One day in early January I woke up and looked out the window. There, rising off the ocean, was a wall of steam which looked about twenty feet tall. I'd seen mist on ponds, fog on rivers, but never anything like this. What was it? “Beautiful,” was the best I could do.

A couple of weeks later a group of us walked by a stream in one of Sakonnet Preservation's properties. There, spinning in a curve in the stream bed, were dinner plate sized circles of ice. What were they? None of us could do better than “Amazing!”

Robert Macfarlane can help. His book Landmarks is a wonderful, wide-ranging celebration of “the power of language . . . to shape our sense of place,” inspiring us to get out there, look closely, and name what we see. It also encourages us to get help from others, by reading about place and species and language, and simply by asking people who know more than we do.

Macfarlane is focused on Britain. He explores the language of its landscape in separate chapters, each inspired and informed by the work of one person, usually a writer, devoted to a specific aspect of the natural world. At the end of each chapter is a glossary of terms which Macfarlane and his colleagues have compiled, mostly regional dialect words, because this is a book about the language of place. “A word-hoard of the astonishing lexis for landscape,” he calls it.

In an effort to expand my own language of place, I asked around for help with my word queries. Abigail Brooks, our esteemed president, told me what I'd seen on the ocean was “sea smoke.” Mary-Kate Kane, our Stewardship Director, told me the twirling plates in the stream were “ice pancakes.”

In Landmarks Robert Macfarlane has created a written landscape of language, myth, weather, comradeship, and history. It's a good place to visit.

– Michal Brownell, SPA Board Member
Part of the fun of acquiring new properties is the treasure hunt to learn about their history, biology, beauty, and uses.

The beauty part has been most striking this winter as Stewardship Director Mary-Kate Kane, several board members and I have visited our latest acquisitions: the Gray’s Mill Pond Property in Adamsville and our easement on the Little Compton Agricultural Conservancy Trust’s Mosher Bog Lot on Long Highway. What the deep cold in early January provided was easy access to very wet properties and a taste of the impacts of freezing, thawing and flooding.

The flooding that took the Adamsville Brook and Gray’s Mill Pond over their banks showed the frightening power of water, yet also its dramatic beauty in the ice formations suspended from overhanging trees and in eddies of a neighbor’s stream. We await the return of roosting egrets in the spring.

On our first visit stepping onto the Mosher quaking bog, we were able to see through ice to the mosses, air bubbles and ice formations below the surface. Exposed mosses had turned russet and pale yellow-green while the moss beneath the ice remained vivid green. We found cranberries on purple-leaved stems, and a fluff of cotton grass still on its stem despite the winter winds. The colorful shapes of sweet pepperbush and blueberry on the western portion of the bog gave way to oak, holly and beech as the land rises into forest. A return visit following snowfall revealed much animal use of the bog, with neat footprints tracing their activity. We know of no other property like this one in Little Compton. We plan to provide guided visits in the future.

We sincerely thank our members, and the Guild and Mosher families, for making it possible to conserve these two spectacular properties last year. Full speed ahead in 2018!

– Abigail Brooks
Kudos to Able Engineering

Little Compton’s own Able Engineering received a first place award from the RI Society of Professional Land Surveyors for its perimeter survey of our Gray’s Mill Pond property. Don Medeiros generously donated the cash award from that prize, along with this message:

“Please use the donation to help with the stewardship of this property. As a resident of Little Compton, I appreciate the opportunity to thank SPA staff and volunteers for their efforts in preserving the heritage of this special town. I take great satisfaction knowing that as a surveyor I have played a role in preserving well over a thousand acres of land in Tiverton and Little Compton.”

Thank you Don and Able Engineering!

A Note About Our Quaking Bog Acquisition

“Just writing to express my delight in reading about your preservation of the Mosher property. I have always worried about the development of this lot.

Aside from being a parcel that is sensitive environmentally, it is also a spot where a lot of game crosses Long Highway from the old Fort Church property. I recently watched a fisher cat cross there. Wildlife can then easily gravitate westward to the large swamp/wooded area between Long Highway and Burchard Avenue. My congratulations on this important acquisition.”

Tack Eddy, former SPA Board Member
2017 Member List – We Couldn’t Do It Without You!

We have always prided ourselves on being a grassroots organization — founded and sustained by Little Compton people for the benefit of everyone in this beautiful little town.

We thank everyone who is able to support us, and count ourselves incredibly lucky for the generous members listed in this report.

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Patricia J. Almy
Mrs. Aubin Ames
Cushing Anderson & Susan Kazanas
Jack & Lea Angell
Anonymous (4)
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Cherry Arnold & Peter Goldberg
Jerry & Livy Arnold
Nate & Berta Atwater
Joe Azrack & Abigail Congdon
Margot Balboni
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In Appreciation for:
Mr. Joe Arrack & Ms. Abigail Congdon
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Cotter
Dr. Judith Edersheim & Dr. Nicole Danforth
Mr. & Mrs. William Kohl
Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Mackintosh
Mr. & Mrs. David Mussafer
Ms. Dorothy Osborn
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The Guild Family Foundation, Inc.
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Sakonnet Lobster Co.
RI General Assembly, Senator Louis DiPalma

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If your name is listed incorrectly, omitted, or you wish to remain anonymous, please accept our apologies and notify Kathy Klees Clarendon at kclarendon@sakonnetpreservation.org or call (401)635-8800.
Our Mission

The Sakonnet Preservation Association, a non-profit land trust, is dedicated to preserving the rural character and natural resources of Little Compton for the lasting benefit of the community.

For Information:

401.635.8800

sakonnetpreservation.org

Check out our new Website!
SakonnetPreservation.org

Same address, but fascinating new features:
- Interactive Map – see properties, photos and more
- Learn about educational events, meet our Board and staff
- Sign up for our emails and follow us on social media

Visit us online or in person. We welcome your feedback!

Newsletter of Sakonnet Preservation Association Winter 2018

SPA 2018 Movie Presentations

Saturday, March 24, 2018
7pm – LC Community Center

Forest Man
The story of Jadav Payeng, an Indian man who single-handedly planted nearly 1400 acres of forest to save his island, Majuli.

along with...

Flight of the Butterflies
A film of hundreds of millions of monarchs in their remote overwintering sanctuaries and along their migratory routes from Canada and across the U.S. to Mexico.

Make plans to join us!

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