

Noss Head Lighthouse

Light Established

1849

Engineer

Alan Stevenson

Position

Latitude 58° 28.8'N

Longitude 03° 03.0'W

Character

Flashing White/Red every 20 secs

Elevation

53 metres

Nominal Range

White 25 miles, Red 21 miles

Structure

White stone tower, 18 metres high. There are 76 steps to top of tower.

History

The lighthouse is situated near Wick Caithness Head. The name Noss Head comes from the Old Norse word, Snos, a nose, the peak of nose-shaped headland. The lighthouse was completed in 1849 by Mr Robert Arnot of Inverness, and the light was first exhibited on Monday 18 June 1849. A new style of lantern with diagonal instead of vertical framing was first used by Stevenson at Noss Head. Stronger and less liable to intercept light in any particular direction, it was adopted as the standard pattern for the service. The original lamp from Noss Head is now in the museum at Wick.

The lens which is approximately 6ft in diameter rotates by clockwork machinery around a mercury vapour lamp.

An access road from Wick to Noss Head was built by the unemployed poor of the area who were paid 3/6d per day.

The following poem, written by James G Duncan, hangs framed in the lightroom:-

To Noss Head Light

*As sweet to me as light of moon or star,
Is thy bright gleam, old trusty friend Noss Head*

*And doubly sweet, when o'er wide ocean far
The ray benignant on my course is shed
Blest be the hand that raised your steadfast tower
And he who trims you never-falling light
For oft when round me midnight tempests lower
Hope's pulse had failed, but for thy flash so bright
My gallant boat, though scarce inch-thick her planks
Flies livelier on the track that heads her home
And dips her prow, as if in grateful thanks
When first you welcome ray reveals the billows foam
Long where the nights and weary were my watch
If from the lively deck thy flame I did not catch.*

The Light was automated in 1987.

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.