



Turnberry Lighthouse ILLW UK0000

A few years ago the International Association of Lighthouse Keepers decided to have an annual open day for lighthouses around the world to encourage visitors to visit their lighthouses. They decided that combining with the existing ILLW event made good sense and this move has been highly successful as the media have become involved in quite a few of the countries taking part in the combined event.

The ILLW event takes place on the 3rd full weekend in August. Stations operate within sight of the lighthouse or, with permission within the structures themselves or their associated cottages or visitors centre. Most first time entrants are so enthused with the event that they return year after year. A report from the Burlington Amateur Radio Club in Canada summed up their first participation in these few words:

“The greatest delight of the day was the active participation of the visiting children who showed a remarkable interest in the whole idea of amateur radio, especially the use of Morse Code.

It was an honour and a delight to participate in this adventure and we look forward with increased enthusiasm to next year's participation.”

Sadly, Mike Dalrymple passed away in December 2005. He was the Treasurer of the Ayr Amateur Radio Group. The event is now dedicated to Mike's memory as is the official ILLW web site where you will find the event guidelines, an on line entry form and lists of participating lighthouses since 1999. In recognition of the link between Mike and Turnberry lighthouse, it now carries the unique ILLW identification number UK0000. Mike's friend, John Forsyth GM400U, still lives in Scotland and is quite impressed and amazed the way their "baby" has grown over the years.

<http://illw.net>



Kevin vk2ce



International Lighthouse / Lightship Weekend

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International Lighthouse Lightship Weekend – ILLW

WHAT IS IT?

Taking place on the 3rd full weekend in August since 1998

This year from 00.01UTC 18 August to 2400UTC 19 August 2018 (i.e. up to 48 hours)

ILLW is an Amateur (HAM) Radio event that promotes the preservation of lighthouses and at the same time presents Amateur radio to the general public.

The month of August seems to have become the international month for celebrating lighthouses. Countries all over the world have become involved in one or other lighthouse related activity. Some years ago the United States Congress declared August 7th as their National Lighthouse Day and during the first week in August amateur radio operators in America set up portable stations at lighthouses and endeavour to make contact with each other. Unlike the ILLW event there are prizes and certificates awarded for the NLD event.



Shoreham Lighthouse, Southern England. Photo: M0MNG

The Association of Lighthouse Keepers, [ALK](#), conducts its International Lighthouse Heritage Weekend on the 3rd full weekend in August. Their objective is to encourage Lighthouse managers, keepers and owners to open their lighthouse or lightstation and related visitors centres to the public with a view to raising the profile of lighthouses, lightvessels and other navigational aids, and hence preserving the maritime heritage around the world.

The major event which takes place in August however is the International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend, [ILLW](#), which came into being in 1998 as the Scottish Northern Lights Award run by the Ayr Amateur Radio Group. The history of this event can be found on the [illw.net](#) website. The ILLW takes place on the 3rd full weekend in August each year and attracts over 500 lighthouse entries located in over 40 countries. It is one of the most popular international amateur radio events in existence probably because there are very few rules and it is not our usual "contest" type event. It is also free to take part and there are no prizes for contacting large numbers of other stations. There is little doubt that the month of August has become "Lighthouse Month" due largely to the popularity and growth of the ILLW and the lighthouses this event presents.



History of the Lighthouse Weekend

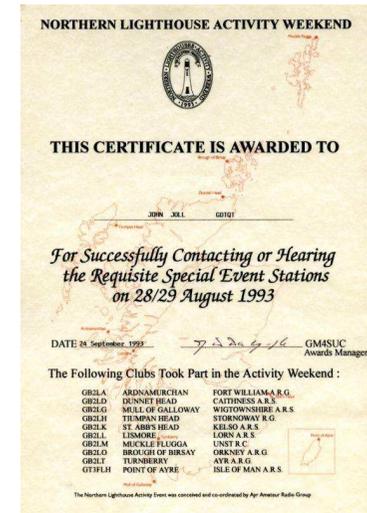


It all started in 1993 during a wet wintry evening when two members of the Ayr Amateur Radio Group in Scotland, John Forsyth (radio call sign GM4OOU) and the late Mike Dalrymple (radio call sign GM4SUC), after a club meeting, were talking about creating an event in the summer where club members could get out on a sunny weekend and "play radio". Various locations were considered; ports, airports, historic Scottish sites, the Firths of Scotland, castles etc. etc. but it was finally decided that the lighthouses of Scotland would be ideal.

Following research it was discovered that the lighthouses of Scotland were controlled by the Northern Lighthouse Board in Edinburgh who were not only responsible for the lighthouses of Scotland, but also those around the Isle of Man. Approval was sought and obtained from the Northern Lighthouse Board to establish amateur radio stations adjacent to their properties. In February 1993 an invitation was sent to all Scottish radio clubs and the Isle of Man radio club to join in the fun of a weekend, to be called the Northern Lighthouse Activity Weekend, by establishing an amateur radio station at a lighthouse during the third weekend in August. This first year's event saw 11 stations established at lighthouses, operating primarily on the short wave bands, with each station making contacts with approximately 750 other radio stations over the weekend.

The following year the Scottish radio clubs were involved in a weekend activity with the theme of Scottish Firths (river estuaries), so two years passed before the next Northern Lighthouse Activity Weekend. During this period Anne-Grete (radio call sign OZ3AE) enquired through a letter to the Practical Wireless magazine if there was any lighthouse related activity in the amateur radio

hobby. Following discussions with her it was agreed that Danish radio stations could join in the fun of the weekend. Germany, South Africa and France quickly followed, so the name of weekend was changed to The International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend. It was at this time that John, GM4OOU, due to pressure of work, had to cease his connection with the event. The weekend became an annual event taking place over the third full weekend in August and the event has slowly grown in popularity. In 1999 there were 204 lighthouse/lightship stations in 36 countries and now some 450 radio stations in over 50 countries take part. Full statistics and guidelines for participation can be found on the [illw.net](#) website.



August 1993 Certificate

The main reason the event has become so popular is because it is a relaxed fun weekend without the pressure of a contest. The guidelines are simple and the onus is on the operators to act within the spirit of the weekend which is simply to expose the amateur radio hobby and the plight of lighthouses to the public. This is why it is important for the ham station to be as close to the lighthouse/lightship as possible and with the controlling body's approval.