

Sanda Lighthouse

Light Established

1850

Engineer

Alan Stevenson

Position

Latitude 55° 16.5'N

Longitude 05° 34.9'W

Character

Long Flashing White every 10 secs

Elevation

50 metres

Nominal Range

15 miles

Structure

White tower 15 metres high. There are 210 steps to top of tower

History

Sanda lighthouse is situated off the south end of Kintyre. Since the CHRISTIANA, of Glasgow, outward bound in bad weather, was lost with all hands on the nearby Pattersons Rock as far back as 1825, there had been a demand for a light on this island which forms the turning into the Clyde after passing through the north Channel between Scotland and Ireland. Trinity House proposed we move the Mull of Kintyre light to Sanda, the Commissioners declined, although they were willing to mark Pattersons Rock with a beacon. As wrecks continued, however, they later decided to build on the summit of the Ship Rock which is a small detached rock off Sanda. The engineer designed a stone tower 3 steps set against the face of the rock, still the only one of its kind in Scotland. It was first lighted in 1850.

In 1900 the RNL silver medal and vellum citation was presented to the attending boatman for Sanda - Daniel Dempsey and his 2 sons - for saving the crew of a schooner wrecked near the lighthouse, using a small boat in heavy seas and at great risk to themselves.

One of the Board's ships the SIGNAL, had the misfortune to run ground on the Mull of Kintyre peninsula in dense fog in 1895 while on the way from McArthur's Head to Sanda. The boats were at once launched and all on board, including one

of the Commissioners, Sheriff William Ivory, were saved with most of their effects. Attempts to salvage the ship proved fruitless, and she sank the next day.

There have been several shipwrecks at Sanda. In March 1946, the American liberty ship BYRON DRYSDALE ran aground. Fifty four people were on board and all were saved.

On October 19, 1970, the Dutch cattle ship HEREFORD EXPRESS went aground. Her cargo of livestock was either drowned or destroyed by the SSPCA officers who flew out to Sanda by Helicopter.

The lighthouse was relieved by boat but in 1976/7 the helicopter was introduced to the service and this made a difference to the keepers. The weather was no longer a major factor to the reliefs being made.

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.