Shipbuilding & Innovation: Harland and Wolff Heavy Industries

During the Industrial Revolution, Belfast blossomed as a port and a center for heavy engineering. It was a natural location for shipbuilding.

Founded in 1861 by Edward Harland and Gustav Wolff, Harland and Wolff became one of the world’s largest shipyards and a mainstay of the local economy. At its height during World War II, the Queen’s Island yard in East Belfast employed 35,000 workers. Many families worked for Harland and Wolff for generations.

Among the many innovative ships designed and built at Harland and Wolff were seventy White Star Liners, including the Titanic and her sister ships Olympic and Britannic.

Today, designing and constructing “Renewables”—innovative sustainable energy projects, such as offshore windfarms and tide- and wave-power generators—are a growing part of Harland and Wolff’s business. The firm also specializes in ship repair and conversion, work for the offshore oil industry, ship design, and bridge building.

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