

Whitford Lighthouse

Whitford Sker
Burry Estuary



Whitford Information

**Photographs of The Whitford Light
Today (May 2000)**

Whitford Light C1910

Lady Stepney on the Light C1910

Whitford Lighthouse

If the members of Llanelli Harbour Trust needed an excuse for a summer-time jaunt, they needed to look no further than their former lighthouse at Whitford. A pilgrimage to it would have been in order in its centenary year. If the tide was in, the trustees could have gone by boat, a trip of about four miles across the bay. By road, the journey is much longer and more arduous, via Loughor and the northern coastline of Gower to the approaches of Llanrhidian. The last two or three miles to the Whitford sker would be by foot over scrub, dune and sandbank (providing, of course, the tide was out). The first Whitford lighthouse was built on piles in 1854. The present tower succeeded it in 1866. Hennett and Co., the engineering firm who built it for £1,600, had their difficulties.

It was a stormy winter and because of this a Harbour Trust committee, meeting in February, recommended the firm be given an extension of one month and finish the job in April. Eight months later, at their October meeting, the same committee gave the contractors yet another extension of one month, adding the warning that if the work was not finished in that time certain penalties would be enforced. Finally, in December, the Whitford was reported to be "lit", and in that condition it remained on succeeding nights until

December 21, 1921, on which date it was superseded by the Burry Holmes lighthouse a few miles further up the bay. The old building has remained in Harbour Trust ownership, apart from a short period after the closure of the Llanelli port in 1951 when it was sold to the local engineering firm of Messrs. O'Connor and Davies.

Mr. Les O'Connor,



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who surveyed it at that time, said the wrought-iron plating was in remarkably good shape. For two-thirds of its height, the lighthouse was of solid stonework and between this and the outer plating was a lining of lead. The roof, surmounted by a weathervane, was of copper sheeting. The new owners expected to get about 90 tons of scrap from the structure. The demolition did not take place, and the Whitford was instead sold back to the Trust. This was done at the request of the Elder Brethren of Trinity House, who thought that the old lighthouse, although long deprived of its beam, was still of value as a familiar seamark. According to Mr. O'Connor, it was also considered at that time to be a useful marker for the fliers based at the R.A.F. aerodrome at Pembrey. Since then, the fliers have departed, as also have the more valuable components of the Whitford tower, including the weathervane, the copper sheeting and the lead. Gone, too, are those who once served as the keepers of the lighthouse at Whitford.

Mr. D. G. W. Griffiths, Llanelli's harbour superintendent, recalled that the local lighthouse-keepers used to alternate a fortnight on duty at Whitford with a fortnight at the lighthouse on the end of the breakwater at the Llanelli harbour entrance. In

1919, he spent a weekend at the Whitford as the guest of its crew hut never sought to repeat the experience.

Cycling around the bay from Llanelli to Llanrhidian, he finally arrived at the lighthouse in a state of utter exhaustion after



carrying his machine over a couple of miles of soft, yielding sand. Even so, he did not get much sleep in his bunk that night. A strong wind blew up, and for half the night he was kept awake by the crash of waves against the tower. The staple diet of his hosts was ship's biscuits; their daytime pastimes, fishing or making rope-mats. Mr. Griffiths said he left the Whitford with a rope-mat, with a hunger unappeased by the ship's biscuits, and with a deep resolve never to become a lighthouse-keeper.

(from 'Looking Around Llanelli' by Harry Davies)

Photographs Carmarthenshire FHS , May 21 2000

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The Photograph below is a Photograph of Pauline James' Great Grandfather, who was a Lighthouse Keeper on the Whitford Light for many years until his death in 1913. He is seen here on the Light along with Lady Stepney and is dated at approx. 1910, if anyone should know the exact date of this photograph we would be very grateful for the information



Whitford Lighthouse C1910

Lady Stepney (2nd Right) and William Thomas (of Aberdaron and Llanelly) right hand side.
The Gentleman in the middle of the group is probably a Mr Griffiths also a Lighthouse Keeper
the other Gentlemen are not known, can you name Them?

