LONDON, BENGAL, THE CHINA TRADE AND THE UNFREQUENTED EXTREMITIES OF ASIA: THE EAST INDIA COMPANY’S SETTLEMENT IN NEW GUINEA, 1793–95

ANDREW GRIFFIN

On 25 October 1793 an Englishman, Captain John Hayes (fig. 1), hoisted the British flag at Dore Bay on the north-west coast of New Guinea, near present-day Manokwari in Irian Jaya. With appropriate ceremony a twenty-one gun salute was fired and Hayes, on behalf of the King and nation of Great Britain, took possession of the newly named and thus far unexplored country of ‘New Albion’. A formal proclamation describing the annexed territory’s bounds was signed by Hayes, his three senior officers and twenty-two crewmen of the Duke of Clarence and Duchess under his command. So began the first European presence on the great island of New Guinea.¹

Captain John Hayes, an officer of the English East India Company’s naval force, the Bombay Marine,² had taken furlough in 1793 to lead a privately funded expedition to the South-West Pacific. His principal backers were two merchants in the Company’s territory of Bengal, James Frushard and Stephen Laprimaudaye³ who, at their own expense, had purchased and fitted out the Duke of Clarence and the Duchess to undertake the expedition. The voyage took Hayes round the southern coast of Australia (twenty-four years after Cook first surveyed the eastern side) and he made significant discoveries in Tasmania and New Caledonia before navigating an unknown route through the Louisiades and Bismarck Archipelago to the northern coast of New Guinea.⁴ But, the object of his expedition was commercial: he was in search of the prized spice nutmeg and at Dore Bay, situated outside the area of Dutch control, he believed he had found it, as well as other valuable commodities.⁵

The Natives unasked soon convinced me I was in the exact spot I had wished to discover by bringing Nutmegas, Clave Bark, Massoy Bark,⁶ Birds of Paradise, Bees Wax, Tortoise Shell . . .⁷

Captain Hayes and his party had entered Dore Bay in September 1793 ‘in a state truly distressing’, having lost half of the two ships’ company due to scurvy.⁸ However, the local Papuan⁹ people welcomed the Europeans with ‘contentment and satisfaction’ and the surviving crew were rapidly restored to health, leading Hayes to name the place Restoration Bay. Anticipating a permanent settlement, Hayes built a stockade fort and on 25 October 1793 named it Fort Coronation in honour of the crowning of King
George III. Nearby a plantation was established of 1500 young massoy trees and ten round nutmeg trees were transplanted from the interior.

Restoration Bay, reported Hayes, was capable of holding one hundred sail of shipping and was sheltered from all winds and dangers from the sea. The Bay provided:

... the most eligible situation possible for an Establishment [i.e., trading settlement] as well from its natural defensible and healthful site, as from being in all other respects peculiarly adapted for commanding more securely and at a trifling expense a most beneficial trade ...

... as soon as the Settlement is formed there will be Prows, from Soloo [Sulu], Magandas [Mindanao], and the Phillipines, be assured it will even be unnecessary to cultivate the Spices produced at Restoration Bay, as the Molucca Islands will supply us with more than we can wish for.

Besides nutmegs and cloves growing locally, the country abounded in fruits, wild hog and guinea fowl; the fish in the sea were excellent, the air pure and the climate temperate, the thermometer never having risen above eighty-six degrees between September and December. In the vicinity of the Bay grew a native vegetable resembling spinach, as well as lemon grass and scurvy grass, and the soil was so fertile that the seeds brought by Hayes from India—potatoes, onions, radishes, french beans and yams—grew luxuriantly and in a matter of weeks produced a plentiful supply.

As well as its advantages for trade, the settlement might also serve another function:

... we cannot refrain to observe on its centrical Situation and how conveniently for the Ships bringing our Convicts and Stores to Botany Bay which may [on their return] refresh at, and load with the rich products of Restoration Bay, and take them to China...

... I am well assured [wrote Hayes] that it will be a source of Aggrandisement and Riches to Great Britain if nurtured, surely at least the Convicts will be sent to New Albion... instead of that wretched and unprofitable place Botany Bay.

Hayes left the infant trading settlement in the hands of his second in command, Captain Thomas Court, and returned to India to consult with his financial backers and to find out whether the East India Company's Governor-General in Bengal would take steps to secure New Albion to Britain. We do not know with what confidence of success Hayes approached Sir John Shore, the Governor-General at Calcutta. Shore, 'an honest and conscientious civil servant', had only just succeeded Lord Cornwallis. He had inherited a reorganised internal government of Bengal and a permanent revenue settlement. Sound government in the interests of the inhabitants had become the paramount policy in the Company's dominions; but the continued existence of the East India Company was still dependent upon its commercial success.

Sir John Shore and his Council gave careful and detailed consideration to the proposal for an establishment at Dore Bay but rejected it on two counts. Firstly, they were not convinced by the evidence that Hayes had found the true Banda nutmeg; secondly, they considered that the East India Company was already precluded by a Company order...
Fig. 1. Captain John Hayes. Photogravure from the original painting by Opie; from Ida Lee, *Commodore Sir John Hayes...* (London, 1912)
from establishing further settlements in the Eastern Seas in consequence of the failure of the Company's north Borneo factory at Balambangan in 1775. But even before the Bengal Council had come to its decision the Dore Bay settlement had failed. The British presence at Fort Coronation in the country of New Albion lasted little more than a year and a half. The wretched survivors were picked up in 1795 having been relieved by Captain John McCluer, another officer of the Company's Bombay Marine, whose discovery, several years earlier, of the nutmeg growing in apparent abundance on the west side of New Guinea, had induced Hayes to undertake his voyage of exploration.

The English East India Company's interest in New Guinea, intermittent and resulting largely from the wider considerations of its Far Eastern trade, had begun in the 1760s and continued for about forty years. This period coincided with the rise of the Company as a territorial power in India and the birth of British dominion, and with a huge expansion of India's trade with countries to the eastward. By the end of this period the Company had established its greatest commercial asset, the China tea trade. It had also, however, come increasingly under attack at home—from the British Government which wished to assert parliamentary control over the Company's affairs, and from opponents, in government and commerce, who wanted to see an end to its restrictive privileges and monopoly of trade. The year that Captain John Hayes hoisted the British flag on New Guinea soil, 1793, was, coincidentally, the year of the first small breach, by Act of Parliament, in the Company's monopoly of trade between Europe and Asia.

The north-west end of New Guinea lay along the eastern route to China taken by Company ships from India and direct from Europe. The route had been pioneered in 1759 by Captain William Wilson in the *Pitt*. Wilson had arrived too late in the season at Batavia (Djakarta) to take the usual course to China northwards through the South China Sea. He therefore sailed east through the Moluccas, in dangerous and little known waters, and reached the Pacific by passing through Dampier Straits at the north-western end of New Guinea; from here the *Pitt* sailed north, passing well to the east of the Philippines, before heading back in a westerly direction to Canton. Returning by the same route, Wilson had arrived back in London a full six months earlier than expected; so great was the importance attached to his achievement that the Company's directors ordered that he should be presented with a medal valued at one hundred guineas.

The 'unfrequented extremities of Asia', in the area of which New Guinea was situated at the easternmost fringe, were seen as offering new trading opportunities. Also in 1759 a Company employee at Madras, Alexander Dalrymple, was despatched on a secret voyage to the Eastern Seas. Aware of Wilson's discoveries, Dalrymple spent two and a half years cruising among the Eastern islands in the schooner *Cuddalore*. His orders, as reported to London, had been to find a new route to China through the Molucca Islands and New Guinea that would avoid the danger, in time of war, of going through the Straits of Malacca. But there was undoubtedly a commercial objective of the voyage, for Dalrymple's ambition was to extend the Company's trade and open up new possibilities in the trade with China. During the voyage he secured a
treaty of friendship and commerce with the Sultan of Sulu (in the present-day south-west Philippines).  

How to fund and expand the lucrative China trade was a recurring problem for the Company. There had always been an imbalance in the exchange of commodities between Europe and the East, the difference being made up by what could be traded on the way but more particularly by the export of European silver. England’s commerce had been developed from the sale of wool and woollen products to European markets. Woollen goods and to a lesser extent base metals—copper, tin, lead and iron—comprised the chief items of English cargoes sent to China by the Company, together with a few ‘novelties’ such as clocks, knives and glass. China, however, with a self-sufficient agrarian economy and huge internal trade, had little use for European goods and only a limited interest in the produce of other Asian countries. Even when the entire stock of English goods was sold, it was generally at a loss and was taken by Chinese merchants only in order to secure contracts to supply the Company. Chinese products, which besides tea included silks, porcelain and other goods, had therefore to be bought in Canton with bullion and coin. This imbalance in trade became exaggerated by Europe’s insatiable demand for tea.

The first substantial quantities of tea arrived in London in 1678. Demand rose steeply in the eighteenth century: between 1760 and 1800 tea imported from China increased tenfold and in 1785 alone, following the reduction of customs duty to twelve and a half per cent, over fifteen million pounds of tea were sold at the Company’s London sales. By about 1800 tea provided one-tenth of the total revenue of England and the whole profit of the Company. Yet at the very time when the volume of tea imports was expanding, the East India Company found increasing difficulty in obtaining specie. Between 1779 and 1785 during the American War of Independence not a single Spanish dollar was sent from England to Canton.

The Company’s trade in the East must be considered together with the ‘country’ or port-to-port trade which was carried on by native merchants, and Company employees engaged in private trade, between ports in India itself and between India, the Eastern Islands and Canton. The country trade is illustrated by the merchant ships which carried raw cotton from Bombay to China, and exchanged other Indian goods in Malaya and Indonesia for dollars or commodities in demand at Canton. Because private merchants were not allowed to compete in the tea trade they had difficulty in remitting to India and England the funds that flowed from their successful trade at Canton. One way round this was for the merchants to pay specie into the Company’s treasury at Canton in return for Bills on the Court of Directors in London or on the Government of Bengal. From the 1750s the tea trade and the country trade in the Eastern Seas surged ahead, each stimulating the other; by the 1770s country ships from India were carrying as much commerce as the Company’s East Indiamen.

Immediately after 1765 when the Company became the revenue collector and, in effect, ruler of Bengal, it was believed that the surplus Bengal revenue could pay for
the whole of the Company’s investment in Indian goods without the need to export silver from Europe. This led to a speculative boom in East India Stock and a demand for higher dividends by the Company’s stockholders in London. The Company’s directors had to try to satisfy this demand without using up Bengal’s scarce silver coinage and ruining the country. The acquisition of political power in Bengal had brought previously undreamt of opportunities for making fortunes; but while the Company’s employees were able to acquire vast fortunes, the Company’s profits from trade, instead of being augmented by the revenues of Bengal, were absorbed by the costs of administration and the need to maintain large military forces to protect the Company’s position in India. In 1770 the Company in London was forced to ask the British Government for a loan of one million pounds to avoid bankruptcy. Thus began a process whereby Parliament asserted increasing control over the Company’s affairs; the culmination in this period was Pitt’s India Act of 1784 which created a Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, or Board of Control, on which the cabinet was prominently represented. Thenceforth, the Company’s ambitions and Government policy would need to coincide: for example, the desire to expand trade and open new markets for Indian and European manufactures should not prejudice the Government’s wish to avoid conflict with the Dutch; and territories acquired in the Eastern Seas to further the Company’s commerce must provide secure harbours of strategic value for the King’s ships in time of war.

The leading figure on the Board of Control, Henry Dundas, who had contemplated the abolition of the East India Company, was convinced that the surplus revenues of the Indian territories could only be realised in Britain by means of the Company’s trade; revenue and trade were interdependent and any attempt to separate the Company’s commerce from its territorial and governmental responsibilities would probably render the Company bankrupt. However, the Company’s directors, after investigating the question, felt that no great increase in the export of British manufactures was possible. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Company’s exports of silver were back at the levels of the 1750s. But with an increasingly uncertain supply of silver from Europe, the gap between British imports to, and exports from, China became alarming. How to provide commodities which would be acceptable to the Chinese and would pay for tea—this was the problem facing the Company.

Raw cotton and opium ultimately provided the solution. These two staples came to pay for the Company’s tea investment and from 1804 little or no silver was sent from Europe to China by the Company. Until at least the mid-1780s, however, the idea of financing the China trade by expanding the Company’s commerce in the Eastern Seas had been consistently promoted, both in London and India. This could be achieved perhaps by means of a trading emporium or entrepôt, located in the Far East, which would become the centre of a network of trade reaching as far as New Guinea; the centre would attract the commerce of the Eastern Seas, would assist in distributing British and Indian manufactures, and would facilitate the remittance of the Indian revenues to Britain.

156
Alexander Dalrymple’s voyage of exploration in the Eastern Seas had taken him to Sulu which lay outside the Dutch and Spanish spheres of influence. Here, in January 1761, Dalrymple had found ‘a Prospect of a beneficial Commerce’ and when he returned to Madras early in 1762 he carried with him, as already noted, a treaty of alliance and commerce concluded with the Sultan of Sulu. This allowed the Company to establish a factory or trading settlement on Sulu island; precluded other Europeans from trade and gave the Company the exclusive privilege of free trade within the Sultan’s dominions; and allowed Chinese or other merchants to settle under the English. When Dalrymple was sent back to Sulu by the Madras Government in 1762 he obtained from the Sultan, by way of sale, a cession of the island of Balambangan situated between northern Borneo and Palawan (Philippines).

Dalrymple found out later, however, that he had been dealing with a usurper. When during the Seven Years War the British captured Manila from the Spanish in October 1762, the legitimate Sultan of Sulu was discovered to be held prisoner in the city. Dalrymple, to whom fell the task of restoring the Sultan to his throne, used the opportunity to renegotiate a new treaty. The cession of Balambangan to the Company was reconfirmed and other territory was ceded, including an area in northern Borneo, the island of Palawan and other islands.

Dalrymple returned to London in 1765 and began promoting the trading emporium idea. However, his proposals were received with little enthusiasm by the Company. He publicised his case in several pamphlets including, in 1769, *A Plan for extending the commerce of this Kingdom and of the East India Company*. The English Company had, began the Plan, ‘at present no establishment to the eastward of Sumatra, and scarce any intercourse or commerce in that quarter but at Canton in China.’ Such an establishment, Dalrymple claimed, could become an emporium to which the produce of the Eastern Seas would be drawn and exchanged for European and Indian commodities. The Company could procure, by cultivation and commerce, a share in the spice trade and would be able to extend its trade into the remote areas of Asia, such as New Guinea and New Holland (Australia). The China trade could be directed more to the advantage of the Company and the Chinese would be encouraged to form a colony able to export its own produce and consume the manufactures of Europe and India. Balambangan, the Plan explained, was ‘exquisitely adapted’ to be the location for the emporium.

Though the Company may have preferred a less remote site, the Balambangan scheme was eventually put into operation. Dalrymple, however, who had quarrelled over terms with the directors in London, had been dismissed as Chief and Captain John Herbert had been appointed in his place to establish the new settlement. The Company’s detailed directions for Balambangan were incorporated in a letter of 1771 to the Government of Bombay, sent out with the Company’s ship Britannia. The Britannia carried with her an assortment of trial goods and was instructed to pick up at Madras opium, piece goods and other articles supplied from Bengal and suitable for the Eastern trade.
The objects of the new establishment were to be: ‘To draw thither the valuable productions of China and the Eastern countries in exchange for the commodities and manufactures of Europe and of the continent of India. To acquire by cultivation and commerce a share in the spice trade. To extend the Company’s trade into the unfrequented countries of Asia. To direct the Chinese trade into a more advantageous channel by encouraging settlers of that industrious nation to form a colony which would tend to the consumption of European and Indian commodities and enable it to export its own produce, such as pepper, sugar and other valuable articles.’ The letter to Bombay also contained instructions to the Chief and Council of Balambangan for erecting warehouses, provisioning and defence, for renegotiating a treaty with Sulu, for developing an emporium (temporarily a free port), for purchasing and storing tea, and for carrying on trade and relations. The acquisition and cultivation of cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, pepper and clove bark for the China market was ‘especially recommended . . . as an object of the highest Importance’: these products were to be made part of the Company’s consignments to China. This last instruction was reiterated in a subsequent letter with the threat that ‘failure in this respect may occasion a regret at the undertaking & induce the Company to withdraw the settlement’.45

The Britannia took far longer than it should to reach Balambangan. The ship was at Madras for three and a half months before sailing for Fort Marlborough and Balambangan on 15 September 1772; on board were John Herbert, the Chief, other employees of the new settlement and a military detachment.46 Herbert and his colleagues finally arrived at Balambangan on 12 December 1773 having stopped on the way at Pasir (south-east Borneo) to form a temporary trading post and having sold the principal part of the Britannia’s cargo to themselves at Sulu.47

Balambangan failed after little more than a year when the settlement was destroyed in February 1775 by a local uprising. Herbert, whose régime has been described as ‘a riot of fraud and peculation’,48 retired to a subsidiary settlement on Labuan island and began to form a new establishment.49 But the Company’s London directors had already sent instructions replacing Herbert and his Council and prohibiting any attempt to settle elsewhere.50 When the directors finally heard of the expulsion of their servants from Balambangan, they informed Fort Marlborough (the Company’s settlement at Bencoolen on the south-west coast of Sumatra) that they ‘totally disapprove and disclaim the steps taken by Mr Herbert for forming an establishment at Laboan’ and ‘strongly ratify’ their earlier orders forbidding settlement at any other place in the Eastern seas.51 The Balambangan fiasco is estimated to have cost the East India Company about £170,000.52

However, an attempt at least had been made to investigate the possibilities of trade in the unfrequented countries of Asia. Six months before the destruction of the Balambangan settlement, Herbert and his Council, prompted by conversations with one Ismail Tuan Hadjee of the Moluccas who claimed to know of cloves and nutmegs produced outside the areas of Dutch control,53 had appointed Captain Thomas Forrest to undertake a voyage of exploration.54 Believing the Dutch to claim a right to all the

158
Moluccas, Forrest resolved, from Ismail’s report, to go beyond these islands to the coast of New Guinea in search of ‘cinnamon, cloves, nutmegs, pepper and clove bark’.\textsuperscript{55} Forrest set sail on 7 November 1774 in the Tartar galley, a Sulu vessel of only ten tons, preferred by Forrest because of its ease of navigation in narrow and shallow waters, and because, as a native craft, it was unlikely to attract the attention of the
Dutch. Tuan Hadjee accompanied him, the ‘one person of rank, education, and good behaviour’. To avoid quarrels with the mostly Malay and Eastern Islander crew, Forrest took with him two Europeans only, the mate and a gunner.56

Forrest went first to Sulu, then sailed south-east through the Moluccas, passing close to Ternate and Tidore and coasting along Batjan island before heading east to reach the north-west coast of New Guinea. He continued along this coast until he came to Dore Bay on 27 January 1775. Off the mouth of the Bay Papuans came on board and were:

quite easy and familiar: all of them wore their hair brushed out . . . In this they stuck their comb, consisting of four or five long diverging teeth . . . We anchored . . . close to one of their great houses, which is built on posts, fixed several yards below low water mark . . . 57

Here Forrest stayed for about three weeks. The Dore women wore coarse blue Surat bastas and brass rings in their ears; Forrest saw them weaving mats and making earthenware pots. The men wore a garment made from the fibres of the coconut. Both sexes wore glass or china beads. Forrest noticed no gold ornaments but was told that gold was to be found in the hills. The ‘Harafora’ people further inland lived in tree houses and were, it seemed, ‘kept under, or at least kept in ignorance’ by the Dore people. East of Dore the inhabitants were said to be ‘fierce and hostile’ but to deal honestly with the Chinese who traded with them.

At Dore there was ample evidence of trade: iron tools, knives, axes, bastas, china beads and plates were purchased from the Chinese in exchange for massoy bark which came from the eastward of Dore. The Chinese also sought other trade such as sea slug, tortoiseshell, pearls, lories, birds of paradise and other prized plumage—and slaves. While at Dore, Forrest was offered slaves:

I might have had them very cheap; but, being crowded, I did not choose to purchase them. If I had, Tuan Hadjee and others would have expected the same indulgence. These objects of traffic had the gristle between the nostrils pierced with a bit of tortoiseshell, and were natives of New Guinea, a good way farther east. 58

The Dutch would not allow the people of Ternate or Tidore to trade at Dore Bay. The Chinese, who were trusted by the Dutch not to deal in nutmegs, had passes from the Sultan of Tidore. A Tidore corocoro flying Dutch colours stopped at Dore while Forrest was there before sailing east. Forrest and his party made several searches in the area for nutmegs. Some trees bearing unripe fruits were found. These, according to Tuan Hadjee, were the long variety and not the round nut cultivated at Banda and monopolised by the Dutch. The Dore people placed no value on them though they knew that nutmegs were gathered at a place to the eastward. Forrest had many young trees dug up with the intention of carrying them back to Balambangan.

Forrest returned by way of Mindanao (part of the present-day Philippines) where he secured from the rulers for the English East India Company a grant of the island of Bunwoot. But nothing came of this; by the time Forrest arrived back at Sulu in January
1776 the Balambangan settlement had been destroyed. The following year in London he received a mixed reception from the Company’s directors, perhaps because of his association with John Herbert and the Balambangan episode, but the value of his work was recognised and permission was given for the publication of his account.\(^59\)

For several decades the East India Company maintained an interest in both Mindanao and Celebes (between Borneo and New Guinea) but various factors had prevented the Company from establishing a commercial presence in these islands.\(^60\) In 1780 during the American War of Independence, the Company, when conducting negotiations of the utmost secrecy with senior members of Lord North’s Government, had come near to taking advantage of the King of Mindanao’s offer of an alliance with the English and of territory for trade. The Company’s Chairman and Deputy Chairman signed an agreement with the Government in September to co-operate in an expedition against Spanish South America via India and the South Seas; to facilitate the plan, they proposed establishments on Mindanao and Celebes.\(^61\) A settlement on Mindanao alone, less than 800 kilometres south of Manila where the Spanish had a large force, would involve too much risk and expense, but an additional settlement on the island of Celebes to the south—because of its proximity to the spice islands and the protection it would offer to the Company’s ships in the China Seas—would ‘probably be productive of great and permanent advantages’.\(^62\)

The expedition to South America never took place but the negotiations between the East India Company and the Government are nevertheless revealing. The Company objected to having to bear the cost of establishing the Mindanao settlement which was intended to be a base; the Government finally agreed to defray all expenses at Mindanao during the expedition. And the Government cautioned the Company against any acts of hostility in India or the Eastern Islands against the Dutch with whom Britain was still at peace.\(^63\) In a comment not intended for the Government’s eyes, the Company’s Chairman and Deputy Chairman saw the ‘whole risk and expense of the plan’ to be ‘that of three or four ships, and a few Sepoys in India’, suggesting that the need for economy was in the forefront of their minds. In their letter to the Governor and Council of Bengal of 2 October 1780, forwarding details of the expedition, they wrote:

The recent miscarriage of the Settlement at Balambangan, and the heavy loss incurred by that undertaking being fresh in memory, it is hardly to be supposed that our Brethren in the Direction [the directors], or the Proprietors at large [the stockholders], will justify the present attempt if it be not attended with success.\(^64\)

The American War (1778–83) had provided one of the blackest moments for the British in India. A formidable combination of Indian rulers, backed by the French, had threatened to destroy the Company’s position in the country. Yet the end of the war hastened British supremacy and Dutch decline in the East. In the peace negotiations the British forced the Dutch to concede what had been in dispute for two centuries—free navigation and with it the right to trade to places in the East Indies not possessed
by the Dutch. In the 1780s the British Government sought, and after prolonged
discussions obtained, a defensive alliance with Holland which would establish friendly
relations in the Eastern Seas and provide a safeguard against the French. But rivalry
between the two countries continued. This, and the Company’s continuing search to
achieve its commercial aims, is illustrated by its moves in the area of the Strait of
Malacca and by the foundation of Penang in 1786.

In May 1784 the Governor-General in Calcutta gave instructions to Thomas Forrest for
the establishment of an agency at Riau (at the eastern end of the Strait of Malacca,
south of present-day Singapore) in consequence of an offer made by the King of Riau.
The object was ‘to open a free intercourse of Trade not only with the inhabitants of
Rhio, but of all the Neighbouring Islands...’; a settlement situated here would be
well placed for the China route and would also serve the need of a naval base for the
defence of British interests in the Indian Ocean. The English Company was too late,
however, for the Dutch had already taken possession of Riau and expelled the King.
Meanwhile, Captain Francis Light, a British trader at Junk Ceylon (Phuket, Thailand)
had used his influence and friendship with the King of Kedah to obtain a grant of the
Island of Penang (on the north side of the Malacca Straits, close to the west coast of
the Malay Peninsula), thus acquiring for the Company a port at which

... all Vessels bound to China may procure refreshments and those articles of Trade which
best suit the Chinese markets, the Malays and Buggesses [Bugis] will have a place of Safety to
come and purchase Ophium, Piece Goods, and Europe Manufactures, you will likewise in a
short time obtain a more exact knowledge of the state and utility of the Eastern Commerce, and
be enabled to form such alliances as may prove beneficial to the Honourable Company both in
Peace and War.

Light was appointed by the Bengal Government to superintend Penang and took
possession of the island on 12 August when it was renamed Prince of Wales Island.

Lord Cornwallis arrived at Calcutta in September 1786 as the new Governor-General
of India, the first parliamentary appointment made under Pitt’s India Act of 1784. He
had been charged by Parliament to follow a policy of non-aggression and was expected
to reform the administration in India and cleanse it of extravagance, corruption and
malpractice. His first opinion of the Penang settlement was not favourable; he told the
Company’s Secret Committee that he would have ‘unwillingly consented to the first
proposal for undertaking it’; he was uncertain about its commercial advantages and its
usefulness as a port for the Navy in time of war; he anticipated that it would incur
great expense; and he feared that it might bring conflict with the Dutch.

In a private letter to Henry Dundas he was more scathing:

I wish you would talk over with your friends in Leadenhall Street [the Company’s headquarters
in London] the real utility of Bencoolen, & whether it is wise to keep both that settlement &
Penang. ... whenever we are directed to occupy an Island, an expense of five or six Lacs
annually is entailed on Bengal ...

Orders from the Company’s Court of Directors, urging a more expansionist policy,
would have reached Cornwallis at about this time. Having now seen Light’s letter of 25 January 1786 to acting Governor-General McPherson reporting the grant of Penang, they asked Cornwallis to consider the establishment of a settlement there, and/or at Junk Ceylon, to attract Bugis and Malay traders. The Court wished:

... without embroiling ourselves with the Dutch, or giving them any well founded jealousy of our intending to wrest from them, or rival them in, the Spice trade, that every practicable method should be tried for extending our Commerce amongst the eastern Islands, and indirectly by their means to China...

The Court also looked with ‘sanguine expectations’ to the benefit of a settlement ‘somewhere near the Pitts Strait’ at the north-western end of New Guinea.73

Cornwallis, for his part, considered the Penang settlement plan had gone too far to be cancelled; it was his duty therefore to promote its success ‘consistently with the rigid economy which our present circumstances so loudly call for’. He recommended a thorough investigation to determine whether the new possession would promote the Company’s Eastern trade, the purpose of which, as Cornwallis understood it, was to be:

... a Mart for the Barter of Ophium and other productions of Bengal for Tin and Pepper, to be applied as funds in the Chinese market for the purchase of Tea, instead of the ruinous export of specie from this Country [India].

A detailed survey of the harbour and island was required to determine whether Penang would serve as a port for the British fleet in time of war.74

The instructions sent to Light by the Bengal Government in January 1787 took a long term view of the settlement’s commercial prospects:

... our great Object in settling Prince of Wales’s Island is to secure a Port of Refreshment and Repair for the King’s, the Company’s and the Country Ships and we must leave it to time and to your good Management to Establish it as a Port of Commerce...

As an inducement to merchants to bring their goods to Prince of Wales Island there would be no duties on imports: the port would be free to all nations.75

The Bengal Government showed some concern, however, to use the settlement as a means of expansion. In February 1787 Light was asked to consider whether commerce could be opened up between the Company’s Indian settlements and Manila ‘through the medium of communication offered by the new settlement’.76 In March Cornwallis told Dundas that he would pay more attention than previously to the search for secure harbours for ships of war ‘in the neighbouring countries and islands to the Eastward’.77

As the Company’s trade with China increased, more detailed and accurate information was sought about the various passages, some still almost unknown, from the Indian Ocean to the Eastern Seas.78 In March 1790 the Company’s directors in London sent instructions to the Bombay Government79 for a survey to be made of ‘the most eligible passage’ for ships using the eastern route to China.80 The work was to be carried out
in the two seasons 1790–91 and would include a survey of the north-west coast of New Guinea, and of the island's south coast (knowledge of the extent of the New Guinea land mass being still incomplete) to find a channel or strait which would be navigable by East Indiamen. The survey was to be combined with a visit to the Palau islands (1000 kilometres north of New Guinea) to convey news to the chief of his son's death in London. Alexander Dalrymple, now the Company's Hydrographer, had been pressing for such a survey and must have played a key part in drawing up these instructions; he may have been hoping that the Company would resume the attempt to extend its commerce in the Eastern Seas, but no commercial objective was mentioned, the principal object being 'an Hydrographical Survey'. There was, however, an ulterior motive in visiting the Palaus: to look for a suitable port which Company ships could use for refreshment and refitting on the voyage to and from China. Captain John McCluer of the Bombay Marine was appointed to command the mission, 'the most elaborate and expensive attempt to explore the passages to the East ever sponsored by the Company'. The principal survey ship was the Panther, a large vessel of 150 tons and carrying fourteen guns, which was to be accompanied by the Endeavour. The expedition sailed from Bombay in August 1790.

McCluer reached the western end of New Guinea in July 1791 having gone to Palau first. After visiting Amboyna for supplies the party returned to New Guinea and in late October, on the island's southern side, entered a deep 'Gulph' (McCluer's Inlet) which was explored for several days. It was after the two vessels had reached as far as they could and were returning to the entrance of the inlet that McCluer met about thirty native canoes all carrying nutmegs and masooy bark. McCluer bought their nutmegs (the husks of which native people ate raw 'like apples') and could have filled his vessel with them, so plentiful were they.

When McCluer was at Bencoolen in May 1792 he sent back to India an account of his voyage; it is probably at this time that he communicated to Captain John Hayes, his fellow officer in the Bombay Marine, that nutmeg and other valuable products could be obtained on the west side of New Guinea. After refitting and re-stocking his two vessels at Bencoolen, McCluer returned to the Palau islands where he took the extraordinary step of retiring from the Company's service and handing over authority to his second in command, John Wedgeborough. McCluer's object was to devote himself to the welfare of the islanders who were, he said, 'absolutely in need of some person to advise them and regulate their conduct, to prevent them murdering each other', and to instruct them 'in the most useful branch of agriculture . . .'

Meanwhile, on 6 February 1793, John Hayes had embarked on his expedition to the South-West Pacific. Hayes had intended to follow a track between Timor and New Holland but, because of the early commencement of the south-east trade winds, he decided, having held a council of his officers:

... to round the south cape of New Holland and proceed to the Eastward, after woooding, watering and refitting at Adventure Bay [Bruny Island, Tasmania] until we got the S.E. Trade in the Pacific Ocean, with which we could range any part of New Guinea at pleasure.
Hayes reached Tasmania (then known as Van Dieman’s Land) on 25 April and remained there till 9 June exploring and charting the southern extremity. Then, sailing north-east across the open Tasman Sea, he headed for New Caledonia where he arrived on 28 June. He investigated the island’s south-west coast, ‘before entirely unknown’, and skirted the western side, encountering local people in canoes. After a night in which ‘a large mountain burnt furiously’ and agitated the sea, and having seen in the morning at low tide ‘innumerable black rocks’ exposed, he decided to leave the island, ‘one of the most dreary and barren places in the known world’. Clearly, Hayes had not surveyed the island itself and had probably confined his explorations to the reefs.

On 3 July he sailed for the Louisiade Archipelago (now part of Milne Bay Province in Papua New Guinea). He passed round to the south of the Louisiades exploring many of the small islands, penetrated as far westwards as possible and reached the south-eastern extremity of New Guinea before doubling back to Rossel Island. On Rossel he found two distinct races of people: one, with long straight black hair, inhabited the mountains and lived in huts or ‘dobbos’ constructed in the forks of tall forest trees; the other, having woolly hair, lived by the seashore in neatly built huts raised upon piles. Hayes was the first European to come into contact with these people: he believed them to be cannibals.

From Rossel Island Hayes headed north intending to follow a course that would take him through Dampier’s Strait between New Britain and the mainland of east New Guinea. However, contrary winds and currents compelled him to pass through St George’s Channel 500 kilometres to the east between New Britain and New Ireland, but by a different route to that of Carteret in 1767. Here the party met friendly East New Britain people who came alongside in their canoes, but Hayes was unable to anchor. He then sailed in a westerly direction passing an extensive range of islands (possibly the Vitu group) which he named Cornwallis Archipelago in honour of the Governor-General. He then ranged the ‘whole east side of New Guinea’ and arrived at Dore Bay on 18 September.

An account of Hayes’s stay at Dore Bay and of the settlement which he founded has already been given. Hayes left Dore Bay in the Duke of Clarence on 22 December 1793 to return to India, leaving behind Captain Thomas Watkin Court and a party of twenty four, with the Duchess (now unseaworthy), six four-pounders, powder and ammunition, and provisions for twelve months.

On the return voyage Hayes was forced to stay at Buru in the Moluccas, under Dutch control, while waiting for supplies. From here he sailed southwards to Timor where, with assistance from the Dutch, he was able to continue his voyage to Batavia (Djakarta). He arrived at Batavia in June 1794 to find there the East India Company’s Bengal Squadron under Commodore Mitchell, recently in action against the French. Hayes was not allowed to continue his voyage to India and ‘found himself under the necessity of proceeding to China’. A passage was, however, obtained for Captain Relph (who had commanded the Duchess), and to him was entrusted Hayes’s despatches for the Governor-General and for Messrs. Frushard and Laprimaudaye, the expedition’s
backers. Relph also carried with him a round nutmeg tree. While at Batavia Hayes showed a sample of his New Guinea ‘vegetable productions’ to Dr Charles Campbell, a botanist and medical man, who pronounced the round nutmeg from New Guinea to be the true Banda nutmeg. Campbell, however, who carried out his examination on board a ship, was not confident of complete accuracy; he also regretted that Hayes had not taken a naturalist on the expedition.97

At Canton Hayes disposed of the greater portion of his cargo including massoy bark, clove bark and other New Guinea products which were esteemed delicacies by the Chinese. He left Canton on 18 October and at Macao chanced to meet John McCluer, who had arrived from the Palau Islands after an epic voyage in a small open six-oared boat without instruments or charts, having subsisted with his Malay crew on coconuts and water. Hayes told McCluer of the settlement he had established at Dore Bay and asked him to take provisions to those he had left behind. McCluer, who was intending to return to the Palaus, a few days sail from Dore, agreed.98

Hayes and the Duke of Clarence arrived at Calcutta on 5 December. His letter and accompanying papers, sent to Sir John Shore from Batavia six months before, had already been considered by the Governor-General and Council, as had a letter from Frushard and Laprimaudaye of 31 October asking Shore for assistance in promoting the new settlement of Restoration Bay, and for a reward equivalent to the expense and importance of the expedition’s discoveries.99

Before considering the benefits of the proposed settlement Shore had consulted the records to ascertain ‘the sentiments of our Superiors on this subject’. He looked first at the objects of the Balambangan settlement, as set out in the Court of Directors’ instructions to the Bombay Council of 12 June 1771 (see above), and at the Company’s orders precluding settlement elsewhere should Balambangan fail.100 These orders, said Shore, ‘contain a positive prohibition against any further attempts to form Settlements to the Eastward’. The Company’s joint expedition with the Government in 1780, during which settlements were to be established in Mindanao and the Celebes, was cancelled in favour of an expedition against the Cape. Shore could find no other attempt to effect an establishment in the Eastern Seas ‘unless the Settlements of Pulo Penang should be deemed an exception’.101

Next Shore dismissed Hayes’s claim to have made new discoveries. Comparing Forrest’s map of Dore Harbour with Hayes’s map of Restoration Bay no doubt could possibly remain that they had visited the same place, even though ‘the Latitude and Longitude assigned to the Spot by the two Navigators differ’. After repeated searches Forrest found nutmegs of the long kind on Manaswary Island in Dore Bay but did not pretend to have found the ‘true nutmeg’. No decisive opinion could be formed from the specimens brought back by Hayes’s expedition because they were only half mature.102 But, argued Shore, if the advantages of New Guinea were as Hayes described—a favourable climate, excellent soil, ample provisions and products, and a capacious and secure harbour—it was difficult to believe that the Dutch would not already have exploited them.
I do not see that the possession of a Settlement at Restoration Bay would essentially contribute to promote the Commercial Interests of the Nation and the Company; that the sale of the products of Great Britain would be promoted by it, in any important degree, or that it would be of material use to our China Trade . . .

Though in the course of time Chinese settlers might be encouraged to form a settlement there:

. . . the protection of the Infant Colony would require a considerable Military Establishment, and after all, unless we were sure of Returns for the Market of Europe, the Balance would be finally against the Company. Neither do we at present know sufficient of the disposition of the Inhabitants in the interior parts of the Island, and how far they could countenance or oppose a Settlement.

It is however certain that the advantages which the Dutch derive from their Spice Trade would diminish in proportion to the augmentation of our profits, and the Wisdom of the policy which would produce this effect is with me doubtful . . .

. . . considering all the circumstances which I have stated, the Distance of the Spot from this Government, the difficulty of protecting it in time of War, and of furnishing it with Supplies at all times, the situation of affairs in Europe, the certainty of a considerable expense in the Outset, and the probable continuance of it for a long time, I am of opinion that we should not be justified in complying with the applications of Messrs Frushard and Laprimaudaye by prosecuting the Establishment of a Settlement at New Guinea on the Company’s account. 103

The Secretary of the Bengal Government did not, however, repeat these arguments when informing Frushard and Laprimaudaye of Shore’s decision: he wrote merely that the Governor-General was precluded from authorising or taking part in Captain Hayes’s establishment because of the Company’s ‘positive Orders’ prohibiting new settlements to the eastward. 104

At about this time, November 1794, McCluer arrived at Dore Bay with provisions for the relief of the settlers. He found them in a miserable state: of the original twenty-five, several had died and fourteen were sick and dependent on the kindness of the local people. 105 Restoration Bay, he said, was ‘rather an improper appellation’ in view of the unhealthy climate; it was the ‘worst situation’ that could be chosen for a settlement being too far from the trade routes. He blamed ‘bad management’ but also ‘unforeseen errors’ for the expedition’s loss of life and money. 106 McCluer left Dore Bay in March 1795 having been unable to make the settlers’ ship, the Duchess, seaworthy again, 107 but anticipating that Hayes would arrive presently to complete their rescue.

When Hayes had arrived at Calcutta late in 1794, however, his period of leave had expired and he could not return to New Guinea. The task was given to his second officer on the expedition, William Risdon, who was placed in command of the Duke of Clarence. Risdon reached Restoration Bay in about May 1795 bearing the news that the settlement had not received the support of the Bengal Government. The settlement can be said to have ended with his departure from Dore Bay, with the Duchess, probably in mid-June. 108
John Hayes himself went on to serve with distinction in the Bombay Marine, became senior officer of the Indian Navy, the successor of the Bombay Marine, and was knighted by George IV. One of the financial backers of the expedition, James Frushard, though an ‘unsuccessful speculator for years’, made a fortune out of silk. However, he and his partner, Stephen Laprimaudaye, could not have considered their New Guinea speculation to have been entirely a failure. William Risdon and the returning settlers had brought with them ‘a cargo of immense value’ consisting of ‘all the spices which are in the highest estimation’. And in November 1796 Frushard and Laprimaudaye applied to the Board of Trade at Calcutta to send to England on one of the Company’s regular ships thirteen and three-quarter tons of nutmegs and mace ‘lately imported from the Eastward upon the ship Duke of Clarence’. Their experiment, the Bengal Council agreed, ‘appears to lead to the opening of a Trade which may eventually prove beneficial to the Commerce of Bengal’ and merited ‘every fair encouragement and assistance’.

At the same time the Bengal Government’s Botanical Gardens were investigating the cultivation of nutmegs and other spices in the Company’s territories: in 1797 there were over 800 nutmeg plants growing in the Gardens at Calcutta and about 200 had been distributed to different parts of the country. A nurseryman, Mr Smith, was despatched to the Eastern Islands to collect specimens and he later sent back nutmeg and sago plants to India and clove, nutmeg and other spices to Penang and England.

Commercial interest in the west New Guinea region did not quite end with the Hayes settlement. When John McCluer was at Dore to relieve the settlers an ambassador arrived from Prince Nuku, one of the sons of the Sultan of Tidore, who resided at the east end of Seram. The ambassador carried with him letters from the Prince inviting the English to Seram, and complaining of their failure to fulfil the promise of Captain Thomas Forrest to protect the Prince and his family against the oppressions of the Dutch. The Sultan claimed as his territory all the lands of Papua (i.e., New Guinea) as well as the neighbouring islands at the western end not occupied by the Dutch—Gebe, Waigeo, Salawati, Batanta, Missol, East Seram and all the chain down to the Aru islands. In communicating this to Alexander Dalrymple in London, McCluer recommended that the Prince’s offer should be notified to the East India Company because:

... a very grand commercial field might be opened, for not only the produce of the Moluccas but of the Sooloo Seas and the Philipinas including the whole in the same voyage.

McCluer favoured Batanta, or Gebe which had a fine harbour.

Dalrymple backed McCluer’s suggestion and now revived his entrepôt scheme on a more ambitious scale: in a submission to the Company in 1796 he proposed a ‘capital’ settlement at Balambangan and subsidiary bases near the Straits of Alas or Sape (east of Java), and on New Guinea, Gebe, and at Tourane in Cochin China, all places along the route to China. The East Indies, however, had now become a minor theatre of operations in the French revolutionary wars and although in 1801 the East India
Company moved to acquire the island of Gebe and, separately, Obi in the Moluccas, no settlements were established. An attempted re-settlement of Balambangan in 1803 was abandoned after two years. A quarter of a century later (1828) the Dutch flag was raised at Fort Dubus on the south-west coast of New Guinea and Holland’s sovereignty proclaimed over the western half of the island.

1 India Office Records (IOR): Bengal Secret Consultations (BSC), 7 November 1794, nos. 1-4, and 28 November 1794, nos. 1-10, IOR: BEN CON Vol. 30. These consultations contain copies of submissions made to the Governor-General and Council of Bengal proposing the establishment of the New Guinea settlement, and the Governor-General's minute on the proposals and reply. Also included are lists of the known produce of New Guinea, of the forces and stores necessary for forming a settlement and of the officers and men left in charge, a copy of the proclamation, and papers and opinions about spices found in New Guinea. Lack of financial support may have prevented Hayes from publishing an account of his voyage to New Guinea and subsequently his charts and papers were lost; see Ida Lee, Commodore Sir John Hayes: his voyage and life (1767-1831) (London, 1912), pp. 149-51, and Charles Rathbone Low, History of the Indian Navy (London, 1877), vol. i, p. 200; see also IOR: Bengal Despatches: Public Letter to Bengal, 27 July 1796, para. 114, E/4/645, p. 399, which refers to the Bengal Government's decision to subscribe for thirty copies of Hayes's survey: nothing seems to have come of this.

I am grateful to Andrew Cook, Map Archivist at the India Office Records, for his comments on a draft of this article and for his generous guidance to sources previously unknown to me. Crown copyright material in the India Office Records is quoted by permission of the Comptroller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

2 Officers of the Company's marine force who had command of a ship were entitled to be called Captain. Hayes's substantive rank was actually Lieutenant.

3 'Messrs. Frushard and Laprimaudaye' was a mercantile house in Calcutta in the 1790s. Frushard had been sent from London by the East India Company in 1779 to promote improvements in the production of raw silk in Bengal; he was an unpaid agent engaged to supply the Company with silk at a given rate, and he eventually became a successful merchant and speculator. See W. W. Hunter, The Annals of Rural Bengal (London, 1868), ch. vi, and East India Company, Reports and documents connected with the proceedings of the East India Company in regard to the culture and manufacture of cotton-wool, raw silk, and indigo, in India (London, 1836), Report on raw silk, p. xviii. A third person, Mr Udney, may have been involved in the planning of the Hayes expedition (see BSC, 28 November 1794, no. 3, Hayes to Sir John Shore, dated Batavia, 23 June 1794): possibly this was George Udney, a senior merchant in the Company's employment in Bengal.

4 Hayes's biographer, Ida Lee, suggests that even without taking into account these discoveries, his distinguished service in the Bombay Marine ought to have entitled him to a place in the Dictionary of National Biography.

5 The Dutch, Britain's rival European power in the Eastern Seas, had effectively monopolised the trade in cloves, nutmeg and its derivative mace; production was confined to the Banda group of islands, and neighbouring Amboina, in the Moluccas to the west of New Guinea; see Holden Furber, Rival empires of trade in the Orient 1600-1800 (Minneapolis, 1976), p. 17.

6 An aromatic bark yielding oil.

7 BSC, 28 November 1794, no. 3, Hayes to Shore, 23 June 1794.

8 BSC, 28 November 1794, no. 2, Hayes to Lord Cornwallis, dated Buru [Moluccas], 10 March 1794.

9 The term ‘Papuan’ here refers to the inhabitants of New Guinea. Later the term was used for the people of ‘Papua’, the south-eastern quarter of the island administered by Australia as a separate territory and now forming the southern half of the state of Papua New Guinea.
10 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Cornwallis, 10 March 1794.
11 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Shore, 23 June 1794.
12 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Cornwallis, 23 June 1794.
13 BSC, 7 November 1794, no. 1, Messrs. Frushard and Laprimaudaye to Shore, dated Calcutta, 31 October 1794, and BSC, 28 November 1794, no. 1, Minute by Shore, 28 November 1794; Frushard and Laprimaudaye claimed that the details they supplied had been 'fully verified' by Hayes and also by Captain Relph, commander of the Duchess, and Mr Risdon, Hayes's second officer.
14 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Cornwallis, 10 March 1794.
15 Holden Furber (ed.), The private record of an Indian Governor-Generalship: the correspondence of Sir John Shore, Governor-General, with Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control 1793-1798 (Harvard, 1933), p. 21.
16 BSC, 7 November 1794, Minute by Shore, 28 November 1794.
17 The 1793 Charter Act, though confirming the East India Company's privileges, also required the Company to carry a certain tonnage of private merchants' goods, both outward and homeward.
19 Sir Evan Cotton, East Indiamen: the East India Company's Maritime Service, ed. Sir Charles Fawcett (London, 1949), p. 110. The new route made use of the contrary trade winds which prevail on different sides of the equator: ships could still reach Canton after the onset of the north-east monsoon by sailing south of the equator to the region of the north-west monsoon and using this wind to sail so far eastwards that, when the equator was eventually recrossed, the northern hemisphere north-east monsoon would be a favourable wind for the route westward to China; see Howard T. Fry, Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808) and the expansion of British trade (London, 1970), pp. 16–19.
20 This phrase was used by Alexander Dalrymple in A plan for extending the commerce of this Kingdom and of the East India Company (London, 1769); see also n. 39 below.
21 IOR: East India Company (EIC) Committee of Correspondence Memoranda, 1760, D/108: abstract of letter from G. Pigot, President and Governor of Madras, to EIC Secret Committee, 31 July 1760.
22 Dalrymple's report to the Directors of 26 November 1765 makes clear his commercial objective, see IOR: EIC Miscellaneous Letters Received, 1765, E/1/47, no. 135. See also Fry, op. cit., pp. 19–25.
23 Silver from Europe was largely the product of South America; the preferred form was silver coined as Spanish dollars.
24 Exports from London to India and China are recorded in the Company's General Commerce Journals: IOR: L/AG/i/6.
25 Tea was not introduced into India until the 1820s.
26 The duty was reduced by Pitt's Commutation Act, 1784.
29 Ibid., p. 12.
30 Anthony Farrington of the India Office Records has compiled a detailed analysis of imports and exports at Canton, both English and other European, for the four years 1775–76 and 1778–79, from information recorded in China diaries (IOR: China Factory Records, G/12). The figures do not reveal how much cargo the country ships carried on the Company's behalf, but, as one would expect, Company ships' cargo included far more broadcloth and long ells (woollen cloth) whereas far more cotton was carried on country ships; other commodities—for example, pepper and tin—show a more variable pattern.
32 Ibid., p. 76: Philips also says that there was, in fact, a rapid increase in British exports to India in the years 1788–91; the explanation of this contradiction is probably that the Company, in arguing that exports could not be increased, was trying to preserve its monopoly; however, the successful clandestine private trade with Bengal proved that greater expansion of the Company's trade was possible.
Furber, *Rival empires*, p. 177. Silver purchased by the EIC for export to China dropped significantly from season 1758/59 and was nil from 1781/82-1784/85; from 1785/86 silver purchased was back at the pre-1758 level, see China Factory Records, IOR: G/12/195, f. 66. I am grateful to Anthony Farrington for drawing this source to my attention.

From 1806-09, 7 million dollars in silver bullion and coin was shipped from China to India, Greenberg, op. cit., p. 10, citing statistics in Hosea Ballou Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China 1635-1834*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1926).

IOR: Miscellaneous Letters Received, E/1/47, no. 135, Dalrymple to EIC, 26 November 1765.

IOR: Home Miscellaneous Series H/629, pp. 455-8. See also Nicholas Tarling, *Sulu and Sabah: a study of British policy towards the Philippines and North Borneo from the late eighteenth century* (Kuala Lumpur, 1978), pp. 13-14. It was also agreed that the English should assist the Sulus if attacked and that the Sultan would protect the English from all enemies.

Tarling, op. cit., p. 15.


Fry, op. cit., p. 290, says that the Plan was printed in 1769, but not published till 1771; also published was *Account of what has passed between the East India Directors and Alexander Dalrymple* (1768).


Ibid., p. 34.

Hall, op. cit., p. 535.

Fry, op. cit., ch. iv, discusses in detail Dalrymple's advocacy of the Balambangan scheme and his worsening relations with the Company's directors.

IOR: Bombay Despatches, E/4/999, pp. 1-82, Court of Directors to President and Council of Bombay, 12 June 1771; extracts of this letter are also given in IOR: Borneo Factory Records (BFR), G/4/1, pp. 29-33.

BFR, G/4/1, p. 35, Court of Directors to Balambangan, 19 November 1773.

IOR: Madras Public Consultations, P/240/34, no. 799, 18 September 1772.

BFR, G/4/1, p. 82.


See BFR, G/4/1, Court of Directors to Balambangan, 3 January 1775: Shore cited these instructions when disallowing Hayes's New Guinea settlement in 1794; two letters were sent to Balambangan on this date, one to Herbert and his council, and one to their successors. See IOR: Personal Records, O/6/12, pp. 264-5, and IOR: Fort Marlborough (Sumatra) Factory Records, G/35/33, letter to President and Council, 23 December 1774.

Court of Directors' General Letter to Fort Marlborough, 5 March 1776; not found in the India Office Records but quoted by Shore in his minute of 28 November 1794, see BSC, 28 November 1794.


Ismail had come to Balambangan in the train of ambassadors from the heir-apparent of the Sultan of Mindanao.

Captain Thomas Forrest, *A voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas, from Balambangan, including an account of Magindana, Sooloo, and other islands . . . performed in the Tartar Galley . . . during the years 1774, 1775, and 1776* (London, 1779), pp. 1-3.


See Fry, op. cit., ch. vi.

A volume of papers relating to these negotiations is included in IOR: India Office Political and Secret Department records, L/P&S/1/6.

When Carteret in the *Swallow* had stayed at Macassar in 1767 the King of the Bugis had pressed him to establish a settlement there: see memorandum on Captain Carteret, 8 August 1780, (no. 12), L/P&S/1/6.

Britain declared war against Holland in December 1780.
64 IOR: EIC's Secret Committee minutes, L/P&S/1/5, p. 118.
65 Philips, op. cit., p. 67.
66 After the publication of *A voyage to New Guinea* Forrest had been appointed to a vacant command in the Bengal Marine; Bassett, op. cit., p. 38.
67 IOR: Straits Settlements Factory Records (SSFR), G/34/1, pp. 180–83, extracts from Bengal General Consultations, 31 May 1784. In January of the following year Joseph Kinlock of the Company's Bengal civil service was sent to Acheh, northern Sumatra, as commercial resident; the post was abolished in November 1785, IOR: Biographical File 4.
68 SSFR, G/34/1, pp. 198–203, Francis Light to John McPherson, acting Governor-General, dated Calcutta, 25 January 1786.
69 Ibid.
70 SSFR, G/34/2, p. 357, Bengal Separate Consultations regarding Penang, 13 December 1786. Prince of Wales Island remained a dependency of Bengal until 1805.
71 Public Record Office: Cornwallis Papers, P.R.O. 30/11/156, Cornwallis to EIC Secret Committee, no. 5, 30 November 1786.
72 Cornwallis Papers, P.R.O. 30/11/15, Cornwallis to Henry Dundas, 30 November 1786.
73 SSFR, G/34/1, pp. 204–07, Court of Directors to Cornwallis, undated: reproduced in Vincent Harlow and Frederick Madden, *British colonial developments 1774–1834: select documents* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 52–54. 'Pitts Strait' was a channel leading into Dampier Straits which Captain Wilson had named on the *Pitt* voyage in 1758. A full draft of this letter to Cornwallis has not been found in either the India Office Records or the Cornwallis papers at the Public Record Office; Light's letter of 25 January 1786 was received by the EIC Secret Committee on 23 June 1786 (Secret Committee minutes, L/P&S/1/9, f. 145).
74 SSFR, G/34/2, pp. 343–50, Bengal Public Consultations, minute by Cornwallis, 13 December 1786, and P.R.O. 30/11/153, Cornwallis to Court of Directors, no. 2, 16 November 1786.
75 SSFR, G/34/2, pp. 431–44, Bengal Public Consultations, 22 January 1787, Government of Bengal to Light, 22 January 1787.
76 SSFR, G/34/2, pp. 447–49, Government of Bengal to Light, 28 February 1787.
77 Cornwallis Papers, P.R.O. 30/11/150, Cornwallis to Dundas, 5 March 1787. Penang turned out to be a disappointment: though the harbour was excellent, it was unsuitable as a naval base, and the island proved to be badly placed for trade with the Malay archipelago (Hall, op. cit., pp. 546–7).
79 Officers of the Bombay Marine undertook most of the Company's survey work.
80 IOR: Bombay Despatches, E/4/1006, pp. 129–58, Court of Directors to Government of Bombay, Public Department, 25 March 1790, paras. 18–40. The Committee of Shipping's draft of these paragraphs had been approved by the Court of Directors on 13 January 1790; unfortunately the Committee's minutes for this period have not survived.
82 Fry, 'Alexander Dalrymple and New Guinea', pp. 92–5, gives the background; there is no evidence, however, that Dalrymple's 'A collection of reports in English and Dutch concerning Papua', which Fry claims was intended to help forward the proposed New Guinea survey, was ever published; the copy (press-mark 435.k.13) which was acquired by the British Museum (now British Library) as part of the Banks Collection consists of proof sheets; information supplied by Andrew Cook from a draft of his forthcoming catalogue of the works of Alexander Dalrymple.
84 Fry, 'Alexander Dalrymple and New Guinea', pp. 96–8; Spray, op. cit., pp. 244–5. The gulf, Teluk Berau, runs east for about 250 km. into the north-western tip of New Guinea in the direction of Dore Bay; a narrow range of mountains running parallel to the northern coast separates the head of the gulf from Dore.
85 National Library of Scotland: Melville [Henry Dundas] Papers, MS. 1068, extracts of a letter from McCluer to Dalrymple, dated Pooloo Bay near Bencoolen, 25 May 1792, sent to Dundas, 2 November 1792. This followed a tragic encounter with local people when the ex-
pedition’s surgeon was taken and killed while trying to barter for bird of paradise plumes. McCluer decided, for very practical reasons, that revenge would serve no good purpose and so continued his course into the gulf. See also Low, op. cit., p. 197.

86 Lee, op. cit., p. 9.
88 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Shore, 23 June 1794.
89 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Cornwallis, 10 March 1794.
90 Lee, op. cit., p. 51.
91 The island was given this name during Admiral D’Entrecasteaux’s contemporaneous voyage.
93 Not to be confused with ‘Dampier Straits’ at the western end of New Guinea.
94 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Cornwallis, 10 March 1794, and Hayes to Shore, 23 June 1794. See also Lee, op. cit., pp. 64-9.
95 BSC, 28 November 1794, Hayes to Shore, 23 June 1794. See also Lee, op. cit., pp. 111-13.
96 Hayes’s letter to Cornwallis is dated 10 March, the day before his departure from Buru.
97 BSC, 7 November 1794, no. 4, Campbell to Hayes, dated Batavia Roads, 24 June 1794; Lee, op. cit., pp. 124-30.
99 BSC, 7 and 28 November 1793.
100 The orders were incorporated in letters from the Court of Directors to Balambangan, 3 January 1775 and to Fort Marlborough, 5 March 1776 (see n. 50 above).
101 BSC, 28 November 1793, minute by Shore.
102 Specimens of nutmeg and mace had been referred, for opinion, to Dr W. Roxburgh, Superintendent of the Company’s Botanical Garden at Calcutta (BSC, 28 November 1794, no. 8, Roxburgh to Shore, 7 November 1794). In 1795 Roxburgh was authorised by the Bengal Government to send persons to the Moluccas to procure plants and seeds ‘of every thing valuable, particularly the nutmeg and clove trees’ (The Bengal obituary, Calcutta: Holmes & Co, 1848, p. 317).
103 BSC, 28 November 1793, minute by Shore.
104 BSC, 28 November 1794, no. 10, E. Hay to Frushard and Laprimaudaye, 28 November 1794.
105 Lee, op. cit., p. 150.
106 N.L.S., Melville [Dundas] Papers, MS. 1068, extracts of a letter from McCluer to Dalrymple, dated Fort Marlborough, 16 May 1795, sent to Dundas (now President of the Board of Control), 8 December 1796; Dalrymple had previously referred McCluer’s letter to the Company’s Secret Committee in December 1795.
109 The Bengal obituary, pp. 396-7.
114 Ibid., pp. xxix, 148.
115 N.L.S., Melville [Dundas] Papers, MS. 1068, extracts of a letter from McCluer to Dalrymple, 16 May 1795, sent to Dundas, 8 December 1796.
116 Fry, Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808) and the expansion of British trade, pp. 158-62, provides details and the background; McCluer had earlier also conveyed to London a request of the Sultan of Sulu that the Company renew its friendship and enter into an alliance (ibid., p. 153).
117 Ibid., p. 164.
118 Near Triton Bay, approximately 200 km. south-east of McCluer’s Inlet.

173