

Ardnamurchan Lighthouse

Light Established

1849

Engineer

Alan Stevenson

Position

Latitude 56° 43.6'N

Longitude 06° 13.4'W

Character

Flashing (2) White every 20 Secs

Elevation

55 metres

Nominal Range

24 miles

Structure

Grey granite tower, 35 metres in height. There are 152 steps to the top of the tower.

Fog Horn

2 blasts every 20 secs

History

Ardnamurchan Lighthouse is situated on the most westerly point of the British Mainland. There have been many arguments about this name, two of the most likely are, Point of the sea-hounds or otters, (Airde meaning Point, Muirchu meaning sea-hound or otters) and the Point of the pirates or wreckers (where the "col" from Muirchol means wickedness).

The site for the lighthouse was chosen in 1845 and 20 acres of land was bought for the sum of £20.00. The land was owned by Mr Alexander Cameron who was also paid, rather grudgingly, £58.00 for any inconvenience during building operations.

The contractor responsible for the building work was a Mr Hume. During the three years it took to complete the lighthouse, scurvy broke out among the workmen and a doctor had to be called in to treat them.

The oil light was first exhibited on the night of 5 October 1849.

Two lightkeepers were appointed at a yearly allowance of £18.00. They kept at the station two cows and about a dozen sheep.

On the morning of 22 January 1852 there was severe storm and lightning struck the tower causing broken panes and plaster to come off the walls. Fifty feet of boundary wall was knocked down and 40 feet of road was washed away by the heavy seas. The keepers boat was broken up although they had secured it 15 feet above the last known high water mark.

The lighthouse was automated in 1988 and is now remotely monitored from the Board's headquarters in Edinburgh.

The former keepers cottages and outbuildings are now privately operated as the Ardnamurchan Visitors Centre.

It should be noted that at some sites the Northern Lighthouse Board have sold some redundant buildings within the lighthouse complex and are not responsible for the maintenance of these building.