Strumble Head Lighthouse

(St. Michael's Island, Northern Pembrokshire, Wales)

History

Strumble Head Lighthouse stands imposingly on Ynysmeicl (St. Michael's Island), an islet to the west of Fishguard, separated from the mainland by a very narrow gap through which the sea boils and froths in stormy weather.

The station was built in 1908 by Trinity House for the greater safety of sea traffic between Ireland and the new Fishguard Harbour which is located behind cliffs and a breakwater three miles to the east. The new light also formed a link with the existing South Bishop light, 18 miles to the south-west. This stretch of coast is very dangerous, and some 60 vessels are known to have been lost along it in the 19th Century alone.

The original revolving lens system weighed 4½ tons, supported in a bath of mercury to reduce friction. A massive clockwork mechanism rotated it, driven by a quarter-ton weight which, suspended on a cable, dropped gradually down a cylinder running from top to bottom through the tower and had to be re-wound every 12 hours. The optical system was replaced by more compact equipment when Strumble Head lighthouse was fully electrified in 1965.

Despite the footbridge to the mainland across the narrow sound, Ynsymeicl's isolation and steep slopes set building problems typical of more remote rock towers. Building material and regular supplies were swung across by jackstay cable, between the winches near the cliff-top on the mainland and beside the lighthouse. The handrail of the footbridge and the steps to it also had a special purpose, as the pipeline to carry oil into the tower basement.

The lighthouse was converted to unmanned automatic operation in 1980 and is now monitored from the Operations and Planning Centre at Harwich.

Specifications

Established	1908
Height Of Tower	17 Metres
Height Of Light Above Mean High Water	45 Metres
Automated	1980
Electrified	1965
Lamp	1000 Watt Mbi
Optic	1st Order Catadioptric
Character	4 White Flashes Every 15 Seconds
Intensity	1,000,000 Candela
Range Of Light	26 nautical miles

Location

A487
Cardigan
Lampeter
A483
Newcastle Emlyn
Llandysul
Goodwick
A487
Fishguard
Llandovery
A40
Llandeilo
Carmarthen
Llanarthney
A40
A483
A48
Whitland
St. Clears
Cross Hands
Haverfordwest
A40
Ammanford
Ystradgynlais
A4076
A477
Ystalyfera
Kidwelly
Llannon
Milford Haven
St Ishmael's
Pembroke Dock
Saundersfoot
Pontarddulais
Pontardawe
A465
Angle
Tenby
Llanelli
Pontlliw
Clydach
Burry Port
M4
Neath
Pembroke
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