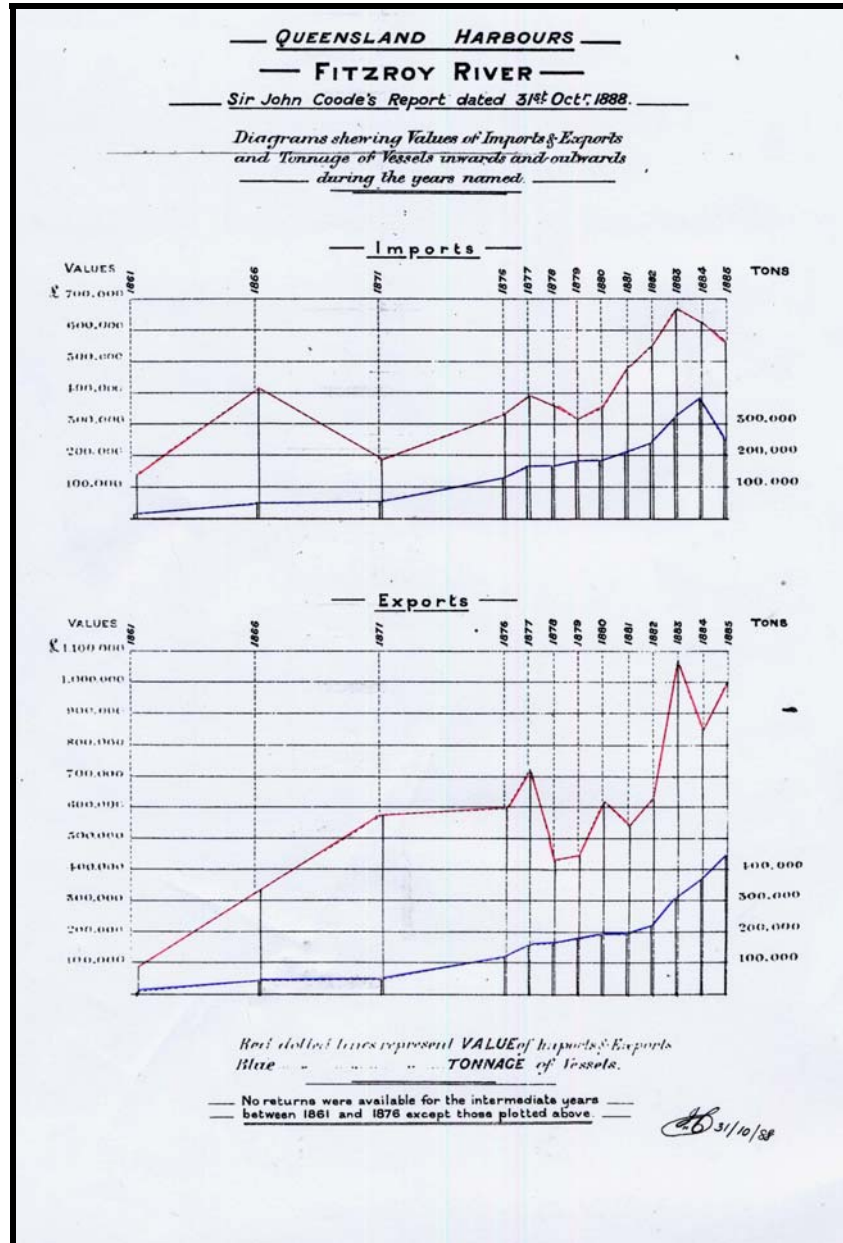


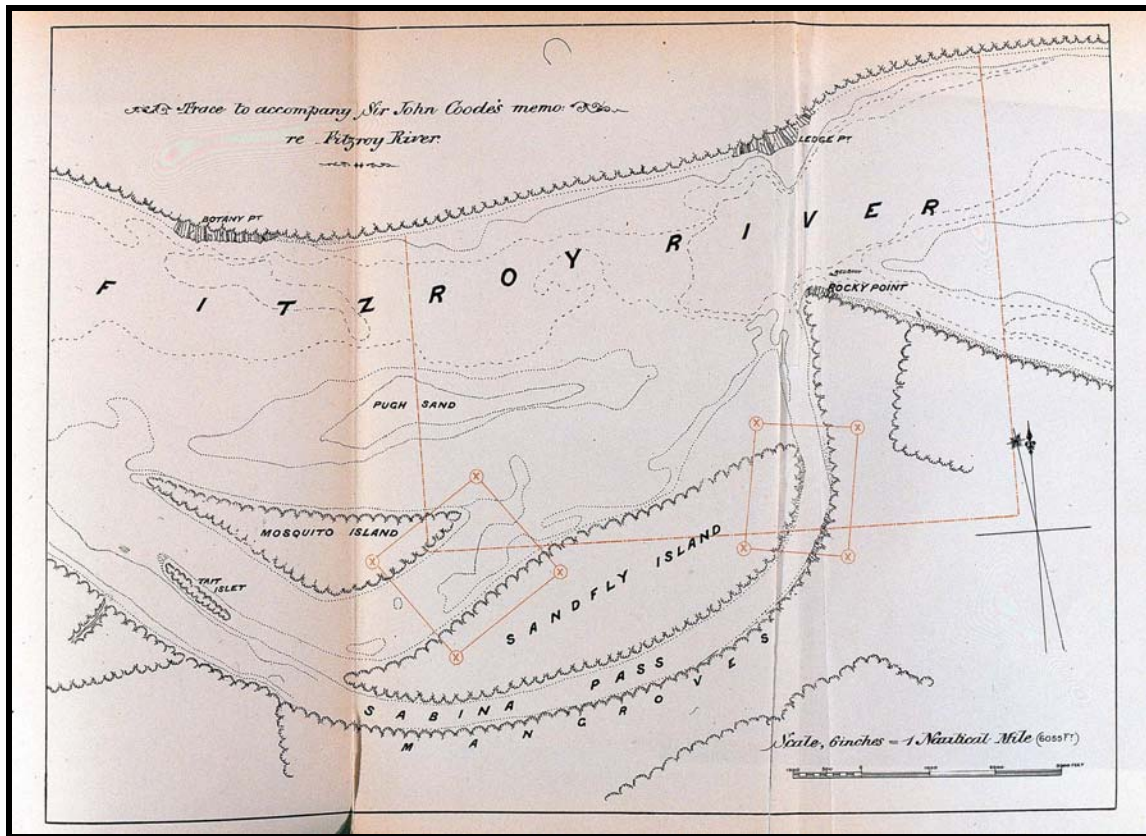
## Sir John Coode's plans for the Fitzroy

The British engineer, Sir John Coode, had vast experience and a high reputation constructing harbours and breakwaters in Britain, South Africa and Ceylon. In 1877, he was invited to Melbourne to design facilities, including a shipping canal, to overcome existing problems there.<sup>1</sup> In 1885, he toured various Queensland ports on behalf of the Department of Harbours and Rivers to advise on improvements. His reports, including that on the Fitzroy, were presented to parliament in 1877.

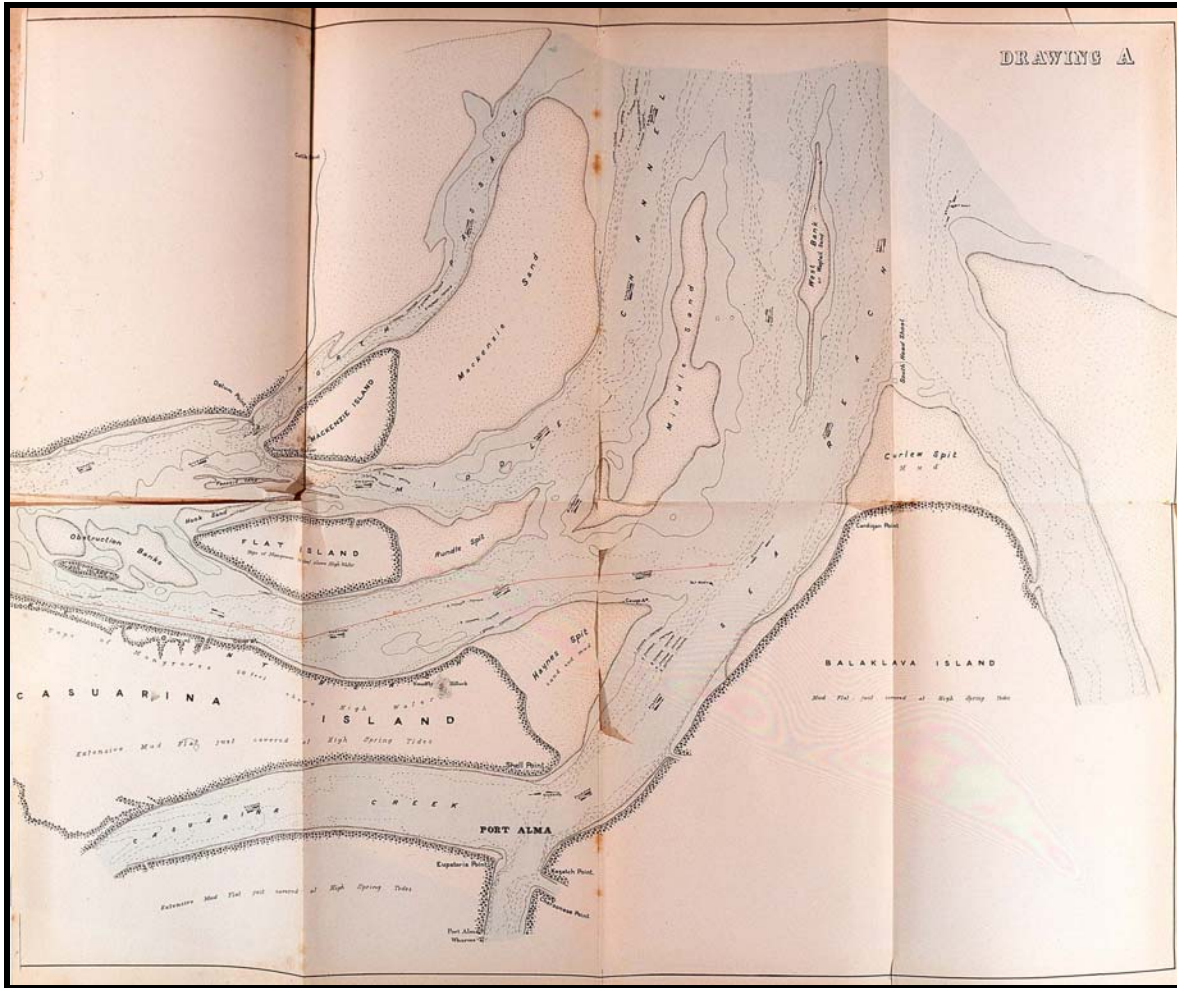


Port of Rockhampton statistics to accompany Sir John Coode's report.  
(QV&P, 1889)

Coode's plans for the Upper Flats and Sand Flats were similar to Nisbet's and he too proposed a 'training bank' (later Satellite Wall) to scour a channel through Humbug Passage by closing off side channels. Coode also proposed another wall of two and a half miles from Shoal Island to Rocky Point where the natural river became very wide. He also suggested straightening and shortening the length of the river by cutting through Pirate Point; reducing the 'abnormal' curve at Devil's Elbow; and even blasting out the rocks above the town to increase the tidal scour.<sup>2</sup> However, none of these ideas was adopted, largely because of cost, with only the walls were eventually constructed.



Close-up plan for narrowing closing between Mosquito, Sandfly and Casuarina Islands. (QV&P, 1889)



Sir John Coode's plan showing the three channels at the Fitzroy mouth, with navigation channel in red. At the bottom, centre, is the isolated deepwater wharf at Port Alma. The wharf was commissioned by Premier McIlwraith in 1881 as a terminal for a spur line from the proposed transcontinental railway to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The railway project was scrapped when McIlwraith lost office in 1885 and the wharf, constructed between 1882 and 1884 by local engineering firm, Burns and Twigg Ltd, remained largely unused until connected by rail to Rockhampton in 1912.

(QV&P, 1889)

**References:**

1. B. Carroll, *The Engineers: 200 Years at Work for Australia*, Canberra, 1988, p.79.
2. 'Sir John Coode's Report upon the Fitzroy River', *QV&P*, 1889, vol. 3, p. 2-4.