

**WANTED,**  
 For the New Harbour at Howth,  
 FROM 20 to 30 MASONS, accustomed to dress  
 Granite Stones—And a few BUILDERS.  
 ALSO, some HORSES and CARS, for the Carriage of Stone  
 from the Quarries, to the Pier at Howth.  
 N.B. The price is now raised to 8d. per load, of 7½ cwt.  
 Application to be made at the Works at Howth.  
 24th May, 1809.

**1800** Directors General of Inland Navigation identify a need for a refuge harbour near the port of Dublin and an all-weather packet boat station. Submission are received from Thomas Rodgers, Superintendent of the lighthouse on Bailey Green, and the Rev. William Dawson, both advocating the suitability of Howth Harbour.

**29/11/1800** Sir Thomas Hyde Page of the Royal Engineers produces a report to the Directors for the development of piers at Howth Harbour. His plan recommends the construction of two piers, one from the Howth side running 2400 ft due north, and another from Ireland's Eye running 2550 ft due South with a lighthouse. Estimated cost £86,400.

**1801** *12/01/1801* Captain William Bligh of the Royal Navy, who had been requested to survey Dublin Bay, submits a plan similar to that of Page, but with shorter piers.

John Rennie Esq., a renowned lighthouse and harbour engineer from Scotland is invited to Ireland to act as a consultant on the proposed improvements to Dublin harbour. Having seen all the submissions, charts and reports, Rennie reports that "...the improvement of Dublin Harbour is perhaps one of the most difficult subjects which has ever come under the consideration of the civil engineer - and therefore it ought to be treated with great caution and judgement". He favours the construction of a harbour at Dun Laoghaire. No work is decided upon or carried out.

**1804** The Directors of Inland Navigation make a report that the old quay at Howth has silted up.

**1805** Dublin Harbour is recognised as being tidal and inadequate to serve as a packet station. An Act is passed (45 George III c55) authorising the expenditure of £10,000 at Howth "to make a fit situation for His Majesty's packets".



WILLIAM BLIGH



THE BUILDING OF HOWTH  
 STEAM PACKET HARBOUR  
 1808 - 1818



THE BUILDING OF HOWTH  
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IRELAND'S EYE



LORD HOWTH

1807 20/07/1807 A Board of Commissioners, with the second Earl of Howth as chair, meets and appoints Captain George Taylor as engineer to carry out improvement works.

1808 *Construction work begins*

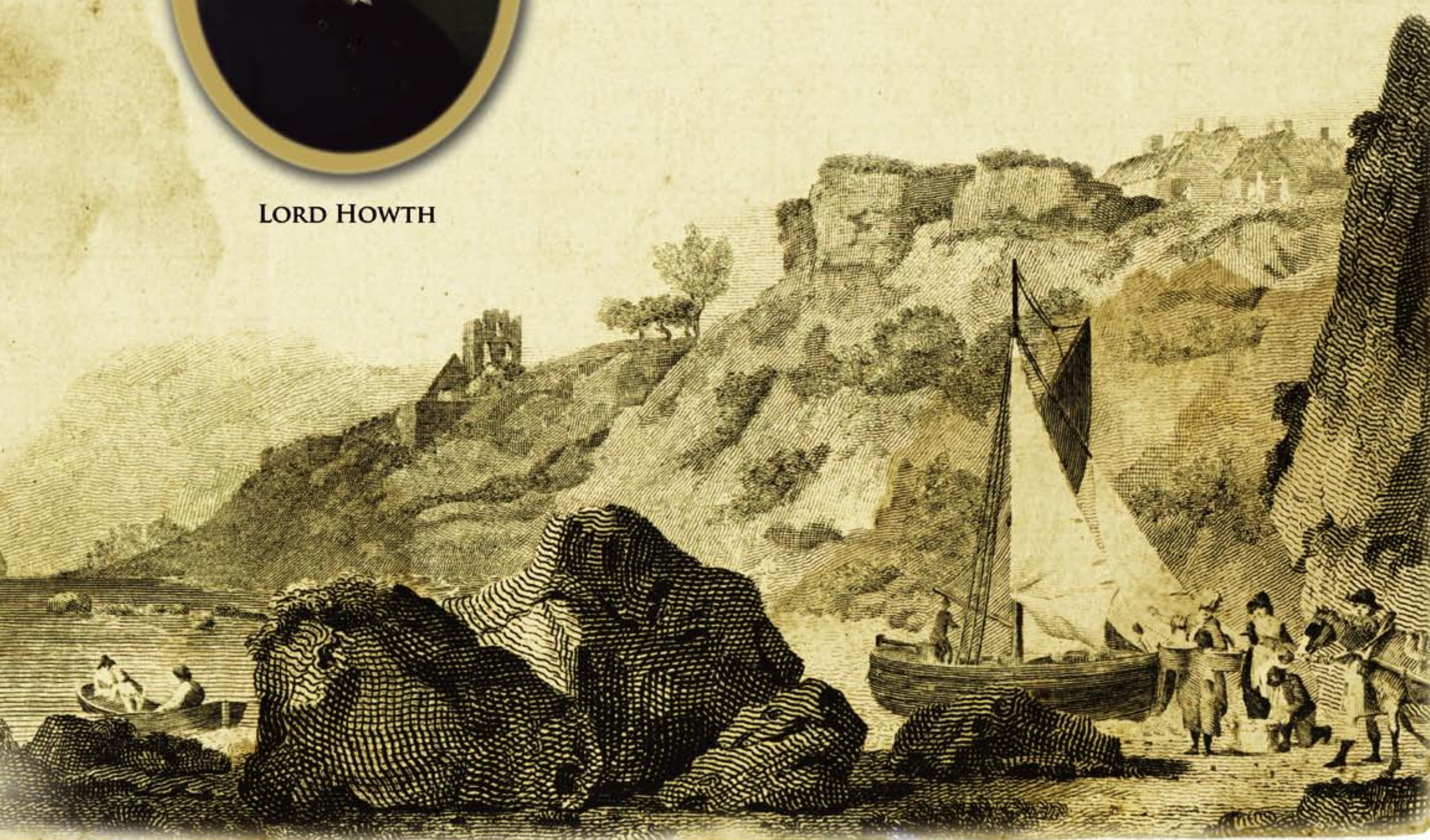
1809 04/01/1809 A north-easterly gale destroys 80 yards of the newly-built pier, and sand has already started to silt up on the west side of the pier as predicted by Mr Rodgers. Dawson criticises the work and calls on the government to do something about it. Taylor tenders his resignation, and a Mr. John Aird takes over as supervisor in May 1809, under the consultant engineer John Rennie. Dawson suggests employing a resident engineer on the harbour works saying "...it did not require a gentleman from England to inform him that a quarry which could not be excavated and a sandpit which could not be dug would make a satisfactory harbour". These warnings go unheeded, though Rennie is repeatedly doubtful of the chances of succeeding to solve the silting problem.

07/10/1809 Lord Howth submits a claim for 4d per ton on 91,000 tons of stone and rubble removed his quarry in Kilrock, and an additional 500,000 tons required to finish the work. Work is suspended and 600 workmen are dismissed.

1810 John Rennie presents his new plans for the works to the Commissioners on April 5th, including the completion of the east pier and the construction of the west pier.

Lord Howth's claim is granted. A new plan, using double railway tracks is introduced to speed up the transport of stones from the rock face to the pier.

Work recommences, the foundation laid below water using large stones from Runcorn, near Liverpool.





JOHN RENNIE



**1811** Houses are built to accommodate the 600 workers employed during the project.

**14/01/1811** Lord Howth, aided by a detachment of soldiers, quells a riot by some 300 labourers. Many do not survive their injuries and six ringleaders are jailed.

**1812** The pier heads are constructed using a diving bell developed by John Rennie for underwater building, the first use of a diving bell in Ireland.

Those workers instructed in how to work in the diving bell are given a special allowance because of the numbers of pairs of shoes they go through. A Patrick Craven is employed for the "making and repairing of Boots for the Men employed in the Diving Bells".

Many labourers are injured during the project, and submissions are received from individuals for compensation, and from infirmaries in Dublin city for financial contributions towards the care of the injured employees. The Minutes of the Board record memorials from Patrick Reilly, Patrick Kelly, and Stephen Byrne, labourers, "...who had been severely injured by the blasting of Stone in the Quarries at Kilrock" asking for an allowance for their families. Another labourer, Patrick Walsh, petitioned the Board "...to be continued for four weeks on the Books as a Labourer" while he seeks medical advice following the loss of his leg. The Supervisor, John Aird, is asked by the Board to see whether "...the Petitioner will be capable of his former employment as a Tallyman on the Railroad".

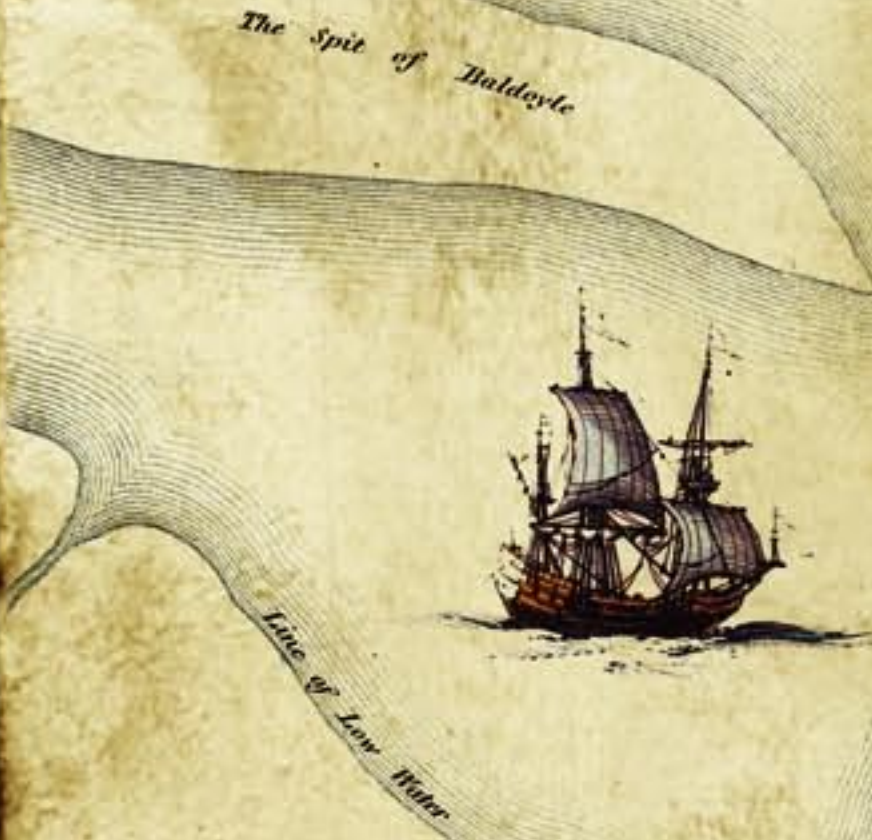
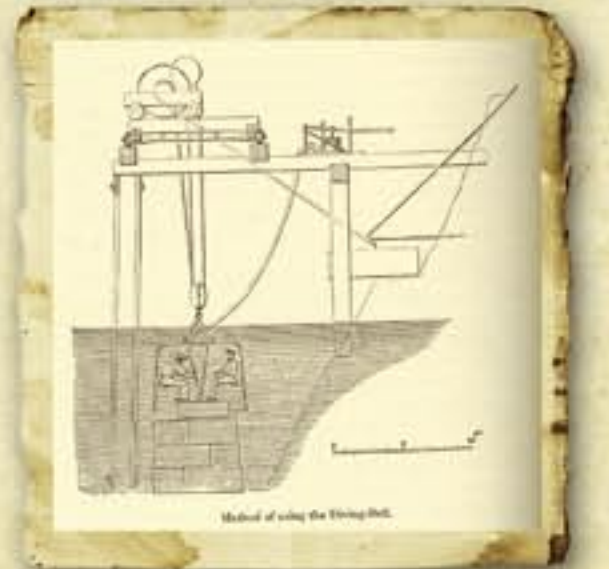
Monday afternoon a very serious disturbance took place in the town of Howth. In consequence of some previous disputes and ill blood between the inhabitants and a number of workmen, mostly co. of Wicklow men, employed as labourers at the new Harbour, an assemblage of both parties, amounting to above 300 men, met in the town, and having stripped themselves, a most desperate conflict ensued; and after some severe pugilistic fighting, the two parties commenced a desperate engagement, in which paving stones and glass bottles flew like hail from side to side. Lord Howth, and Mr. Lyster the magistrate, repaired instantly to the scene of contest, and to their great personal risk, at length and with great difficulty, but not until a small guard of 20 soldiers had been ordered to prime and load with ball cartridge, they succeeded in appeasing the fury of the combatants, and seized and lodged in jail six of the ringleaders. The small party of the military were under arms all night, to prevent a rescue of the prisoners. Owing to the prompt interference of Lord Howth, and his influence among the inhabitants, fortunately no lives were lost, but several of the rioters have been dreadfully cut and maimed. On Saturday night about...

Freeman's Journal, Wednesday January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1811

The completed harbour is a close harbour formed by two piers connected with the land opposite the town. The principal or eastern pier has three arms, and is a total of 2,450 feet long, the west pier is 1900 feet long, with a roadway of 42 feet in width. The entrance to the harbour is 350 feet wide.

**1818** *01.08.1818* Howth officially becomes the mail station for Dublin.

The sailing time for the mail packets from Holyhead to Howth is 15 hours, 5 hours less than the journey from Holyhead to Pigeon House.



S.B. The Soundings, taken in feet, denote the depth at Low Water of Ordinary Spring Tides.

**NEW PACKET HARBOUR AT HOWTH.**  
THE Public are hereby informed, that on and after the 1st July next, His Majesty's Packet Boats will be stationed at the New Packet Harbour at Howth, and the Mails between Great Britain and Ireland, will be transmitted by that route from henceforth. The Receiver for British letters will be closed each evening at six o'clock; an hour which the Postmasters-General feel confident, will in almost every instance ensure the arrival of the Mails at Holyhead previous to the departure of the Mail Coach from thence.  
By Command  
**EDW. S. LEES, Secretary.**  
General Post Office, 4th June, 1818.

THE BUILDING OF HOWTH  
STEAM PACKET HARBOUR  
1808 - 1818

1821 *12/08/1821* George IV enters Howth Harbour on the "Lightning", a steam packet commanded by Captain Skinner... "where the only monarch landed who came in peace to Ireland" (D'Alton).  
John Rennie dies, and is succeeded by his son John Rennie Jnr.

1822 Steam packet boats take over from sailing boats, and reduce the sailing time to less than 6 hours.

1826 Steam packets become larger and eventually can no longer be accommodated at Howth, and it is abandoned as a packet station.

1834 Kingstown Harbour, designed by John Rennie and completed by his son John Rennie Jnr, Dun Laoghaire becomes the station for all packets.



*His Majesty landing on the Pier at Howth.*




**TALBOT AND IVANHOE  
STEAM PACKETS.**

**T**HE Ivanhoe sails from Howth for Holyhead, on Saturday, the 28th, and the Talbot, on Sunday, the 29th instant, Tuesday, the 1st, and Thursday, the 3d May at half-past Eight o'Clock in the Morning; and after that day they will continue to sail as usual, one every Morning.

Refreshmen's to be had on Board.

A Coach starts for Howth, at Seven o'Clock in the Morning, from the Royal Hibernian Hotel, No. 47, Dawson-street, where every information may be had.

Dublin; 25th April. 1821.

