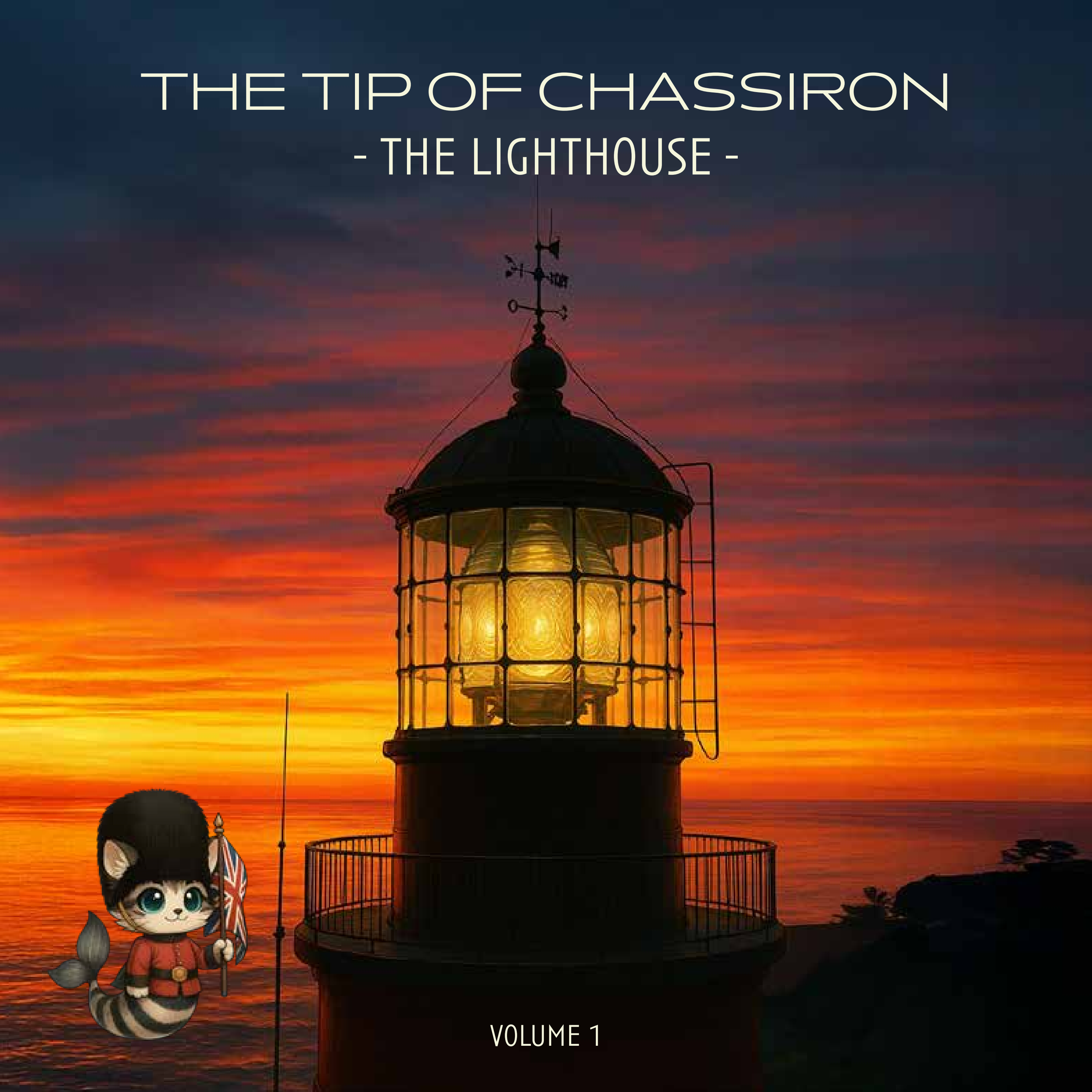

THE TIP OF CHASSIRON
- THE LIGHTHOUSE -
VOLUME 1

the Lighthouse of Chassiron

At the very tip of the island of Oléron stands the Chassiron lighthouse. It is **46 metres** high, and you have to climb **224 steps** to reach the top. There hasn't always been a lighthouse here...

A long time ago, ships sailing close to the coast could be wrecked because there were no landmarks to warn of danger. The first lights were placed in ports for trade. The most famous is the ancient lighthouse of Alexandria on the island of Pharos in Egypt.

Lighthouse of Alexandria

1685 – First lighthouse

As there were numerous shipwrecks around the island of Oléron, the monarchy decided to build a **lighthouse** in Chassiron.

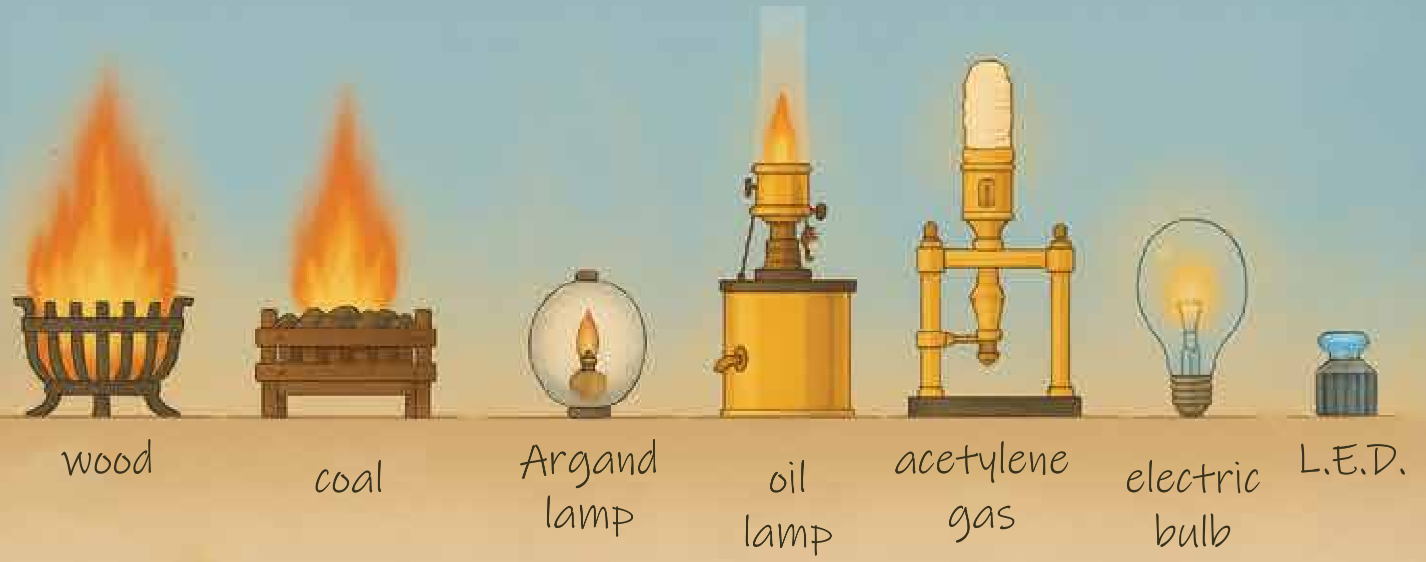
It began operating in **1685**. It was almost **24 metres** high and its distinctive feature was that it had two lights at different heights. Initially, logs from the surrounding forests were burned, but wood from old boats demolished in Rochefort was also used.

As it was built with poor-quality stone, its walls cracked, threatening to collapse.

1836 – a new lighthouse

Over time, the old lighthouse fell into disrepair and it became necessary to build a new one.

Work began in 1834 and was completed on **1 December 1836**. At the time, it did not yet have its black and white stripes. These did not appear until **1926**.



Since the first lighthouse was built, various means of lighting have been used. In 1685, there were two stoves where logs of wood were burned, then there were stoves using coal, followed by Argand lamps (oil lamps with a mirror). With the new lighthouse, the lamps were improved. In 1836, a large oil lamp was installed, which can still be seen in the lighthouse museum. Gas burners then succeeded one another, leading to **electric bulbs** in 1930.

Fresnel lenses.

To be seen from a great distance, the light from a lighthouse must be magnified. Using a large magnifying glass is not possible, as it would be too thick to allow all the light to pass through and would be very heavy.

In **1822**, a French engineer, Augustin Fresnel, succeeded in transforming a magnifying glass by reducing its thickness while maintaining its magnifying power. These are called '**Fresnel lenses**'.

All lighthouses around the world use these lenses, which are also used for other purposes. In fact, they are used to make cinema projectors, very thin magnifying glasses, solar panels, and many other things.

Fresnel lenses are assembled in groups to form what is known as an optical system, which is itself protected by a glass lantern.

Thanks to the optical system, several beams of light can be emitted from the lighthouse. At Chassiron, we have eight lenses, allowing us to obtain eight beams of light at the same time.

To give the illusion of flashes, the optical system rotates. The further away you are from the lighthouse, the less you see the beams, but you get the impression that the light is flashing. The lighthouse code is **one white flash every 10 seconds**.

Inside the lighthouse lantern there is a bulb and Fresnel lenses.

The lighthouse today

Despite the advent of modern technology such as satellite positioning and mobile phones, the lighthouse still has a useful function.

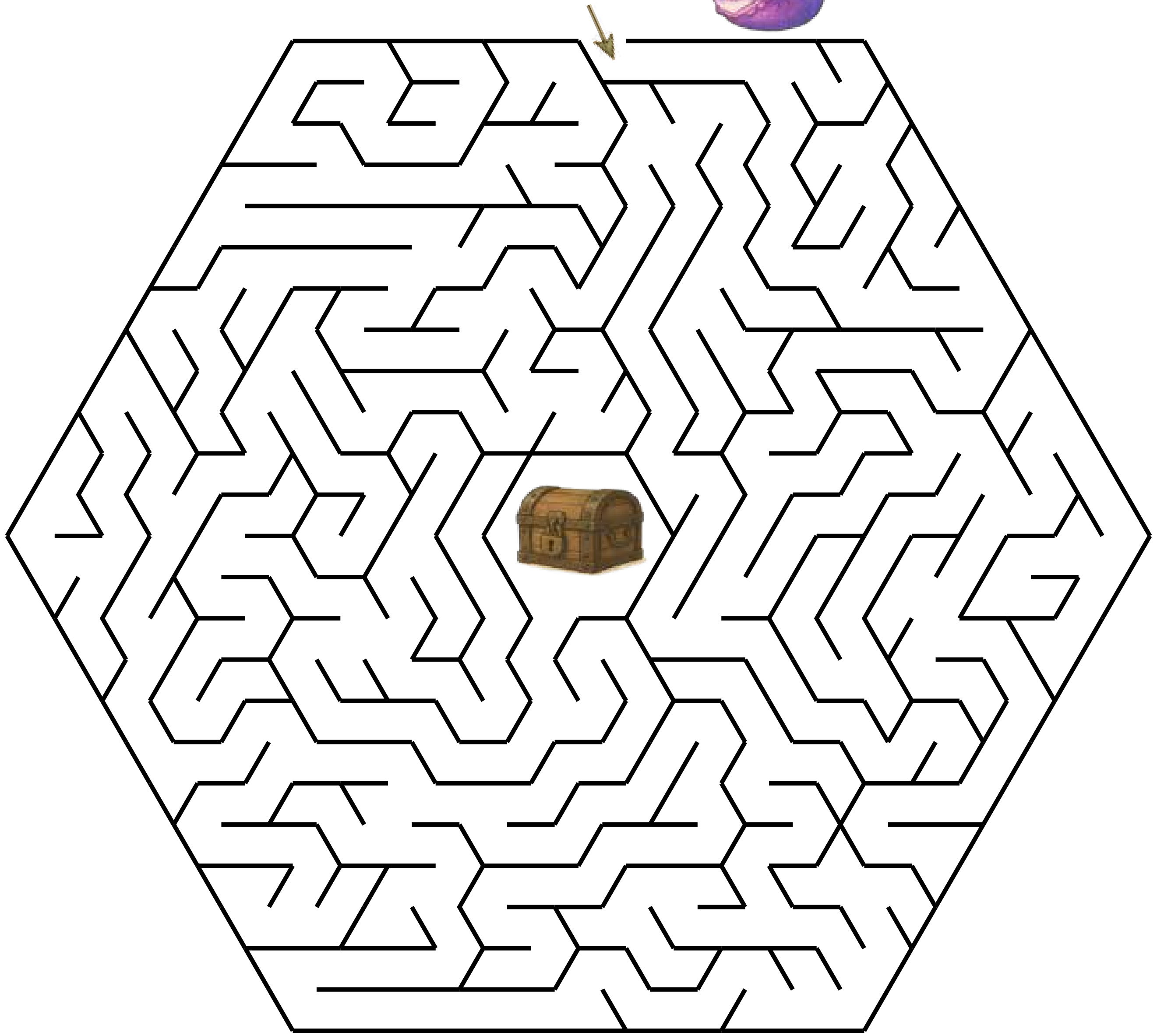
It is maintained by the **DIRM** (Direction Inter-Régionale de la Mer), which ensures that it continues to operate properly.

In addition to its role as a maritime signal, it also serves as a relay for the **CROSS** (Régional Operational Surveillance and Rescue Centre), which is why antennas are installed on its top.

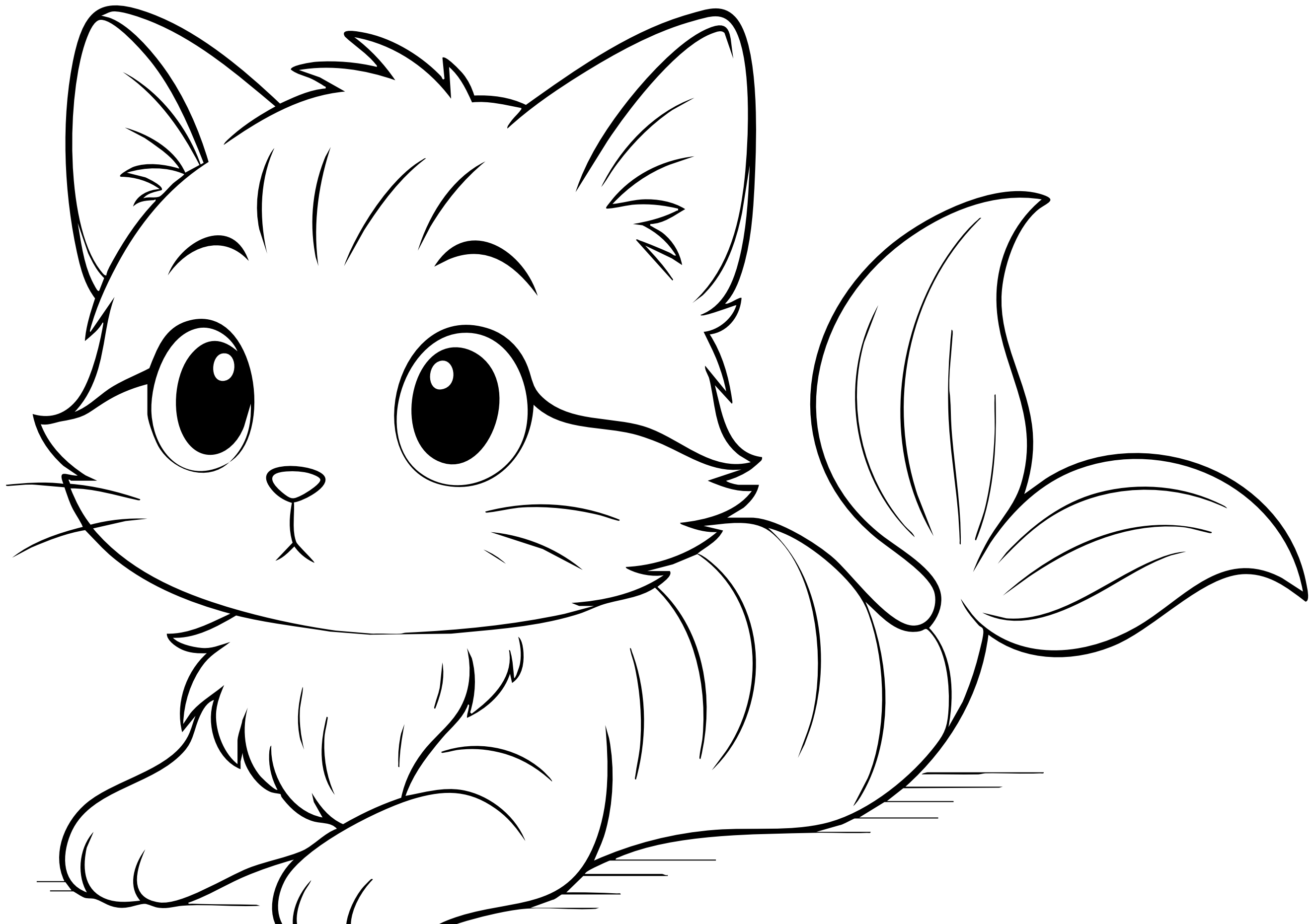
The Chassiron lighthouse is also open to visitors. The museum allows you to discover how it works and to learn all about traditional fishing methods.

There is also a **garden** around the lighthouse, but that's another story...

Help Loubine, the "Mermaid Cat",
find her treasure.



Gourgale, the "Siron cat", has lost his colours. Can you colour him in?



* CHAT = CAT

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