

Concerning the uniform of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners

'The visit of Queen Victoria to Belfast in August, 1849, gave rise to a custom in connection with the dress of the Harbour Commissioners. At a meeting held in the previous month, the Commissioners arranged to present an address to Her Majesty and they decided that the dress to be worn by them at the function should consist of a blue dress coat with a plain collar and gilt buttons, the buttons to be designed with a fowl anchor and crown with the words "Belfast Harbour Commission" in a raised circle; also a white cashmere waistcoat, blue trousers, black stock and a round hat, the coats to be lined with white silk.



Original design of button from
a Commissioner waistcoat

Four days prior to the visit the Commissioners ordered that the dress arranged should be lined with white silk at the breast as well as the skirts, and that it should henceforth be considered as the uniform of the Trust in its corporate capacity and worn in public as such. For some reason the words on the button were altered to "Belfast Harbour Corporation". As the years went on this somewhat elaborate uniform became out of harmony with the sartorial spirit of the time and was modified. Now on public or ceremonial occasions it is customary for the members of the Harbour board to wear ordinary trousers, white waistcoats with the buttons already described, blue ties and morning or frock coats with a small badge pinned on, the badge consisting of a gilt anchor and the letters "B.H.C." on a piece of blue ribbon.'

From D.J. Owen, *A Short History of the Port of Belfast*, (1917).