

## James Cook's Sailing Directions for Halifax Harbour, 1762

*In coming from the westward give the light [Sambro Island Light] a birth of one league until it is brought well on with Cape Sambro, or to bear North from you; then Steer NE and NNE for Chebucto head giving it a birth of one Mile: being the length of Chebucto head steer N & N b W directly for Point Sandwich observing to keep the Citadel of Halifax / which is on the Hill over the Town / open of the point, this will carry you clear of the rock [Lichfield Shoal] off Hollowbut Bay [Halibut Bay] and Herring Cove [Mars Rock]: In this passage you 'l meet with irregular soundings from 20 to 11 fathom, and may Anchor any where if you find it necessary.*

*In coming from the eastward you may with great safety borrow / by your lead / within a Mile and half of Thrum-cap as there is a very good channel of 10 and 12 fathom between the Shoals of that Island and the Eastern Bank [Rock Head Shoal]; you must take care not to open Rouses Island [Devil's Island] a small Island on the east side of the entrance into the SE Arm of the main untill Georges Island is brought over the point of Maughers Beach, for the south part of Thrum-cap Shoals lies with this Island open and touching with the main: you must observe that in comeing out of the harbour as soon as you have joined the Island to the main you are clear of all danger on both sides – If you have occasion to turn between the Shoals of Thrum-cap and the rock off Hollowbutt Bay, you may stand to the westward until the West side of Georges Island be brought nearly in line with Point Sandwich, and to the Eastward until the Flagg staff on the said Island be brought over the Point of Maughers Beach: as soon as you are the length of Thrum-cap, you may stand in to Cornwallis's Island [McNab's Island] by your lead into 7 and 6 fathom; as you approach Point Sandwich you must not stand to the Westward to shut the Citadel behind the Point, nor to the Eastward to bring Georges Island over the Beach.*

*From Point Sandwich to Georges Island is North 3½ miles, you will meet with irregular soundings from 18 to 10 & 9 fathom, every where good Anchorings particularly behind Maughers Beach, where you will be intirely sheltered from the Sea Winds.*

*Between Maughers Beach and the Shoals of Point Pleasant is a small Bank [Middle Ground], whereon is 6 fathom. In turning here you may make free with both sides untill the length of the Ledge of Point Pleasant [Point Pleasant Shoal], then you must not stand to the Westward to shut Chebucto Head behind Point Sandwich untill you are above the Ledge, nor to the Eastward as soon as you are*

*the length of the NW point of Cornwallis's Island to loose sight of the house on Maughers Beach, untill Mr. Gerrish's Storehouse at Point Pleasant is brought in a line with the dwelling house, you will be then clear of all danger and may stand over to the Easteron Shoar as near as you please, it being very bold too having 9 & 10 fathom close to it: you must not make quite so free with the other side untill above Georges Island, you will be then Clear of all danger whatsoever and may Anchor any where before the Town in 12, 13 and 14 fathom excellent Clear good holding ground and Sheltered from all Winds.*

*From Georges Island to the Navy Yard is NNW  $\frac{3}{4}$  W  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile, Ships that want to go there may run up and Anchor before the place or if convenient go along side of the carreening wharf at once where there is sufficient water for almost any Ship in the Navy with all her stores in.*

*From Georges Island to the entrance into the Bason is NNW and NW b N 3 miles, in the passage is 12 & 14 fathom in the middle of the Channel and on each side 7 & 8, the entrance is not quite a quarter of a mile broad and 12 or 13 fathom deep, bold too on both sides.*

*The Bason is between 4 & 5 miles in length N b W & S b E 2 miles in breadth in many places between 38 & 40 fathom Deep and Navigable up to the very head it is frozen up the greatest part of the winter, so that people Travel over it to and from Fort Sackville.*

*The Harbour of Halifax is without doubt one of the best in America Sufficiently large to hold all the Navy of England with great safety, both its in & out let is very easy and open in the most Severe Frosts.*

*Latitude  $44^{\circ}36'N$  pr. Observation.*

*Longitude  $63^{\circ}26'W$  from London by Computation.*

*Variation of the Compass  $12^{\circ}50'W$  from Observation.*

*The Tides flow in the Harbour full and Change half an hour after Seven about Eight feet up and down but is greatly Govern'd by the winds.*

Courtesy of Nova Scotia Archives, Vertical File, Captain James Cook, extracted from Historical Press, Hydrographic Department, Ministry of Defence, Taunton, Somerset, England.

Reproduced in Rear Admiral Hugh F. Pullen OBE, CD, RCN (Ret'd) The Sea Road to Halifax. (Halifax, The Nova Scotia Museum, 1980).