



CHAPTER ONE

Resolution, the Island

There's a degree of organised chaos on the aft deck of the *Southern Winds*, currently anchored in Duck Cove off Resolution Island in Dusky Sound. Nine people are reaching for packs, raincoats, boots. There are stacks of bright yellow plastic egg containers secured and stowed into packs and bum-bags; there is meat, tools, brackets, screws, radios, first-aid kits and GPSs. Just inside the main cabin, breakfast is hurriedly scooped, lunch wrapped and maps exchanged. The pace of it all accelerates as the skipper pushes the anchor winch-control. Dinghies are already in the water, and so with packs secure and raincoat hoods pulled up, bodies clamber into one dinghy after another. We're underway, dispersing to the many corners of the island that access the numerous tracks and predator-control tasks.

It's raining. In Fiordland terms, this is drizzle. Serious rain, which might mean rivers become impassable, is forecast for later the next day. We leap off onto what appears to be a foothold of rock. Viewing a faint marker just visible in the trees, we check the position on the handheld, waterproof GPS, grab at the vegetation and start climbing.

Mauikatau/Resolution is the fifth largest island in New Zealand (if you don't include the Chatham and Auckland islands). On the map it is nearly 21,000 hectares, but that doesn't factor in the repeated ascents to nearly 1000 metres between valleys and tops. Typical

of Fiordland, the contour lines sit very closely together. It's steep.

This massive island is central to the entire Dusky archipelago. Bordered by the Tasman Sea to the west, Dusky Sound to the south, its eastern coast spans the length of Acheron Passage, past Wet Jacket Arm, all the way north to Breaksea Sound.

So high, so vast, Resolution has a dominating presence in this landscape. Perhaps because of the many folds and contortions of its ridgelines, the island appears like a wise old kaumātua, sitting in his armchair, watching over all. What this island has witnessed over centuries: waka, then sailing ships, the slaughter of seals and whales on its shores. All while it played centre stage, historically and ecologically, to the story of Tamatea/Dusky Sound.

As remote as it was from Wellington, Resolution Island was being discussed in Parliament back in 1891, when it was set aside as New Zealand's – and the world's – first nature reserve. Perhaps old man Resolution followed the progress of an open, clinker dinghy going back and forth across Acheron Passage and around the many islands, as a ranger with his dog moved hundreds of kiwi and kākāpō in crates to its shores. And today, even though its tops are shrouded in mist and battered by a nor'west wind, you sense the personification of Resolution Island may well be watching (deities also spring to mind in these conditions) as the team of predator-control volunteers prepare to make their way like foot soldiers up its many ridgelines.

Resolution Island, over 125 years since it was set

DOC Biodiversity ranger Pete McMurtrie on the stern of the *Renown*, finding a clear signal for his evening radio sched with each member of the predator-control team on Resolution Island. LIZ MATHIESON



aside as the world's first island sanctuary, is now a major part of one of the most extensive and significant conservation projects in New Zealand: the *Tamatea/Dusky Sound Conservation & Restoration Plan*.¹

Throughout the greater Dusky archipelago, pest- and predator-control operations have been, and continue to be, carried out across its many islands, as well as on many of the mainland peninsulas. Several species of endangered native birds, lizards and invertebrates are moved to its 'life raft' island sanctuaries. Research projects are underway on and under water and into the far reaches of the surrounding mountains.

But it's on Resolution itself where the Department of Conservation (DOC) faces one of its most challenging operations. The numbers: the 20,887 hectares is today covered in 326 kilometres of traplines, across which are 3500 stoat traps. Resolution is all about the stoats. There have never been possums here (they don't swim) and there are no rats. There *was* a decent population of

Norway rats in the last century (they escaped off mooring lines from boats and ships), but when the stoats arrived, they ate the rats. The mustelids put paid to most things, especially ground birds.

Some say stoats are to be admired. Certainly, their passage to Resolution Island was a phenomenal feat of migration. Introduced near Lake Wakatipu in 1885 and then into Southland in 1886-87, the mustelids turned their noses away from the plague of rabbits infesting the sheep stations and headed west, into the bush.² In just 10 years, the exploding population made its way across mountains, glaciers, almost vertical-sided valleys, swift rivers, through a vast area of forest and then finally swam the 550-plus metres of Acheron Passage to reach Resolution Island. They are excellent swimmers. The farthest that stoats have been recorded swimming in these parts is 1.5 kilometres. Farther north in calm, warm waters, that distance is much greater.

Stoats continue to swim Acheron Passage, regularly,



which is what makes ‘Reso’ the toughest project of all. No matter how many stoats are caught, there are plenty more to fill the vacuum. The reinvasion rate has proved higher than researchers first thought since the plan for the stoat-control operation on Resolution Island began in 2004. Knowing that eradication, at least with the present technology, is improbable, the keyword for scientists is ‘suppression’ or ‘control’; keeping stoats at sufficiently low numbers to allow as many native birds as possible to survive, if not thrive. Until the miracle of stoat eradication can be found, predator control means long days on foot, through mud, rain, snow, dealing with decaying carcasses, and just every now and then, bird song.

Pete McMurtrie, known as ‘stoat man’, seems to live half his life on Resolution Island. He was there during the installation of the operation in 2007, when over \$4 million was secured from Treasury for the grand plan of clearing Resolution, in Dusky, and Secretary Island,

The view from Anchor Island, with Five Fingers Peninsula (far left) across the narrow isthmus to Resolution Island, then Acheron Passage and to the mainland (far right). JAKE OSBORNE

in Doubtful Sound, as two potential life rafts for native flora and fauna. McMurtrie was there (alongside Allan Munn and colleague Kerri-Anne Edge) working on the tracks, traplines and bivvies (dotted across the island), and nutting out logistics. After the fishing boat shipped the thousands of stoat traps around the coast, the team hooked the giant fadges of equipment onto the long lines of a helicopter, dropping one load after another to various clearings.

McMurtrie co-ordinated the teams. They used chainsaws to cut tracks, then he loaded up every DOC worker available to carry and install the heavy, wooden DOC 150 kill traps at 100-metre intervals on each track. Maximum number of traps per human packload? Just four, weighing up to 25 kilograms. It was imperative



Pete McMurtrie checking logistics for the following day's predator-control operation. PETA CAREY

it was done in as short a time as possible to achieve initial 'knock down' of stoat numbers. The first 2660 traps were baited and set in August 2008 and within two months, 290 stoats were bagged. They may have been knocked down, but not out. DOC staff and volunteers still make their way to Dusky at least three times a year to check, reset and rebait every single trap on Resolution Island.

Pete McMurtrie is on almost every expedition. Each evening on the *Southern Winds* he gathers the team, many of them volunteers, around the table, lays out a Resolution map and casually outlines the characteristics of the routes. 'A gentle ascent here; beautiful valley there,' he'll say, tongue-in-cheek. 'You simply fang up this ridge, whizz down this one, or waltz across that.'

I volunteer to accompany trapping stalwart Liz

Mathieson on a two-day mission from one end of the island to the other, stopping overnight in a bivvy. We're doing it back to front, as the wind is forecast to rise to gale force the next day – not ideal for dealing to stoat traps on Mt Wales, at 974 metres. We also have to reach the rivers on the southern side before the real rain arrives. The watersheds here on Resolution are equivalent to those on the mainland. Rivers can rise fast.

Leap-frogging the traps, breathing hard, we barely stop for a rest (too cold, too wet). You soon get accustomed to the rhythm: bend down at each trap, check the entrance is clear, unscrew the lid, biff out the old bait (egg and meat, and be sure to sling those rotten eggs a good distance), check the trigger tension on the trap (without catching/breaking your hand), replace and rescrew the lid. If there's a stoat in the trap, that's another story.

The two of us cover the bulk of the first day's traps, all uphill, in reasonable time (albeit with a fair degree of

cursing). But when we emerge from the bush to ascend Mt Wales, the visibility is nil, the rain heavy, the wind getting stronger and the temperature dropping quickly. So much for the view. We can only make out the next few metres of ridgeline (still heading up) and the occasional orange triangle of a trapline marker atop a steel pole being buffeted in the wind. Frozen hands are fumbling around the screw driver. Please no stoats up here, it's too cold to stop.

No stoats but, unbelievably, in the lee of a ridge between large boulders, comes the unmistakable whistle of rock wren (*Xenicus gilviventris*). Amid the swirl of cloud, a pair of them are watching me quizzically. In conditions best described as hypothermic, to humans, these tiny alpine avians seem unperturbed. It's remarkable they are here at all: their nests are highly vulnerable to stoat predation, their conservation status is 'nationally endangered'. Although rock wrens were moved from the mainland to Secretary Island, they have

never been moved here. Some suggest the birds may have blown over, but with the prevailing wind being westerly, it's unlikely. It means, therefore, that these two wrens, and others that have been seen elsewhere on Resolution, have survived over a century of stoat predation and are descendants of birds that have been here for millennia.

This is why, when I find a stoat trapped right on the bushline next morning, the heart sinks. And the nose wrinkles. It's been here for more than a few weeks. The paint scraper comes in handy as what is left of the stoat (plus the usual band of juvenile fly larvae, i.e. maggots) is not so deftly encouraged into a plastic bag, details are scribbled on waterproof paper and the bag slotted onto the outside of my pack. Every stoat makes the journey back to a laboratory, where the decaying corpse is

Erina Loe and Shane Gebert installing stoat traps on Resolution, 2007.
LINDSAY WILSON





Liz Mathieson checking a DOC 150 stoat trap before ascending Mt Wales. PETA CAREY

genetically tested. Pete McMurtrie and his team have a reasonable understanding of who's related to whom and when they may have swum across Acheron Passage. But not all stoats are caught around the coast. This individual made its way several kilometres inland, past however many hundreds of traps, before being curious and hungry enough to investigate this one.

Finding a stoat takes a good chunk out of a day that's already pressured. We had left the bivvy on daylight, conscious of the pending weather and the threat of rising rivers. Every dead stoat delays progress by a good 15 minutes. And then there's the track, hardly 'Great Walk' standard. Up, down, handhold after foothold, climbing, slipping (amazingly not breaking any eggs, or legs), expletives rising in volume and frequency. Although in 2007 tracks were cut by chainsaws – to just a minimum clearance – all it takes is one treefall or a

lost track marker, and you can walk around in circles for quite some time (even with a GPS), bush-bashing, trying to find your way back to a logical route.

The rain is now falling in earnest, blown in great clouds of precipitation down the steep-sided valley. No one has yet invented the ultimate raincoat. Being wet is one thing, crossing a swollen river, quite another. Having to retrace our steps several hours back up the way we'd come to the shelter of a bivvy on the bushline would be unthinkable.

Pete McMurtrie should know. He was here the previous winter, when daylight hours were short, and the rain was heavier than forecast. After most of the day checking and resetting traps, McMurtrie descended to the valley floor. Within a half hour of reaching the shore and boat pick-up, on dusk, he stopped short at the river. McMurtrie is over 1.8 metres and relatively young and fit, but the river was too high, too swift. He had to turn around. He faced a long walk back across the island to an alternative pick-up point. Fortunately, he had remem-

bered a spare battery for the radio. What he hadn't remembered to pack were batteries for his head torch.

Perhaps Resolution was watching over him. Later that night, with snow now falling, Pete McMurtrie still 'vaguely' on the track, he was met by colleague Tim Raemaekers, who had walked in from the other side of the island with food and spare batteries. They made their way back to the leeward coast and onboard the *Southern Winds* by midnight.

Liz and I make it safely across the two rivers that afternoon and breathe a sigh of relief. Another hour and we get to Duck Cove and the end of the trapline. Egg boxes and bait are all but gone, and we've bagged four stoats. By now it's high tide and the water is being picked up by williwaws. It's a welcome sight to see the dinghy 'fanging' towards us, Pete McMurtrie on board and Hamish Barrow at the controls, both men soaked but grinning. We waded out in waist-deep water before they haul us aboard, not too gracefully. Shattered. Predator control, particularly on Resolution, is not for the faint hearted.

It also requires a great deal of faith. Ten years on since the first traps were baited, the budget to maintain stoat trapping on Resolution Island hovers around \$115,000 a year. The end game is to have an island sanctuary with a diversity of habitats, where endangered native species can thrive. Just as it was envisaged in 1891. But with its eastern coast running over 15 kilometres up Acheron Passage, all within stoat swimming distance from the mainland, just how realistic is that? Pete McMurtrie says he wavers between despondency and optimism: "Ambitious" is the word most people use. In some ways Resolution's been seen as a failure, but we always knew that with the tools we have today we would never get complete eradication. It's not the end of the world, in a restoration sense. Resolution could well be seen as a test case for the whole of mainland New Zealand. The goal of suppression – control

Acheron Passage looking south towards Long Island in Tamatea/Dusky Sound. The narrowest distance between the mainland and Resolution Island (right) is 550 metres. GRAHAM DAINTY





Taumoana/Five Fingers Peninsula. DAVE COMER

of stoats – is working. Mōhua are doing well, and rock wren and fernbirds are turning up in greater numbers. Kākā seem to be increasing. Now, the goal is to try and get it to even better levels, with only a few stoats every year.’

McMurtrie says he’s also optimistic about future technology but says they can’t wait for that miracle of an eradication device. ‘If we throw our hands up and give up, we’ve lost. We’re buying time.’

The average annual stoat-trap tally hovers between 40 to 50 stoats, and those are only the ones that have been caught. But still, many native species are thriving. Mōhua/yellowheads (*Mōhoua ochrocephala*) were introduced to the island in 2011 and 2013. Even on this stormy day, flocks of mōhua accompany us the length of the valley to Duck Cove. Kakaruai/South Island

robin (*Petroica australis*) are everywhere. Rock wren, seemingly, are surviving, dotted across the tops. And tokoeka/southern brown kiwi (*Apteryx australis*) can be heard at night across the island. Look carefully through the bush and you can make out their telltale prods, fine holes in the ground from their long, strong beaks as they investigate insects. The ultimate prize, however, would be if Resolution Island could offer protection for a bird that desperately needs another safe haven: kākāpō.

At the southwest corner of Resolution, Five Fingers Peninsula, or Taumoana, meaning ‘lying in the sea’, stretches out towards the entrance of Tamatea/Dusky Sound. It was Captain Cook who gave the peninsula its European name, with its five upright rocks at the entrance to Dusky. Five Fingers Peninsula is linked to the main massif of Resolution via one tenuous land bridge, an isthmus of stone and sand between the

Tasman Sea to the north and Goose Cove to the south (where Cook's crew optimistically released five geese in 1773. There are no geese now; Cook's gaggle didn't survive long).

And it's across this isthmus and along the shores of the main island of Resolution and Five Fingers that the stoat traps have been intensified to a density of one every 50 metres. The goal is to stop stoats making it onto the peninsula. After 55 stoats were caught on Five Fingers in 2008, only four more stoats have been discovered, three of them found on the northern end near the isthmus. The Kākāpō Recovery Team is watching carefully because, if all goes well, kākāpō could return to Resolution Island, at least to one corner of it.

This 2019 summer will be a test. Another mast year is about to unfold, when a mass seeding of the beech and podocarp forests is forecast, which means that not only do birds benefit from the extra food source, but so too do the rats. Although there are no rats on Resolution (hopefully), there are plenty on the mainland, just across Acheron Passage. An expected rat irruption/plague means an increase of a food source for stoats, triggering opportunistic stoat breeding and an explosion in their population. Stoats will have to keep moving, perhaps to keep swimming.

But that has yet to be seen. Until then there are still traps to check, rebait and reset. The sun almost breaks through on Goose Cove as the mud at low tide sucks at my boots, and I end up face down in the shallows. The channel is like a white-water river when the tide comes in, until all that is left is the small span of sand, stone and scrub, less than a metre above high water.

Over the course of eight long days, the dedicated predator-control crew covers Resolution and most of the islands in the vicinity, with hundreds of traps on the many kilometres of coast of every island, no matter how small. Volunteers leap onto rocks and back again, timing the jump between swells and breaking waves, checking traps often precariously installed on cliffs.

And on just one day, the weather is kind enough to grant a rare view from a ridgeline on Resolution. There's a southerly advancing, the sky is black but still clear as Tamatea/Dusky appears below.

I pause a moment to take in the panorama, the minutiae of conservation tasks diminished beneath the immensity of this wilderness. Resolution is aptly named. Its western cliffs sit staunch, resolute against the power of the Tasman Sea. From here you can feel the force of all that has shaped this corner of Aotearoa, New Zealand, be it the weather systems advancing from the Southern Ocean, the geological and tectonic origins, or the power of deities, demi-gods, atua. Although Mauikatau/Resolution Island witnessed the beginnings of so much of New Zealand history unfold on its shores, there is now nothing that appears to have changed since Māori or Europeans arrived. Tamatea/Dusky appears, at least from a distance, as it would have done to those first navigators and explorers.

From this smooth granite outcrop on Resolution, the island, we can only imagine *Resolution*, the barque, a three-masted sailing ship, turning due east below those five jagged rocks into what its commander had named Dusky Bay. It was 26 March 1773.

OVERLEAF Five Fingers Point, at the entrance to Tamatea/Dusky Sound.
ANDRIS APSE







CHAPTER TWO

Resolution, the Ship

The crew of HMS *Resolution* were not the first people in Tamatea/Dusky Sound. They were not the first to map and name the many coves and harbours, at least not by way of ink on paper. It was Māori navigators who first voyaged, explored, fished, inhabited and made their homes in the waterways of Murihiku. But on 26 March 1773, as HMS *Resolution* sailed downwind past Taumoana/Five Fingers Peninsula, her passage made its own definitive, indelible mark on the ecology of Dusky Sound.

Central to this were Cook's charts – extensive, precise – created from the use of theodolite, sextant or quadrant and compass, before being inscribed with ink-dipped quill on parchment. Cook may have arrived and departed Dusky Sound with minimal tangible impact on the area, but the charts and journals were the genesis for what would follow over the next 250 years.

Cook and his crew created the first detailed descriptions of flora and fauna of Dusky. They also provided the first lens through which to see and endeavour to understand the lives of those people already here, the tangata whenua (or 'takata whenua', as is the Southern Māori dialect).

Tamatea/Dusky Sound presents a magnificent harbour for any mariner, but for the crew of the *Resolution*

it was an especially welcome haven. Prior to their arrival off the coast of Fiordland, they had been at sea for 117 days. And most of that time was spent not just in the subantarctic, but in the Antarctic Circle.

There is much we cannot comprehend about life on board the *Resolution*. How did 113 men work, eat and sleep on this 33.5-metre (110 foot) vessel, alongside sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, chooks, cats, dog and rats? (Who cleaned up after them?) How did anyone feed the men? How did Cook or his officers manage to hold a sextant sufficiently steady on a rollercoaster of an ocean, in Roaring Forties, Furious Fifties and Screaming Sixties latitudes? On that note, how did they manage to write such meticulous and beautiful handwritten logs, despite relentless storms (think of a wet jacket dripping onto parchment), violent swells and breaking waves?

How did over 100 men (and teenage boys) continue to manage sails, halyards, sheets, spars and stays in the Antarctic Circle, navigating around icebergs for months on end, given their basic woollen garments (*Fearnought* seamen's jackets) and the paucity of heating in this uninsulated wooden ship?

Midshipman John Elliott was one of the youngest on board *Resolution* (George Vancouver the other), at just 14 years old. As they neared 67 degrees south, well inside the Circle, he wrote: 'And the frost and cold so intense as to cover the Rigging with Ice, like compleat christal ropes, from one End of her to the other, and even to stiffen our outer Coats on our backs, yet Capt. Cook would not allow any fire in the Gally, or anywhere else but at proper times in the day.'¹

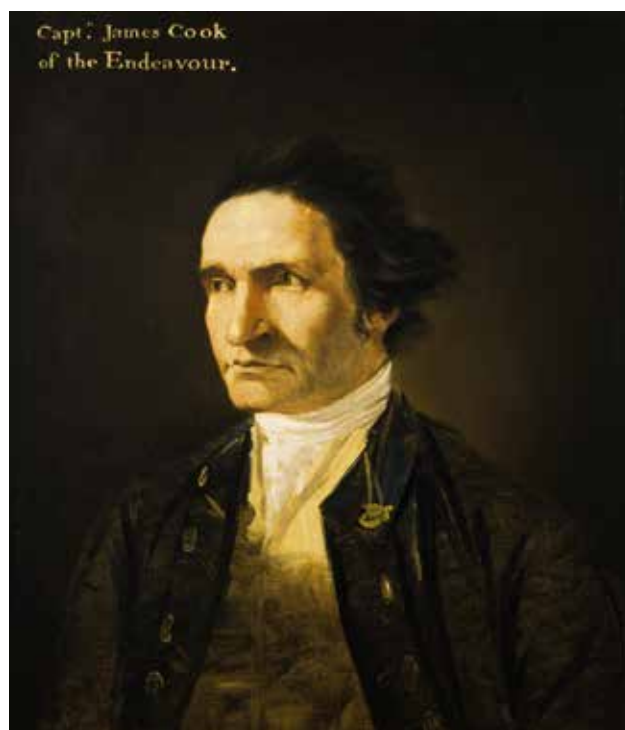
LEFT, ABOVE *Ice Islands*, William Hodges. MITCHELL LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

LEFT, BELOW *The Resolution and Adventure, 4 January 1773, taking in ice for water, lat. 61.S*, William Hodges. MITCHELL LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Captain Cook kept a tight ship. Fuel was solely for cooking, not for heating. While the men endured the cold (think of the ice-embalmed individual sitting aloft in the rigging keeping a lookout for icebergs), some of the chooks, sheep and pigs died from the extremes, no doubt duly eaten. And so it was a very relieved and exhausted crew to finally see the bow of the *Resolution* veer north, and after another couple of weeks to see the southwest coast of New Zealand.

March 25th we were regaled with the pleasing sight of the Mountains of New Zealand – after an absence from Land of 17 weeks and 3 days having been most of that time immersed in snow and ice; – how changed the scene! every body that was able to crawl on the masts and yards got up to satisfy their longing senses of a sight almost forgot, whilst those who were not able, importuned the others as they came down for a discription; without being able to wait until they could see it off the deck.²

Captain James Cook, 1728–79, William Hodges. NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, GREENWICH, LONDON



Cook had seen the entrance to Dusky and noted it as a possible safe harbour when he was on the *Endeavour*, during his first voyage to New Zealand, in 1770. In his journal he had written: ‘This bay I have named *duskey bay* ... it is about 3 or 4 Miles broad at the entrance and seems to be full as deep, in it are several Islands behind which there must be shelter from all winds provided there is a sufficient depth of water.’³ Having arrived too late in the day to make a safe passage in to anchor, Cook sketched the entrance, noting the ‘five high peaked rocks standing up like the four fingers and thumb of a mans hand’, and named it ‘Point five fingers’,⁴ before reluctantly sailing on. Almost three years later, with a clear memory of the potential haven, Cook returned.

The fact that he could return, sailing directly to almost the exact same position in 1773 was an extraordinary feat. By then, determining latitude was relatively straightforward; the essential tool was the sextant. The practice of accurately finding longitude, however, had yet to be finessed. Of all European mariners, Cook had almost nailed it. Even Johann Forster, the by all reports curmudgeonly naturalist on board *Resolution*, gave his captain high praise: ‘However I must here do Justice to our Navigators, who, when we first made Land, coincided within a few Miles with their accounts, since the last Observation of Longitude; some were not above 3 miles out.’⁵

They hove to for the night off the coast, before easing the sheets on the mainsails the next morning to veer east between Five Fingers Peninsula and the South Point of ‘Duskey Bay’. The islands and ridgelines framing the fiord faded into the distance in variegated shades of grey and green, the farthest outline against the sky the hazy Fiordland mountains. William Hodges, the ship’s artist, sketched the scene, perhaps later applying the watercolours to his now famous painting of the entrance to Dusky Sound.

The crew were mesmerised. Georg Forster, just 17 years old, wrote:

[W]e glided along by insensible degrees, wafted by light airs, past numerous rocky islands, each of which was covered with wood and shrubberies, where



numerous evergreens were sweetly contrasted and mingled with the various shades of autumnal yellow. Flocks of aquatic birds enlivened the rocky shores, and the whole country rebounded with the wild notes of the feathered tribe ... we looked upon the country at that time, as one of the most beautiful which nature unassisted by art could produce.⁶

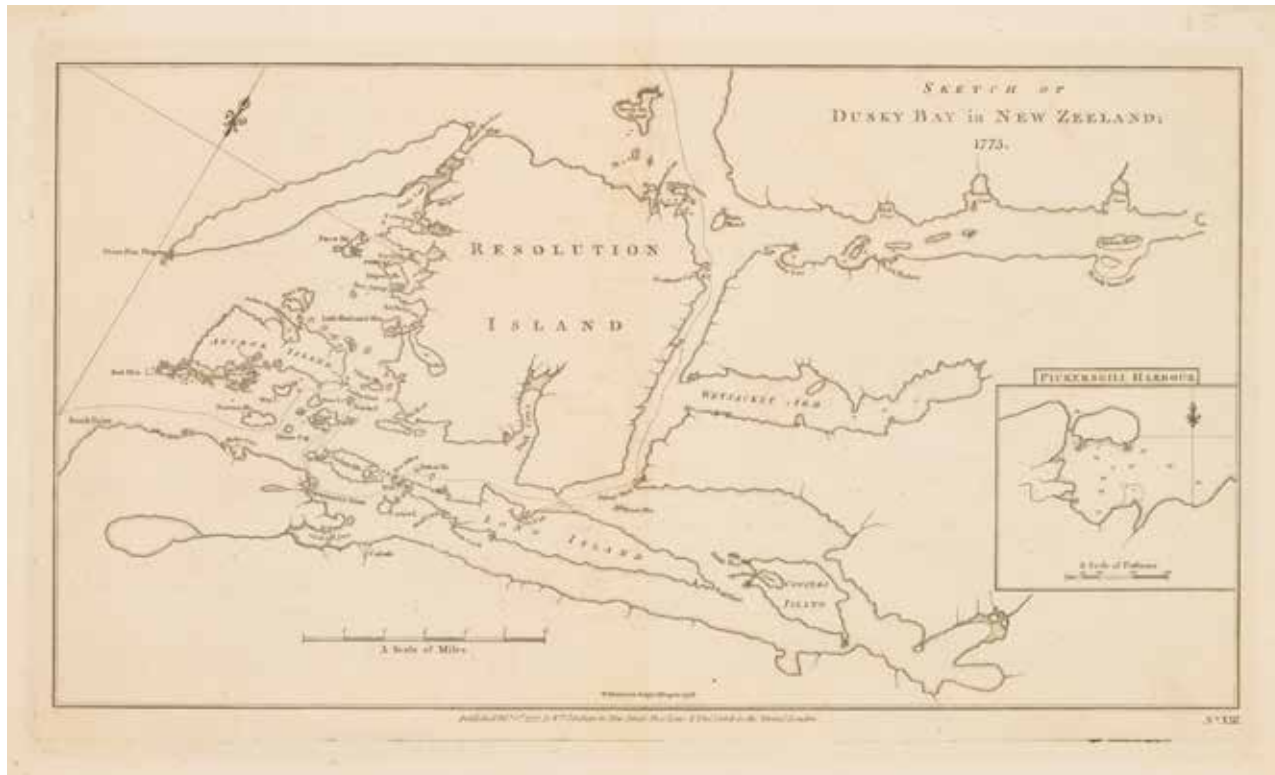
Three masts. Up to ten wind-filled off-white sails, and a solid mass of wood, portholes, bowsprit, stanchions and rigging above the waterline. Sailing along the south coast of what would soon become known as Anchor Island, the mainland and islands of the fiord towering above her, the *Resolution* would have been an astonishing sight.

Then came the moment the crew had long been

In Dusky Bay, New Zealand, William Hodges. MITCHELL LIBRARY, STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

waiting for. The cable unfurled and the anchor found its way swiftly to the seafloor. After four months in the Southern Ocean, the ship was finally still. Such was the sharp drop-off and depth around the eastern corner of Anchor Island (50 fathoms, or nearly 100 metres), that the *Resolution* was positioned unnervingly close to the island, 'so close to the shore as to reach it with a hawser'.⁷

Fish hooks followed the anchor. And within minutes the crew were pulling up hundreds of 'coal fish' (blue cod). After months on rations (and the occasional tough and salty Antarctic petrel), it was a happy crew at dinner that evening.



Sketch of Dusky Bay in New Zealand; 1773.
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

Anchor Island was a temporary anchorage, being exposed to any wind other than the westerly. Cook immediately took a longboat north, finding Facile Harbour on Resolution Island, while Lieutenant Pickersgill took another one south. The latter found the sheltered cove where they would make their home for the next five weeks, naming it Pickersgill Harbour. He wrote: 'After getting thro this passage we opened one of the most enchanting little Harbours I ever saw; it was surrounded with high Lands intirely cover'd with tall shady trees rising like an amphitheatre; and with the sweet swelling Notes of a number of Birds made the finest Harmony.'⁸

The *Resolution* crew could walk to shore via a natural gangway, a long extended rātā branch. Water was close to hand, as was a perfect headland on which to set up scientific instruments. Even though it rained, often, they didn't care. They ate like kings (fish, crayfish, seal steaks, countless birds), they got out for decent walks,

they fished and hunted, got a forge going to repair iron-work, had plenty of water to do their washing, mended sails, enjoyed a cup of 'tea-tree' tea (mānuka), and even managed to brew a not-half-bad beer from 'spruce' or rimu.

The beauty of Tamatea/Dusky was not lost on them. Johann Forster's journal recorded:

Turning about: You behold a vast bay strewed over with small Islands, all covered with a fine verdure: & above them the tops of the cloud cap't high hills on the main appear: & at a distance on one Side is the vast Ocean opening. This is a slight sketch of the inimitable beauties that on this delicious spot surrounded me: which is worthy to be executed by the pencil of a *Titian*, or *Vernet*, dipt in the tints of the rainbow.⁹

There was an astronomer aboard, William Wales. He'd brought along a clock known as the Larcum Kendall K1 chronometer (a cheaper copy of a clock designed by an inventor, John Harrison) which was the essential piece of technology to determine accurate longitude. While



latitude is determined by the angle of the noon sun to the horizon, longitude also depends on knowing the difference between Greenwich Mean Time and where one is positioned (as well as other complicated series of angles and calculations).

Wales had a host of other gadgets, but in order to use them he needed open sky, so the headland alongside the *Resolution* was then cleared. Several ancient rimu trees were felled, two men either side of the cross-cut saw. Once the newly entitled Astronomer Point was levelled, the astronomer set up his observatory, his tent and tools. Wales observed a partial eclipse of one of the moons across the planet Jupiter with his telescope, and he ensured the latitude and longitude of the headland

View in Pickersgill Harbour, Dusky Bay, New Zealand, William Hodges.
NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, GREENWICH, LONDON

were accurate. He measured the rise and fall of the tide with a Tyde-measurer (a tube with a float); when at first not long enough, he lengthened it, to calculate the nearly 2.5-metre (8 foot) difference in high and low tides.

Astronomer Point is still the most tangible evidence of Cook's stay in Dusky Sound. The stumps of ancient rimu are now covered in moss and kidney ferns, like strange headstones in an urupā, or cemetery, the second-generation bush grown up around them. In 1963, Charles and Neil Begg, brothers and both medical prac-



View from Astronomer Point looking east along Cook Channel.
PETA CAREY

tioners, explorers, and authors of *Dusky Bay: In the Steps of Captain Cook*, ensured the headland and cove was commemorated by erecting a small plaque on the rocks above high tide. It reads:

PICKERSGILL HARBOUR
 Captain James Cook
 moored the bark “Resolution”
 in this harbour
 from 27th March until 28th April
 1773

As the decades have passed, and the area has seen the rise and rise of charter boats and tourist traffic, the headland now has a boardwalk and a viewing platform from where one can look out past Crayfish Island along the length of Cook Channel (as the Beggs later persuaded the Geographic Board to name it), to the mountains of the Main Divide above Supper Cove.

The route by which the *Resolution* sailed into Dusky, first anchoring in the lee of Anchor Island, then

sailing and being hauled through the narrow waterway into Pickersgill Harbour, was in plain view of Mamaku (later, Indian Island), where at least one Māori family were living. They, and other Māori in the area, may have been watching the movement of ship, cutters and longboats.

They appeared just one day after the *Resolution* was moored in Pickersgill Harbour. In the canoe were seven or eight people. They came within ‘musket shot’ before erring on the side of caution and retreating. William Wales commented: ‘A sight, so uncommon as our Ship must be to them, would, I suppose, be sufficient to strike terror into the bravest of Mankind!’¹⁰ Although Cook and his men followed, leaving gifts (axes, beads and medals) at the natives’ camp in Cascade Cove, Cook chose not to pursue them.

A week later, on Mamaku/Indian Island, a family of Māori called out to the men aboard the passing longboat. Here, on 6 April 1773, was the first contact between Europeans and takata whenua.

RIGHT A chart of Dusky Sound by Joseph Gilbert, surveyor, and Henry Robert, draughtsman. THE BRITISH LIBRARY (The convention of orientating the map with north at the top of the page was not always adopted at this time.)