

Foula Lighthouse

Light Established

1986

Position

Latitude 60° 06.8'N

Longitude 02° 03.7'W

Character

Flashing (3) White every 15 Secs

Elevation

36 metres

Nominal Range

18 miles

Structure

White tower

History

Foula was built as a gas powered major light (range > 15 miles) in 1986. It was never a manned station as it was built during the automation programme as an automatic light. The decision to establish a light on Foula was as a direct result of the increase in oil tanker traffic using the west coast route. Other lights established at this time were Point of Fethaland, Yell Sound and North Rona. The conversion from acetylene gas to the highly cost effective solar/wind electric operation will mean lower maintenance, an environmentally friendly system which will also provide a higher level of reliability.

Work commenced in Summer 1999 with the laying of the concrete plinth for the construction of a new GRP (glass reinforced plastic) building which contains the control room and battery room.

The original 4th order lens has been retained having been suitably modified to accommodate 35 watt metal halide lamps in a 3 position changer. The rotation of the lens is by a gearless drive and control is by Programmable Logic Controllers and associated switch gear. The monitoring of the light to the Board's headquarters in Edinburgh is by PSTN.

The power system now consist of 36 solar modules charging 2500 AH, 24 volt battery, this is supplemented by four small vertical axis wind generators.

All works associated with the solarisation of Foula lighthouse should be complete by 31 March 2000.

Shetland General Building Contractor James J Johnson of Bixter carried out all concrete works and erected the solar panel framework. Jimmy Johnson has carried out work for the Northern Lighthouse Board since 1967 and was also involved in the works associated with Fair Isle South Lighthouse - Scotland's last manned Lighthouse automated 31 March 1998.

Orkney electrical contractors R S Merriman carried out the electrical installation.