

IRISH LIGHTS

In Salutem Omnium - For The Safety of All is the motto of the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

The Commissioners of Irish Lights are the General Lighthouse Authority for the whole of Ireland, its adjacent seas and islands. The Commissioners are responsible for the provision and maintenance of lighthouses, buoys, beacons, and radio aids to marine navigation to assist the safe and expeditious passage of all classes of mariners in general navigation; Sanctioning the establishment, alteration, or discontinuation of local aids to marine navigation in ports, harbours and on coastlines which are within the jurisdiction of a local lighthouse authority in accordance with international standards; this includes sanctioning the marking and lighting of fish farms, oil and gas rigs, and other hazards; The inspection of local aids to navigation to ensure they comply with international standards and the statutory sanction granted; Marking or removing wreck which is a danger to navigation, where no harbour or conservancy authority has the power to do so.

The statutory basis for the Commissioners' activities in the Republic of Ireland is the Merchant Shipping Act 1894, the Merchant Shipping (Salvage and Wreck) Act 1993, and the Merchant Shipping (Commissioners of Irish Lights) Act 1997.

The statutory basis for the Commissioners' activities in Northern Ireland is the UK Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and the Merchant Shipping and Maritime Security Act 1997.

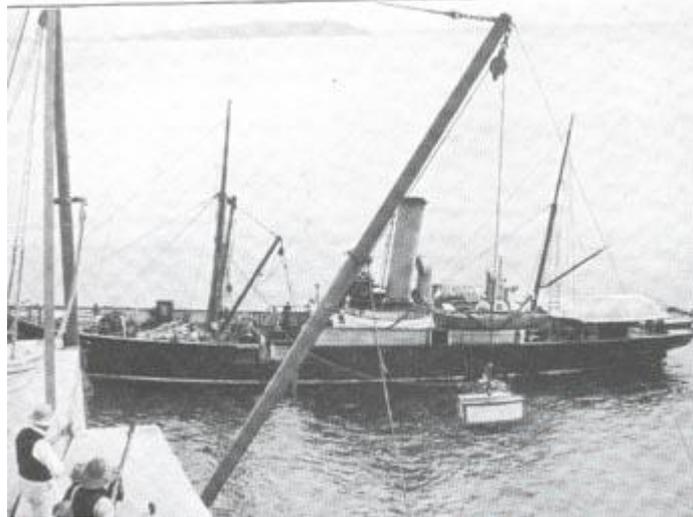
On 2 December 1999 the Irish and UK Governments signed orders establishing the six Implementation Bodies agreed in the Belfast Agreement. One of these is the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission. Primary legislation is required in both Westminster and Dublin to enable the functions of the Commissioners of Irish Lights to be incorporated into the new body. In the meantime the Commissioners of Irish Lights continue to operate under existing Irish and UK law.

The Commissioners are committed to providing technologically advanced Aids to Navigation service for all mariners at the least possible cost in compliance with national and international obligations. In conjunction with Trinity House Lighthouse Service and the Northern Lighthouse Board, the Commissioners conduct regular reviews to ensure that the level and mix of aids to navigation provided is appropriate to the needs of all classes of mariner in general navigation.

The Services provided by the Commissioners are financed from the General Lighthouse Fund. The income of the General Lighthouse Fund is mainly derived from light dues charged on commercial shipping at ports in Ireland and Great Britain, supplemented by an

annual contribution from the Irish Exchequer towards the cost of the services provided by the Commissioners in the Republic of Ireland.

The Irish Lights Vessel Granuaile is deployed to maintain the aids to navigation provided by the Commissioners. A contract helicopter is used to transport maintenance personnel and materials to and from exposed offshore lighthouses. The Commissioners' Lighthouse Depot and engineering workshops are at Dun Laoghaire Harbour.



The legal basis for the operations of the Commissioners of Irish Lights dates back to an Act passed by the Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin in 1786. This act of Grattan's Parliament created a body entitled: "The Corporation for preserving and

improving the Port of Dublin". As indicated by its title, its functions were the maintenance and preservation of the Port of Dublin. Until the year 1810 it had no jurisdiction over, or connection with lighthouses or allied matters. However, in that year, subsequent to the abolition of the Irish Parliament, an Act was passed by the British Parliament, entitled Lighthouses (Ireland) Act 1810, which transferred to the Corporation created by the Irish Act of 1786, all powers, duties and functions relating to the control of Lighthouses around the coast of Ireland, though the title and constitution of the Corporation remained unchanged.

The Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 conferred on the Corporation a new and separate title - 'The Port of Dublin Corporation'. The effect was, in essence, to divide the existing Corporation into two distinct corporate bodies with separate functions. The Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, the original body, was to maintain and improve the Port of Dublin while the new body - The Port of Dublin Corporation had transferred to it all functions, powers and duties in relation to lighthouses, beacons etc. around the coast of Ireland.

In 1867, the severance begun by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 was completed. The new Act separated the Port of Dublin Corporation from the Corporation for the Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin. In doing so it changed the name of the former to the Commissioners of Irish Lights and the latter to the Dublin Port and Docks Board. However, through the provisions of the 1867 Act, the legislative provisions in regard to the composition, method of election, power to appoint and remove staff and to make rules, regulations, bye-laws, etc., of the Commissioners of Irish Lights, continued to be those provided for in the original Irish Act of

Parliament of 1786.

With the advent of Irish independence, it became necessary for the new State to legitimise its functions. Though provided for in the 1922 Constitution of the Irish Free State, it was not until 1935 that things were finally regularised when adaptations necessary to enable the



Commissioners of Irish

Lights to be fully operative in the Irish Free State were made by an Order of the Executive Council, entitled: Irish Lights Commissioners Adaptation Order, 1935. Subject to these adaptations, the relevant provisions of the Act of 1786 remain in force to date. In a very real sense, the governance of the Commissioners of Irish Lights remains a remarkable testimony to the far sightedness and legislative ability of an Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin in 1786.

The Commissioners of Irish Lights are in the accident prevention business, which they conduct, in a hazardous environment. Lights and lighthouses are the most visible manifestations of the way they exercise their statutory responsibilities for the safety of all mariners. There have been people in Ireland who, from the earliest times have dedicated themselves to warning mariners of the dangers of our coastline. Today this is the responsibility of the Commissioners of Irish Lights, founded in 1867, but which can trace its origins back to 1665 when Charles II granted Letters Patent to a Sir Richard Reading to erect six lighthouses on the Irish coast. It is a long and honourable tradition of service.

However, lights and lighthouses are by no means the whole story. Floating aids such as buoys and light floats, as well as the service craft required to maintain them, continue to make up a significant part of the Commissioners' work and super buoys with superior aids to navigation and interactive capability are under test. New technologies such as satellite positioning systems and electronic charts are revolutionising navigation. The Commissioners of Irish Lights have always been at the forefront of technological change and are actively involved in the provision of some of these systems including differential GPS, a means of monitoring GPS integrity as recommended by IALA. Introduction of a European civilian satellite navigation system [Galileo] is being considered within 5-7 years.

In recent years obligations to a wider community have been increasingly recognised. Solar and other forms of renewable energy are now widely utilised; waste is recycled or carefully disposed of in a non-polluting manner; and ways are sought to preserve lighthouses, machinery and buildings where they contribute to the national heritage.

