

OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE COASTS OF  
VAN DIEMEN'S LAND,  
ON  
*BASS'S STRAIT and its ISLANDS,*  
AND ON PART OF THE COASTS OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES;  
INTENDED TO ACCOMPANY THE  
*CHARTS OF THE LATE DISCOVERIES*  
IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

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*By Matthew Flinders,*

SECOND LIEUTENANT OF HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP *RELIANCE*.

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1801.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JOSEPH BANKS, BART.

PRESIDENT of the ROYAL SOCIETY,

*Ac. Ac. Ac. Ac.*

*Sir Joseph,*

YOUR zealous exertions to promote geographical and nautical knowledge, your encouragement of men employed in the cultivation of the sciences that tend to their improvement, and the countenance you have been pleased to show me in particular, embolden me to lay the following observations before you.

However unworthy of being offered to Sir Joseph Banks, this humble attempt to increase the utility of the annexed charts may prove, I trust, that the intention with which it is written will excuse the imperfections it must contain. Utility was the only object in view; and if it is so executed as to answer that end, I am sure of its meeting your approbation. With an anxious hope that you will not be dissatisfied with it,

I am,

SIR JOSEPH,

Your grateful and obedient Servant,

MATTHEW FLINDERS.

## P R E F A C E.

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THE following observations are extracted from the journals of some expeditions from Port Jackson, mostly undertaken by order of His Excellency governor Hunter, for the purpose of exploring the neighbouring coasts. They are here put together under different heads, for the convenience of those who may be amongst the sea in all this navigation; and to serve as an explanation to the charts of Van Diemen's Land, Bass's Strait, and those parts of New South Wales, which have lately been examined by the officers of His Majesty's ship *Reliance*.

The charts are not given as perfect, but as containing the form and situation of what was really seen, as near as could be ascertained. When it is considered, that no time-keeper could be procured for these expeditions, and that the vessel in which most of the work was performed, was not of twenty-five tons burthen, great accuracy in the longitude will not be expected; as a proof, however, that every effort was made to avoid errors; it is proper to remark, that from the north-east cape of Van Diemen's Land, named Cape Portland, by governor Hunter, round by the west, to the South-west Cape, the ship was kept close to the shore, and brought back every morning within sight of the same point it had been sailed off from on the preceding evening. By which means the chain of angles was never wholly broken; and the dead-reckoning from Port Dalrymple, being corrected by these bearings, placed the South-west Cape in the true situation as captain Cook, within  $3'$  of longitude. This was an unexpected agreement, and must not be looked for in the relative situations of the islands in Bass's Strait; and more especially of those which are not in sight from Van Diemen's Land.

The remainder of the deep-sea line, with which the ship was supplied, will account for the very few soundings which are marked in the charts; independently of the small number of the crew, and size of the vessel.

The bearings in the following memoirs are always given by the compass, unless it is otherwise particularly expressed.

If the information here brought forward should be thought little, or imperfect; it ought to be remembered, that that little was gained, under very disadvantageous circumstances, by the voluntary labours of a few individuals; while only fit to be hazardous as an undertaking, was the disinterested spirit of discovery.

If frames find themselves assisted by these observations and the charts to which they are attached, in conducting ships along new coasts, and into new harbours, it is hoped, that inaccuracies in language and in style will be allowed to pass without severe censure.

# VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

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THE south-eastern parts of this island, received the name of VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, from Abel Janszoon Tasman, who discovered it more than a century ago. Since that time, captain Furneaux and others have enlarged our knowledge of the south and east coasts, at different periods; but, though suspected of being separated from New Holland, Van Diemen's Land was not known to be a distinct island, until its circumnavigation was lately accomplished in a small sloop, called the Norfolk, by the order of governor Hunter. It is now found to be thirty leagues distant from any known part of New South Wales. It contains something more than 18,000 square miles of surface; and as far as could be observed, Van Diemen's Land appears to be superior in fertility to the same space of ground in any known part of New South Wales.

A long swell from the south-westward does mostly, if not always, roll in from the southern Indian Ocean, upon the western shores of Van Diemen's Land; and as there is no known place of shelter upon this coast, it becomes extremely dangerous to approach it. The shore in general, is rocky; and in many places there are reefs lying three or four miles off it; but there are also patches of sandy beach; more especially from the black cliffy head, in about  $40^{\circ} 24'$  south, to about  $41^{\circ} 36'$ : the dangerous high also, the center of which is in  $40^{\circ} 4'$ , is mostly beach. It is more of a low than a bold coast, to the northward of Rocky Point, but is not uniformly so; for in the latitude of  $41^{\circ} 30'$ , the island mountains approach within three leagues of the shore; and for ten miles on each side of  $40^{\circ}$ , irregular high mountains come down almost to the water side. From Rocky Point to the southward, both the coast and country put on a different appearance. For the country to the northward is covered with wood, though generally thinly scattered, but here the barren

Water  
Coast.

~~mountains~~  
are in  
ground.

West  
Coast.  
~~There is~~  
ground.

mountains come hanging out of the inland to the sea; and from their colour and nakedness, have the appearance of being covered with snow; it is but in patches that vegetation is free upon them.

Judging from appearances, the west coast of Van Diemen's Land is so desart, and so inhospitable a shore, as has yet been discovered; and the great swell sufficiently assures us, that the consequence of coming near it, between the latitudes of  $41^{\circ}$  and  $42^{\circ}$ , with a south-westerly gale, and a deluging wind, would be to be wrecked upon it.

Point St.  
Vincent.

A point of land on the southern part of this coast, which has two roundish peaked rocks upon its extremity, is named Point Saint Vincent, by governor Blantoe. Its latitude is  $42^{\circ} 16'$  south. Its longitude may probably be a few miles to the westward of what it is hid down in the chart, which is  $145^{\circ} 55'$  east. It is not impossible, but that there may be an opening round this point; for the mountains appeared to open back sufficiently for us, and we found a set of shoals twelve miles to the southward, during a night of nine hours, when lying becalmed to the south-westward of the point.

South-west  
Cape.

The latitude of the South-west Cape, by a meridional altitude of the sun, measured from the south, was  $42^{\circ} 33'$ ; but as captain Furneaux places it in  $42^{\circ} 32'$ , and captain Cook in  $42^{\circ} 37'$ , I conjecture, that from haste to get the noon bearings before the deeps position was materially altered, a mistake of  $10'$  must have been made in reading off from the sextant; the South-west Cape is, therefore, placed in  $42^{\circ} 33'$  in the chart. Its longitude there is  $145^{\circ} 10'$  east, according to the lunar observations taken in Port Dalrymple, and the corrected dead reckoning from thence.

The South-west Cape projects about a mile from the high land at its back, as a steep, narrow, point. When made from the westward, it appears to be jagged; but when seen from the eastward, it is supposed to bear some resemblance to Hant's Head, near Plymouth.

Inhabitants.

The west of parts on the west coast, and the bleak winds which from generally to beat upon it, appear to have prevented the human race from inhabiting it, in the numbers that they do the other shores of Van Diemen's Land. We saw but one certain mark of its being inhabited along the whole coast, which was near Backy Point.

South  
Coast.  
~~There is~~  
ground.

The projecting points of the south coast of Van Diemen's Land, are of the same character with the neighbouring parts of the western coast. They are very high, steep, and barren. The whiteness of these consist of a whitish stone, supposed to be quartz; whence it is, that they appear to a stranger, when at some distance, to be covered with snow. The projections near Storm-Bay Passage have a dark, basaltic appearance.

Every navigator who has hitherto passed along this coast, as far as my knowledge extends, has kept without the Newlines; and they have usually supposed, that there are several openings between the South-west and South Capes, where good shelter might be expected; but the spaces between the intermediate high heads are only shallow bays, which are open to southerly winds; so that there seems to be no inducement for a ship to pass within De Witt's Isles.

South  
Coast.  
Shore in  
general.

The De Witt's Isles are moderately high, and are mostly fringed with black-looking steep shores; but, except those that are mere rocks, have some vegetation upon them. In passing within them, we looked out under the expectation of seeing seals; but neither in the water, or on shore, was one seen. Men either reside upon, or visit these isles from the main; for the vegetation upon two of them had been lately burnt.

De Witt's  
Isles.

The South-west and South Capes lie nearly east and west, by compass, and are eleven leagues asunder, by the log; but it is to be observed, that what is here called the South Cape, is not what is so termed by Captain Cook. If we may judge by its relative situation to his Peaked Hill and the Eddystone, it is the next head to the eastward that is called the South Cape by him; but this head opened round the South Cape at east-by-north, the variation being 2° easterly.

South Cape.

The rocks lying off Taffman's Head, called the Friars, consist of three steep, rocky islets, that have some vegetation upon them; and two black rocks. They are frequented by many gannets; and people still seem to have missed the narrow islet, for it had the burnt appearance that was seen upon two of De Witt's Isles.

Friars.

From Taffman's Head to Fluted Cape, the coast is north-by-east, about ten miles; and from thence to Cape Frederick Henry, *v. 2°* or *3°* *N.*, about the same distance. These capes are all more or less bulbic; and in that part of the south-east coast, which has hitherto been termed Maria's Islands, we find not only the capes, but the coast between them, to be of the same distance. The cliffs of Cape Pillar, Cape Eschton, and of the Head lying off the former, are surrounded by numberless columns, sometimes single, and sometimes clinging together, like flocks of chimneys.

Taffman's  
Head.

Maria's Is-  
lands.

The two capes lie nearly true east and west from each other, and are distant ten or eleven miles. Of the light between them, I cannot say, whether it affords shelter or not.

Round Cape Pillar, the coast opens at true north; and presents the same bold, steep shore, that fronts the south-east coast.

The island, in which Oyster Bay is situated, appeared to be two

Oyster Bay  
Island.

**South Coast.**

lands, of moderate height. The north-east point, which is the Miskern Cape of Mr. Cox, is steep, and is indented like a cock's comb. The diet, which is marked in the chart as lying off it, was not seen.

**Frederick Henry Bay.**

It does not seem to be well determined which is the Frederick Henry or Hendrick's Bay of Tafman. In the chart, I affix that name to the space which lies to the northward of, and between Cape Frederick Henry and Cape Infinites; and I have extended it to those large pieces of water, on each side of Green Head, calling them the upper bay.\*

**Observations.**

The observations, for ascertaining the latitude of the upper and lower bays, were two in each. In longitude, they are placed according to the situation of Penguin Island, ascertained by captain Bigh, in 1788.

**Entrance.**

In entering this bay, there are no dangers to be feared that are not sufficiently conspicuous.

Around Betty's Island, the sea-weed grows up to the surface of the water; but in passing between the island and the two flat rocks that lie to the northward of it, there is from five to nine fathoms amongst the weeds.

**Anchorage.**

Besides various anchorages in different parts of Frederick Henry Bay, the eastern part of the upper bay contains more than eight square miles of anchorage, upon a bottom of mud or sand, in from six to nine fathoms water: this part of the bay only is, therefore, capable of affording shelter to a large fleet.

**Upper Bay, imperfectly examined.**

The opening left at the back of Woody Island, had the appearance of being either the mouth of a river, or a passage going out to the sea. Circumstances did not permit us to ascertain this important point. The western part of the upper bay must still be looked upon as unexplored: it may probably have a stream falling into its north-west corner. The Euxine here is low and sandy; but from thence eastward, rocky heads and alternate sandy beaches become the northern boundary of the upper bay. The southern shores of the eastern bay are mostly rocky, but not high.

**In Rivers.**

The sides of the entrance, from the lower to the upper bay, are generally steep, rocky, and moderately high; but these rocky shores are divided into distinct heads or points, by intermediate sandy beaches: this is most frequently the case on the west side of the entrance.

**Tide.**

No run of tide was observed in Frederick Henry Bay; but there is some rise and fall, perhaps two or three feet.

\* It appears that this upper bay had been previously visited by the French *expédition* D'Entrecasteaux.

The wood does not appear to be much calculated for other uses to a ship than for wood. It can be procured in every part of the bay. F. H. B.

A small stream of fresh water runs over the rocks, into the sea near Gull Island; but the shallowness of the sea towards its head, makes it difficult of access. This is the only fresh water, for ships, that was found in Frederick Henry Bay: but the heads of the greater number of the coves remain yet to be examined. Wood.  
Water.

The country on the eastern side of the bay, is stony; and, wherever we landed, is wretchedly barren. The islands have a better appearance. Smooth Island, contains about one hundred acres of ground, that might serve for a garden: its soil is shallow and sandy. Sloping Island has a pretty appearance. Bailey's Island is really a fine spot; although so high and steep, that it is scarcely accessible, except at the north end. Its top is well covered with timber, and fine grass; and it seems to have a moderate depth of excellent soil. The length of this island is about one mile, and the view from its high land is extensive.\* Islands.

The River Derwent appears to have been the discovery of Mr. Hayes, commander of the ship *Duke*, about 1793. With the exception of Herdman's Cove, the names that are applied in this river and its immediate neighbourhood, were taken from his chart; but in such parts as the ship visited, it was found necessary to make some alterations in the terms: coves having been called ports and bays, and creeks, rivers. The river itself is denominated Fletcher Hayes's Gulph, in the lower part, and Derwent towards its head; but, as it is certainly nothing more than a common river, I have dropped the name of gulph, and called Derwent River as the name of the whole. Derwent  
River.  
Name.

Herdman's Cove being unnoticed in Mr. Hayes's chart, has received a name descriptive of the country that surrounds it; and it is the only name given by me in this part of Van Diemen's Land; five shoals in the upper part of Frederick Henry Bay, and Cape Balaites, which are also descriptive.

Three observations were taken for the latitude in different parts of this river. Mount Dixon is in 48° 48' South. The mean variation of the magnetic compass and theodolite, observed on the south side of Ribbon Cove, in December, 1793, was 9° 33' east. Mount.

\* Some account of the inhabitants, &c. is included in that of the Derwent River.



**Derwent  
River.**

The Derwent being almost as free from rapids, but very apparent, dangers, as Frederick Henry Bay, it is thought unnecessary to engrave the particular chart of these parts: the original plan is upon a scale of half an inch to a mile.

**Entrance.**

The entrance of this river, is in depth ten or twelve fathoms, and in width, two miles and a half; but a small part of this space is occupied by four rocks, that lie off the point on the east side of the entrance.

When the river is entered, Shoal Point seems to be the only place of danger. It is necessary to give it a wide berth, by keeping close over to the echoing cliffs on the opposite side. The width of the river is here contracted to half a mile.

**Sailing up.**

In sailing up thus far, Mount Direction will be a very conspicuous object a-head: a gap at its top, divides it into two roundish heads. Below this mount, is Bilton Cove, which is the highest part to which a ship can safely go. We could scarcely find so much as two fathoms water ahead of Mount Direction; but when round the point, there is a channel by the starboard shore, with not less than four fathoms in it. Below the next point, on the same side, are some dry mud-banks; and except slipping into the mid-channel to pass round these, the deep water continues on the same side past Herliam's Cove. The channel then becomes exceedingly narrow, in proportion to the width of the river; and keeps closer to the starboard shore, until the south-south-west reach opens: it then rounds over to the opposite side. The depth of water is from two to three fathoms above Herliam's Cove, and continues to be so as far up as our examination went.

No vessel that draws more than nine feet water should attempt to go above Bilton Cove. It is for the use of smaller vessels, and of ships long boats, that the channels so high up are spoken of. A long boat may still get up the creek that falls into the north corner of Herliam's Cove. The greater part of this creek is a dry mud-bank at low water; but there is a narrow channel, leading round by the starboard shore into the creek, in which there is nine feet water.

**Anchorage.**

A ship may lie in Bilton Cove, out of the focus of the river, in from six to three fathoms, muddy bottom; and from thence downwinds to Ralph's Bay, both sides of the river afford anchorage in various depths of water, between three and twelve fathoms, on the same ground.

Ralph's Bay appears to be a very spacious harbour, but I cannot speak of the depth of water in it.

Prace Cove, in the northern part of Swan-Bay Passage, affords complete shelter from winds at north-east, and round by the west to south-west;

well; but at low, there would be a considerable flow thrown into it, and an easterly wind would make a short disagreeable swell. The water flows very faintly in the head of this cove.

Sea-water  
Rises.  

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The water moves so slowly in the lower parts of the Derwent, that a good sailing vessel need pay no attention to the tides. We sometimes found the water draining down for twelve hours and more together, and at other times, so long upwards; whilst the rise and fall by the flood, were at the usual intervals. A counter current at low water appeared to be the cause of this irregularity. From Shoal Point upwards, the tides formed to run true, and to have some little strength, perhaps half a mile per hour.

Tide.

I reckoned the time of high water to precede the moon's passage over the meridian on any day, about four hours; which is more than an hour later than in Adventure Bay.\* The rise is between four and five feet in Rifles Cove.

Every part of the shores of this river will afford wood for the fire, in abundance; but such water is not so easily procured by shipping. The river itself is fresh in that part where it takes a south-south-westerly course; but the larger classes of vessels can only get at it by boats, from Rifles Cove. A fresh stream falls into the creek, which is in the north corner of Hoodman's Cove; but the large stones at the head of the creek, will much impede boats in filling their casks; and the high banks, by increasing the power and altering the direction of the wind, will make sailing very tedious.

Wood.  
Winn.

Rifles Cove was our watering place. The hogheads were rolled into the creek at high water, filled at the following low water time, and rowed out as soon as they floated. The late rain had made the water somewhat muddy; but it was otherwise very good.

The head of the cove, called Sainsforth's Bay, by Mr. Hayes, was not examined.

Some rills of excellent water come winding through a rich valley, at the back of Frasn Cove; and uniting, fall into the head of the cove; but the shoals, which dry at low water, are a hindrance to watering a ship at this place. It is probable, however, that Mr. Hayes, or perhaps admiral D'Entrecasteaux, watered here; for there was a tree lying near the run, which had been cut, both by a saw and an axe; and they would not have picked upon this as a wooding place only, when there were twenty others about the cove more convenient for the purpose.

\* See Captain Cook's third voyage, and Lieutenant Bight's narrative of the Bounty's voyage to Otaheite.

A. H.

PART.

Inhabitants.

From appearance it seems, that the south-east part of Van Diemen's Land is tolerably well inhabited. Once only, in the upper part of the river, were we able to overcome their efforts to avoid us. Two women ran off screaming, but a man held to receive Mr. Tule and myself; and accepted a fawn that was presented to him, with great joy. He carried two dead fawns in his hand, but seemed to be devoid of fear. Our fire-arms were neither objects of curiosity or alarm; and the only part of our dress that attracted his attention, were the red handkerchiefs about our necks. He was a short, slight made man, of the middle age. His countenance was more expressive of benignity and intelligence, than of ferocity or stupidity. His features were less negro-like than is usual in New South Wales; and his hair was either cut or burnt very close. He understood none of the dialects spoken in the neighbourhood Port-Jackson, or the common words of the Oahitean language.

The natives of Frederick Henry Bay, have some mode of conveyance by water; for they had visited Barty's Island, the Isle of Caves, Smooth Island, and Gull Island; and, perhaps, the others. It has been a received opinion, that the inhabitants of this part of Van Diemen's Land have no canoes; and, had our observations been confined to the Derwent River, we should have joined in that opinion.

Esquimaux.

A few of the gulls, and of the smaller red kangaroos, were seen here.

Swan.

The flocks of swans, in the Derwent, will be the best dependance for fresh provisions, to those vessels that shall visit it early. In December, and perhaps at all times, from one-fourth to one-third of these swans are without their wing feathers; and may be taken by a handy whale boat, whose only weapon need be a boat-hook. By swimming and flapping along the water, and by their craftiness in gaining the wind, after being once chased, the swans would sometimes tire our little two-masted boat: a few that then generally ended the pursuit.

The long gulls that grow upon the shoals of mud, furnish the swans with food; and where this food is most plentiful, there they are most numerous. We did not meet with one in Frederick Henry Bay; but in the northern part of Storm-Bay Passage, and in the lower parts of the Derwent, there were a few straggling birds. It is in the lower part of the river, from Ribbon Cove upwards, where they are found in hundreds. Their swans are black, the wing feathers excepted.

Ducks and  
Geese.

Ducks, black snags, gannets, red-bills, and pelicans, were occasionally seen; principally in the shoal lagoons, at the back of Ralph's Bay.

Fish.

The only trial that we here made to catch fish, was in the lower part of the Derwent; and was not without success. Fish are known to very plentiful in Adventurer Bay.

venomous snakes are found here, which is much remarkable here  
 facts, that it requires a close inspection to detect them. One was  
 taken alive, but died soon afterwards; apparently in consequence of  
 his own bite.

Derwent  
 River—  
 mountain  
 banks.

The banks of the Derwent are not remarkable for their height;  
 but on the east side, the hills rise suddenly from the water, whilst the west  
 side ascends gradually up to a large body of mountain; the summit of  
 which is four or five miles inland. This mountain is the parent of all the  
 streams that fall into the river on that side; and is sufficiently high to be  
 seen over the land in almost all parts of Frederick Henry Bay. Mr. Bala  
 found it covered with large timber, to its very top. In the fresh part of  
 the river, the hills rise rather suddenly from the water-side; and the  
 country seems to be hilly, if not mountainous.

Additional  
 Remarks.

The borders of the river are, in general, much better calculated for  
 pasture than for agriculture. They are covered with grass, equally  
 dispersed over a good, but sometimes shallow, soil. The hills descend  
 with so gradual a slope, that they usually leave a considerable extent of  
 valley; and the depth and goodness of the soil, in many of these valleys,  
 form very fit for the plough.

The stream that falls into Risdon Cove, runs out of an extensive val-  
 ley, that in the disposition of the ground, exceeds in beauty every  
 other that was met with. Round Herdman's Cove, the country is usually  
 thin of timber, and slowly rounded into grassy hills. Upon the tops  
 of these hills, as upon most others, it is usually stony; but in some of the  
 valleys, the soil is capable of a profitable cultivation.

The remarkably formed peninsula, that surrounds Ralph's Bay, is toler-  
 ably good ground; and about the Shoal Lagoon, there is some of a  
 superior depth of soil. Was a settlement to be formed in this neighbour-  
 hood, Ralph's Bay would deserve particular attention.

The sand about the Derwent is sometimes ballitic, and often contains  
 iron. From its great weight, it is well calculated for ballast; and in  
 many places, as in Risdon Cove, may be conveniently taken into a  
 boat.

# HUNTER'S ISLES.

Name.  
Position.

This cluster is named after His Excellency the governor of New South Wales. In latitude, the isles are placed according to four meridional observations of the sun, taken in sight of some of them; and in longitude, according to the dead reckoning from Port Dalrymple, corrected by the bearings along the coast.

Albatross Isle is in latitude  $40^{\circ} 28'$  south. Its longitude, by the above authority, is  $143^{\circ} 4'$  east. No observations were taken to find the variation of the compass; but in constructing the chart,  $1^{\circ}$  east were allowed.

Three Isles  
Is.

These isles are in general high; and the south westernmost of them are surrounded by steep, forbidding cliffs.

Black Rock is a small conic-formed islet, and may be seen more than five leagues in fine weather.

Albatross Isle is visible at the distance of ten leagues. The heavy south-west swell, which breaks upon the steep shores of this rocky islet, will seldom allow it to be landed upon, and then only at the north-eastern end.

The long spit of land between Albatross and Three-hummock Islands, I judge to be an island also, distinct from the north-west end of Van Diemen's Land; but this is a matter of some uncertainty. The west side of this land is low, and there are some broaches upon it. The north point is low, but rocky. On the east side of this capped island, the land rises as it proceeds to the southward, and the shore to become steep. The inland parts of it are sparingly covered with a kind of half-stunted vegetation.

The three hummocks, on the island which they give name to, lie in the direction of a  $30^{\circ}$  w. by compass, nearly in a line. The southernmost of them, which is the largest, is shaped somewhat like a sugar loaf; and may be seen more than seven leagues from almost every direction.

Anchorage.

On the east side of this island, there is anchorage on a sandy bottom, and

Anchor

blow from westerly winds. Judging by appearances from the anchorage, the shore up to the hummocks is covered with an impenetrable brush; over which the heads of a few stunted gum trees are seen.

Anchorage.

The Islands, whose situation is nearest to the north-west part of Van Diemen's Land, as well as the north-west part itself, must be considered as yet unexplored; and it is necessary to observe, that the relative positions of those islands that are more distinctly marked in the chart, may not be correct to one, two, or perhaps three miles; for between the moons of the 2d and 10th of December, a long swell, and strong winds and tides, made a considerable disagreement amongst our angles and bearings; which disagreement will, more or less, affect the whole of the lands in the neighbourhood of this part of the track.

Further an-  
satisfactory  
required.

Upon Three-hummock Island, there were certain marks of its having been frequented by man; but it is probable, that none of Hunter's Isles have stationary inhabitants.

Inhabitants.

The tides run very strong amongst these islands. The flood comes from the south-westward. It appears to be high water about one hour before the moon passes over the meridian, and the rise of the tide seems not to be less than eight feet.

Tides.

Although not a seal was found upon the east side of Three-hummock Island, yet several were seen in the water near it; and some of a reddish bad fur, were knocked down upon Abetrook Island.

Seals.

Sea birds are numerous amongst Hunter's Isles. There were vast numbers of albatrosses on that Isle to which their name is given, which were tending their young in the beginning of December; and being unacquainted with the power or disposition of man, did not fear him: we taught them their first lesson of experience.

Birds.

Out of the great, and almost unknown, night, between Three-hummock Island and Circular Head, such an immense number of gannets, and Mount-Pitt birds\* issued, that there must be one or more islands there, which are much frequented by them. They came from the southward at day-light in the morning, and took their way, round the islands, to the westward.

\* A large-colored petrel, of the size of a pigeon. They are commonly called *Shearwaters* in the Is.

# VANDIEMEN'S LAND.

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## NORTH COAST.

Shore in  
general.

THE north coast of Van Diemen's Land puts on a very different aspect from that of the west or south coasts. The long swell from the Southern Indian Ocean, which strikes over to the coast of New South Wales from Hunter's Isles, leaves this side of Bass' Strait in smooth water. From this cause, and from the most prevailing winds being off the land, the north coast has more the appearance of being the shore of a harbour, than of one that is exposed to the sea.

Circular  
Head.

Circular Head is steep, resembling a round twelfth cake in form, and is high enough to be seen more than eight leagues. The cape, to which it is connected by a low isthmus, and of which it forms the easternmost part, is smooth, sloping, and rather low.

Table Cape.

The bight between Circular Head and the next projection eastward, is almost entirely a sandy beach; and there are also sandy beaches half way from the rocky projection towards Table Cape; but the shore then becomes rocky and more steep. Both Circular Head and Table Cape, and also the rocky cape between them, make like islands when first seen from the eastward. The Table Cape preserves its flat appearance in every direction from the sea. Its cliffs are steep; and it is high enough to be seen at the distance of twelve leagues.

To Port  
Dalrymple.

Taking that space of coast between Table Cape and Port Dalrymple, we find a good deal of sandy beach upon it; and although the land is very mountainous at the back, yet the shores do not appear to be steep, in general. There is a round hill close down to the water, five leagues to the eastward of Table Cape; and a few miles beyond this hill, there is a range of mountains coming from the south-westward, which break off abruptly at the water side, and form a bluff head; but do not project beyond the line of the coast.

From

From hence eastward, we are not so well acquainted with the nature of the shore; and it is not impossible, but that there may be a small opening in the light which lies about five miles west of Port Dalrymple: the small projecting point in that light is low, and made like an island.

NORTH  
Cape 087.  
5 1/2 miles  
Dalrymple

On each side of Port Dalrymple, ranges of hills from the mountains inland, approach near to the sea; but from thence eastward, the coast may be called low; and is, with few exceptions, a sandy beach which continues round Cape Portland, and as far beyond it as I have seen the coast. The principal exception, is a stony head lying ten miles to the north-eastward of Port Dalrymple. This head is not remarkable for height; but it will easily be known, by its being the only stony projection in the neighbourhood, and from having a small rocky islet lying two-and-half miles off it, north-west-by-west, by compass.

Stony Head

The great similarity that one island or piece of land, has to some other in its neighbourhood, is often remarked; and this is exemplified in the likeness between the Waterhouse and the islet that lies three or four miles to the westward of it. They are both moderately high, and level at the top. The shores of the islet are rocky; but the inner point of the Waterhouse is sandy, and seems to run off shoal. We passed between this isle and the main, our shallowest soundings being four fathoms, and the bottom sandy; but I would not recommend it to any ship to follow our example, unless from necessity. I think it still less safe for a ship to attempt passing between Cape Portland and the isle that lie off it. The northernmost of these isles is divided into two parts, nearly equal in size, whence it may be called double isle. From this double isle, and the shoals near it, there appeared to be shoal water connecting them with the Swan isle. The rippling water, which is marked in the chart as a curving line from the double isle, is about two cables length broad. Upon that part of the ripple over which we passed, there was nine fathoms; and the water appeared to be as much agitated there as in other parts.

The Waterhouse

Cape Portland and its isles

The latitude of the largest Swan isle is 40° 45' south, and its longitude, reduced back from the observations in Port Dalrymple, 148° 15' east. On the south side of this isle, there are two small sandy bays. Our anchorage in the eastern bay, was a short quarter of a mile from the shore, in four fathoms: the points of the island bearing, by compass, n. 60° e. and s. 30° w.; and the easternmost part of Van Diemen's Land s. 40° e.; the bay is, therefore, open to easterly winds.

Swan isle

On this part of the north coast the tides run strong; and on the

Tides



**North  
Coast.**

**Table  
Cape.**

west side of Cape Portland, the tide takes in westerly a direction, that we expected to have found a considerable opening in the height; but from the Waterhouse, where the flood comes from the eastward, to Circular Head where it appears to come from the west, there seems to be very little tide running. A line drawn from the Waterhouse to the head, will probably be a boundary, to the eastward of which, no tide will be perceptible on this coast.

**Inland  
appearance.**

In speaking of the most interior part of the north coast of Van Diemen's Land, it will be convenient to divide it into three portions. That part of the country from Table Cape westward, has almost as fertile an aspect as the west coast, or as Hunter's Mesa. It is for the most part rocky, and in many places bare rock. This was the appearance of the country from the sea.

In height, this part of the coast rises as it proceeds to the eastward. It may be called a low and level country in its western parts; but, as before observed, is high enough at Table Cape to be visible more than twelve leagues.

The second portion of the coast, from Table Cape to Port Dalrymple, is mountainous inland; but almost every where has a fertile appearance, being well covered with timber down to the water side.

About four, or perhaps more, leagues inland, there is a remarkable hill, which opens round Table Cape at a 11° *n.* by compass, as a sharp-pointed sugar loaf; but when it bears to the westward of South, it becomes flat-topped. From the shape and height of this peak, it might be thought to have once been a volcano.

Stretching from hence, round the head of Port Dalrymple, the inland presents nothing but mountains; the back ridges topping over those that are nearer to the sea. The head which forms the west side of the entrance into the port, is of considerable height; and the ridge of back mountains, which it partly hides, is of great singularity. This ridge is formed into peaks, hammocks, and knobs, of various shapes, in its more western parts; and into itself behind the head is a kind of table land. These peaks and knobs are generally bare of vegetation, and from the brilliancy with which they reflected the sun's rays, on his appearance after rain, I judged them to consist of quartz, like the mountains of Fenneman's Islands.

The same kind of mountains are seen reaching to the eastward, from the upper part of Port Dalrymple; and they also extend so far to the northward, as to be visible from Cape Portland.

In the third portion of the north coast, from Port Dalrymple, eastward,

ward, the hills form a gradual descent from their inland mountains towards the low land near the sea coast. Their descending hills are well covered with wood; and though the soil seems to be sandy, yet it appeared to be above mediocrity. There are on all the some grassy tracts of open ground, that are pretty varied by clumps of wood and large single trees standing here and there: their open tracts were principally seen on the east side of Cape Portland.

There is usually a space of from one to five miles, between the feet of these green hills and the sea; which space, in the whole of this portion of the coast, forms to purpose of the same sandy nature as the shore. Some hillsides on the pitch of Cape Portland, and on the projection opposite to the Waterhouse, are exceptions to its being universally low land.

The fashies which abounded from various parts of this coast, gave us to understand that it was inhabited. These fashies were most numerous between Port Dalrymple and the Waterhouse.

Several overgrown hair seals and some flocks of birds, which were sitting upon the rocky islet that lies between the Waterhouse and the main, was an indication, that men do not often, if ever, visit the islet; and consequently, not the more distant is. On the largest Swan isle, we found no marks of men; but there were wild geese, pronghens, and Mount-Pitt birds, upon it; and according to the information of a man who had crossed over from the wreck at Preservation Island, it abounds with swans at sometimes. Upon this man's authority, I called this small cluster the Swan Isle, in February 1798; but on visiting it in the November following, we found no indications of its deserving its respectable name.

On passing the rocky islet, which lies two-and-half miles from the busy head near Port Dalrymple, a few seals were seen sitting on the top of it.

Port Dalrymple is the only harbour that the north coast of Van Diemen's Land is at present known to afford. It was so named by His Excellency governor Hunter, as a small token of respect to Alexander Dalrymple Esq.

Low Head is a projection of sloping land on the east side of the entrance into the port; its latitude by six observations taken near it, is 61° 23' South.

The observations for ascertaining its longitude were taken with

NORTH  
COAST.  

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Island  
appearance.

Inhabited.

Seals and  
birds.

PORT DALRYM-  
PLE.  

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Name.  
Head.

**FOUR-DAL-  
BYMPIE.**  
Entrance.  
Troughton's sextant, No. 331, of nine inches radius, and with a five inch  
extent made by Adams. They were taken in different parts of the port;  
and when reduced to Low Head by the survey, will be as follows:

Two sets of "Alidhama" and two of the sun . . . . .	} east of the } $\frac{\text{Sun}}{\text{Alidhama}}$	147° 23' 6" S. do. 147° 30' 36" S.
Two sets of "Alair and two of the sun . . . . .		} west of the } 147° 29' 33" do. 147° 30' 54"
	Longitude	<u>147° 7' 00" S.</u> <u>147° 30' 36" S.</u> 147° 3' 00"
	Mean longitude	<u>147° 30' 36" S.</u>

The variation of our azimuth compass, by four sets of observations, was	} in November, 1838	7° 33" S.
By one set for a Troughton's theodolite, it was . . . . .		8° 30"
	Mean variation	<u>8° 1½"</u>

**Marks for  
the entrance.**

The entrance of this port is by no means conspicuous; and it is difficult to find good marks whereby it may be found. It has been observed, that ridges or chains of hills from the mountain island, approach nearer to the sea on each side of Port Dalrymple, than they usually do in its neighbourhood. When the entrance bears to the south-east, that chain which comes to the back of Low Head appears as a cluster of irregular hills, with the blue tops of the higher mountains peeping over them; and the ridge which comes down to the sea on the west side of the port, puts on nearly the same appearance. Again, the long head which has been mentioned as having a small rocky flat lying two-and-half miles to the north-west-by-west, is the only projection on the east side of the port that is not sandy; and on the west side, is the very singular range of mountains, before mentioned, which is formed into uneven shapes and peaks. These marks, taken together, are the best that I can give for knowing the entrance of the port by, in addition to its latitude and longitude, and the trending of the coast on each side of it, as laid down in the chart.

**Sailing in.**

It will sufficiently appear by the chart, that this port is difficult of access. In addition to the particular chart, I would observe to a vessel going in, that the greatest part of the shoals are covered at low tide;

tide; it is therefore by much the best time to enter the port with the full of the flood, or even a little before that.

A line drawn from about two cables lengths off Low Head, for the middle of the harbour, will, with a little deviation, carry a vessel almost up to Green Island. There are two passages into this fair way. That nearest to Low Head lies through the patches of weed. This weed does not grow up to the surface of the water, but the patches are sufficiently distinguishable from the main head or five yard; and with a free wind, a vessel that advanced her helm quick might avoid running over them, by yawing to one side and the other. On coming into this port the last time, we ran through them before a gale of wind at west-north-west, and saw no breaking upon any but the water patch; which, in the chart, is marked as a rock; I therefore conclude, that there cannot be less than three fathoms upon them. At a much less distance than two cables lengths from Low Head, this inner passage may probably be clear of weed: it appeared to be so when inspecting it from the head.

The outermost shoal from Low Head lies about mid-way to the opposite shore. It is, I believe, dry at all times of tide, and is frequented by fags and other birds. The outer passage into the fair way, is, to run in within about a quarter of a mile of this shoal, where nine fathoms is marked, and then to steer for the lagoon beach till arrived in the fair way; which may be judged of, by having deep water, by having the entrance fairly open, and by comparing the chart with the land.

Having gained the fair way, the middle of the harbour will be conspicuous; and the Middle Head also, if the weather is not thick. Keep a straight course for these, for one mile and a half, looking out sharply upon the great shoal upon the starboard hand, from the main head. At the same time, it is best to keep to that side within; and to edge more to port if the water should shoal to five or six fathoms.

The northernmost of the hills, on the east shore, is also the nearest hill to the water side. At the top of this hill there is a gap in the trees; and when this gap bears east-by-north, by compass, a vessel will be in the worst part of the channel, and ahead of a rock which lies a quarter of a mile from the lagoon shore. This rock is covered before half tide, and, is not deep to; and it is more particularly dangerous, as the ebb tide seems to let a good deal upon it. Its place will often be denoted by a strong rippling in the water, but perhaps not always.

On account of this rock it is principally, that I recommend keeping

Four Days  
 in the  
 Channel  
 being in

rather over towards the flood on the starboard hand. This flood being a mixture of shells, sand, and mud, upon a rocky foundation, will flow off to a man at the mast-head in almost all kinds of weather; and if the vessel comes in before the tide is much risen, the greater part of it will be dry. Therefore, having passed the dangerous rock, keep inclining towards the starboard shore, but paying attention to the lead, till you approach Green Island. This island will at first appear like a point, and the direct channel into the port will seem to be on the starboard or west side of it; but with the knowledge that the channel winds round on the east side of the island, it will be sufficiently conspicuous.

The principal thing to be attended to, when passing round Green Island, is to look out for the Middle Rock. This rock is covered at half tide, like most of the others. It lies at equal distances from Green Island, and from the two points of Queen Cove; and is, consequently, right in the middle of the channel. The water is deep to within twenty yards of the rock, and the passage is clear on either side of it; but if the rock should be covered, the safest way is to keep the island close on board. This is most particularly necessary on the ebb tide, as it sets over the rock on the first half of the ebb, and close past it when it becomes uncovered.

After passing Green Island, there can scarcely be said to be any danger in getting into the harbor; for the points are all steep to, and the Stag Rock is not covered till the top of high water. A vessel may safely pass in to the westward, between the Stag Rock and the point; taking care that the bows are near enough to the point, if the flood tide is running; and that the dots not go too near the flood water in the entrance of the western arm, before she anchors.

Upon the whole, although the entrance is certainly a dangerous one, I confidently hope, that by attending to the chart, and the preceding remarks, and by keeping a vigilant look out, a ship of any size, under easy sail, may get in safely. On first entering this port in the Norfolk Schooner, we got up as high as Green Island, almost without perceiving any danger; this circumstance, however, has often surprised me.

To run up the river, for I consider it to be a river about Middle Island, there seems to be no direction necessary, but to consult the chart, particularly about Bush Island. After passing the Norfolk's uppermost anchorage, a boat or two should be kept ahead of the ship.

The tides run so strong in Port Dalrymple, that a vessel will hardly get in or out against them; but by their assistance, may get against any wind; if she can carry sail. In the sea much more particularly, that

is, from Green Head downwards, the tides occasion strong eddies and whirlpools. Upon many of these we have found deep water; but it must by no means be inferred, that a vessel need be under no apprehension of them. The names Point Round-a-bout, Point Rapid, and Whirlpool Beach, are descriptive of the effect of the tides in the neighbourhood of these parts.

I calculate the time of high water in Port Dalrymple, to be about a quarter of an hour before the moon passes over the meridian on any day; and the rise of the tide to be from six to eight feet. The ebb runs out near seven hours.

Outer Cove will afford anchorage for at least one vessel, on a sandy bottom. Ships that have good boats, may lie in any part of the basin where there is deep water; but for small craft, the anchorage on the west side of Stag Rock is well calculated. A vessel of even fifty tons should not attempt to go up the Western Arm without a previous examination by boats; and a ship that attempts the passage towards the Middle Arm, without following the same step, would probably find some difficulty in hitting the channel; although the line of direction in the chart, from the South head of Decatur's Cove to Inflection Head, should be found correct.

Above Green Head, the bottom is universally muddy.

Fire wood can be had in every part of Port Dalrymple, in as great plenty, and so conveniently, as can be wished. Our hasty examination did not bring us to the knowledge of any timber well fitted for better use: the growing trees are very heavy, and full of gummy sap.

Although the country appears to be well stored with fresh-water for all the domestic purposes that inhabitants might require, yet it is but indifferently supplied for the convenience of shipping, in the lower parts of the port. The fresh-water lagoon, at the back of the beach near Low Head, is the most convenient place we met with; but the water was inferior to those that was procured in a shoal cove on the eastern shore, two or three miles above Middle Head. In this latter place, hogheads could only be refilled off at high water; and our time and strength being ill adapted to such a mode of proceeding, we preferred the standing water of the lagoon.

For a vessel that wanted much water, or to refit, I should think it most advisable to run up into the fresh-water cove at once. It was almost drinkable at low water, at the Norfolk's uppermost anchorage; from whence we concluded, that if circumstances had permitted us to have gone have five or six miles further up, the water would have proved fresh.

Port Dalrymple.  
Anchorage.  
Tide.

Anchorage.

Wood.

Water.

Four Days  
SYMBOL  
Landscape

If we may form any judgment from the traces of inhabitants that were found upon its shores, Port Dairymple is peopled in almost the same proportion as the ports of New South Wales. Seven or eight huts were sometimes found standing together, like a little encampment; but the owners of them were always absent. Some natives came made fire ahead of where the boat was lying; but as soon as the boat came near the shore, they ran off into the woods; and this was the nearest communication that their shyness would permit.

Concerning circumstances from to point out, that the men of this place have no canoes. Middle Island excepted, the Men in this port have no appearance of having been visited; and no tree was ever met with in the woods, whose bark had been taken off so as to be fit for making a canoe. The sum of our observations upon these people, and their mode of calling, was, that they have less ingenuity, and are more destitute of comforts and conveniences, than even the inhabitants of New South Wales.

Kangaroos

Kangaroos are tolerably numerous in the neighbourhood of Port Dairymple, and according to Mr. Hall's opinion, they are larger than those found near Port Jackson. The kangaroo is only to be procured by hunting with stout greyhounds, or by shooting.

Marks of the cow, or calf, were met with, but the kind itself was not seen.

Swans

The swans that inhabit this port, will be a source of food to its visitors for some time. Similar to those in the Derwent, a considerable portion of these swans were without the wing feathers. In the short intervals of time that our little two-masted boat could be spared from more important employment, we caught thirty-five; and as one swan will serve three or four people for a day, they constituted the greatest part of our food. The Middle and Western Arms, and the heads of the coves up the river, are frequented by the swans; but they were most numerous in the final night above Swan Point, three hundred of them having been counted swimming there, in the space of a quarter of a mile square. They will probably be found to be more numerous in the fresh water.

Ducks

Owing to the ease and certainty with which we supplied ourselves with fresh food by swan hunting, we did not follow after the large flocks of ducks that were met with in different parts of the port; these birds are they, even here.

Birds

The small, white-bellied, shag, and the larger black one, inhabit here. Pelicans, and the black, and pied red-bills, are also found. Green Island is a breeding place for gulls; and eggs were also found upon

Egg

Egg Island. Crows, and parrots of dull plumage, are met with in the woods.

Port Dalrymple.  
 Middle  
 Island.

Of the fish, I can only say, that our wants and leisure, whilst in this port, were never sufficient to induce a trial to catch any.

Mollusks are numerous upon the rocks that are overflowed by the tide; and the natives appear to get oysters by diving; the shells being found in many places.

Middle  
 Island.

Amongst other reptiles, are poisonous lizards, and some brown iguanas.

Reptiles.  
 In Islands.

The Islands in Port Dalrymple would be found very convenient to a vessel for landing sheep upon, or other live stock, during her stay. Green Island is secure, but the grass upon it is neither very good or abundant. Middle Island is a beautiful place, containing about forty acres of good pasture; but the natives sometimes cook over to it at low water. Was a ship to lie at anchor near it, or were two men to be left on shore with the flock, it is probable, that the natives would not come near it. Egg Island is very small, but it is secure; and the grass upon it good.

This part is situated between two ridges of mountains; which, from the sea coast, stretch inland to the east-north-east, with an increasing elevation; and approaching nearer to each other, form to unite in a point; which point is, probably, the source of the river. The high peaks which rise themselves above the ridges of mountains, from the uppermost part of the river now visited, may perhaps be this point; and if so, the river is marked in the chart to but one half of its real extent: this is corroborated by the firmness of tide and depth of water at the uppermost anchorage.

Mountain  
 country.

Hills strike off in various directions from the ridges of mountains that bound the river on each side; in some places, permitting its banks to open out to a considerable extent, and in other parts, contracting it to a small channel. The river is in one place nearly two-and-half miles, and in another a short quarter of a mile in width, and there nearly close together.

The fertile appearance of the points in falling up Port Dalrymple, with which an eye accustomed to the rocky banks of Port Jackson is so much delighted, is no fallacious specimen of the soil in general. A good covering of herbage, equally dispersed, clothes the rising grounds; and the villages are overgrown with a stronger grass, which is more particularly adapted to the use of large cattle.

The hills are generally found to be stony near their tops; and the steep banks of the river, as in Whirlpool Beach, are stony also.