

HMS *DAPHNE* IN GALAPAGOS: ITS VISIT AND LEGACY

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SUMMARY

HMS *Daphne*, for which the Daphne Isles were named, was the first British naval ship to explore Galapagos after HMS *Beagle's* famous visit in 1835. Details of the voyage are published here for the first time. The *Daphne* spent 33 days in Galapagos, from 24 February to 28 March 1845, surveying the archipelago and assessing its suitability as an outpost for the British navy. Despite difficult and dangerous navigational conditions, possibly related to an El Niño episode, five islands (Floreana, San Cristóbal, Santa Cruz, Santiago and Isabela) were examined and land excursions made on the first four. Captain John James Onslow documented the voyage, focussing on the inhabited areas and places where freshwater could be obtained for shipping. On Floreana, where up to 350 people had lived and farmed in the highlands during the 1830s, he reported just 40 inhabitants now living at the lower spring but still farming the highlands, and surviving on the same crops reported in the 1830s, as well as by selling chickens, pigs, goats and bullocks to visiting whalerships. The tortoises, formerly the main article of trade, had been overexploited and could no longer be found on the island. Another ten people resided at the new settlement (established c. 1843) in Wreck Bay, San Cristóbal, farmed the highlands and hunted tortoises for trade with whalers, and 15 lived in the interior of Santa Cruz where they also cultivated plots of land. These records constitute one of the earliest descriptions of the Wreck Bay settlement and the earliest known report of agriculture on Santa Cruz Island. The *Daphne's* surveyors, who included the captain's son (also named John James Onslow), surveyed Post Office Bay (Floreana) and the previously uncharted Conway Bay (Santa Cruz), with Midshipman George William Pakenham Edwardes producing coloured charts of these and four other bays (Freshwater Bay, San Cristóbal; James Bay, Santiago; Iguana Cove, Isabela; Gardner Bay, Española), as well as an illustrated map of the whole archipelago. Six places were named during the voyage: "Daphne Isles", "Onslow Islets", "Seymours Isles", "Gordon Rocks", "Cormorant Point" and "Daylight Point". The first three were named after the ship, its captain (and his son), and George Francis Seymour (commander in chief of the Pacific Station). Gordon Rocks has four possible namesakes: Captain John Gordon, of HMS *America*, which joined the *Daphne* for part of the voyage, his brothers George Hamilton (foreign secretary) and William (a senior member of the Admiralty) who were involved in Britain's Galapagos exploration from afar, and the unrelated Captain George Thomas Gordon of the famous paddle-steamer HMStr *Cormorant*, which also met up with the *Daphne* in Galapagos. Cormorant Point (Punta Cormorant) honours this ship, the first steam vessel ever to navigate Galapagos waters, while Daylight Point (Punta Luz del Día) appears to have been named for topographical reasons.

RESUMEN

HMS *Daphne* en Galápagos: su visita y su legado. El HMS *Daphne*, en cuyo honor las Islas Daphne fueron nombradas, fue la primera nave de la armada británica en explorar Galápagos luego de la célebre visita del HMS *Beagle* en 1835. Detalles del viaje del *Daphne* son publicados aquí por primera vez. El *Daphne* permaneció en Galápagos 33 días, del 24 de febrero al 28 de marzo 1845, realizando levantamientos hidrográficos del archipiélago y evaluando su potencial como base naval británica. A pesar de las condiciones de navegación difíciles y peligrosas, posiblemente debidas a un evento de El Niño, cinco de las islas (Floreana, San Cristóbal, Santa Cruz, Santiago e Isabela) fueron examinadas y se realizaron excursiones a tierra en las cuatro primeras. El capitán John James Onslow documentó el viaje, enfocándose en las áreas pobladas y lugares con disponibilidad de agua fresca para abastecimiento. De Floreana, en donde hasta 350 personas vivían y cultivaban en la parte alta durante la década de 1830, Onslow reportó solo 40 habitantes para entonces viviendo junto al manantial más abajo pero todavía cultivando las tierras altas, y sobreviviendo de los mismos cultivos reportados en los 1830, además de la venta de pollos, cerdos, cabras y vacunos a las balleneras de paso. Las tortugas, anteriormente el principal artículo de comercio, habían sido sobreexplotadas y ya no se las encontraba dentro de la isla. Otras diez personas residían en un nuevo asentamiento (establecido c. 1843) en Puerto Chico (Wreck Bay) en San Cristóbal, cultivando las tierras altas y cazando tortugas para comercializarlas a los balleneros, y 15 individuos vivían en el interior de Santa Cruz en donde también mantenían parcelas de cultivo. Estos registros constituyen una de las descripciones más tempranas del asentamiento de Wreck Bay y el más antiguo referente conocido de agricultura en la isla Santa Cruz. Los hidrógrafos del *Daphne*, quienes incluyeron al hijo del capitán (llamado

también John James Onslow), registraron la bahía Post Office (Floreana) y la no cartografiada previamente bahía Conway (Santa Cruz). El cadete George William Pakenham Edwardes produjo cartas ilustradas a color de las bahías mencionadas y de otras cuatro (Freshwater Bay, San Cristóbal; James Bay, Santiago; Iguana Cove, Isabela; Gardner Bay, Española), al igual que un mapa ilustrado de todo el archipiélago. Seis lugares fueron bautizados durante este viaje: “Daphne Isles”, “Onslow Islets”, “Seymours Isles”, “Gordon Rocks”, “Cormorant Point” y “Daylight Point”. Los primeros tres fueron nombrados en honor a la nave, su capitán (y su hijo), y George Francis Seymour (comandante en jefe de la Estación del Pacífico). Las rocas Gordon tienen cuatro epónimos posibles: el capitán John Gordon, del HMS *America* que acompañó al *Daphne* en parte del viaje; sus hermanos George Hamilton (secretario del exterior) y William (miembro de alto rango del Almirantazgo), quienes estuvieron involucrados en la exploración británica de Galápagos a la distancia; y el capitán George Thomas Gordon (no relacionado a los anteriores) del célebre vapor de ruedas HMStr *Cormorant*, el cual también se encontró con el *Daphne* en Galápagos. Cormorant Point (Punta Cormorant) fue nombrada en honor a esta nave, el primer vapor que navegó las aguas de Galápagos, mientras que Daylight Point (Punta Luz del Día) parece haber sido nombrada por razones topográficas.

INTRODUCTION

Daphne Major Island, a small, barnacle-shaped tuff cone in the centre of the Galapagos archipelago, is famous for its iconic shape and flat-bottomed craters, and as the site of a world-renowned 40-year evolutionary study of Darwin’s finches (Grant & Grant 2014). It is one of the most recognized and well-studied islands in the archipelago (Fig. 1). In contrast, very little is known about the ship for which it was named, HMS *Daphne*, and its visit to Galapagos in 1845. The ship’s captain, John James Onslow, and surveying crew made several contributions to the cartography of Galapagos, naming islands and landmarks and charting bays and coastlines; these hydrographic achievements were incorporated into later editions of Admiralty Chart 1375 “*Galapagos Islands Surveyed by Capt. Robt. Fitz Roy R.N. and the Officers of H.M.S. Beagle, 1836*” which had first been published in 1841 (e.g. Fig. 2: 1886 edition) and Admiralty Chart 1376 “*Anchorages in the Galapagos Islands*” (e.g. Fig. 3), first published in 1887.

The original charts drawn during the *Daphne* voyage, however, were never published, and nor was a narrative of the visit. Thus, many details about the voyage, such as the length of time the ship spent in Galapagos, its route through the archipelago, the islands explored and observations made, have never been brought to light. Even the timing of the voyage has remained unclear, with a few Galapagos researchers noting only that it occurred sometime around 1846 (e.g. Grant & Grant 2014, Woram 2021), or even in 1836 (Slevin 1959). These errors may have arisen because the title of the chart of Post Office Bay included in Admiralty Chart 1376 specifies that it was made “by the Officers of H.M.S. Beagle & Daphne, 1836–46” (Fig. 3); the *Beagle* and *Daphne* charts were each completed a year after their respective 1835 and 1845 visits.

This article aims to clarify this obscure page in the history of Galapagos with information obtained principally from the UK National Archives (UKNA), UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) and National Library of Australia (NLA), in the following manuscript documents: HMS *Daphne*’s log book for 1842–7 (Onslow 1847), G.W.P. Edwardes charts and sketches of Galapagos made during the voyage (Edwardes 1846a–g), Captain Onslow’s “Remark Book” for 1845 (Onslow 1845a) and his official report of the voyage in two letters addressed to Sir George Francis Seymour (commander-in-chief of the Pacific Station 1844–7), of which the first was written in Galapagos and the second completed a month later, during the ship’s return to the South American mainland (Onslow 1845b).

THE SHIP AND ITS OFFICERS

HMS *Daphne* was an 18-gun corvette, 36.6 m long and 11.5 m broad, with a complement of c. 150 men (Fig. 4) (Sharp 1858, Phillips 2014). Built at Pembroke Dockyard, Wales, and launched in Aug 1838, it completed three major voyages before being retired from service. Its first naval commission was to the Mediterranean Station (Dec 1838 to May 1842) under the command of Captain John Windham Dalling (1789–1853). Galapagos was visited during its second commission, a 4-year voyage to South America and the Pacific Station (Oct 1842 to Jan 1847), under the command of Captain John James Onslow (1795–1856). The

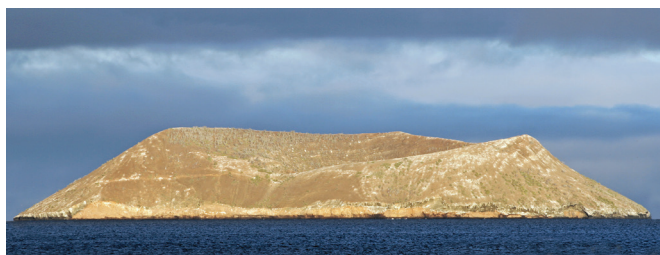


Figure 1. Daphne Major Island, July 2019 (photo: KTG).

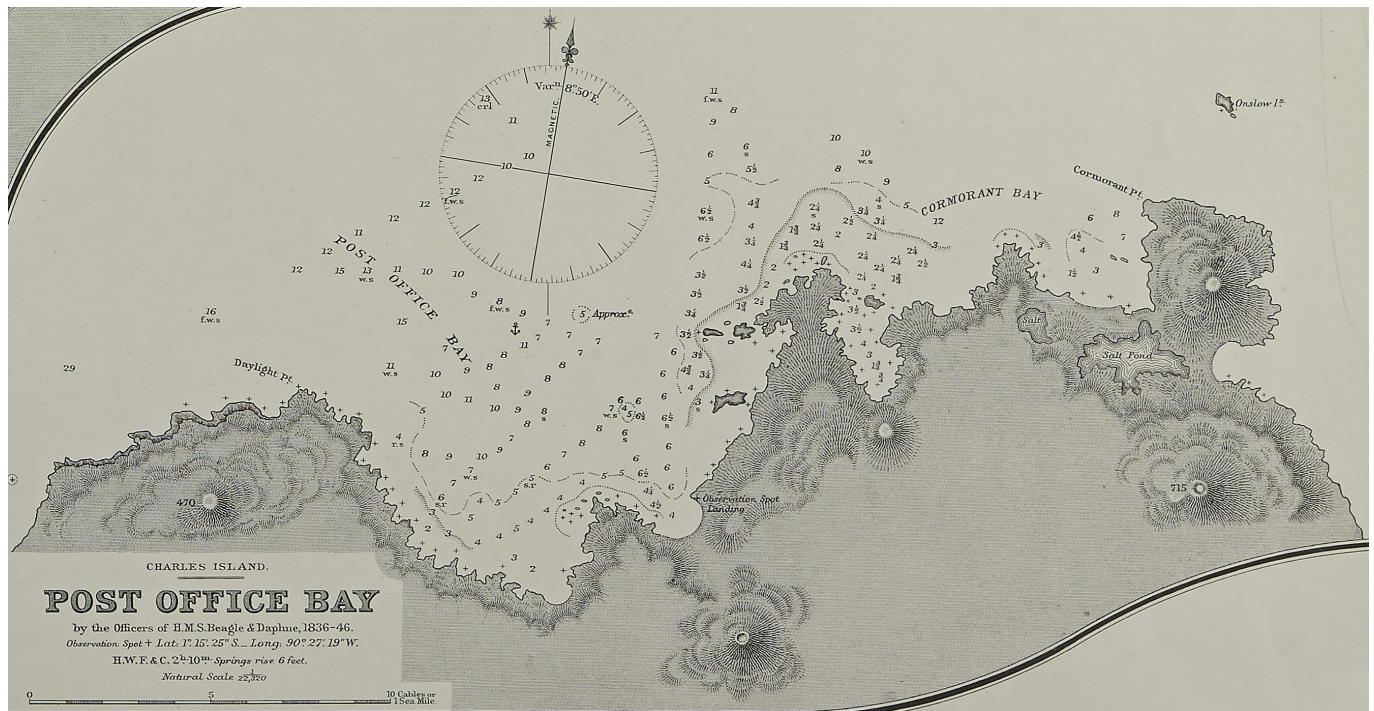


Figure 3. A chart of Post Office Bay, Floreana constructed “by the Officers of H.M.S. Beagle & Daphne, 1836-46.” (from Admiralty Chart 1376, edition of 1887).



Figure 4. HMS *Daphne* in September 1842, shortly before commencing her voyage to South America. From a hand-coloured lithograph by C.H. Seaforth (painter) and C.J. Hullmandel (lithographer), National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Daphne returned to South America and the Pacific Station (Dec 1848 to Aug 1852), under the command of Captain Edward Gennys Fanshawe (1814–1906), but Galapagos was not revisited. The ship was sold for breaking in 1864.

The principal officers on board for the voyage to Galapagos were Captain Onslow, First Lieutenants William Barrie, Francis H. Harper, George R. Halliday, Julian F. Slight and Richard Farmer, Master Daniel McDonnell Jago, Surgeon John Moody, Assistant Surgeon George H. Somerville, Chaplain and Naval Instructor David Carson, and Midshipmen John James Onslow (the Captain’s son), and George William Pakenham Edwardes (Haultain & Allen 1844).

Captain Onslow, fifth son of Admiral Sir Richard Onslow, 1st Baronet (1741–1817) (Maclean 1879), was already a famous naval officer, having commanded HMS *Clio*’s 1830–3 voyage to Chile, Peru, Panama and the Gulf of California, during which he re-possessed the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (originally claimed by Britain in 1765, but then effectively abandoned), leaving a note of British sovereignty at Port Egmont (West Falkland) on 20 Dec 1832 and, between 3 and 5 Jan 1833, ejecting a

small battalion of Argentines stationed at Port Louis (East Falkland) (Cawley 2015). This event was remarked upon by Charles Darwin when he arrived at the Falklands on HMS *Beagle* two months later, astonished to find “that the [British] Flag was now flying” (Keynes 2001, Grant & Estes 2009). The *Daphne* was Captain Onslow’s next and final command. When the ship returned to England, Onslow was reprimanded at a court martial for allowing the *Daphne* to touch ground (albeit briefly, and without lasting damage) off St Catharine’s Point (Isle of Wight) on 31 Dec 1846 and failing to report the incident to the commander-in-chief at Portsmouth (Hickman 1851). Master Jago, who was steering the ship at the time, was also admonished. Onslow retired from the Navy some 4.5 years later.

Lieutenant William Vincent Barrie (1817–73), sole son of Rear-Admiral Robert Barrie (1774–1841) and Julia Wharton Ingilby, was HMS *Daphne*’s chief surveyor. Although Barrie had never previously visited Galapagos, he was familiar

with the west coast of South America from having served as a lieutenant aboard HMS *President*, flagship of Rear-Admiral Charles Bayne Hodgson Ross, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Station 1837–41 (O’Byrne 1849). He also had family connections to Galapagos: his father had been a midshipman on HMS *Discovery* when it visited the islands in 1795, during George Vancouver’s circumnavigation of the world (1791–5), and his great uncle was Admiral Alan Gardner (1742–1809), for whom Gardner Island near Floreana and possibly Gardner Islet near Española are named (Woram 1989, Grant 2017). Towards the end of the *Daphne* voyage, Barrie was promoted to the rank of commander (Anon. 1847a) and, at Valparaíso, married Dolores Wood Ramirez de Arellano, the eldest daughter of artist and military officer Colonel Charles (a.k.a. Carlos) Wood, who designed the Chilean coat of arms (Anon. 1846a). After completing the *Daphne* voyage Barrie worked for the Hydrography Department of the Admiralty and raised a family at his inherited home, Swarthdale House, Lancaster (Dawson 1885).

Midshipman John James Onslow (1827–47), the third son of Captain Onslow and Lavinia Dinning (MacLean 1879), was another of the *Daphne*’s surveyors, “having been employed in the surveying Department” despite his young age (Onslow 1845b). With Barrie he explored various anchorages in Galapagos by small boat. He died just eight months after the completion of the *Daphne* voyage, while serving as newly-promoted Mate aboard HMS *St Vincent*, the same vessel that had hosted his father’s court martial earlier in the year (Lodge 1859).

George William Pakenham Edwardes (1825–?) was tasked with drawing the charts of Galapagos. He joined the *Daphne* as a first class volunteer (Becher 1842), and was promoted to Midshipman on 1 Jan 1845, two months before arriving in Galapagos. After the voyage he served on various naval ships (including the *Collingwood*, *Star*, *Retribution*, *Linnet* and *Nile*), achieving the rank of Lieutenant in 1853. He was court-martialled on 20 Mar 1854, for “having committed a breach of the 2nd article of war” but then “honourably acquitted”, the charge being found “false and unfounded” (Anon. 1854). Later that same year he left the Navy and returned to India, his place of birth, where he married Catherine Poulton in 1860.

THE VOYAGE TO GALAPAGOS

HMS *Daphne* left Portsmouth on 3 Oct 1842, and sailed to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where it spent the next 1.5 years protecting British interests on the east coast of South America. It then rounded Cape Horn in May 1844 and arrived at Valparaíso, Chile, Britain’s naval base on the west coast of South America, on 3 Jun 1844 (Anon. 1844). Seven months later, after visits to Nicaragua, San Salvador and Guatemala (Dunlop 1847), the *Daphne*, in company with two other naval ships, the 50-gun frigate HMS *America* and the steamship HMStr *Cormorant*, sailed from Valparaíso to Callao, Peru. Then on 12 Feb the *Daphne* departed alone and headed to Galapagos, where the three ships would reunite later.

The *Daphne* sighted Floreana Island at 11h00 on 24 Feb and spent the following 32 days navigating the southern and central part of the archipelago, touching at Floreana, Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal and Isabela islands, and sending a small boat to explore Santiago Island and its environs (Fig. 5). Throughout the visit, depth soundings were taken daily and sometimes hourly by the surveyors, and many sketches of island profiles were drawn by Midshipman Edwardes. Working under Onslow’s supervision, and using the ship’s copy of Admiralty Chart 1375 as a template, Edwardes also drew a map of the archipelago (Fig. 5) and six charts of anchorage bays, all adorned with his landscape illustrations. Four of these, L5845 of Gardner Bay, Hood Island (which wasn’t visited by the *Daphne*’s men), L5847 of Freshwater Bay, Chatham Island, L5846 of James Bay, James Island, and L5844 of Iguana Cove, Albemarle Island, are faithful renditions of the *Beagle* charts of the same places (L955, L954, L957 and L958), copies of which may have been on board the *Daphne*, and which were also depicted as small insets on Chart 1375. The remaining three charts, L5848 of Post Office Bay, Charles Island (Fig. 6), L5385 of Conway Bay, Indefatigable Island (Fig. 7) and L5843 Galapagos Islands (Fig. 5) show novel features and depth soundings recorded by the *Daphne*’s men. Edwardes completed the final drafts of these maps in 1846 and they were delivered to the Admiralty in Apr 1847 (UKHO 1846–56).

The ship’s first anchorage was at Post Office Bay, Floreana, 27 Feb to 3 Mar. On 28 Feb Captain Onslow and the officers took one of the ship’s cutters to Black Beach, from where they hiked “about 1 ⅔ miles” to the Floreana settlement, then situated near the first spring. There they met the acting governor of the island, “Don Felipe Betere”, who informed them that a total of 40 men, women and children lived on the island along with “300 head of cattle” (mostly wild), “jackasses” which they used for transport, and chickens, pigs and goats which they sold to “North American Whalers, for flour, tobacco, sugar, salt provisions and spirits.” Continuing higher up the trail, Onslow then “observed the extensive plain described by Cap^t Fitzroy” where about “30 acres” were planted with “bananas, plantains, pumpkins, melons, sugar cane, Indian corn, sweet potatoes, oranges and lemons”, and where he estimated “double that space might be brought into cultivation” (today, the island’s agricultural zone covers 290 ha, or > 700 acres: DPNG 2014). The next day was spent exploring and charting Post Office Bay and its adjacent coastlines, and discovering an additional salt pond near the salt lagoon at the northern end of the bay, which was added to Edwardes’ chart (Fig. 6). Don Betere was hosted aboard the *Daphne* while the crew were employed “hogging [the] ships bottom”, i.e. cleaning the submerged part. On 2 Mar Onslow returned to the highlands, this time with “Honble Cap^t [John] Gordon of [HMS] *America*”, which had arrived at Post Office Bay from Callao on 28 Feb. On this second visit into the

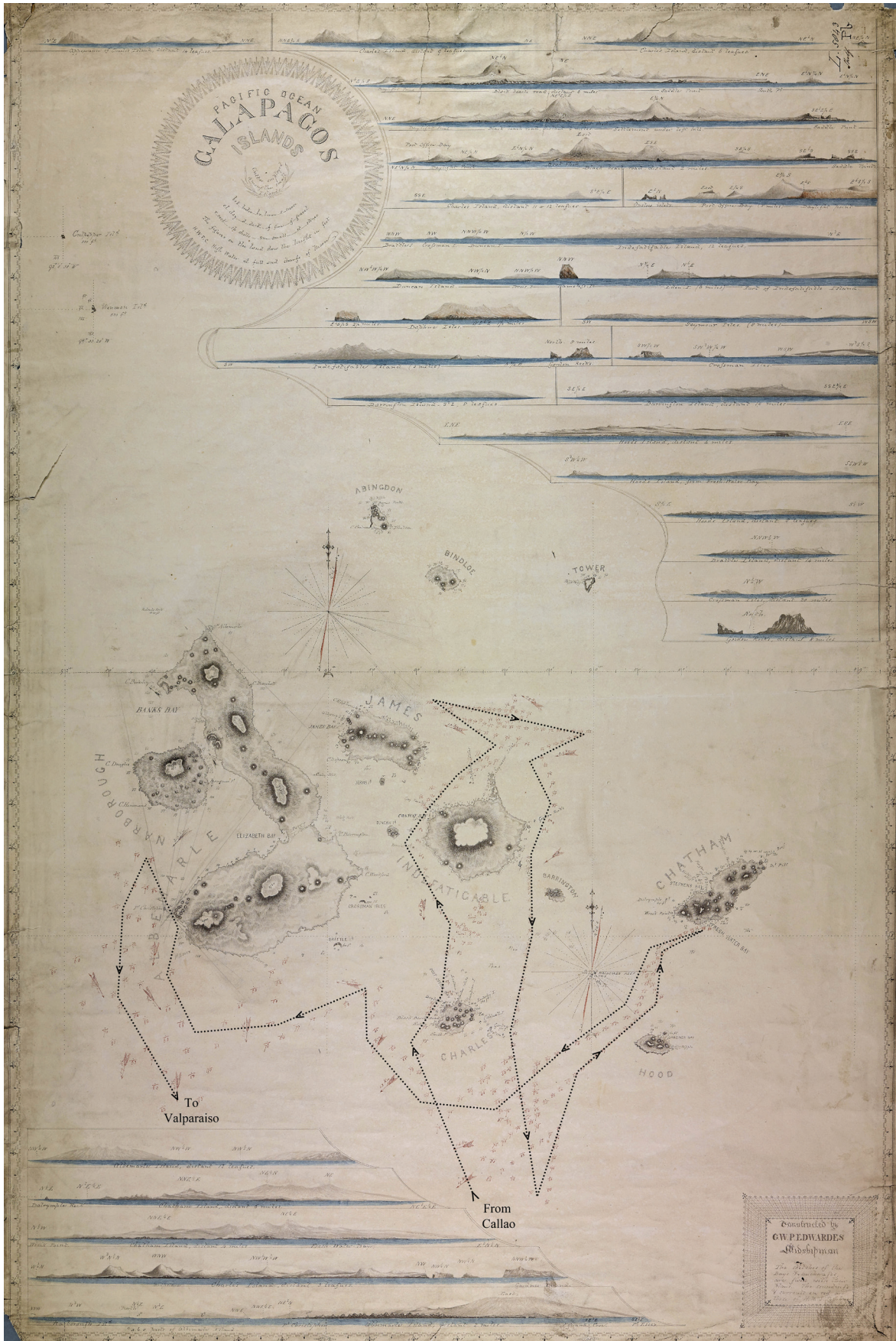


Figure 5. G.W.P. Edwardes' map of the islands (L5843: Edwardes 1846a), with the route of HMS *Daphne* added by KTG (dotted line with arrows, and labels "From Callao" and "To Valparaiso").



Figure 6. G.W.P. Edwardes' chart of Post Office Bay (L5848: Edwardes 1846b).

highlands, Onslow and Gordon reached the "Governor's Dripstone" (the spring at the base of Asilo de Paz), where they found "orange, lemon, and fig trees growing luxuriantly close to the water". The *America* remained anchored there until 4 Mar and in the vicinity of Floreana until 6 Mar, when it left the archipelago bound for California and the North Pacific Station (Seymour 1845a, Gordon 1846).

Leaving Floreana on 3 Mar, the *Daphne* began a slow, week-long, clockwise circumnavigation of Santa Cruz Island, stopping first to survey Conway Bay, "a fine safe bay with not less than 5 fathoms water", on the morning of 5 Mar. The bay had first been identified as an anchorage of interest by the officers of HMS *Conway* (Captain Eden) which stopped there in Nov 1834, and it was marked on Admiralty Chart 1375 (published 1841), but it had not been surveyed by the *Conway* nor by the *Beagle*. Edwardes chart L 5835 was thus the first of the anchorage (Fig. 7), and would later be added as an inset to Admiralty Chart 1375 (Fig. 2, fifth inset from left). Betere had informed Onslow that "15 fishermen lived on this Island close to the mountains, where a sufficient quantity of water exists for their sustenance... and [where] a very small proportion of land near the mountain is brought into cultivation for their use." However, Onslow found no sign of habitations, nor "of fresh water or anything like a road" from Conway Bay. The *Daphne* weighed anchor that same afternoon, at which point Lieutenant Barrie and Midshipman Onslow were dispatched in one of the ship's cutters "with 10 days provisions to survey James Is^d & the small islands in its vicinity".

At noon on 6 Mar the *Daphne* passed 2.5 km to the west of a small island "not named in the Chart" which Onslow dubbed "Daphne Island". Both this island and its smaller neighbour were recorded in the ship's logbook, on that day, as the "Daphne Islands" (Fig. 8). After continuing northward, the *Daphne* rounded, on 8 Mar, the "three Islands off [the] North end of" Santa Cruz, which Onslow named "Seymour's Islands" "after the Commander in Chief" (George Francis Seymour). On the evening of 9 Mar the *Daphne* passed 13 km to the east of "two islands off [the] East Point of 'Indefatigable Island'" which Onslow named "Gordon Rocks" in the ship's log and on Edwardes map, and "Gordon Island" in Onslow's report to Seymour (Fig. 9). Early in the afternoon of 10 Mar, finding a current setting the ship towards the shore and winds too light to stem it, the *Daphne* dropped anchor 3 km off the southeast point of Santa Cruz (today known as Punta Rocafuerte), and remained there until a breeze picked up the following morning and allowed the ship to continue safely. At this point the *Daphne* abandoned its circumnavigation of Santa Cruz and proceeded to San Cristóbal, which it reached four days later, after passing to the west of Santa Fé (Barrington), "a mere small rocky Island, with ... no fresh water", to the southeast of Floreana and within 8 km of the northwestern side of Española (Hood), another "of the small ones in this group, has no fresh water".

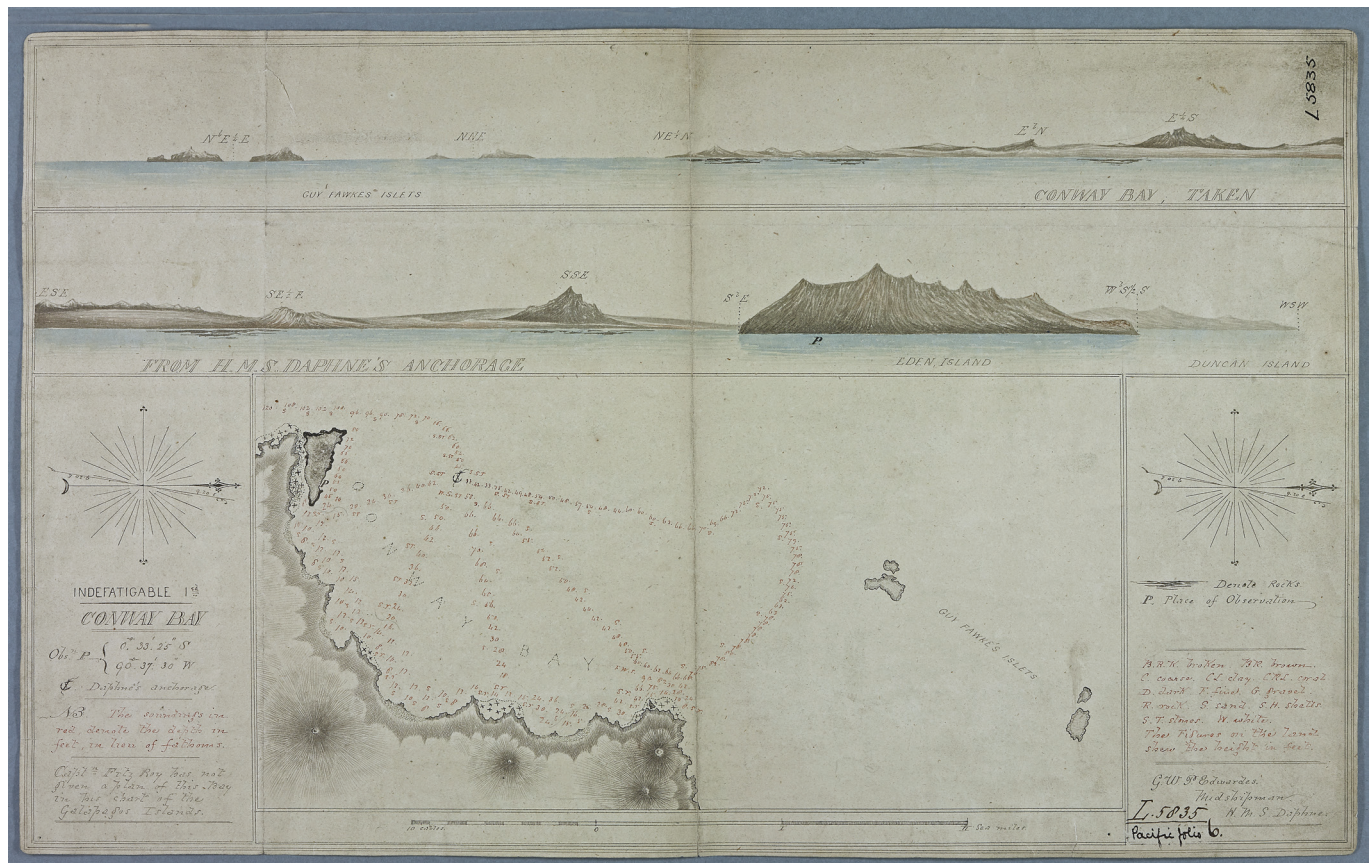


Figure 7. G.W.P. Edwardes' chart of Conway Bay (L5385; Edwardes 1846c).



Figure 8. Edwardes' sketch of the Daphne Islands (from L5843; Edwardes 1846a).



Figure 9. Edwardes' sketch of Gordon Rocks (from L5843; Edwardes 1846a).

At 10 am on 15 Mar, the *Daphne* reunited with its cutter off Wreck Bay, San Cristóbal. Upon reboarding the ship, Barrie reported that he had difficulty landing in James Bay, Santiago, “owing to the surf, and had to swim on shore”. He had hiked “inland three miles, but saw no signs of cultivation”; Onslow clarified in his report that the island had, in the 1830s, been “colonized and used principally by the Whalers to boil their oil and to purchase Terrapin” but it was, in 1845, “deserted”. Rábida (Jervis) was also “examined” but possibly not up close, for Onslow wrote, incorrectly, that the island has “no anchorage, or bays.”

Barrie and the junior Onslow also landed at Wreck Bay (San Cristóbal) where they met “general Menez” [*sic*, General Pedro Mena] who styles himself Governor” and who lived in “two Huts” near “Wreck Point”. Mena informed them that “about 10 settlers” lived on the island, subsisting “on Terrapin and extract[ing] oil from them

which they barter with the whalers for flour, salt provisions, and spirits”. They were also told that a small amount of land was being cultivated in the highlands, where “water exists plentifully”, where “the same species of fruits” were being grown as on Floreana, and where “much [more] land might be brought into cultivation, if [Mena] had settlers to accomplish it”.

With the officers back on board, the *Daphne* anchored at noon in Freshwater Bay “a very exposed anchorage with a swell setting on shore and causing a heavy surf”. Over the next 3.5 days (15–19 Mar), the crew, using the ship’s pinnace, took on board 35.5 tons of drinking water, breaking two oars in the process and having, at times, “to swim on shore”. “Exploring parties” were also sent on land, and although “they could not penetrate far inland” due to “the thickness of the stunted wood”, they saw “several” tortoises, and caught “a few”.

At 10 am on 16 Mar, HMStr *Cormorant* (Captain George Thomas Gordon), on its way from Paita, Peru to Panama, anchored next to the *Daphne* for 10h. Onslow wrote a progress report, a letter to George Seymour informing the “Commander in Chief of [his] proceedings in the Galapagos Islands”, and gave a copy of it to Gordon to send to the “Secretary of the Admiralty, London” from Panama (Onslow 1845b). The paddle steamer left at 8 pm that same evening, apparently without taking on any freshwater, and arrived at Panama six days later, on the evening of 22 Mar (Anon. 1845, Gordon 1847).

On 19 Mar HMS *Daphne* sailed for Iguana Cove, Isabela (Albemarle) Island, which it reached seven days later, after passing to the south of Floreana. On 26 Mar, heavy swells “between Points Christopher and Essex” pulled the ship inshore, necessitating the use of one cutter to tow the *Daphne* away from the coast, while the other was deployed “to inspect” Iguana Cove. The next day attempts were made to advance further north up the western coast, but were abandoned “in consequence of [the] variable winds & strong currents which prevented the ship” from doing so quickly, and because Onslow believed that “in the present Season of light airs and calms” it would be unsafe “to attempt the passage between Albemarle and Narborough Islands”. Although he could see “a few stunted trees near the sides of the Mountain on Albemarle, looking green” he assumed the island was, for agricultural purposes, “steril [sic], being one solid mass of Lava”, adding that if there was freshwater on the southern side of Isabela, he could see no way of obtaining it. He concluded, from what he saw and “from information ... [he] received from an intelligent Man, a Native of Guayaquil, who has been amongst these Islands upwards of twelve years, and was employed on the Beagle’s Boats during their Survey, the only Islands capable of cultivation are Charles [Floreana] and Chatham (San Cristóbal), and at Chatham alone is water to be obtained for Shipping.” On 28 Mar, with the *Daphne*’s water supply decreasing and with a long voyage ahead, Onslow “thought it prudent to quit these Islands... without loss of time” and to head back to Chile. On 19 Apr, one day before arriving at Valparaíso, Onslow wrote the second half of his official Galapagos report, which he then hand delivered to Seymour, who had been at Callao, Peru on his flagship HMS *Collingwood* (Captain Robert Smart) for much of the time the *Daphne* was in Galapagos, but who had returned to Valparaíso ten days earlier (Seymour 1845a).

After Galapagos, the *Daphne*’s next tasks were to convey British consul George Pritchard (who, in early 1844, had been expelled from Tahiti by the French and then brought to Valparaíso by HMStr *Cormorant*) to his new post at the Navigator Islands (Samoa), and then to voyage to New Zealand to support Governor FitzRoy (ex-captain of HMS *Beagle*) who was embroiled in the country’s first Māori-British war (Wards 1968). After dropping Pritchard off at Apia on 26 Jul 1845, then spending six weeks (12 Aug to 2 Oct 1845) at New Zealand (Anon. 1846b) the *Daphne* returned to South America, where it remained until Aug 1846. Loaded with over a million sterling in “specie” (gold, silver bars and dollars) collected from British merchants operating on the west coast of South America, the *Daphne* then departed for England, and after surviving “a complete hurricane” off the Bay of Biscay in Dec 1846, arrived off Spithead on 1 Jan 1847 (Anon. 1847a, b) (Fig. 10).

VALUE OF THE DAPHNE OBSERVATIONS

The purpose of the *Daphne*’s visit to Galapagos was to assess the archipelago’s suitability as a naval station and coal depot for the British government. Britain was seeking a northern locale for a new naval base on the west coast of America, and Galapagos lay strategically close to the Isthmus of Panama with its valuable, newly opened, overland trade and communications route to the Atlantic (at that time by foot, donkey and canoe) (Van Aken 1989, Gough 2016). It was the first of four expeditions (three British and one French) sent to Galapagos in the 1840s for similar reasons, with HM Ships *Herald* (Captain Henry Kellet) and *Pandora* (Lieutenant Commander James Wood) visiting for 11 days (6–16 Jan) and the French brig *Le Génie* (Captain Louis Henri, comte de Gueydon) exploring for 35 days (14 Aug to 18 Sep) in 1846, and HMS *Pandora* returning for 36 days (2 Aug to 7 Sep) in 1847. George Seymour on HMStr *Sampson* (Captain Thomas Henderson) also made a three-day inspection of two islands (Floreana and San Cristóbal), 8–10 May 1847. All these explorations were encouraged by Ecuador’s first president, Juan José Flores, who hoped England and France would take possession of Galapagos lands in lieu of war debt repayment, and who, after his overthrow on 6 Mar 1845 (the same day the *Daphne* isles were named) in a rebellion led by his



Figure 10. HMS *Daphne* on her return to England in December 1846 (from an 1847 lithograph by T.G. Dutton, at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich).

successor Vicente Ramón Roca, kept the offer on the table through his son-in-law General Leonard Stagg (Van Aken 1989).

The *Daphne* was also the first British naval vessel to explore Galapagos after HMS *Beagle*'s famous visit ten years earlier (15 Sep to 20 Oct 1835), when Admiralty Chart 1375, the first clearly navigable map of the archipelago, was made. This map, along with FitzRoy's observations and other information provided by the Admiralty, enabled Onslow to steer the *Daphne* directly to the inhabitable islands and focus on the places already identified by FitzRoy and others as having desirable qualities (e.g. fertile soil, freshwater, safe harbour) for settlement and shipping purposes. These places included Santa Cruz, an island that had not been explored on land by the *Beagle* men, but where the officers of HMS *Conway* had discovered in 1834 "good landing for boats" at "Duncan Bay" (later named "Conway Bay") and plentiful supplies of turtles and tortoises (Allan 1836).

Onslow was cautiously optimistic about the prospect of turning Galapagos into a naval outpost. He believed that Floreana, with its rich soil and secure "Anchorage, Bays and landing places ... from its position, might be made useful to British Interests as a coal and naval depot", an opinion shared by John Gordon, of HMS *America*, who was also "favourably impressed with [Charles Island's] verdure and the goodness of the anchorage in the Road." (Seymour 1845b). The island had limited supply of "bullocks & vegetables" and an insufficient and not easily accessible water supply, but Onslow felt the water problem could be overcome by collecting the highland spring water and piping it to the coast. He suggested, with words remarkably prescient of what came to be c. 170 years later, that "a large reservoir might be made near to the [Governor's] "Dripstone" together with several Tanks, which during the rainy season would be filled and greatly add to the supply of water". He suspected, however, that Floreana could not "be maintained as a colony unless at an expense to the Crown of Great Britain, for several years". He was less positive about San Cristóbal for the primary reason that Freshwater Bay, "the only place to obtain fresh water for shipping" was in his opinion "by no means a safe one and nothing but the actual want of water can justify a ship of war going there". As for the other islands, he thought they had little to offer, and in general he warned that during the hot season "difficult, nay dangerous" navigational conditions prevail in the archipelago, with calms, "strong currents setting to the Southward", and "a heavy swell on shore which renders anything but steam navigation dangerous". The *Daphne*, despite having the reputation of responding "like a racehorse to the spur" (Sharp 1858) had progressed but slowly through the archipelago, had failed to reach the northern islands and had "twice" been in peril of running ashore.

Although the sea conditions described by Onslow are not atypical of a normal hot season, when the Humboldt Current and southeast trade winds slacken and the Southern Equatorial and Panama currents flow into the archipelago, there is some evidence (unusual amounts of rainfall recorded in northern Peru between 1844 and 1846) that a moderate to strong El Niño episode was imminent or underway (Quinn 1992, Ortlieb 2000). Onslow wrote of "intensely hot" weather in March, and an unusual current off San Cristóbal "setting the Ship East 1½ knots an hour", which could indicate the presence of an El Niño, but the rainfall recorded in the *Daphne*'s logbook (on nine out of 28 days in March), and the sea and air temperatures recorded by HMS *America* at Floreana between 28 Feb and 6 Mar (sea 78.6–83°F, mean 81.3°F; air daily maximum 82–86°F, mean 84.2°F; air daily minimum 72–78°F, mean 76°F), are inconclusive. I found no temperatures recorded in the Galapagos pages of the *Daphne*'s log, which might have indicated late March conditions. There is stronger evidence that an El Niño was affecting the islands later in the year, for at the beginning of November (a normally dry month) the New Bedford whale ship *Niger* reported "shears of rain" off Española (Perry 1845), and in early Jan 1846 the men on the *Herald* and *Pandora* experienced prolonged heavy downpours at Floreana and Santiago, and high surf on both these islands and San Cristóbal, with running brooks and "extraordinary" numbers of locusts (indicative of significant rainfall several weeks earlier) also observed on Floreana (Seemann 1853).

The next visitors (Gueydon on *Le Génie*, Seymour on the *Sampson* and Wood on the *Pandora*) arrived during cooler months, and experienced easier sailing. They all wrote favourably about San Cristóbal (Gueydon 1847, Seymour 1847, Wood 1847), with Seymour declaring it "better calculated for settlement, than "Charles Island" having Water...for Shipping...a better Anchorage, and possessing a greater quantity of Soil capable of cultivation". Ultimately, however, Britain and France concluded that Galapagos, having no natural coal stores and thus unable to be a self-sufficient coaling station (Samson 1999), was not worth the risk of provoking international conflict with each other, or with the United States, which was heavily invested in whaling the archipelago, and abandoned their plans for ownership (Van Aken 1989).

Unlike the *Beagle*, the *Daphne* did not have a naturalist on board and no natural history observations or collections were made during the voyage. Nevertheless Onslow's remarks on the human occupants of the archipelago, and on the introduced crops and domestic animals they raised, are of value to the natural historian for they shed light on how and where the natural environment was being modified by human activities at the time. Onslow was the first foreigner to report on Galapagos during the second phase of colonization, i.e. after the original Floreana settlement (inaugurated 1832) had effectively collapsed (by 1842), after founding Governor José Villamil brought new recruits to the archipelago in 1843–4 (Latorre 1999), and when new islands were being settled and new lands exploited. His remarks about the Wreck Bay settlement on San Cristóbal, which did not exist when HMS *Beagle* visited in 1835,

constitute the oldest known descriptive account of this tiny hamlet, which evolved into the town now known as Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of Galapagos Province. This settlement effected the rapid destruction of the southern San Cristóbal tortoise population, as the settlers slaughtered them for consumption and for sale to the whaling and oil markets (Wood 1847, Seemann 1853). Onslow noted that the *Daphne* men found tortoises at Freshwater Bay, but just two years later, commander Wood and the men of HMS *Pandora* could not find a single one in the southern parts of the island (and “but few...on the Northern slopes of the hills”), with Wood (1847) remarking that within “three months” it is predicted that “the wild dogs & the supply of food they afford to Whalers & Settlers will soon destroy all that remain”.

Onslow’s words about Santa Cruz give us the earliest record of agriculture on this island, and thus a starting point for when non-native plants were introduced to it. This is particularly useful because the early history of cultivation on Santa Cruz, before San Cristóbal resident Manuel Julián Cobos established farms in the Salasaca and Santa Rosa regions of the highlands in “the late 1800s” to provision the workers he periodically sent to Santa Cruz to hunt tortoises and gather lichen for his orchilla business (Rendón 1965, Lundh 1995), has been poorly elucidated. José Villamil (Latorre 1999) reported a small group of people residing on Santa Cruz in Dec 1837 but made no mention of farming by them. Indeed, they appear to have left by July 1838 (Du Petit-Thouars 1841) and thus were probably only there temporarily, to fish and hunt tortoises for the Floreana settlement, just as other Floreana settlers were employed on Santiago Island, from 1835 to 1837, also apparently without farming (Onslow 1845, Latorre 1999, Grant & Estes 2009). However, Villavicencio (1858), an author who never visited Galapagos himself, claimed there were abandoned banana plantations and sweet potatoes on Santa Cruz in 1858. Onslow did not observe where the Santa Cruz inhabitants and their farms were located in 1845, but Gueydon, in 1846, found “two or three huts” at the base of the hill in what is now known as Whale Bay (Bahía Ballena), 5 km south of Conway Bay, and from there, a path leading “ten or twelve miles” into the interior (Slevin 1959). From this it appears that the cultivated plots were in the area that Cobos began farming some decades later.

As for Floreana, Onslow documented three changes that had occurred since the 1830s. First, the cattle, which FitzRoy (1839) witnessed being introduced to the island on 16 Oct 1835, had increased to 300 head, more than double the 130 reported by Du Petit-Thouars (1841) who visited in 1838. Second, the human population had decreased to 40, from c. 100 in 1838 (having been c. 350 in 1835). Later in 1845 it would drop further, as “the greater number of the exiles” still living in Galapagos “were recalled by the party who attained power” when President Juan José Flores was overthrown in Mar 1845 (Seemann 1853), and by 1847 it was “about 25” (Seymour 1848). Third, the seat of the settlement had moved: in the 1830s the residents lived predominantly in the highlands, next to their farms, a situation that FitzRoy criticised: “a house on the dry ground, and plantations in the moist valley, would answer better” to living in perpetual damp. By 1845 the inhabitants were still farming in the highlands but were residing lower down near the first spring, where FitzRoy (1839) had recorded just “a few huts”, of which only “two or three” were occupied in 1838 (Du Petit-Thouars 1841) (Fig. 11). The move appears to have been long term, for later 19th-century visitors reported the same lower location for the settlement (Borrowman 1847, Seemann 1853, Wolf 1879), and Albert Hastings Markham, captain of HMS *Triumph*, who visited in Feb 1880, stated that “When the island was visited by Darwin in 1836 [sic], the settlement was situated about two miles from the site of the one now existing” (Markham 1880).

A LEGACY OF NAMES

The most obvious legacy of HMS *Daphne*’s visit to Galapagos is the six place names that were bestowed during the voyage: Daphne Isles, Seymours Isles, Gordon Rocks, Onslow Islets, Daylight Point and Cormorant Point. The *Daphne*’s logbook and Onslow’s report indicate that the first three of these were given in March 1845. The last three were also named during the voyage (for they are found on Edwardes’ finished sketches and charts of Galapagos, all of which were completed in 1846 and thus before the *Daphne* returned to England) but not necessarily while the ship was still in Galapagos.

Unlike many of the English names that had been given to Galapagos Islands, primarily by Ambrose Cowley in 1684 and James Colnett in 1793–4, and which were, in 1892, replaced by Spanish names (McEwen 1988), all but one

of the four names given to islands by the *Daphne* crew are still in dominant use today. The exception is Onslow Islet, which has given way to Corona del Diablo or Devil’s Crown. These were also the last Galapagos islands to be given English names by the Royal Navy although British naval ships continued to name Galapagos topographical features other than islands throughout the 19th century (e.g. Magicienne Rock, a submerged reef in Gardner Bay, Española, named in 1857 after HMS *Magicienne*, and



Figure 11. Edwardes’ sketch of the Floreana settlement showing its location below the northwest flank of the highest peak, Cerro Pajas (from L5843: Edwardes 1846a).

Sappho Cove on San Cristóbal, named in 1883 after HMS *Sappho*: UKHO 1905). Cousins Island, the last Galapagos island to have been given an enduring English name, was named c. 1969 by a British civilian, Robert Cousins (Woram 2021).

The Daphne Isles were clearly named after HMS *Daphne*. Today they are distinguished as Daphne Major (Daphne Mayor) and Daphne Minor (Daphne Menor or Daphne Chica), the qualifiers having been introduced by William Beebe (1924), who also named the small rock off Daphne Major (which is included in Edwardes' sketch of the "Daphne Isles") Wheeler Rock, after entomologist William M. Wheeler (Woram 2021).

The three "Seymours Isles" were named in honour of Admiral George Francis Seymour (1787–1870). Even though Seymour visited Galapagos two years later on HMStr *Sampson*, on route from Panama to Paita, he never saw "his" isles for the ship touched only at San Cristóbal (where 12 tortoises were purchased from the Wreck Bay settlement) and Floreana (where he visited the Governor's Dripstone) (Henderson 1847, Seymour 1848). Today only two of the original Seymours Isles bear the Admiral's name; North Seymour, which has no other designation, and South Seymour, today more commonly known as Baltra (Grant 2024). The middle isle is now called Mosquera, after Ecuador's 25th President (Dec 1938 to Nov 1939) Aurelio Mosquera. It was also dubbed Seal Island by the US Navy in 1843, presumably in reference to its sea lion population, but this name is no longer in use (Woram 2021).

Onslow did not specify whom he named the Gordon Rocks after, and there are several possibilities. One is John Gordon (1792–1869), youngest son of George Gordon, Lord Haddo (1764–91) (Boase 1892). John was the "Honorable Captain" of HMS *America*, who joined Onslow at Floreana Island for three days in Feb–Mar 1845. John's two older brothers, George Hamilton Gordon (1784–1860), 4th Earl of Aberdeen, and Vice-Admiral William Gordon (1784–1858), are also contenders, as they were both involved in Britain's interest in Galapagos at the time of the *Daphne's* visit: George as foreign secretary, and William as a senior member of the Board of Admiralty and an associate and correspondent of George Seymour. William has previously been proposed as the namesake of Gordon Rocks (Woram 2021).

While it is likely that the Gordon Rocks were named in honour of at least one member of this high ranking Scottish family, the name could also be a nod to the unrelated Captain George Thomas Gordon (c. 1807–1887), from Devon, England (Walford 1869, Boase 1892), commander of HMStr *Cormorant*, which accompanied the *Daphne* and the *America* from Valparaíso to Callao before the Galapagos trip, met the *Daphne* at Freshwater Bay, San Cristóbal on 16 Mar 1845, and conveyed Onslow's Galapagos progress report to Panama. Seymour considered this Gordon (who obtained the rank of Rear Admiral in 1864: Boase 1892) to be one of the best steamship officers in the Navy (Gough 2016). After Galapagos, Seymour ordered him to take the *Cormorant* to the North Pacific Station to spend a year (mid-1846 to mid-1847) assisting British interests and towing sailing vessels back and forth across the Strait of Juan de Fuca, against unfavourable tides. In British Columbia, Gordon River and Gordon Head on Vancouver Island are named after him, and Cormorant Island, east of Port McNeill, and Cormorant Point near Gordon Head, honour the ship he commanded (Humphreys 2001).

The Onslow islets (Fig. 12) were presumably named after Captain John James Onslow, though the honour may extend to his son, the junior John James, who probably helped to survey them. Unlike the other islands named during the *Daphne* voyage, none of which had earlier names, the Onslow islets already bore several, though none appeared on Admiralty Chart 1375. The oldest name was "Abbey Ruins", on a manuscript map owned by William Wyndham Grenville (1759–1834), Prime Minister of the U.K. 1805–7, which is now in the Greenwich Maritime Museum. The origins of this map (Anon. c. 1803: GREN 85/12) are unknown, but three of the other unique labels on it, "C[ape] Grenville" on the southeast-facing coast of San Cristóbal, just north of the bay today known as Bahía Rosa Blanca, "Camelford Bay" (Post Office Bay) on Floreana, and "Willding Rock", a "sunken and dangerous" rock depicted near Gardner-by-Floreana, which probably refers to the "dangerous breaker" later noted there by FitzRoy (1839), strongly suggest that it may have been made by someone on the whaleship *Willding* (Captain John Borlinder), which visited Galapagos in Oct 1803 and which was owned by Grenville's brother-in-law, Thomas Pitt, 2nd Baron Camelford (1775–1804). When the *Willding* returned to England in 1805 it passed into Grenville's hands, Lord Camelford having died in a duel the year before (Cockburn 1804, Jackson 2005, Clayton 2014). GREN 85/12 was the first English map to depict Charles Island (Floreana) in full outline and with labelled bays and headlands; not until 1820, when James Colnett's "Chart of the Galapagos..." (Colnett 1798) was re-issued with "Additions & Corrections to 1817" (Colnett 1820), were Post Office Bay and the islet in question shown. GREN 85/12 appears never to have been used or reproduced, with none of its labels transferred to any subsequent map. In 1813 Onslow Islet had been dubbed "Devil's Rock or Rock Dismal" by Captain David Porter of the US Frigate *Essex* (Porter 1815), which may be the origin of the modern name Devil's Crown (Corona del Diablo), but on William Hooker's map of the archipelago, published in the second edition of Porter's narrative (Porter 1822) it was labelled "Diamond Rock".

Daylight Point and Cormorant Point designate the western and eastern headlands of Post Office Bay, Floreana, as seen on Edwardes chart (L5848) (Fig. 6) and Admiralty Chart 1376 (Fig. 3). "Daylight Point" ("Cape Barry" on Grenville's map, was presumably named

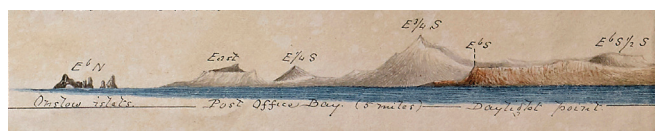


Figure 12. The Onslow islets (left) and Daylight Point (right), Floreana, sketched by Edwardes (from L5843: Edwardes 1846a).

for topographical reasons; from the perspective of a ship anchored in Post Office Bay, the red-orange cinder cliff at Daylight Point (today known as Point Daylight or Punta Luz del Día), is one of the first and most striking landforms to be illuminated by the rising sun (Fig. 12). It also lies in the direction of the setting sun, where daylight lingers longest.

Cormorant Point almost certainly honours HMStr *Cormorant*, the first steamship ever to enter Galapagos waters, on 16 Mar 1845. The next steam vessels to visit Galapagos were HMStr *Sampson* in May 1847, HMStr *Magicienne* in 1857 and the United States steamer *Hassler* in 1872, after which most naval, merchant, and scientific expedition ships visiting Galapagos waters were steamships or had auxiliary steam power, until the 1930s when diesel engines took over. The *Cormorant* was a famous paddle-wheel steamer of six guns, 53 m x 11 m, built and launched at Sheerness in 1842 and which served the Navy until 1853 (Fig. 13). It was already distinguished for being the first ship to voyage by steam to Tahiti (19 Feb to 13 Mar 1844), Hawai'i (18–30 May 1846) and British Columbia (Jun 1846) (Kemble 1949, Pritchard 1866, Akrigg & Akrigg 1975), but its short, pioneering visit to Galapagos (15–16 Mar 1845), has been overlooked. The *Cormorant* was one of the first four British steamships (and first two Royal Naval steamships) to operate on the west coast of South America. The steam packets *Chili* (Captain William Glover) and *Peru* (Captain George Peacock) had been the first to pass westward through the Straits of Magellan in Sep 1840, brought by William Wheelwright to ferry letters and goods up and down the coasts of Chile and Peru for the Pacific Steam Navigation Company (PSNC), while HMStr *Salamander* (Captain Andrew Snape Hammond) and the *Cormorant* navigated the strait in Mar and Nov 1843 respectively (Anon. 1843, Peacock 1879, Collard 2014). In 1844, after an overland passage across Panama was established that allowed communications with England to be sent via Chagres on the Atlantic side of the isthmus, the *Cormorant* became the first west coast steamship to receive and deliver Admiralty dispatches at Panama. Onslow's letter for the Secretary of the Admiralty, sent from Galapagos on the *Cormorant*, represents one such. Towards the end of its naval career, in the early 1850s, the *Cormorant* was used to capture slave ships off the coast of Brazil, under the command of Captain Herbert Schomberg (Thomas 1997) (Fig. 13).

There is no indication that Cormorant Bay (the harbour adjacent to Cormorant Point) was named at the same time as Cormorant Point. The latter ("Cormorant-Spitz") is mentioned and illustrated (Fig. 14) in Theodore Wolf's book about his visit to Galapagos in 1875 (Wolf 1879) but "Cormorant Bay" does not appear in print (as far as I have determined) until the Oct 1887 edition of Admiralty Chart 1376 (Fig. 3). Woram (2013) suggested that Cormorant Bay got its name from another British naval steam ship called *Cormorant*, which (he wrote) visited Galapagos "ca. 1886", actually 25 Jul to 2 Aug 1886, under Captain Jasper Edmund Thomas Nichols (Nichols 1887). This was a 51.8 x 11 m composite screw-propelled steamer, launched from Chatham Dockyard, Kent, in 1877 and broken up in 1949 (Fig. 15) (Mitchell 1881, Brock & Greenhill 1973). Nichols (1887) reported that, after stopping for the night of 25 Jul 1886 at Gardner Bay (Española Island), the ship anchored "in Cormorant Bay" (Floreana) 26–28 Jul 1886,

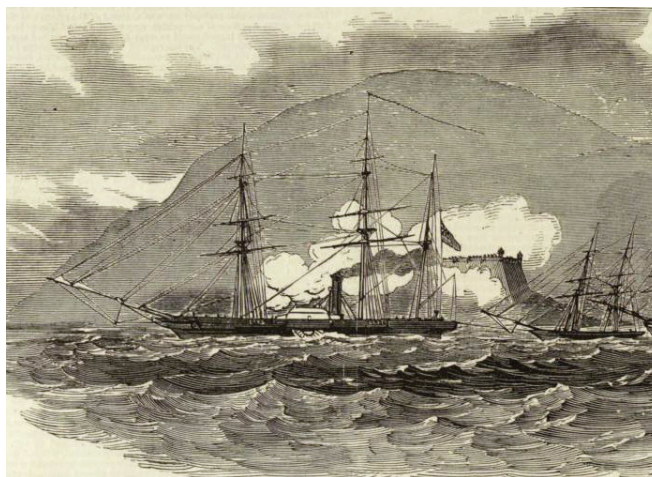


Figure 13. HMStr *Cormorant* (1842–1853) in pursuit of slave traders off Paranaguá, Brazil (from Anon. 1850).

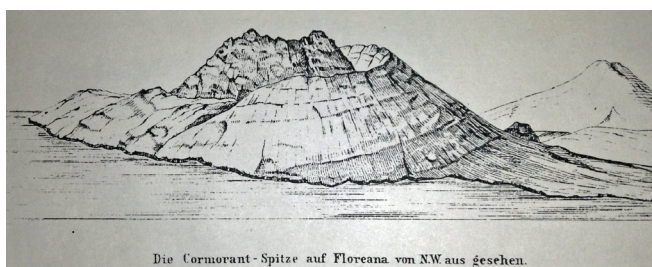


Figure 14. "Cormorant Point on Floreana as seen from the NW." Drawn by Theodore Wolf during his 1875 visit (Wolf 1879).

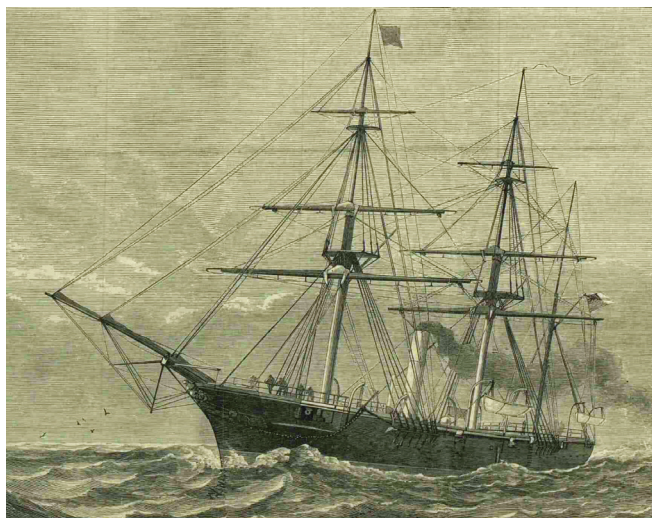


Figure 15. The second HMStr *Cormorant* (1877–1949) (from Anon. 1878).

then moved to Isabela and anchored 28–29 Jul in “Webb’s Cove” (now Webb Cove), named after the ship’s Navigation Lieutenant, George A.C. Webb (Slevin 1959, Woram 2013). The southwestern tip of this cove, St John Point (which is labelled on Admiralty Chart 1375 “with corrections to 1887”: Fig. 2, second inset from left), was probably named after the *Cormorant*’s Lieutenant Percy Stuart St John. The ship then proceeded to “Port Chico” (Wreck Bay) on San Cristóbal Island and anchored there from 30 Jul to 2 Aug before leaving the archipelago for Panama (Nichols 1887).

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