

Mull of Galloway

Light Established

1830

Engineer

Robert Stevenson

Position

Latitude 54° 38.1'N

Longitude 04° 51.4'W

Character

Flashing White every 20 seconds

Elevation

99 metres

Nominal Range

28 miles

Structure

White round tower 26 metres high. There are 114 steps to the top of the tower.

History

Gulls, gales and grandeur of cliff and sea that is unsurpassed - this is the Mull of Galloway. It's as far South as you can go in Scotland, without falling off the 260ft cliffs. The lighthouse at first showed "intermittent" or "occulting" lights, where two opaque cylindrical shades were moved up or down so as to meet and obscure the light at fixed intervals, with periods of darkness longer than those of light. The cost of this lighthouse was between £8,000 and £9,000. The building part of the work was done by contract, and the engineer fitted up the lightroom, getting some of the articles by contract and others made under his own supervision. The contractor responsible for the building was Brebner and Scott of Edinburgh.

Several changes have taken place at Mull of Galloway since 1828. At one time the lamp was a combination of shining brass and sparking crystal, turning through its two and three quarter minute revolution on beautifully made rollers - so perfect that the 5 ton of lens could be moved by hand. The lamp was as simple as the familiar tilly, lit by hand with paraffin and then pumped up, for all the world like a camp-cooking stove. But there the resemblance ended for the surrounding prisms, which gave off myriad rainbows on a sunny day, caught the light and magnified it to the power of 29,000 candles.

In 1971 Mull of Galloway was converted to electric. It is a sealed-beam light, mounted on gearless revolving pedestal, which uses a low-voltage rotary mechanism which suits a wide range of power supplies. The lamp units are light, produce a good beam for a very low power input and being sealed in a vacuum these do not deteriorate or tarnish, but the main advantage of this system is that it is almost fully automatic. The lightkeeper visited the lightroom hourly until 10pm and then did not have to go near it until extinguishing time the next morning, unless summoned by the alarm bell. The lamps are mass produced and so economical and the apparatus is convenient to install and maintain. The cleaning of the lighthouse is much easier, with no lenses to polish and no machinery to oil.

During the Second World War on 8 June 1944 at 7.30pm a Beaufighter aircraft crashed into the lighthouse stores building. It was foggy at the time, and two men were killed as part of the roof of the store was blown off.

Mull of Galloway Lighthouse was demanned in 1988 and is now remotely monitored from 84 George Street, Edinburgh.

The Mull of Galloway Lighthouse is open to the public in the summer

You can stay in the former Lightkeepers cottage . It is available for rent as a holiday house through the National Trust for Scotland. Telephone them on 0131 243 9331 or e-mail holidays@nts.org.uk