

# **Stroma Lighthouse**

## **Light Established**

1896

## **Engineer**

David A & Charles Stevenson

## **Position**

Latitude 58° 41.8'N

Longitude 03° 07.0'W

## **Character**

Flashing (2) White every 20 secs

## **Elevation**

32 metres

## **Nominal Range**

26 miles

## **Structure**

White tower 23 metres high. There are 80 steps to top of tower

## **Fog Horn**

2 blasts every 60 seconds

## **History**

Off the Northern-most point of Stroma, is the Swilkie, the most dangerous whirlpool in the Pentland Firth, occasioned by the meeting of four or five contrary tides. According to Icelandic legend, the Swilkie is the place where the salt which maintains the saltiness of the oceans is ground in a giant quern, stolen from King Frodi by a sea-king named Mysing. When Mysing's longship sank off Stroma under the weight of it, he still continued to grind away with it 15 fathoms down and to this day the sea can still be heard roaring through it. In 1896, Stroma was established as a major light. It was a Trotter-Lindberg light which used petroleum spirit or lythene, contained in cisterns placed outside the lantern, which had to be recharged at least once a fortnight and it was regularly observed and visited by a local crofter or fisherman appointed for the purpose. Stroma was soon found to be an unsuitable location for a minor light and a paraffin lamp was substituted for the former lythene lamp - enabling the small tower which carried the lantern also to serve as an oil store instead of requiring a separate building.

On 22 February 1941, the lighthouse buildings were machine-gunned by an enemy plane. No-one was injured, and what little damage that had been done was repaired by the lightkeepers.

In 1972, Stroma was converted to electric operation, using a sealed beam optic mounted on a gearless revolving pedestal; At the same time, a helicopter landing pad was built near the station, and the relief or changeover of Keepers was effected by helicopter.

Work commenced in April 1994 to convert the station to automatic operation, this was complete in March 1997. The former sealed beam lamp array optic was removed and replaced by the ex Sule Skerry 4th Order lens system. This rotates using a gearless pedestal and the light source is a 250 watt metal Halide lamp. The air driven fog signal has been removed and replaced by an electric emitter type located on the lighthouse balcony.

When manned, power for the station was obtained from constant running generators. In the automatic mode, power is provided from batteries 'cycle' charged at regular intervals.