

Why not climb to the top?

In 1988 Ardnamurchan lighthouse was automated and the former keepers cottages and outbuildings were sold to The Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust. These are now operated as a Visitor Centre offering the chance to learn more about Scottish lighthouses and the flora and fauna of the Ardnamurchan peninsula you can also have a restful break in the coffee shop.

In a joint partnership between the Northern Lighthouse Board and The Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust you can now climb to the top of Ardnamurchan lighthouse. There is a small charge to help maintain this facility, tickets are available through the Visitor Centre, which is open between April and October.

On days when essential maintenance is taking place the lighthouse will be closed to visitors.



How to get there

From the Corran Ferry join the A861, for Salen, then join the B8007 and continue to Kilchoan, at the end of the village follow the sign to the lighthouse. Great care should be taken along this route.

Beautiful Beaches and Views

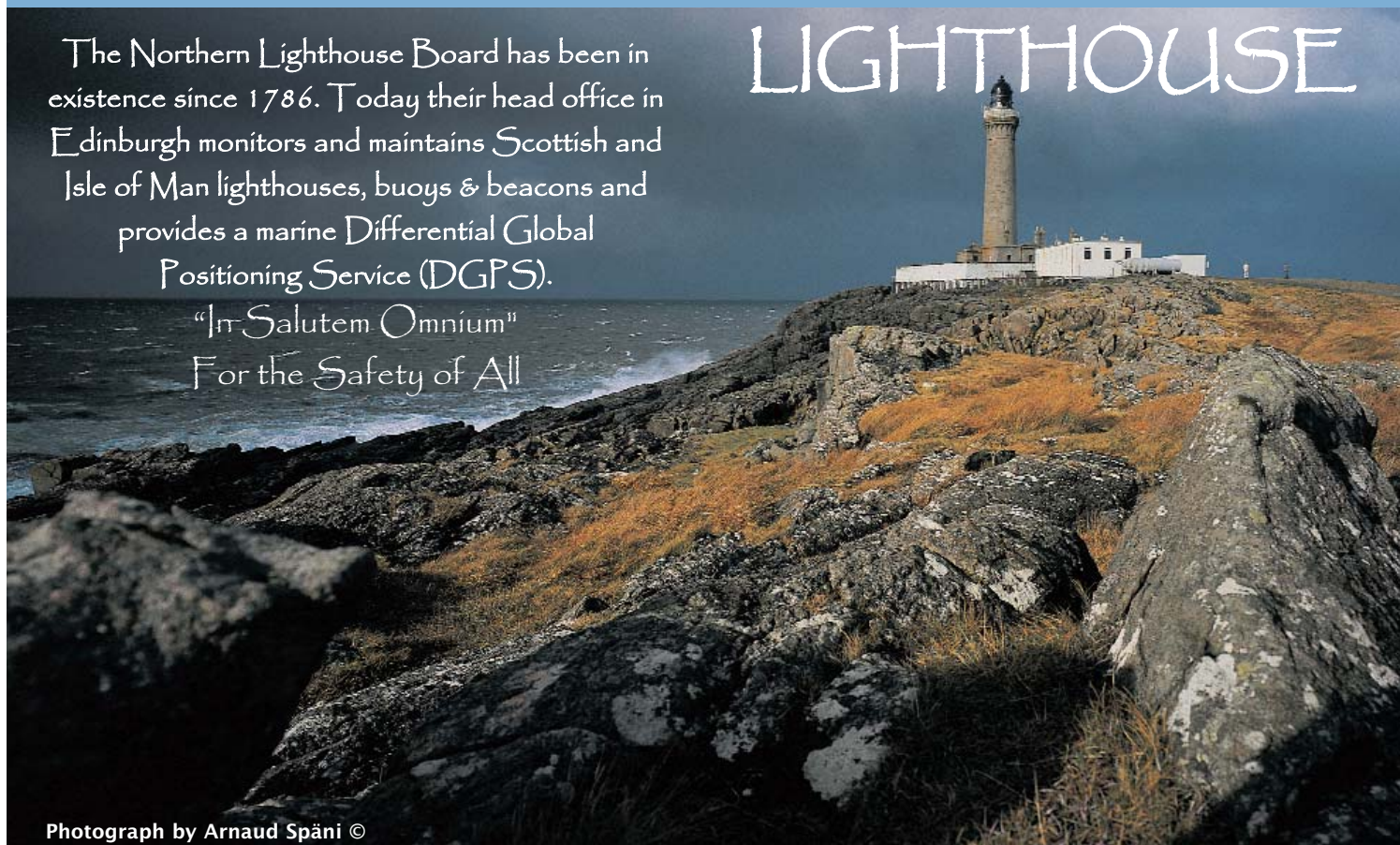
The panoramic views of the Hebrides are unsurpassed from Ardnamurchan and the surrounding area abounds in wildlife. Otters, seals, porpoises and minke whales are regularly seen in the seas below the light. While the skies overhead are frequented by a huge variety of birdlife. Both red and roe deer graze nearby and pine martens and wildcats have been spotted. Nearby, the beaches at Sanna and Portuairk offer beautiful white sands.



Ardnamurchan LIGHTHOUSE

The Northern Lighthouse Board has been in existence since 1786. Today their head office in Edinburgh monitors and maintains Scottish and Isle of Man lighthouses, buoys & beacons and provides a marine Differential Global Positioning Service (DGPS).

*"In Salutem Omnium"
For the Safety of All*



Photograph by Arnaud Späni ©

More than Lighthouses
www.nlb.org.uk

Peace and her huge invasion to these shores
Puts daily home; innumerable sails
Dawn on the far horizon and draw near;
Innumerable loves, uncounted hopes
To our wild coasts, not darkling now, approach:
Not now obscure, since thou and thine are there.

Northern Lighthouse Board
84 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DA, United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 (0) 131 473 3100 Fax: +44 (0) 131 220 2093
E-mail: enquiries@nlb.org.uk

Extract from poem "To my Father" by Robert Louis Stevenson

BEACONS OF THE SEA

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

Egyptian influences

Standing 36 metres high and 55 metres above sea level Ardnamurchan lighthouse was designed and built by Alan Stevenson in 1849. This is the most westerly point on the Scottish mainland; the lighthouse plays a vital role in navigating through an area of many islands, strong tidal streams and poor weather conditions.

The site for the lighthouse was chosen in 1845 and 20 acres of land was purchased for the sum of £20,000! It took three years to complete the building of the lighthouse, which was built of Ross of Mull granite. It stands secure on the surrounding dark coloured gabbro volcanic rock (Granite from Ross of Mull was also used to build Skerryvore and Dubh Artach lighthouses). Egyptian influences can be seen in the entrance to the tower, the chimneys of the cottages and the arches (corbel) at the top of the lighthouse tower beneath the balcony.



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.



Alan Stevenson



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. The



status of the light and all its associated equipment is relayed back to the Northern Lighthouse Board's head office in Edinburgh by phone link, radio signal or satellite. Prior to the automation of Ardnamurchan in 1988 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.

Ardnamurchan Facts

Light established: 1849

Engineer: Alan Stevenson

Position: Latitude 56° 43.6'N

Longitude 06° 13.4'W

Character: Flashing (2) White every 20 seconds

Range of light: 24 nautical miles

Elevation: 55 metres (above sea level)

Height of tower: 36 metres

French Crystal

The original lens at Ardnamurchan was a Fresnel lens, so named after its French inventor, Augustin Fresnel. The lens was made from a series of perfectly polished crystal glass lenses set into a brass structure. This lens has since been removed and is on display in the Visitor Centre. It was replaced with an array of sealed-beam electric lamps.



Fog Horn

There is no longer a working fog horn at Ardnamurchan. The area has been made into a viewing platform and offers wonderful panoramic views of the Inner Hebrides and is ideal for viewing passing whales and dolphins.

