

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO  
THE BOGS COMMISSIONERS

1809–1813

*Edited by*  
ARNOLD HORNER



IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

2019

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## INTRODUCTION

In operation between 1809 and 1813, the Bogs Commissioners were a government-appointed body given the task of appraising the development potential of the bogs of Ireland. In fulfilment of their remit, they organised a series of district surveys with reports and maps that embody an exceptional range of detail on a major feature of the Irish landscape. In the two centuries since elapsed, the bogs of Ireland have changed greatly as a result of extensive drainage and reclamation. The continuing interest of the early scientific work of the Bogs Commissioners lies in the extent of these changes and in the survival of so many of their records, manuscript as well as printed, which can feed into local and national studies of environmental change. The maps, especially, also contain much incidental topographical information (e.g. outline town plans, detail on demesnes, communications and rural settlement) that is of economic and social interest. The records associated with the Bogs Commissioners collectively constitute an important witness to the operation and implementation of a very specific piece of early nineteenth-century government policy and administration. NAI, Private Accession 1137/77 (Purser Griffith collection), the main text presented here,<sup>1</sup> is a minute book recording summary detail from the 145 meetings held by the nine commissioners over a fifty-two month period. Although punctuated by ‘silences’ concerning some of their decisions, discussions and activities, this book charts much of the planning, operationalisation, aspirations and limitations of the work of the commissioners. Its text is followed here by a series of appendices which identify and offer commentary on some of the other principal documents and records linked to the commissioners.

### THE FORMATION OF THE BOGS COMMISSIONERS

On 15 June 1809, an act (49 Geo. III, chap. 102) was passed at Westminster providing for the appointment of commissioners to enquire into and examine, until 1 August 1811, ‘the nature and extent of the several bogs in Ireland, and the practicability of draining and cultivating them, and the best means of effecting the same’. Three months later, on 15 September 1809, the lord lieutenant of Ireland gave effect to the act by issuing a warrant nominating nine commissioners headed by the octogenarian former military engineer and eminent antiquarian General Charles Vallancey (1726–1812) (see Plate 2). The commissioners, who are considered further below, held their first meeting four days later, on 19 September 1809.

<sup>1</sup> The volume is also available on microfilm (NAI, MFP 9/1). The text was transcribed by Katy Horner, with the assistance of Arnold Horner. Particular thanks are due to the staffs of the National Archives of Ireland and of the National Library of Ireland for their unfailing help during the execution of the present work.

The creation of the commissioners was the outcome of an exceptional coalition of interests in Ireland and Britain during the early 1800s. Within Ireland, there had been a long-standing, if intermittent, intellectual interest in the drainage and reclamation of the boglands which extended across up to one-seventh of the country.<sup>2</sup> That interest was also to the fore in the mind of one of the leading politicians of the day, the former speaker of the Irish House of Commons and from 1806 to 1811 the chancellor of the Irish exchequer, John Foster (1740–1828) of Collon, Co. Louth.<sup>3</sup> A master of the political scene and adept at exerting influence and manipulating appointments, Foster had a long-standing interest in the development of the linen industry in Ireland and in the cultivation of the raw materials, flax and hemp. Among his other concerns were the improvement of agriculture and bog drainage. In the vast surviving collections of his personal papers, over thirty items have been directly catalogued to the themes of bog-land and drainage improvement,<sup>4</sup> the two earliest of which are the ‘heads’ of parliamentary bill proposals formulated in the 1750s. Referring in 1801 to his early aspirations, Foster recalled how, at some (undated) stage, he was preparing a general bill

for reclaiming our bogs.... But the popery question and the rebellion prevented any hope of its being properly attended to.... Every bog here is full of oak or deal timber. Why not expect the same trees again to thrive? Rape, hemp, cabbage and turnips would depart from the more valuable tillage lands into them. Potatoes would find an easier cultivation and require less manure. All these and many other ideas for the improvement of this kingdom occupied my mind for years, and some I brought forward and succeeded in.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly demonstrating the pivotal role he must have played, Foster’s records contain copies of much of the key correspondence and documents relating to the lead-up to, and early operation of, the bogs commissioners during 1809. A few later records, with proposals for bog-land improvement and drainage from around 1820, suggest that his interest in reclamation and improvement continued long after his formal political retirement in 1811.

From 1801 the statistical surveys of Irish counties published by the Dublin Society provided a new, intensive focus for many of the improvement issues that concerned Foster. The survey of King’s County by Sir Charles Coote in 1801 recorded how Foster and the trustees of the linen manufacture were seeking to promote the growing of the hemp used in the development of sail cloth manufacturing, adding that hemp ‘succeeds admirably in drained bog manured with ashes.’<sup>6</sup> Reproduced too was a letter from the

<sup>2</sup> For general context on the extent and development of Irish bogs see Feehan and O’Donovan, *Bogs*. Early expressions of interest in bogs include William King, ‘Of the bogs and loughs of Ireland’, *Phil. Trans. R. Soc.*, 15 (1685), pp 948–60; see also Henry Brooke, *A brief essay on the nature of bogs, and the method of reclaiming them. humbly addressed to the Right Honourable and Honourable The Dublin Society* (Dublin, 1772).

<sup>3</sup> A. P. W. Malcomson, *John Foster (1740–1828): the politics of improvement and prosperity* (Dublin, 2011), hereafter cited as Malcomson, *John Foster (1740–1828)*.

<sup>4</sup> PRONI, D562/7990–8023. While this is the sequence directly related to bogs and drainage, records in other parts of the Foster papers also touch on these themes.

<sup>5</sup> Foster to earl of Sheffield, 17 May 1801 in *An Anglo-Irish dialogue: a calendar of the correspondence between John Foster and [John Baker Holroyd] Lord Sheffield, 1774–1821*, ed. A. P. W. Malcomson (Belfast, 1975), p. 40; see also Malcomson, *John Foster (1740–1828)*, p. 276.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Coote, *General view of the agriculture and manufactures of the King’s County* (Dublin, 1801), p. 217.

Navy Office in London offering to buy Irish hemp. Bogs drainage was also a topic of discussion between Foster and Charles Abbot who became chief secretary for Ireland in 1801, with Abbot being sufficiently interested in the issue to seek advice from Sir Joseph Banks, the president of the Royal Society.<sup>7</sup> However, Abbot was recalled to become speaker of the House of Commons early in 1802, before any specific action was taken. Other later statistical surveys, notably that of Co. Kildare (1807) by Thomas J. Rawson,<sup>8</sup> were especially eloquent on the as yet unrealised potential of the great midland bogs. When he published a memorial a year later asserting that Co. Kildare contained upwards of 20,000 acres of moor and 40,000 acres of bog ‘which could be made produce hemp sufficient to supply the whole British navy’, the development of the bogs of Ireland had once again expanded from being a specifically Irish concern to being a matter of strategic interest for the United Kingdom as a whole.

As Napoleonic Europe threatened the supply of vital raw materials, especially flax and hemp which were imported from the Low Countries and from the Baltic, government departments were forced to appraise alternative, more secure sources, including the possibility of developing, as a long-term strategy, new domestic sources.<sup>9</sup> Included among such sources were the bogs of Ireland, which Foster and other authorities continued to claim would, if drained, be suitable for the growing of hemp and which also might well be capable of supplying corn for the growing populations of both Britain and Ireland. The flow of interest during 1808 in developing bogs for growing hemp includes a printed letter (in March) from Lord Somerville.<sup>10</sup> Observing that ‘a large proportion of Ireland...from its climate, and the strength of its soil, is admirably adapted for the growth of hemp’, he added

Whilst our properties, our lives, and (which ought to be more dear to us) the freedom and glory of our country, depend on the superiority of our Navies, this subject should not for a day be neglected.<sup>11</sup>

A month later, Lord Mulgrave, first lord of the Admiralty, sought a meeting with Foster ‘to discuss the project for growing hemp in Ireland.’<sup>12</sup> By the end of the year, the Board of Trade was taking the crisis in hemp supply very seriously, with the need for a systematic plan being advocated to ‘free us from our dependence on Russia’.<sup>13</sup> In January 1809, a wide-ranging and very detailed memo with estimates of

<sup>7</sup> *The diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, speaker of the House of Commons 1802–1817*, (3 vols, London, 1861), i, 298, 361 (hereafter cited as *Diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*); for Charles Abbot (1757–1829) see *DIB*.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas James Rawson (1748?–1814): see *DIB*.

<sup>9</sup> For a broader perspective on the long-standing strategic issues associated with hemp supplies, see particularly Nick Mattingly, ‘Natural knowledge, sea power and the decline of hemp cultivation in early modern England’ in *History Australia*, ix, no. 2 (2012), pp 111–34.

<sup>10</sup> For John Southey Somerville (1765–1819), 15th Lord Somerville, see *ODNB*; he was president of the Board of Agriculture, 1798–1800, and author of ‘A Letter ... on the importance of growing hemp’ in Robert Wissett, *A treatise on hemp* (London, 1808), p. 279.

<sup>11</sup> Printed letter of Lord Somerville, 2 Mar. 1808 (PRONI, D562/5837).

<sup>12</sup> Lord Mulgrave to Foster, 16 Apr. 1808 (PRONI, D562/5823).

<sup>13</sup> [Sir] Stephen Sharp (alias Shairp), 1757–1826, British consul-general in St Petersburg, to Lord Bathurst (president, Board of Trade), 10 Dec. 1808: note on the state of exportation of hemp and flax from Russia (PRONI, D562/6018).

quantities was prepared on the subject of flax, flax-seed and hemp supplies, in which it was observed:

That Ireland can grow the [stated] quantity of seeds without encroaching on the tillage of corn must be evident to anyone who reflects on the uncommon quantity of undrained bog there and that no ground produces better flax than drained bog properly prepared. Considering therefore what a great object it must be to render the Empire independent of foreign countries for the prime material of so extensive a manufacture and to reclaim ... and bring under the plow so many additional acres of land is a subject of the utmost importance and demands the most immediate and serious attention ...<sup>14</sup>

It was further stated that a sufficiency of hemp to meet the needs of the royal and commercial navies 'may beyond doubt be produced in Ireland'

Reclaimed bog is peculiarly suited for its growth and the rich lands of the south have produced it equal in quality to the best that is imported...

In the developing atmosphere of crisis, any official reservations on the proposed bogs initiative were perhaps inevitably muted, giving only cursory attention to the manpower, costs or time that might be needed to effect drainage and reclamation on a large scale. Foster was keen to exploit the opportunity. The main immediate beneficiary was the Linen Board which received a £20,000 grant to promote the growth of flaxseed.<sup>15</sup> Although not without some parliamentary dissent,<sup>16</sup> bog drainage was also firmly on the agenda. Various Whitehall departments proved to be receptive when in February 1809 the lord lieutenant of Ireland acted upon a memorandum that had been drafted in the chief secretary's office.<sup>17</sup> His letter (Appendix 1) to the earl of Liverpool, then home secretary, linked the drainage of bogs to an expanded cultivation of flaxseed, and proposed as a preliminary action the establishment of a bogs commission who might oversee a survey to determine practicalities.<sup>18</sup> Such a proposal, involving the institution of a dedicated commission with specified powers and specified, and initially limited, funding to supervise the survey, invoked a procedure for which Whitehall could readily find precedent. Richmond particularly cited the commissioners appointed in 1803 for making roads and bridges in the Scottish Highlands. The Board of Agriculture for England, established in 1793 and receiving a subvention of just £5000 per annum, was another already-established, if also criticised, body dedicated to ideas of survey and improvement.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Dated 21 Jan. 1809, and headed 'Copy Step[hen] Sharp to Lord Bathurst on flax and hemp, sent by Mr Perceval' (PRONI, D562/6019).

<sup>15</sup> Bathurst to Foster, 4 Mar. 1809 (PRONI, D562/6020).

<sup>16</sup> Foster to James Corry (Linen Board), 24 Mar. 1809, recorded the struggle to pass the £20,000 flaxseed grant, observing that '[Sir Henry] Parnell [MP for Queen's County] by a strange perverseness of mind declaimed against reclaiming bogs...' (PRONI, D562/6456).

<sup>17</sup> Undated memorandum to the earl of Liverpool proposing the drainage of bogs and morasses in Ireland (NAI, OP 290.6.93). This memorandum is a rough draft of the duke of Richmond's letter.

<sup>18</sup> Duke of Richmond to earl of Liverpool (home secretary), 28 Feb. 1809 (TNA, HO 100/154, pp 68–9); see also TNA, BT 1/43, pp 23–5, and PRONI, D562/7999.

<sup>19</sup> Rosalind Mitchison, 'The old Board of Agriculture (1793–1822)' in *English Historical Review*, lxxiv (1959), 41–69.

Three months later, following an intensive appraisal of the proposal in several Whitehall departments,<sup>20</sup> John Foster introduced a Bill outlining the intended operational framework to parliament, its object being to

...appoint commissioners who should undertake without salaries to examine the ...bogs of Ireland, and to suggest the means by which they might be drained, and the interests of all proprietors conciliated. The expence of such commissioners was not to exceed an allowance to surveyors, or the persons immediately employed in exploring the bogs. As to the benefits likely to result from this undertaking ... half the ground of those reclaimed bogs, converted to purposes of agriculture, would produce in a year more corn than had ever been imported into Great Britain in any one year, while the other half would grow more hemp and flax, for which the ground would be peculiarly calculated, than would serve for the consumption of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>21</sup>

With such advantages in view, Foster expressed the hope that no objection could arise to his motion. Just over a month later the act was approved (Appendix 2). Setting out in some detail the structure and scope of the commission, and also specifying procedures for the proposed survey (including the provision that only those bogs over 500 (Irish) acres in extent would be examined), the Act was fiscally undemanding. Initially just £5000 was provided for the use of the commissioners, who were expected to act without salary, completing their brief by 1 August 1811, at which time the Act would lapse.

### THE COMMISSIONERS

News of the proposed bogs initiative produced a range of debate. An early suggestion from Spencer Perceval, chancellor of the exchequer, was that the commission be controlled from London with the speaker of the House of Commons acting as a commissioner.<sup>22</sup> Such a structure might have forestalled any criticism that ‘an Irish job’ was in train, but Foster was cool on this, and Dublin was accepted as the centre of control.<sup>23</sup> Within Ireland, at least two individuals with long-standing interests in reclamation lobbied their own proposals on how the project might proceed. The lawyer William Vavasour<sup>24</sup> revived an earlier scheme which he now sent to Foster via

<sup>20</sup> The involvement of the Home Office, Admiralty, Navy Board, Board of Trade and the Treasury during the period 6 Mar.–29 Apr. is recorded in TNA, BT 1/43, pp 26–34, BT 3/10, pp 77–82, BT 5/18, pp 469, 477, 489–92, HO 100/154, pp 70–73 and in PRONI, D562/7996–8, 8000–8002. The attendance of Mr Rennie, the eminent civil engineer, at a meeting on 13 Mar., presumably to provide technical advice, is recorded in TNA, BT 5/18, p. 469. On 29 Apr. 1809 Cecil Jenkinson, under-secretary at the Home Office, relayed to Foster that ‘Sir Arthur Wellesley is anxious that an act be passed’ (PRONI, D562/7996); Wellesley was chief secretary for Ireland, Apr. 1807–Apr. 1809.

<sup>21</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, 9 May 1809.

<sup>22</sup> *Diary and correspondence of Charles Abbot*, ii, 182.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer Perceval to Foster, 4 May 1809 (PRONI, D562/2170); Foster to Perceval, 5 May 1809 (PRONI, D562/2169).

<sup>24</sup> PRONI, D207/46/16; the barrister William Vavasour (1744–1819), was active in reclaiming parts of the Dodder estuary at Ringsend, Dublin. The scheme was republished in *Brief notices respecting the origin and purpose of some of the departments of the Royal Dublin Society, referring also to a scheme for improving bogs and other waste lands in Ireland* (Dublin, 1831), which is available in NLI, P.1775 (8).



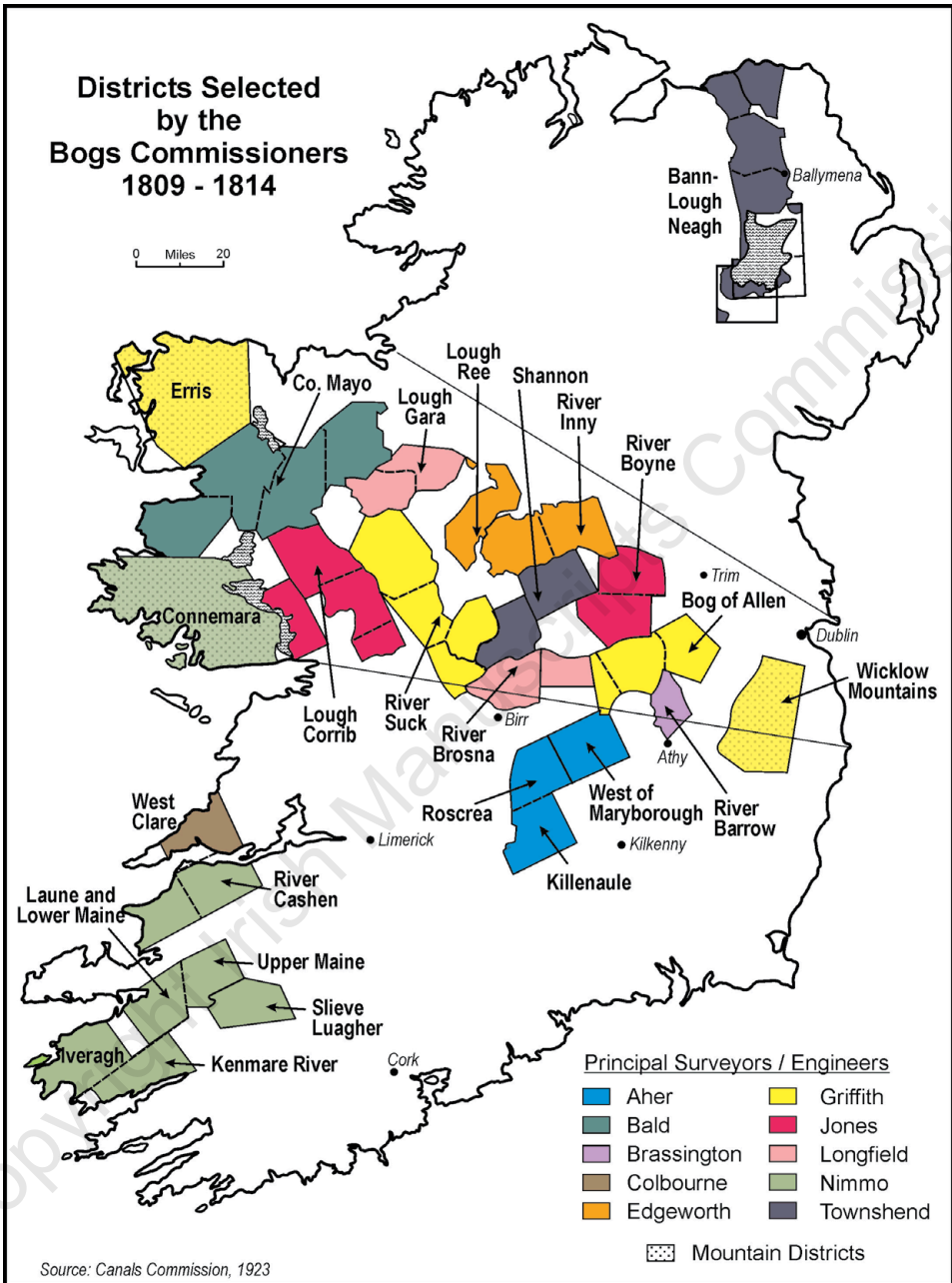


Figure 1. Districts included in surveys by the bogs commissioners 1809–13. Map compiled by Stephen Hannon. A version of this map appeared in *History Ireland*, 13 (2005), no. 5.

MINUTE BOOK OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS FOR  
THE IMPROVEMENT OF BOGS  
IN IRELAND, 1809–1813

NAI, PRIVATE ACCESSION 1137/77

(PURSER GRIFFITH COLLECTION)

**BY THE LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND<sup>1</sup>**

Whereas by an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament entitled 'an Act to appoint Commissioners to enquire and examine, until the first Day of August 1811, into the Nature and Extent of the several Bogs in Ireland, and the Practicability of draining and cultivating them, and the best means of effecting the same', it is enacted That any Persons, not exceeding in the whole the number of nine Persons, who shall be nominated and appointed by The Lord Lieutenant or other Chief Governor or Governors of Ireland for the time being by writing under the Hand or Hands of such Lord Lieutenant or other Chief Governors or Governors, to be Commissioners for the Execution of the said Act, shall be and they are thereby appointed to be Commissioners for the purposes in said Act mentioned. We do therefore hereby nominate and appoint General Charles Vallancey, The Honorable Hans Blackwood, Sir Samuel O'Malley, Baronet, Reverend Thomas Dix Hincks, John Leslie Foster, John Staunton Rochfort, William Gore, Richard Griffith and Henry Hamilton Esquires to be Commissioners for the execution of the Act aforesaid. Given at His Majesty's Castle of Dublin the 15th Day of September 1809

By His Grace's Command  
Robt Dundas<sup>2</sup>

Ent in the Office of His Majestys  
Auditor General 4th October 1809<sup>3</sup>

Commissioners to enquire and examine  
into the nature and extent of the  
several Bogs in Ireland &c

<sup>1</sup> The volume starts with two blank pages followed by an insert of four sides (the last two blank) with the warrant, dated 15 Sept. 1809, of Robert Dundas, chief secretary for Ireland, appointing commissioners until Aug. 1811: 'ent. in the Office of His Majesty's Auditor General 4th October 1809'.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Dundas (1771–1851), later 2nd Viscount Melville, chief secretary for Ireland, Apr.–Sept. 1809.

<sup>3</sup> This statement has been pasted in and has near the top of the first page the word 'Richard's' – perhaps suggesting that this particular volume may have been a copy for either Richard Griffith senior, the commissioner, or his son Richard Griffith junior, the engineer.

**TUESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 1809**

Present: CV, HB, JLF, RG, SOM, JSR, WG<sup>4</sup>

Pursuant to the annexed Warrant, the following Commissioners named therein met, viz

General Charles Vallancey in the Chair

Honbe. Hans Blackwood	Sir Samuel O'Malley Bart
John Leslie Foster Esqr.	John Staunton Rochfort Esqr.
Richard Griffith Esqr.	William Gore Esqr.

Having taken the Oath prescribed by the Act, came to the following Resolutions.

Resolved That a Secretary be appointed, who shall take down the minutes of their proceedings, issue Summons for their meetings, keep their Accounts and conduct their correspondence with Surveyors and others under the direction of the Board.

Resolved That the Secretary be allowed a Salary of Two Hundred Pounds per Annum.

Resolved That the Money granted to the Commissioners be lodged to their Credit, in the Bank of Ireland, payable to the order of any Four Commissioners, agreeable to said Act.

Resolved That the Secretary do pay all Bills under the Sum of Ten Pounds, the same being first approved by the Board and that all Bills above the Sum of Ten Pounds, be paid by an order of Four Commissioners, on the Bank of Ireland specifying the services for which the said Sums were drawn.

Resolved That Bucknall McCarthy Esqr. Assistant Secretary to the Dublin Society be appointed Secretary to the Board.

Resolved That it appears to the Board, that the House<sup>5</sup> of the Dublin Society, will be most convenient for this Board to meet in, and that an application be made to the Society this day for that purpose. And then the Board adjourned for one Hour.<sup>6</sup>

The Commissioners having obtained the permission of the Dublin Society to use their Apartments for the purpose of their meetings met, then pursuant to their adjournment, B. McCarthy being appointed their Secretary was brought in and Sworn pursuant to the Act to his true and faithful demeanour in his Office.

And then the Board adjourned till tomorrow.

Ch Vallancey in Chair

<sup>4</sup> For full identification of commissioners, see introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Clause 6 of the Bogs act provided for the Dublin Society premises, then at Hawkins Street, to be used by the commissioners.

<sup>6</sup> The adjournment presumably allowed time for the extraordinary meeting of the Dublin Society which is noted as having been held on 19 Sept. 1809. At this meeting, attended by just eleven members (including four of the new commissioners), approval was given to the commissioners' request to use the Dublin Society's premises (*Proceedings of the Dublin Society*, 45, 1808–9, pp 183–4). As noted in the introduction, the use of the Dublin Society house and the appointment of McCarthy had already been anticipated by John Foster in a letter to Charles Saxton on 27 July 1809 (PRONI, D562/10875).

**WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 1809**

Present: CV, HB, SOM, JLF, RG, WG, JSR

Resolved That the Secretary do write to the Royal Canal Company to request that they will permit their Engineers M[essr]s Jones<sup>7</sup> and Towns[h]end<sup>8</sup> to attend this Board to give such information as they may require with respect to levels and Surveys, and to know whether this Board may employ M[essr]s Jones and Townsend in levelling and surveying such Bogs as may approximate to their Navigation.

and then the board adjourned till tomorrow

Ch Vallancey in the Chair

**THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 1809**

Present: CV, SOM, JSR, WG, JLF, RG

The following agreement was made between the Board and Mr Larkin<sup>9</sup> Surveyor.

(Copy) Mr Larkin proposes to furnish the Commissioners for the improvement of the Bogs in Ireland, with a Trigonometrical skeleton Map of the King's County, exhibiting all the Bogs of the County with the high ground connected with them, and the Towns Roads Rivers Lakes & Canals of said County, drawn on a scale of Four Inches to an Irish Mile, and the contents of each Bog in Irish Plantation Acres marked accurately upon it, so as to give complete working plans of the County above mentioned on which their Engineers might accurately mark the Levels taken by them under their Instructions for the purposes of drainage and navigation, & roads agreeably to the detailed plan shown to him for their guidance in these. The above he proposes to furnish the Commissioners for Sum of Three Hundred Pounds. With this proposal the Commissioners have closed, and Mr Larkin undertakes to furnish this Map in about Two Months.

Signed by me on behalf of the Commissioners and  
by their order this 21st day of September 1809.

B McCarthy  
William Larkin

and then the board adjourned till tomorrow

Ch Vallancey in the Chair

<sup>7</sup> John [or James] Alex Jones (*fl.* 1800–1815), assistant engineer with the Grand Canal Company in 1802–3, assistant engineer, later resident engineer with the Royal Canal Company, 1808–14 (salary £500 p.a. in 1809–10).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Towns[h]end (*c.* 1771–1846) engaged on various canal surveys in Ireland, including with the Royal Canal Company, 1802–12, and was later engineer for part of the Birmingham canal system (Skempton, pp 712–14)

<sup>9</sup> William Larkin (*fl.* 1800–1821), post roads surveyor and engineer, maker of county maps for the grand juries of twelve or more Irish counties. The map described here is now NAI, OPW 3/1/1/2.

ACCOUNTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS  
15 SEPTEMBER 1809 TO 5 JANUARY 1812

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[*Editorial note*

In the minute book, accounts for 1809–11 appear as an eight-page section following the ‘Estimate’ that is recorded in the entries for Friday 28 February 1812. To give greater flow to the minutes record, these accounts have been extracted and presented as a separate section below. The original lay-out has text at left, then sums to the right and main section totals to the right again.

Some differences are evident between the minute book accounts presented here and the accounts presented in the reports printed in parliamentary papers. Whereas the former run to 5 January over three successive years, the latter cover periods ending 15 April 1810, 5 January 1811 and 31 December 1813. Differences are also apparent in the order of presentation of information and in the detail of the two sets of accounts.

Both sets of accounts on occasion offer distinctive information, for example the minute book version has more on which surveyors worked particular districts. However, some particular payments are given greater detail in the printed accounts, for example the £419-8-0 listed in the minutes account as paid to William Larkin for drawing, copying and enlarging maps is itemised under four entries in the printed accounts.

The Account of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the nature and extent of the Several Bogs in Ireland and the practicability of draining and cultivating them and the best means of affecting the same, commencing the 15th September 1809 and ending 5th January 1810.]

**Engineers**

Paid Richd Griffith junr principal Engineer Pay and allowance from 30th Septr to 23d Decr 1809 both inclusive at £3-8-3 p.day	£290-1-3
Thomas Townshend Engineer pay and allowances due and paid to him up to 9th Decr 1809	£40-19-0
J.A. Jones Do. Do. for 3 weeks ending 23d Decr	£18-4-0
Richd L Edgeworth do. do. & do. between the 21st Oct. & the 30th Decr.	£80-15-3
Engineers	£429-19-6

**Surveyors**

John Molloy Surveyor pay and allowances for 11 weeks ending 23 December 1809		£81-18-0
Hill Clements	Do. the like for 10 weeks ending 23 Decr 1809	£78-9-9
Thomas Dowd	Do. the like for 3 weeks ending do.	£14-15-9
Christopher Quin	Do. the like for 1 do. ending do.	£6-16-6
James Brown	Do. the like for 10 do. ending do.	£62-11-3
John Thomas	Do. the like for 6 do. ending do.	£38-13-6
Wm Edgeworth	Do. the like for 10 do. ending do.	£36-8-0
Jas. Johnson	do. the like for 9 do. ending do.	£50-1-0
Jas. Grier	do. the like for 4 do. ending do.	£23-17-9
John Hampton	do. do. 3 do.	£22-15-0
		<hr/>
		£416-6-6
		£846-6-0
[new page]		
Brought forward		£846-6-0

**Staffmen and Labourers**

Staffmen and Labourers employed by Mr. Griffith p returns to 23d Decr 1809		£170-6-0
More by Mr Townshend per returns to do.		£48-15-0
More by Mr Jones	do.	£10-8-9
do.		
More by Mr. Edgeworth	Do.	£31-1-6
30th do.		
		<hr/>
	Staffmen & Labourers	£260-11-3

**Implements**

Richd Griffith Engineer disbursed by him for stakes		£3-6-0
Nichs Ross for boring rods		£5-10-3
Richd Griffith Engineer disbursed by him for repairing do.		£0-18-0
		£6-8-3
		<hr/>
	Implements	£9-14-3



**Stationary [*sic*] & Maps**

A.B.King for Stationary [ <i>sic</i> ]	£19-2-8
Wm Allen Maps	£17-3-7½
Wm Larkin drawing a Map of part of the bog of Allen f[ro]m actual survey	
Copy[in]g do. & enlarging & copying others	£419-8-9
	£436-12-4½
For a Bank Cheque & pass book	£0-5-5
	<hr/>
Stationary [ <i>sic</i> ] and Maps	£456-0-5½

**Salaries & Wages**

B. McCarthy Sec 1 quarter & 10 days Salary to 25th Decr 1809 @ [£]200 p anm	£55-10-0
P.T. Wilson Clerk the like to do. at £60	£15-15-0
	£71-5-0
Sundry messengers to do.	£4-0-0
	<hr/>
Salaries & wages	£75-5-0

**Miscellaneous Payments**

Fees at the Treasury	£1-19-8
Postage to 5th January 1810	£4-18-6
For a tin map case	£0-1-7½
	<hr/>
Contingencies	£6-19-9½

**Total** **£1,654-16-9**

[new page]

The Account of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the nature and extent of the Several Bogs in Ireland and the practicability of draining and cultivating them from the 5th January 1810 to 5th January 1811.

## APPENDIX 6

### PRINCIPAL PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS RELATING TO THE BOGS COMMISSIONERS

This list identifies the principal documentation in British parliamentary papers relating to the bogs commissioners. The location of the commissioners' main reports is followed by a listing of other documentation such as parliamentary bills, short reports, financial returns and estimates.

#### PRINCIPAL REPORTS OF THE BOGS COMMISSIONERS, 1810–14

1810. *First report*, ordered to be printed 20 June 1810, H.C. 1810 (365), x, 389 (also reprinted as a 16 page pamphlet without maps and without appendices, in 135 x 230 mm format: Dublin, Graisberry & Campbell, 1810).

1810–11. *Second report*, ordered to be printed 1 April 1811, H.C. 1810–11 (96), vi, 579 (also reprinted as a 50 page pamphlet, 120 x 200, without maps and without appendices, in octavo size format: Dublin, Graisberry & Campbell, 1811).<sup>193</sup>

1813–14. *Third report*, ordered to be printed 28 April 1814, H.C. 1813–14 (130), vi, 1.

1813–14. *Fourth report*, ordered to be printed 28 April 1814, H.C. 1813–14 (131), vi, 167.

See 33, 34 of 1812 H.L. (vol. I p. 1 and vol. L. p. 57); also 100, 102 of H.L. 1819 (vol. CII.1 and vol. CIII.1)

1819. *Second report from the Select Committee on the State of Disease, and Condition of the Labouring Poor, in Ireland*, ordered to be printed 7 June 1819, H.C. 1819 (409), viii, 457. Includes general comments (pp 96, 98); also features observations from Alexander Nimmo (pp 101–2, 105–6) and contains (pp 121–256), the four bogs reports of the commissioners together with extracts from the several appendices, the district reports.

1829. *Second report ... on the state of disease and condition of the laboring poor in Ireland*, issued in 1819 (see above), ordered to be re-printed, 19 June 1829, H.C. 1829 (347), iv, 451 (see also 100, 101 of 1819, H.L. Sessional Papers).

1847. *Indexes to reports of commissioners 1810–1846 (Public Works, Ireland)*, ordered to be printed, 21 July 1847, H.C. 1847 (710), lviii, 1 (includes index (pp 19–118) to the four reports of the bogs commissioners, 1810–14).

<sup>193</sup> See RIA, HAL 999/13 for an example.

**OTHER PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTATION – SHORT REPORTS, BILLS, ENABLING ACTS, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**

1809. Bill to appoint commissioners to enquire and examine into the nature and extent of the several bogs in Ireland, and the practicability of draining and cultivating them; and the best means of effecting the same. 5pp (enacted as 49 Geo. III. chap. 102), H.C. 1809 (212), 1, 489.

1810. *Report from the committee respecting the draining of bogs in Ireland: with an appendix.* 5 pp. Ordered to be printed 22 March 1810, H.C., 1810 (148), iv, 103. Appendix 2 is a copy of the ‘general instructions given by the commissioners to the engineers in their employment’.

1810. A return made to the Honourable the House of Commons of the Names of all Engineers, Surveyors, Clerks, and Officers, appointed and employed by the Commissioners ... between 19th September 1809 and 15th April 1810, H.C. 1810 (322), x, 453–6. Originally ordered to be printed 28 May 1810. Reproduced in condensed format, without the names of the commissioners signing the return, as part of the *First report*, p. 13.

1810. A return made to the Honourable the House of Commons of all sums paid by or under the authority of the commissioners... between 19th September 1809 and 15th April 1810, H.C. 1810 (323), 10, 457. Originally ordered to be printed 28 May 1810. Reproduced, without the names of the Commissioners signing the return, as part of the *First report*, p. 14.

1811. A Bill intituled an Act to continue, until the first day of one thousand eight hundred and thirteen, an Act for appointing commissioners to enquire... [i.e. the Act 49 Geo. III, chap. 102], H.L. 1811 (77), xli, 509. Enacted as 51 Geo. III chap. 122, 2 July 1811; authorises a further £12000.

1811. An account of all sums granted for defraying the expenses of the inquiry and examination into the nature and extent of bogs in Ireland [ordered to be printed 11 June 1811], H.L. 1811 (102), xlv, 39. Dated 11 June 1811. Very brief. Notes grants by parliament in 1809 and 1810 of £5000 and £12000 respectively, and records that House of Commons voted £12000 in the present session.

1812. Estimate of the Sums that will be necessary to complete the surveys of the districts already given in charge by the commissioners appointed to enquire into the nature and extent of the several bogs in Ireland.... and of the further sums that would be necessary for completing the surveys of such other districts, as the commissioners are disposed to recommend. 2pp [ordered to be printed 3 March 1812], H.C. 1812 (94), 5, 137. Dated 25 February 1812. Indicates £5900 needed to complete the districts ‘already given in charge’ with a further £1500 needed for making further general surveys in the north-west, and another £1500 for the ‘trigonometrical connection of the districts recommended by the commissioners’. Gives the dates when the surveys of districts still outstanding were initiated.

1812. A Bill intituled an Act to continue, until the first day of one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, an Act for appointing commissioners to enquire... [i.e. 49 Geo. III and 51 Geo III chap. 12], H.L. sessional papers (97), xlvi, 941. Enacted as 52 Geo. III, chap. 74. Authorises a further £8900.

**REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR AUDITING PUBLIC ACCOUNTS IN IRELAND. YEAR-END ACCOUNTS FOR THE BOGS COMMISSIONERS (BC) APPEARING AS PART OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.**

1810–11. *The thirty-seventh report of the commissioners of accounts of Ireland.* Ordered to be printed 9 Apr. 1811. Item No. 51, p. 109, BC account for 15 Sept. 1809 to 5 Jan. 1810, H.C. 1810–1811 (109), v, 233

1812. *The thirty-eight report of the commissioners of accounts of Ireland.* Ordered to be printed 7 Feb. 1812. Item No. 17, pp 27–8, BC Account for 6 Jan. 1810 to 5 Jan. 1811, H.C. 1812 (36), v, 405.

1812–13. *The report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland.* Ordered to be printed 22 Mar. 1813. Item No. 21, pp 46–7. BC Account for 6 Jan. 1811 to 5 Jan. 1812, H.C. 1812–1813 (99), vi, 511.

1813–14. *The report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland.* Ordered to be printed 27 Apr. 1814. Item No. 49, pp 151–2. BC Account for 6 Jan. 1812 to 5 Jan. 1813, H.C. 1813–1814 (129), vii, 169.

1814–15. *The third report of the commissioners for auditing public accounts in Ireland.* Ordered to be printed 14 Feb. 1815, Item No. 42, pp 103–4. BC Account for 6 Jan. 1813 to 5 Jan. 1814, H.C. 1814–1815 (67), vi, 1861.

**BILLS AND REPORTS RELATING TO BOGLAND DRAINAGE, 1820S AND 1830S**

1823. Bill to encourage the improvement of barren and waste lands and bogs, and for the employment of the poor in Ireland. 6 May 1823, H.C. 1823 (324), ii, 87

1824. Bill for improving and draining the bogs in Ireland. 15 April 1824, H.C. 1824 (243), ii, 123.

1828. Bill for draining the bogs and marsh lands in Ireland. 11 July 1828. H.C. 1828 (530), iii, 589. Preamble recalls the structures and reports of the bogs commissioners.

1829. Bill for encouraging the draining and improving the bogs of Ireland. 16 April 1829. H.C. 1829 (173), ii, 445. Preamble recalls the structures and reports of the bogs commissioners. Text as amended by committee, 12 May 1829, appears in H.C. 1829 (229), ii, 455.

1830. Bill for the draining and allotting the bogs of Ireland. March 1830. H.C. 1830 (103), ii, 123. Text as amended by committee, 7 April 1830, appears in H.C. 1830 (262), 2, p. 165.

1835. *First and second reports from the select committee appointed to inquire into the amount of advances made by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland with the minutes of evidence, appendix and index* [Ordered to be printed 26 June and 27 August 1835]. The second report focuses on the waste land issue with evidence from, among others, Alexander Nimmo (the nephew of Alexander Nimmo, the bogs engineer), Bald, Griffith, Aher.

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## APPENDIX 7

### DISTRICT REPORTS, MAPS AND OTHER DIAGRAMS IN THE PRINTED REPORTS OF THE BOGS COMMISSIONERS

Listed here are the district reports, printed maps and diagrams which appeared as appendices to the four parliamentary reports, 1810–14. The illustrative material bears the names of the (superintendent) engraver, James Basire,<sup>194</sup> and the printers, Luke Hansard & Sons. The sequence adopted here follows the order in the printed reports. Appendix and plate numbers, as quoted below, start afresh for each report.

In each map description, the year cited is that appearing on the map itself. This is not always the same as that of the Commissioners' report in which it appeared. Report dates appearing outside the bottom margin of the frame can refer to either the original printing or to a subsequent re-print approved by parliament (e.g. by House of Lords, 22 March 1819).

Frame sizes are given in millimetres as width x height. Unless otherwise stated the printed map scale closely approximates – with some small variations perhaps from paper shrinkage – the scale specified by the Commissioners, two inches to an Irish mile (equivalent to 1: 40,320). Where other scales and representative fractions are cited, they are the approximate values determined from the printed versions. Also unless otherwise stated, magnetic north is shown and is at 90° to the top margin. The statement 'magnetic north at angle' means true north is at 90° to the top margin.

To help readers identify the areas covered by each map,<sup>195</sup> some places or localities at or close to the limits of the surveyed area are given. Particular comments, in the map reference or elsewhere, which seem relevant to understanding the survey technique or key aspects of map representation such as altitude, are also noted. Unless stated, all bogs appear in hues of pale brown.

Listed here too are the relevant pages in each printed report, together with the total acreage ('English' or statute measure) of bog, relating to each map or district. Where known, the date of commissioning (i.e. when the district was put 'in charge' of an engineer) and the date of completion are indicated for each district report. Where a manuscript map or district report is known to survive, its National Library of Ireland catalogue number is indicated.

<sup>194</sup> James Basire (1769–1822), 7 Quality Court, Chancery Lane, London: see L. Worms and A. Baynton-Williams, *British map engravers: a dictionary of engravers, lithographers and their principal employees to 1850* (London, 2011), pp 54–7.

<sup>195</sup> See also Figure 1 above, p. xxxv. A large map of Ireland showing the extent of the districts surveyed for the bogs commissioners appears in *Coimisiún na gCanálach agus na mBóthar Uisce Intre*, Report: July 1923 (IPP 1923, III, 607 (250 11.23) Map 2. Images of most of the printed versions of the individual district maps are to be found at <https://www.bordnamonalivinghistory.ie/maps/> (accessed 15.7.18).

***First report***

(Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 20 June 1810).

(**Appendix 4**) Bog of Allen, Kildare, King's County [Eastern Division of District No.1, Griffith]

Containing 36,430 acres bog. Survey initiated on 9 October 1809 and report signed off at Robertstown, June 1810. In NLI, MS 309, *First report*, pp 15–55. MS map and sections in NLI, 16.D.12.

I. Map of part of the Bog of Allen 1810; 750 wide x 630 high. Bogs in yellow. Main drains in red. Covers Edenderry (NW) – Cloncurry (NE) – Sallins (SE) – Milltown (SC) – Rathangan/Brackna. Includes statement: 'Summit level on Grand Canal is 264' above high water mark on Dublin Bay' (see Plate 38).

Sections printed as separate sheets: each section is drawn to a horizontal scale of just under 8 inches to 1 Irish mile (1:10,080), and to a vertical scale of 1 inch for 20 feet (1:240). Each section is related to (i) 'Level of Water Surface at Summit Level of Grand Canal', and (ii) the [lower, by 74' 9"] 'Level of Surface Water at the junction of the Little Barrow and Feagile Rivers'.

(A) Transverse Section of Lullymore Bog, or No. 1.

A seven-mile section from the Grand Canal near the Wood of Allen (now Allenwood) via Pulloughbuie and Lullymore Island to Ballydermot.

(B) Two sections, within a frame 480 x 370.

(a) 'Section of a Subterraneous River in Lullymore Bog'. Extends over 2 miles 3 furlongs from 'Lands of Codd' via Cushaling River to Clonbrowne.

(b) 'Section through Part of Lullymore Bog'. Extends over 3 miles 7 furlongs from 'Junction with Cushaling River' via 'Cowling Stream' to Grand Canal.

The following figures are integral to the report text:

Section of a Turf Bank in Timahoe Bog: facing p. 53. 185 x 330. Identifies 'the several variations in the composition between the top and the bottom', a depth of 38½ feet, and indicates substrata of marl, blue clay and clay mixed with limestone gravel. Coloured original appears in NLI, MS 309, p. 115.

P. 33: cross section of a main drain: process of execution.

Plate 38 (overleaf, pp 204–5). First bogs map to be engraved and printed. Richard Griffith's map of the Bog of Allen East Division, June 1810 (included with *First report*).



**MAP**  
of part of the  
**BOG OF ALLEN,**  
Situating in the  
**COUNTY OF KILDARE,**  
being the EASTERN DIVISION  
of  
**DISTRICT, N<sup>o</sup>. 1.**

on which are laid down the Lines of the proposed Drains  
for the improvement of the Bogs.

Levelled and Surveyed by order of the Commissioners

for enquiring into the nature and extent &c. of the

**BOGS OF IRELAND.**

By *Richard Griffith, Jun<sup>r</sup>.*

*Civil Engineer, &c. &c. &c.*

1810.



**Reference.**

	N <sup>o</sup> of Acres.		Amount of Estimate.		Average high water mark in Dublin Bay.		Average Depth.
	Irish	English	Irish Money	English Money	Feet part lower part of tide	of tide	
LULLYMORE BOG... or N <sup>o</sup> 1.	10,080	16,247	36,519	7.2	2.56	2.14	20
TIMAOH BOG... or N <sup>o</sup> 2.	7,950	12,878	21,470	2.0	2.80	2.32	25
BOG OF MOOLDS... or N <sup>o</sup> 3.	3,180	5,070	7,605	1.6	2.96	2.54	30
CLANE BOG... or N <sup>o</sup> 4.	1,480	2,235	4,419	1.7	2.98	2.55	30
Amount	22,490	36,430	70,014	7.5			

Note.—The surface water of the Summit Level of the Grand Canal is 26.4 Feet above high water mark in Dublin Bay.

**Explanations.**

The Red Lines are proposed Main Drains. The Single Black Lines are proposed Minor Drains. The Arrows point out the Fall of the Bog, and also the fall of the River.

Note.—The cross and intermediate Drains have been omitted on the Map, to prevent the confusion which their number must occasion.

