

Copy of an original drawing of Start Point light system, dated 1814.



Start Point LIGHTHOUSE

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Lighthouse Tours

Why not climb to the top of the lighthouse? The tower, with its unique black & white stripes, is situated on the tidal island of Start Point on Sanday's exposed eastern tip. Limited tours of the lighthouse are organised through the Sanday Ranger.

Booking is essential for these tours, for further information on timings and meeting locations please contact the Sanday Ranger, Rod Thorne, Tel: 01857 600341. Binoculars would be useful and wellies are essential!

There is a small charge to help maintain this facility. On days when essential maintenance is taking place the lighthouse will be closed to visitors. The opening of Start Point lighthouse is a joint venture between the Northern Lighthouse Board and the Sanday Development Trust.



*The Chill blind circle of night
Watching him through the panes.
This is his country's guardian,
The outmost sentry of peace.*

*This is the man
Who gives up all that is lovely in living
For the means to live.*

Extract from poem "The Lightkeeper" by Robert Louis Stevenson



Solar Power

Start Point Lighthouse is powered by Solar energy; a bank of 36 solar panels charge batteries which are then used to power the light. The Northern Lighthouse Board has successfully used solar energy at its lighthouses for over 20 years and have also converted all its statutory lit buoyage to solar power.

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Start Point

How to get there

Return flights are available to Sanday from Kirkwall Airport, contact Loganair (Tel: 01856 872494) for information on Orkney internal flights.

Ferry crossings to Sanday are also available, contact Orkney Ferries (Tel: 01856 872044) for details.

The Northern Lighthouse Board was established in 1786 and is now responsible for a network of over 200 lighthouses around the coasts and islands of Scotland and the Isle of Man.

"In Salutem Omnium"
For the Safety of All

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LATITUDE 59° 16.64' N
LONGITUDE 02° 22.56' W



More than Lighthouses
www.nlb.org.uk

BEACONS OF THE SEA

Start Point lighthouse is one of over 200 located around Scotland's wild coastline operated and maintained by the Northern Lighthouse Board.

First Light

The first beacon to mark the Start Point on the Orkney island of Sanday was an unlit masonry tower, but this beacon proved inadequate as ships continued to be wrecked on the island. At the time Robert Stevenson was engineer to the Northern Lighthouse Board and he decided to transfer the light from the neighbouring island of North Ronaldsay to Start Point. Building work began and the new lighthouse was established and first exhibited on 2 October 1806. The original great ball (measuring some 8 feet in diameter) from the top of the first beacon was removed and placed on the old beacon at North Ronaldsay (RIGHT) - this can still be seen today.



The Sensational Stevensons

For over one hundred and fifty years Robert Stevenson and his descendants designed most of Scotland's Lighthouses.

Battling against the odds and the elements - the Stevensons constructed wonders of engineering that have withstood the test of time, an amazing historical achievement. Robert Stevenson's talented family also included the famous writer Robert Louis Stevenson (his grandson). Visits with his family to remote lighthouses are thought to have inspired his books *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*.



Disaster

Disaster struck during the building of Start Point lighthouse when the vessel "Stromness" set off to return the workmen back to Leith. A tremendous storm blew up forcing the "Stromness" back northwards to shelter off Flotta island. During the night the cables broke and she was smashed to pieces on the rocks with the loss of all on board except the cabin boy, who was found clinging to the top of the mast.

Surrounding area

On the east side of Start Point, close to the lighthouse, there is a super shell-sand beach where you can find cowrie shells (*grottie-buckies*). You can also find Oyster-plants (*a sea-loving flower*) on and around the nearby beaches.

Lightkeeping - end of an era

All Scottish lighthouses now operate automatically. The last Scottish lighthouse to be automated was Fair Isle South in 1998. Now, when daylight falls and rises between set levels, a light sensor switches the light on and off.

Prior to the automation of Start Point in 1962 a Principal Lightkeeper and an Assistant, with their families, lived at the light. The families were almost self sufficient and would have kept cows and sheep at the station.

Lightkeeping was a remote, lonely and hard existence. At night each keeper was required to keep a watch in the lightroom to ensure that the light flashed correctly to character. During daytime keepers were engaged in cleaning, painting if necessary, and generally keeping the premises clean and tidy. At the time of building the lighthouse, in 1854, the Principal Lightkeeper was paid £45 per year!



Revolving Light

The Sensational Stevensons

French Crystal



Illuminating Facts

Start Point

Light established: 1806

Engineer: Robert Stevenson

Height of tower: 23 metres

Range of light: 18 nautical miles

Elevation: 24 metres (above sea level)

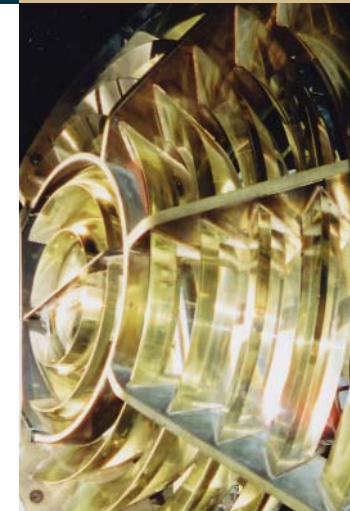
Character: Flashing (2) White every 20 seconds

Position: Latitude 59° 16.64'N Longitude 02° 22.56'W



Revolving Light

Start Point was the first Scottish lighthouse to have a revolving light which gave it a unique character making it easily distinguishable from other lights. Start Point lighthouse was painted with its black and white vertical stripes around 1915, which makes it a recognisable day mark; it is the only Scottish lighthouse painted in this way.



French Crystal

The magnificent lens at Start Point is an original 4th Order Fresnel lens, with a new lamp system. So named after its French inventor, Augustin Fresnel. It is made from a series of perfectly polished crystal glass lenses set into a bronze structure.

An emergency back-up light is positioned on the balcony should the main light ever fail.