

# **Ruvaal Lighthouse**

## **Light Established**

1859

## **Engineer**

David & Thomas Stevenson

## **Position**

Latitude 55° 62.2'N

Longitude 06° 07.3'W

## **Character**

Flashing (3) White/Red every 15 secs

## **Elevation**

45 metres

## **Nominal Range**

White 24 miles, Red 21 miles

## **Structure**

White tower 34 metres high. There are 158 steps to the top of tower

## **History**

The lighthouse is listed as a building of Architectural/Historical interest. Ruvaal is situated at the north end of the island of Islay. The Board of Trade requested that the light should show towards the westward, as far as the direction of the Neva Rocks. Consequently, it was found necessary to design a tower 100ft in height and the total cost of this lighthouse was £6,500.

The light was first exhibited on 1 January 1859. It was fixed, 2nd class dioptric light. There have always been deer around Ruvaal Lighthouse and it is not usual to find them feeding inside the station grounds at night.

On 16 February 1981 the lighthouse helicopter "KILO PAPA" was engaged on work with "Highland Cables", a company contracted to put the mains power line out to Ruvaal from Bunnahabhainn, a distance of about 4 miles. The first two poles had been successfully landed in place at the lighthouse end of the line, when the helicopter attempting to land the third, struck the pole with the main rotor cutting the top section off the pole and destroying the rotor. The helicopter then crashed, ending up with the broken stump of pole lying across the tail boom. The pilot had a remarkable escape.

A new lighting system consisting of a gearless pedestal with catadioptric sealed beam lamp arrays was installed in 1982. The gearless pedestal uses a low-

voltage rotary mechanism which suits a wide range of power supplies, and the lamp units are light, produce a good beam for a very low input, and being sealed in a vacuum, do not deteriorate or tarnish. The lamps are mass produced and look rather like car headlights. The apparatus is convenient to install and maintain, and the cleaning of the lighthouse is much easier, with no lenses to polish and no machinery to oil.

In the autumn of 1981, the lightkeeper's life was lit up on Ruvaal by the introduction of helicopter reliefs at this station. This meant that adverse weather conditions no longer played a major part in the relief of the lighthouse. The lighthouse was subsequently automated in 1983.

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.