

# Tiumpan Head Lighthouse

## Light Established

1900

## Engineer

David A & Charles Stevenson

## Position

Latitude 58° 15.6'N

Longitude 06° 08.3'W

## Character

Flashing (2) White every 15 secs

## Elevation

55 metres

## Nominal Range

25 miles

## Structure

White tower 21 metres high. There are 69 steps to top of tower

## History

The century opened with a new light on the west coast Tiumpan Head near Stornoway which had been refused by the Board of Trade but revised in May 1879 on being recommended by the Western Highlands and Islands Commission, and from which a watch on illegal trawlers was first authorised. The estimated cost of the lighthouse and building was £9,000 and Mr John Aitken was the contractor. A Mr William Frew was appointed as inspector of works. Chance Brothers made the optics and the revolving machine was made by Dove and Co. The light was exhibited on 1 December 1900.

Her Majesty the Queen, with Prince Charles and Princess Anne visited the lighthouse in 1956 when the seven year old heir to the throne sounded the first blast on a new fog siren.

There was a complement of six lightkeepers attached to the station, 3 lightkeepers and their families at the station and a local assistant and 2 occasional lightkeepers coming in from the village nearby.

The lamp was operated from the mains electricity and was a 250 watt mercury vapour type. In case of emergency, such as power cuts, which occur frequently during the winter, there was a 'scheme R' battery operated light, and in the event of prolonged power failures the paraffin vapour lamp equipment was retained in

readiness. The apparatus for driving the lens was a hand wound, weight operated, clock work machine which had to be wound up every 35 minutes.

The fog signal was operated by compressed air supplied from a compressor, which was driven by Kelvin Diesel Engine. There were three Kelvin engines and compressors, and when the fog signal was in operation, two of them were in service to maintain the required air pressure with one standby, in rotation.

The Gaelic name is Rudha Tiompan. This could be from Tom, a rounded knoll or hill, a one-sided knoll is called Tiompan. But as we have very few Gaelic place names in Lewis, it is most likely a Norse name, probably from Sjon, sight, which could also be a scouting position where the beacon fires were lit. It could have been an ideal situation for a "Ward Hill".

The lighthouse was automated in 1985.

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.