

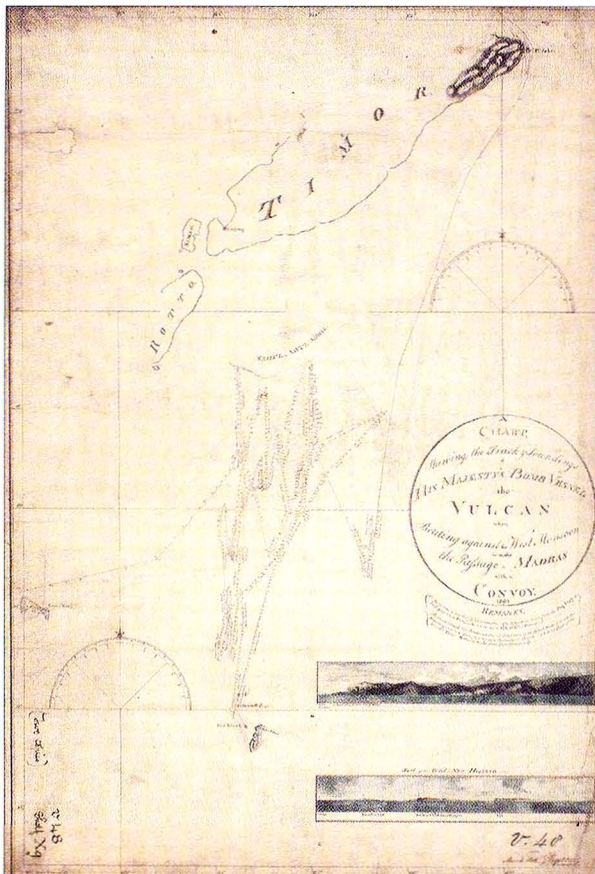


From Mutineer to Hydrographer The Surveying Career of Peter Heywood

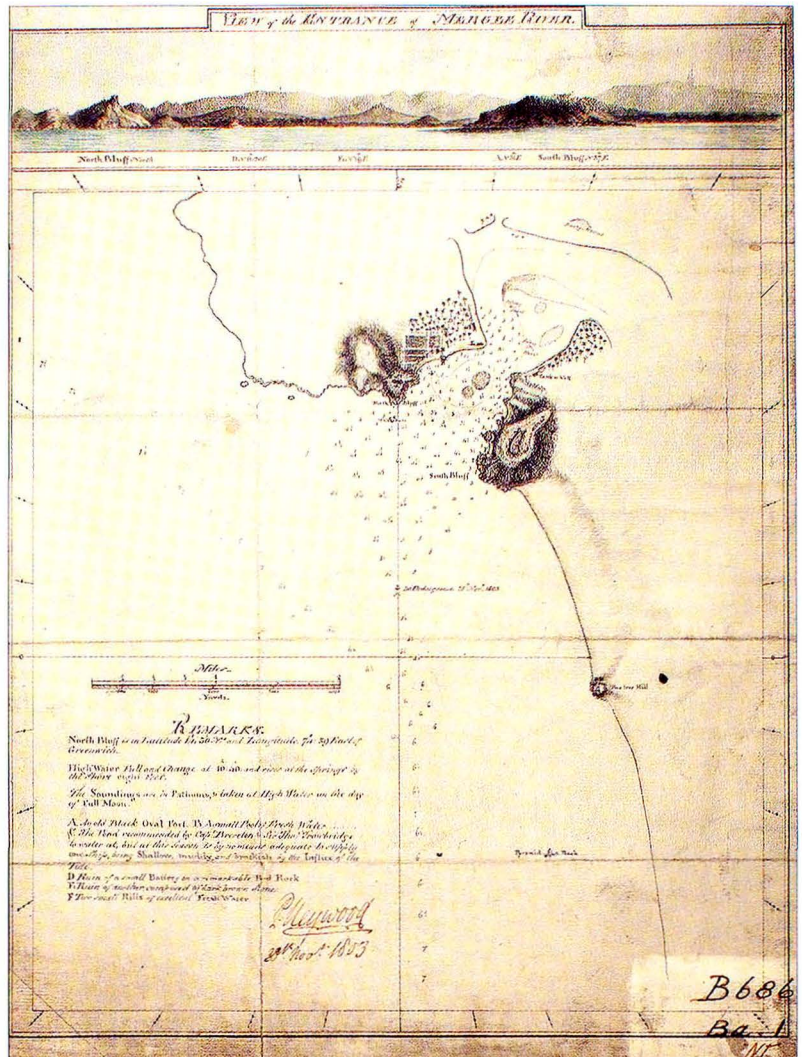
By Andrew David, UK

On 27 August 1787 Peter Heywood, a fifteen year old lad from Douglas in the Isle of Man, joined His Majesty's Armed Vessel *Bounty*, commanded by Lieutenant William Bligh, at Deptford in the River Thames. Bligh's wife Elizabeth, *née* Betham, also came

from the Isle of Man, where the Heywoods and the Bethams were close friends. It was through this connection that Bligh was persuaded to take Heywood with him. Heywood entered the *Bounty*, his first ship, as an able seaman, but was rated midshipman on 23 October. The story of the *Bounty* and the infamous mutiny having been told on numerous occasions need not be repeated in detail here. At the time of the mutiny Heywood remained on board the *Bounty* under circumstances which are subject to controversy to this day. When Christian sailed from Matavai Bay for the last time Heywood was one of a number of the *Bounty's* crew who elected to stay behind. When the *Pandora*, Captain Edward Edwards, sent by the Admiralty to search for the mutineers, anchored in Matavai Bay, Hey-



A Chart, shewing the Track & Soundings of His Majesty's Bomb Vessel the *VULCAN* when Beating against the West Monsoon to make the Passage to Madras with a Convoy, 1801. Signed: March 1801 P. Heywood (bottom right). The UK Hydrographic Office, v48. Reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the UK Hydrographic Office



Entrance to Mergée River.
 Signed: P. Heywood 30th Nov
 1803 (bottom centre). The UK
 Hydrographic Office, B686.
 (detail) Aghnashini or Tadi
 River on India's Malabar
 Coast. Reproduced by permis-
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 Office

wood, considering himself innocent, immediately went on board, but was treated as a mutineer, seized, put into irons and taken back to England with a number of other members of the *Bounty's* crew. On 12 September 1792 a court-martial was convened in Portsmouth to try for mutiny the prisoners brought back by Captain Edwards at which Heywood was found guilty and condemned to death. The court, however, recommended Heywood to his Majesty's Royal Mercy and he was subsequently granted a free pardon and allowed to rejoin the navy.

Heywood resumed his career in the navy on 17 May 1793 under the patronage of Lord Howe, who had presided at his court-martial, serving under him in the *Queen Charlotte* in 1794 at the Battle of the Glorious First of June.¹ On 13 January 1796 Heywood was appointed third lieutenant of the frigate *Fox* of 32 guns, commanded by Captain Pulteney Malcolm, serving in her first in the North Sea but later that year in the East Indies, where he began to carry out hydrographic surveys whenever his naval career would permit. A number of sketch surveys of various places in the East Indies have survived from the time Heywood served in this frigate.

Heywood's first introduction to hydrographic surveying must have been on board the *Bounty* under Bligh's eagle eyes. It is not known how much of Bligh's instruction Heywood absorbed, which was cut short, in

¹ Andrew C.F. David, 'The Glorious First of June. An Account of the Battle by Peter Heywood' in *The Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 64 (1978), pp. 361-6

any case, by the infamous mutiny before the *Bounty* could reach Torres Strait which was to have been Bligh's major survey on this voyage. Nevertheless, Heywood would have learnt a lot from Bligh on the value of good astronomical observations. As a result Heywood acquired a reputation, during his time in the East Indies, for taking observations for geographical positions, basing his longitudes on chronometer observations rather than lunar distances. At this time chronometers were still very expensive and not standard issue to ships of the Royal Navy. Officers, who were interested, purchased their own and it seems certain that Heywood possessed a personal chronometer.

In 1798 Heywood was appointed to the *Suffolk*, the flagship of Admiral Peter Rainier, whose master, Mr Duncan Weir, was a very able surveyor. There can be little doubt that Heywood benefitted from their association and it is known that they carried out a number of surveys jointly. Much encouraged in his survey work by Admiral Rainier, Heywood remained on board the *Suffolk* until 1800 when he was appointed in command of the bomb *Vulcan*.

Heywood's skill as a navigator/surveyor was put to the test at once on joining the *Vulcan* as he was directed to escort a convoy of merchantmen from Amboina [Amboin] to India with orders to pass south of Timor, possibly to avoid enemy cruisers in the Java Sea. As soon as he cleared the east end of Timor, Heywood encountered the South-west Monsoon and, for the best part of a month, the *Vulcan* and her convoy were forced to beat to and fro in an attempt to make westing in the face of appalling conditions of weather and visibility. In spite of this Heywood recorded all his soundings and took observations to obtain his position whenever possible and at the end produced a very creditable survey of the little known area between Timor and the north-west coast of Australia.² During this survey Heywood discovered two shoals, which were named Heywood Shoal and Vulcan Shoal in his memory in 1900 by the then Hydrographer, Admiral Wharton, just over one hundred years after their discovery.³ On his nearest approach to the Australian coast on 24 January 1801 Heywood noted in his log, 'not a Tree or any verdure to be seen and the only remarkable Object to know this part of the Coast is a Small Isl^l about the same height as the Coast, & laying 5 or 6 Miles from it; it appears as if formed of Red Ochre is seen verry (sic) conspicuously in Contrast with the Land at the Back of it. I called it Red Isl^l.'⁴ Heywood drew a water-colour view of this feature (now Red Islet) on his chart. He also named a feature 8 miles to the east Vulcan Point (now Vulcan Islets), while nearby are Heywood Islands. Once the monsoon relented Heywood made rapid westing and soon sighted a reef, which he named Scott Reef in honour of the boy who first sighted it from the look-out position on the mainmast. It was not, however, a new discovery as the *Cartier* had run aground on it the previous year, but it was Heywood who was able to fix its position accurately. Heywood thought that Scott Reef was probably Dampiers Rocks, a danger which had been positioned very inaccurately on charts since sighted by William Dampier over one hundred years earlier. However, it seems much more likely that Dampier had sighted what is now known as Seringapatam Reef, since Dampier's description and latitude fit this reef much better. In 1800, however, this reef had not been rediscovered, so naturally Heywood assumed that Scott Reef and Dampiers Rocks were identical. Heywood's survey was engraved by Alexander Dalrymple but it does not appear to have been published since only a single copy has survived in the archives of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office.⁵ In 1814 when Matthew Flinders was compiling his charts of Australia on his return to England after his imprisonment in Île de France (Mauritius) he incorporated Heywood's survey, with due acknowledgement, in Plates I and XVI of his published atlas.⁶

On his return to India Heywood was appointed in command of the 16-gun sloop *Trincomale* in June 1801, shortly after she had been captured from the French, and in the following year in command of the 50-gun ship *Leopard*, followed in September 1802 in command of *La Dedaigieuse*, a 36-gun frigate that had been captured from the French off the coast of Portugal in 1801. During this period Heywood was for a time

² United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO), v48 (2 copies), the fair copy of which carries the note, 'The Longitude is laid down by Chronometer. The Departure taken from the Flag Staff at Amboyna whose Longitude is reckoned at 128° 15' E' of Greenwich

³ Admiralty Notice to Mariners No 494/1900

⁴ Public Record Office, Adm 51/1434

⁵ UKHO, y21

⁶ For a full account of this survey see Andrew C. F. David, 'Peter Heywood and Northwest Australia' in *The Great Circle*, Vol. 1, No 1, April 1979, pp. 4-14

on detached duties which gave him the opportunity to carry out a number of detailed surveys. He was specifically ordered in 1802 to survey the east coast of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and in particular Point Pedro Shoal off the north-east part of the island.⁷ He also surveyed a considerable part of the Malabar coast.⁸

By the time he returned to England in 1805 Heywood had fixed by chronometer the longitude of about 350 places in the East Indies.⁹ During his time in the East Indies Heywood carried out over twenty surveys (the exact number is a little uncertain as it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the surveys carried out by Heywood and those carried out by Weir or jointly by them both). From time to time Heywood forwarded his surveys to Dalrymple, who published nine of them in addition to engraving Heywood's survey between Timor and the north-west coast of Australia. In December 1804 Heywood carried out a detailed survey in *La Dedaigieuse* of The Typa, the important anchorage off the Portuguese port of Macau,¹⁰ which was published 12 September 1809 by Laurie and Whittle. By coincidence Heywood's survey superseded that carried out by Bligh in 1779-80 when master of the *Resolution* during Cook's third voyage, although not attributed to Bligh in the published account of Cook's third voyage. By 1834 The Typa had shoaled to such an extent that it was no longer usable as an anchorage.

On the voyage home Heywood met James Horsburgh, a captain in the service of the East India Company, and they became firm friends. When Horsburgh succeeded Dalrymple as Hydrographer to the East India Company in 1808, Heywood prepared a chart of the South Indian Ocean, which he dedicated to Horsburgh and which Horsburgh published in two sheets on 4 January 1809.¹¹ Horsburgh also used various sailing directions written by Heywood in his *Directions for Sailing to and from the East Indies* first published in two parts 1809-10, and in particular 'Instructions for ships having occasion to pass inside of Point Pedro Shoal, by Capt. P. Heywood, R.N.'¹²

In 1806 Heywood was appointed in command of the 64-gun ship *Polyphemus* and for a time was stationed in the River Plate (Río de la Plata), but circumstances prevented him carrying out any survey work on this visit. In 1809 he was appointed in command of the 32-gun frigate *Nereus* in the Mediterranean and while operating out of Gibraltar he carried out a survey of the Spanish city of Ceuta.¹³ This survey is illustrated by a most attractive water-colour view of this fortress town, a feature of many of Heywood's surveys. In 1810 Heywood returned to England taking back the remains of Admiral Collingwood, commander in chief Mediterranean, who had died at sea, for burial in St Paul's Cathedral close to Nelson. After the *Nereus* had been refitted in Chatham, Heywood was sent back to the River Plate in 1810 on a diplomatic mission. For a time he was employed cruising between the River Plate and the Cape of Good Hope, which enabled him to fix the position of Tristan da Cunha and Gough's Island accurately for the first time.¹⁴ Although he was unable to make a regular survey of the River Plate, Heywood was able to make sufficient observations over the years to enable an excellent chart of the river to be published in two sheets by William Faden in 1817. The plate was acquired shortly afterwards by the Admiralty and published thereafter under the imprint of the Hydrographic Office as were a number of Heywood's surveys of the East Indies, originally published by Dalrymple. The survey of the River Plate was, however, credited to John Warner, the master of the *Nereus*, who carried out a number of other surveys in South American waters under Heywood's directions. At the same time Heywood compiled extensive sailing directions for the River Plate, which were published by Lloyds of London in October 1813 and afterwards incorporated in Horsburgh's *The India Directory*, where they continued to be published up to the eighth edition in 1864. In July 1813 Heywood was appointed in command of the 74-gun ship *Montagu* in which he returned to England. The following year he was ordered to the Mediterranean, where he was able to observe a further

⁷ UKHO, u85, B689 and I188

⁸ UKHO, C93

⁹ UKHO, Misc Papers Vol. 65

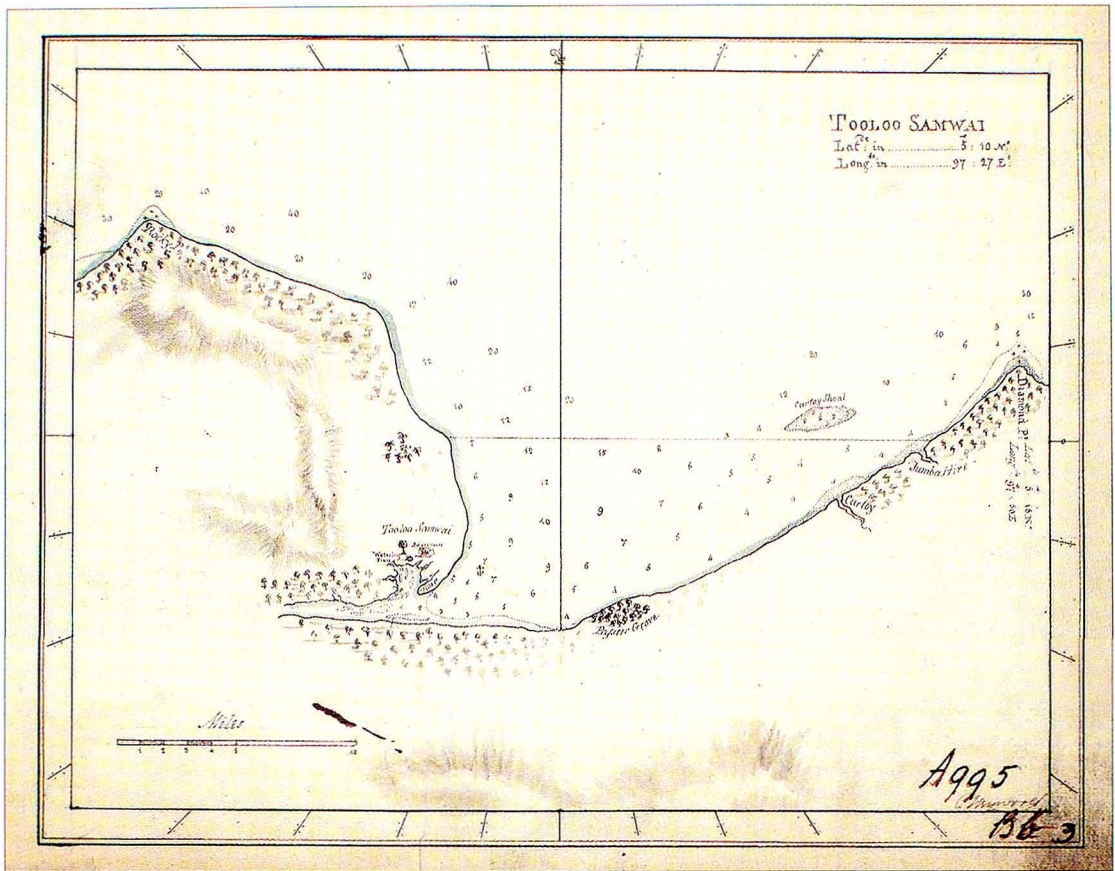
¹⁰ UKHO, x 82 and L2013

¹¹ British Library, MAPS 147 e 18 (2 and 3)

¹² James Horsburgh, *Directions for Sailing to and from the East Indies*, Part First, London, 1809, pp. 330-1. Heywood's manuscript directions are held in UKHO, Misc Papers, Vol. 64

¹³ UKHO, 155

¹⁴ UKHO, Misc Papers, Vol. 58



Toooloo Samwai. Signed: P. Heywood (bottom right). An unimportant anchorage on the north coast of Sumatra, a few miles west of Tanjung Jambauir. The UK Hydrographic Office, A995. Reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the UK Hydrographic Office

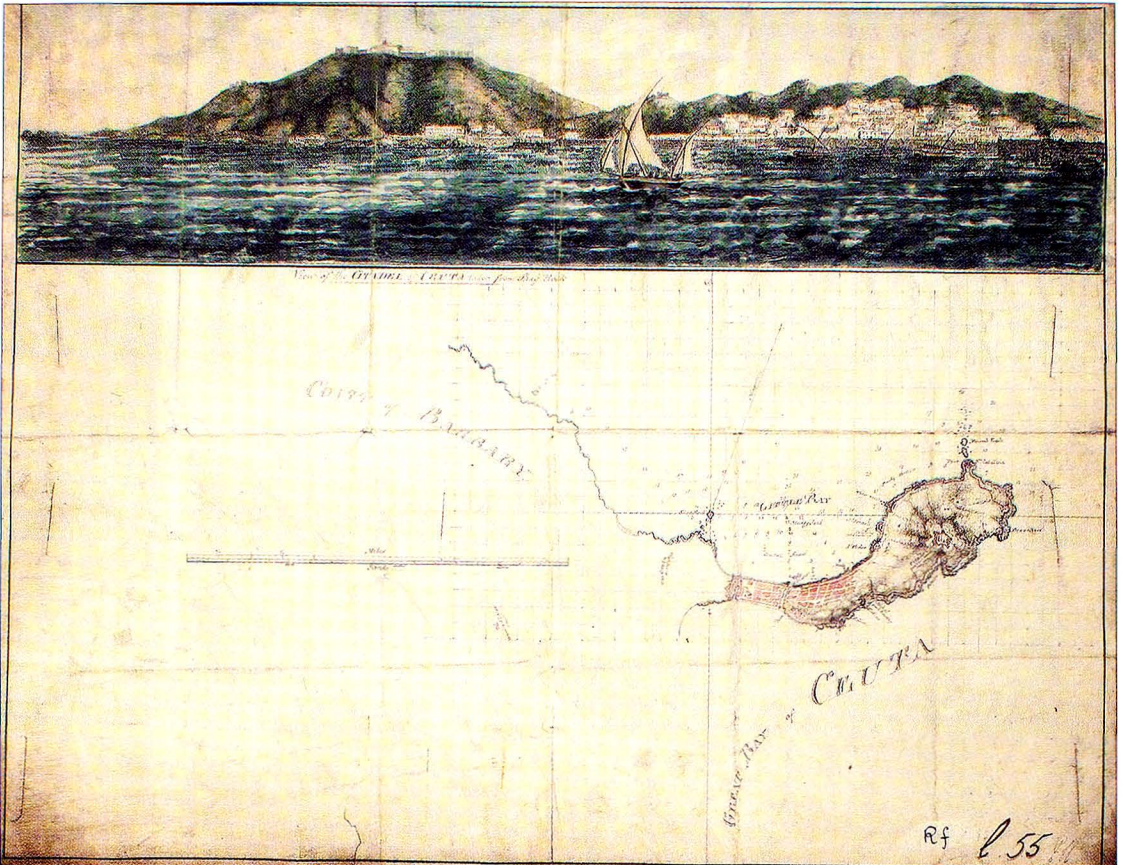
series of geographical positions in conjunction with John Warner.¹⁵ This was his last sea-going appointment and he was placed on half pay in 1816.

In retirement Heywood continued to take an interest in hydrographic matters and in 1816, together with Captain W. F. W. Owen, advised the Hydrographer of the Navy, Captain Thomas Hurd, on the setting up, under the control of the Hydrographer, a permanent flotilla of survey ships commanded by experienced hydrographic surveyors. Up to that time such surveys that were deemed necessary were ordered by the Admiralty and not the Hydrographer of the Navy, whose sole duty was the publication of charts.

According to a letter from Captain Heywood's widow, published in *The Daily News*, on 26 January 1858, Heywood was offered the post of Hydrographer of the Navy on the death of Captain Hurd in 1823 and again on the resignation of his successor, Captain Parry, in 1829. The reason why Heywood did not accept these offers is not clear, but it was probably on account of ill health. On declining the second offer Heywood stated that his friend Captain Francis Beaufort, whom he had first met in the River Plate in 1807, was the fittest person to fill the vacant post, a recommendation that was happily accepted.

During the period that Parry was Hydrographer Heywood spent some time working in the Hydrographic Office on some of his surveys, probably of the Malabar coast and the south and east coasts of Ceylon

¹⁵ UKHO, Misc Papers, Vols 77 and 79



Ceuta. Signed: P.H. (bottom right). The Spanish enclave on the north coast of Morocco. The UK Hydrographic Office, 155. Reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the UK Hydrographic Office

as new charts embracing these surveys were published in 1822 and 1826. In the latter year Heywood was summarily banished from the Hydrographic Office by Mr Croker, First Secretary to the Admiralty, together with Captain W. H. Smyth who was working on his Mediterranean charts. After that, apart from declining the offer of the vacant post of Hydrographer, Heywood took no further part in hydrographic affairs. He died in 1831 after being unwell for the previous two years.¹⁶

Biography

Andrew David is a retired Lieutenant Commander, Royal Navy, who specialised in hydrographic surveying. He is the senior editor of the acclaimed *The Charts and Coastal Views of Captain Cook's Voyages*, published in three volumes between 1988 and 1997 by the Hakluyt Society of which until recently he was a Vice-President.

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¹⁶ For further biographical details see Edward Tagart, *A Memoir of the late Captain Peter Heywood, R.N.*, London, 1832. A list of Heywood's surveys in this volume is far from complete