

# EXPLORER



# MATTHEW FLINDERS





**HERITAGE  
EXPLORER  
SERIES**

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# **EXPLORER MATTHEW FLINDERS**

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Since 1644 Australia was known as New Holland since its discovery by the Dutch Explorer Abel Tasman. Matthew Flinders first officially proposed the name Terra Australis or Australia in 1804. The name however was not officially approved by the United Kingdom until 1824 and not by the Netherlands until the end of the 1800s.

Throughout this Factsheet Australia will also be referred to as **New Holland** and **Terra Australis**, Tasmania as **Van Diemen's Land**, Sydney Harbour as **Port Jackson** and Sydney Town as **Sydney Cove** (small bay on the southern shore of Sydney Harbour).



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## EXPLORER MATTHEW FLINDERS

**Name:** Matthew Flinders  
**Born:** 16 March 1774 Donington in the Lincolnshire Fenlands  
**Parents:** Matthew and Susanna Flinders (nee Ward)  
**Occupation:** Distinguished Naval Captain, Explorer, Navigator and Cartographer  
**Married:** Ann Chappelle 17 April 1801  
**Died:** 19 July 1814

First man to circumnavigate Terra Australis 1803 and responsible for its naming in 1804 (previously known as New Holland), accurately map and prove it one land mass.

**Matthew Flinders  
Market Place  
Donington, Lincs**



Rodney Burton CCL 2.0

### Early Years

Matthew was the first child born to Dr Matthew Flinders and Susanna (nee Ward) in Donington 1774 where his father had set up his medical practice four years earlier. Matthew's father was a surgeon and apothecary (chemist) as was his father John before him. An apothecary shop was attached to their home which was common practice at that time. Dr Flinders was interested in science and astronomy, was a frugal, methodical and hard working man.

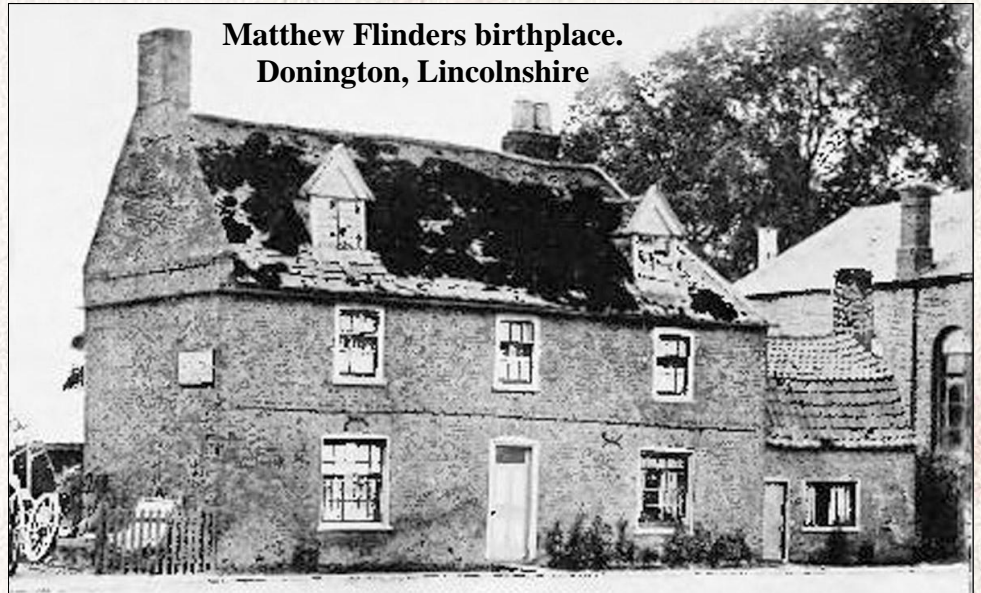
Matthew's mother died in childbirth with the arrival of her tenth child Samuel when Matthew was nine. She had previously lost five children including two sets of twins and the five surviving children were, Matthew, Elizabeth, Susanna, John and Samuel. Within a year of her death Dr Flinders married a widow, Elizabeth Weekes Ellis from Spilsby.



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When Matthew was five he commenced Donington Free School and was described as 'bright' and was learning Latin and writing the following year. At 12 years he was boarding at Reverend John Shinglar's Grammar School seven miles from home at Horbling and at some point he learnt to play the flute. Fortunately his father kept diaries of day to day events and his notes on Matthew's progress mention him being 'better than expected'. It is evident his education was a sound basis for his future naval pursuits.



Matthew Flinders birthplace.  
Donington, Lincolnshire

Dr Flinders wanted his son to follow in a medical career and had Matthew from around the age of 14 helping him in his shop. On 26 April 1790 Matthew commenced a position with a surgeon and apothecary in Lincoln which lasted only two weeks and then his father accepted and supported Matthew in his own choice of a naval career.

Dr Flinders wanted his son to follow in a medical career and had Matthew from around the age of 14 helping him in his shop. On 26 April 1790 Matthew commenced a position with a surgeon and apothecary in Lincoln which lasted only two weeks and then his father accepted and supported Matthew in his own choice of a naval career.

### Naval Career

The ocean voyages of James Cook from 1768 - 1779 and war with France were the catalyst for many young boys to join the navy. Since 1778 England had been at war with France due to their support to the American colonies in the War of Independence.

Matthew was inspired as a boy by the story of Robinson Crusoe. His older cousin John Flinders was in the navy and during his naval career had travelled to America and seen action against the French and Dutch. Six years of sea-time was required in order to sit for the Lieutenant's Passing Certificate. As was a common practice in the navy, John Flinders was instrumental in having Matthew accepted as *servant* for Robert Laurie, Acting Lieutenant on *HMS Alert* in the West Indies despite the fact Matthew was not on board. His name was however on the muster list so this time qualified for part of his six year sea-time.





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Promotion in the navy was facilitated by having a highly placed patron. Matthew's cousin Henrietta Flinders (John's sister) was working as Governess for Captain Pasley's family and upon her recommendation to him, Matthew at the age of 16 and in 1790 was accepted as Midshipman on his vessel *HMS Scipio* just as mounting force of the French Revolution was impacting on Britain. Shortly later he transferred to *HMS Bellerophon* - 74 guns with Captain Pasley. In 1791 he served briefly on *HMS Dictator*.

He transferred to *HMS Providence* under Captain Bligh which was greatly supported by Sir Joseph Banks and was a scientific voyage which was to take three years and would circumnavigate the world. The purpose of the voyage was to transport breadfruit plants from Tahiti to the West Indies.

Prior to the voyage Matthew Flinders received a reassuring letter of support from Captain Thomas Pasley encouraging him to support Captain Bligh and reassured him that if he did so and kept him informed with regular updates of his voyage he would be very supportive of Flinders' future advancement.

Despite evidence that Midshipman Flinders didn't greatly admire Bligh he did learn much from him including cartography which improved throughout the voyage. Bligh had sailed previously and learnt from Cook. Flinders observed Bligh's dealings with natives especially where conflict occurred in Torres Strait as Bligh well knew that peaceful dealings were essential for the future safety of other ships. After delivery of the breadfruit trees to the West Indies *HMS Providence* was brought into the War with France and commenced escorting convoys and capturing French vessels. The voyage was completed on 7 August 1793 after two years and five days away.

Flinders had befriended the two botanists on *HMS Providence*, one of whom Miles remained in the West Indies to take up employment there and entrusted Flinders with a business letter for Joseph Banks. Flinders saw the advantages of contact with Joseph Banks who was a man of great standing in England regarding science, exploration, all things associated with Terra Australis and also had a lot of political influence and delivered the letter eight days after the end of the voyage.

On 7 September 1793 Flinders was again sailing on *HMS Bellerophon* with Captain Pasley in the War against France. Pasley during this time was made Commodore of the Fleet. The position for Flinders provided a chance for excitement, financial gain and promotion. Around this time his cousin John Flinders at 26 died of yellow fever in the





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West Indies. In April 1794 Pasley was promoted to Rear-Admiral and Flinders an Aide-de-camp. On 1 June *HMS Bellerophon* played a major part in Lord Howe's victorious first naval battle of the war over the French Fleet. During the battle Pasley lost his leg which Flinders realized would no longer make him his active patron. Despite the positive role he played on board, his financial reward was little and his rank remained the same as he still had to finish his six years before sitting for his lieutenant's exam.

After this period Flinders had an opportunity to spend time with his family and socialize with friends who were all proud of his achievements. His youngest brother Samuel who was almost 12 was anxious to join the navy. Discussions between Flinders and his father occurred regarding the advantages of Samuel joining at a younger age than Matthew had been.

### Exploration Years

Henry Waterhouse, First Lieutenant of *HMS Bellerophon* was to be Commander of *HMS Reliance* 394 tons and 90 feet long accompanied by *HMS Supply* 382 tons with Lieutenant William Kent as Commander for an expedition to New South Wales (NSW) with John Hunter who was to be the new Governor of NSW. On 10 August 1794 Flinders joined *HMS Reliance* as Senior Master's Mate and Samuel also enlisted on the same vessel as a *volunteer* earning six pound per year. It took several months for preparation of both vessels for the journey.

In February 1795 both ships set sail with a huge naval escort for protection at the commencement of the voyage as France and England were again at war. Hunter was a capable hydrographer and he spent time on board instructing the younger officers. There were many passengers of interest on board. Daniel Paine a new boat builder for the colony. George Bass who was ship's surgeon. Bennelong an aboriginal man, anxious to return home who had been taken to England and presented to royalty with an aboriginal youth Yemmerrawanie, who had died of respiratory illness whilst there. Both Bass and Paine spent time on board learning the aboriginal language off Bennelong who spirits rose throughout the journey.

George Bass was 24, tall, strong, lively, intelligent, outgoing, sociable, adventurous and possessed a sense of humour and was prepared for any challenge. He got on well with Commander Henry Waterhouse and five years later married his sister Elizabeth. Flinders and Bass had grown up 11 miles apart and got on well. Flinders would have



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felt comfortable in the company of a surgeon. Flinders at 21 was short and slight in stature, physically tough, strong willed and determined in his endeavours. During the voyage Flinders was appointed acting Second Lieutenant by Hunter ahead of another more senior officer and despite not yet having done his exams for the position.

After seven months at sea *HMS Reliance* reached Port Jackson and docked at Sydney Cove. It is reasonable to assume that during this length of time these men came to know each other quite well. On 26 October 1795 with approval from Hunter, Flinders and Bass explored the Upper Georges River and due to their findings that it contained fertile soil were instrumental in the settling of Bankstown. This was accomplished with William Martin who was Bass' servant and medical assistant, in a small vessel brought out on *HMS Reliance* called the *Tom Thumb* approximately 10 feet long with sail. Back in Sydney around this time Flinders had been treated for a kidney problem which may have been caused because of severe water rations during his voyage with Bligh.

In January 1796 Flinders and Bass in their respective roles on board *HMS Reliance* sailed to Norfolk Island 1041 miles which was a penal colony and substantial settlement (887 people), with stores and Captain Johnston who was to be the new Commandant. Hunter had given orders for cannons to be retrieved at low tide from timbers off the previously shipwrecked *HMS Sirius* and brought back to Port Jackson. Captain Johnston due to ill health actually returned with them 5 March 1796. Flinders, Bass and Martin after permission from Hunter to explore the coast east of Port Jackson set out on 25 March 1796. They were provided with a similar boat which they named the *Tom Thumb II* and given provisions for the journey. It was a successful enterprise which explored and charted more of the East Coast to Lake Illawarra but was not without its dramas



***HMS Sirius* memorial, Norfolk Island.**

Photograph © Kathie Maynes 2015





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**Illustration of the Tom Thumb**  
*Picturesque Atlas of Australia circa 1884*  
*Courtesy National Library Australia*





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and dangers. They encountered thirst, drenching of their provisions, dangerous seas and aborigines. Their encounter with aborigines had Flinders innovatively using scissors to cut their beards and hair but which aroused more interest and therefore was more challenging to make their escape. The hazardous seas were another ordeal which their vessel was ill equipped to handle and it was only through their outstanding seamanship and ingenuity that they survived. Some of Flinders' topographical surveys from this venture were printed in England 1799 which was an amazing feat as he had done it with only the use of a compass.

Due to the colony's much needed supplies, Hunter in September 1796 sent *HMS Reliance*, with Flinders and Bass on board, and *HMS Supply* to the Cape of Good Hope, despite the very poor condition of both vessels for these supplies. They transversed the South Pacific, rounded Cape Horn and crossed the Atlantic and arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on 16 January 1797.

During this voyage Flinders completed his six year sea-time including two year's service as a Midshipman. On 24 January 1797 Flinders received the Certificate of Lieutenant after sitting an oral examination on practical seamanship and basic navigation before a panel of officers in which he performed well. Whilst in port the ships were repaired, stocked with all forms of provisions including numerous livestock as well as merino sheep which ended up being the start of a very successful Australian industry.

On 15 May 1797 *HMS Supply* miraculously limped back into Port Jackson and was immediately condemned a total ruin and prohibited from any future sailing. Due to monster seas *HMS Reliance* arrived back weeks later on 26 June 1797 with Flinders now the owner of a kitten he called Trim which was born during a storm on the return trip. Immediate extensive refurbishment of *HMS Reliance* commenced which required Flinders' involvement.

The merchant ship *Sydney Cove* was shipwrecked on 9 February 1797 off Van Diemen's Land on an island today known as Preservation Island. It was carrying a cargo of alcohol to Port Jackson which was retrievable from the wreck as well as the crew. Captain William Hamilton remained there with some of the crew and the cargo. The remaining crew and Clarke who was part owner of the merchandise left in a long boat and headed to Port Jackson for assistance. They landed at Ninety Mile Beach in Victoria



A historical map of Port Phillip, Australia, showing the coastline and surrounding islands. The text 'PORT PHILLIP' is visible on the map.

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but as their vessel was no longer seaworthy set out walking to Port Jackson. Only two men including Clarke made it there in May 1797 and then relayed the plight of the *Sydney Cove* to Hunter.

Hunter sent *HMS Eliza* and *HMS Francis* to assist with salvage of the vessel. Clarke and Bass went to explore Port Kembla as Clarke had reported coal deposits along the shore there. The discovery of coal and the fact that *HMS Eliza* unfortunately disappeared with no trace on the return voyage to Sydney Cove made Hunter fully aware of the need for more accurate surveys to be taken.

As a result Flinders on the first day of 1798 was sent as a passenger in the schooner *HMS Francis* for the sole purpose of hydrographical survey while further salvaging of the *Sydney Cove* took place. Five of the six men at Preservation Island were alive and well due to the abundant food source. Flinders had the opportunity to survey Preservation Island and other nearby islands which he named Chappelle Isles after a family friend Ann. His notes on wildlife included the rocks, vegetation and animals including two variety of seal, kangaroos, echidnas, wombats, geese, penguins and sooty petrels (sic) with no signs of human habitat.

During this time another exploration by Bass had discovered Western Port Bay in a whale boat assuming there was likely a strait of water between Van Diemen's Land and the mainland of Terra Australis. Flinders on his trip to Preservation Island assumed by the water movement there was also a strait though confirmation was still required.

During the absence of both Flinders and Bass on their respective voyages Hunter granted both men one hundred acres of land at Bankstown for service to exploration rendered. Flinders returned on 9 March 1798 and Flinders' sketch survey with Bass' discoveries on his voyage through the strait to Western Port Bay were combined on one map and sent to England.

In late May 1798 Flinders went to Norfolk Island on *HMS Reliance* with supplies and to sit on a board due to mutiny there which was standard practice for a man of his rank.



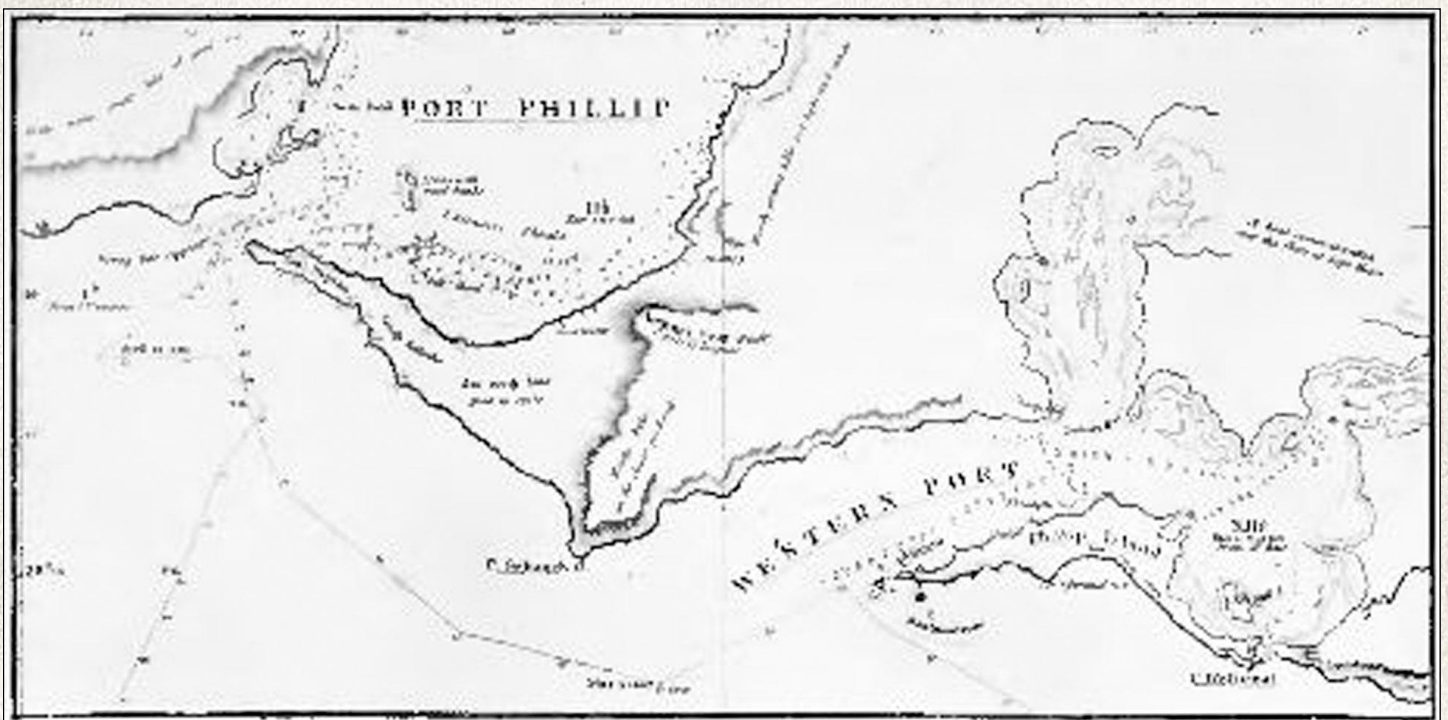
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### First Command

The *Norfolk* a 35 foot sloop 11 foot beam 255 ton, set sail on 7 October 1798 with Flinders, Bass and eight volunteers from *HMS Supply* and *HMS Reliance*. It was Flinders' first command and Waterhouse had assisted with the preparation of the voyage and provided navigation equipment from *HMS Reliance*, though were not provided with a timekeeper. They had provisions for 12 weeks and orders were to endeavour to circumnavigate Van Diemen's Land and chart it. They left Port Jackson accompanied by a whaling vessel *Nautilus* which would moor in Kent's Bay at Cape Barren Island for five months for sealing.

Rough weather provided them with many challenges from the outset. Bass proved a capable seaman and navigator as Second in Command and managed the sloop when Flinders went off in the boat to chart. Many scientific and geographical findings confirmed Van Diemen's Land as an island which would in effect cut 600 miles (a week in time) off future voyages to Port Jackson. They had little contact with aborigines whose language bore no resemblance to Port Jackson aborigines. On 11 January they successfully completed their assignment. Hunter endorsed their discovery by personally naming Bass Strait and Flinders Island on the charts, after the explorers.



Flinders map of Port Phillip Bay  
Courtesy State Library Victoria



# NEW SOUTH WALES

The track is that of Colonial Schooner Francis in 1798 } from Port Jackson by M. Flinders.  
Sloop Norfolk in 1798 & 99

The single is the whaleboat's track by G. Bass Surgeon of H.M.S. Reliance

The single's denote the courses steered, the 's' the set of the flood tide

The shore from Port Jackson to Western Port was coasted by M. Bass in a whaleboat, the water shaded parts are copied from his eye sketch. The Ram Head being placed according to Capt Cook's Longitude & taken as a fixed point. The long beach is extended beyond its limits in a former chart to bring Wilson's Promontory into the relative position with Furneaux's Islands which they seem to require. A dead reckoning must necessarily be incorrect in the way of such a ride as runs here, & it is by its authority only that they are thus placed. The Islands are carried to the Eastward of their situation by Capt Furneaux, they are placed according to the Lunars in Port Dalrymple & the run of it from Swan Island. The beginning & end of a Lunar Eclipse observed at the east end of Preservation Island gave  $148^{\circ} 37' 30''$  E.



The exploration route of George Bass (HMS Reliance Ship Surgeon) sailed in a whaleboat is shown on this c1798 map produced by Matthew Flinders.

BASS'S

STRAIT

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

Circumnavigated in the Colonial Sloop Norfolk by M. Flinders, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. of H.M. Ship Reliance. By order of His Excellency Governor Hunter, 1798-9-10.

Port Dalrymple is laid down by 7 sets of Lunars on each side of the Moon by two sextants. The rest of the North & West sides are by nothing better than a dead reckoning corrected by bearings along the coast. But on making the S.W. Cape we found an error of only 5' out from its situation in Capt Cook's last voyage, the whole remains as we made it. Adventure Bay is copied from Capt Cook's sketch Out. Edit. Dublin. Swilly Rocks or Pedro Blanco is placed 59' of Long east of S.W. Cape according to the table there given which agrees with an indistinct bearing we had of it. The unshaded east coast was laid down by Capt Furneaux & is copied from a chart of New South Wales on a scale of about 1 inch to a degree of Longitude. The water shaded part about Oyster Bay is copied from a plan of about 17 inches to a degree by J. H. Cox Esq. published by M. Dalrymple in 1791. The parts touched with yellow are copied from a manuscript chart by M. J. Hayes who visited the S.E. end of Van Diemen's Land in a ship called the Duke from Bengal, their accuracy I cannot answer for. Henshaw's Bay & Cape Hanson in his chart are reallied to Frederick Henry Bay & Cape Pillar. A few other alterations are made in the names where examined in the Sloop, his ports & bays are called coves, & his rivers, creeks.

High water Element 8' rises 4 or 5 feet. The tides are weak and do not seem always to coincide with the rise and fall but sometimes to run contrary. The land rises to a summit a quarter of a degree of the horizon Van 8' 12' 3 Dec. 1798 9. 18. 1 by theodolite

CHART  
OF

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

AND PART OF

THE SOUTHERN COAST OF AUSTRALIA

The Original by  
Lieutenant Flinders.





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In 1799 Flinders was 25 and had various duties which included involvement on trials. It was nine years since he had been in the Navy and four years since he had been home. He was showing signs of restlessness, was corresponding with Ann Chappelle and was aware that his wage was not adequate for him settling down. Position and wealth were becoming important to him as he witnessed entrepreneurs in Sydney who were making money through trade, sealing, whaling and various other enterprises. Discussions with George Bass took place who was thinking of going into business with ship owner Charles Bishop.

Despite George Bass' business interests, he also had an illness and was given a year off in which time he went to England on half pay and whilst there met and married Henry Waterhouse's sister Elizabeth. In July 1799 Flinders requested the use of *HMS Reliance* for more exploration of north of Port Jackson.

Instead Flinders was again assigned the *Norfolk* as it was deemed more suitable for any river exploration. His crew without Bass and the addition of his brother Samuel 16 (now Midshipman on *HMS Reliance*), Bengaree a Port Jackson aborigine and his cat Trim was similar to that of the Van Diemen's Land circumnavigation. He was also given a timekeeper from *HMS Reliance* for this voyage. They sailed out of Port Jackson on 8 July 1799 to chart the area that Cook had done 29 years earlier.

The trip was hampered by a leaking boat a few days out (constructed from Norfolk Pine which despite Cook's recommendation for its use turned out to be quite unsuitable for shipbuilding) and several encounters with aborigines. Despite detailed sketch surveys, three major rivers were missed, Clarence, Brisbane and Burnett. Unlike English rivers clearly running into the sea many Australian river outlets only give this appearance during the wet season when the rivers are high and at other times of the year resemble estuaries (tidal marshes), sand banks and mangroves which makes their appearance far less obvious. He described their inland expedition to one of the Glass House Mountains and recorded differences with the aborigines he encountered and different animals such as dugongs. He mapped Green Island, Morton Bay and Pumicestone River which is in fact a passage between Bribie Island and the mainland and returned to Port Jackson on 20 August 1799.

Flinders sailed to Norfolk Island on *HMS Reliance* on two occasions with his brother Samuel as a crew member at the end of 1799. By 1800 Flinders had acquired 300 acres of land at Bankstown.





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### Trip Back to England

Flinders and Samuel sailed to England as passengers during which time Flinders readied three charts for publication. Their arrival on 27 August 1800 marked five and a half years away and news awaited them of the deaths of their sister Elizabeth and friend Mary Franklin. Flinders wrote to Joseph Banks regarding the possible exploration of Terra Australis and arranged for publication of his 42 page memoirs on observations of the coast of Van Diemen's Land, Bass Strait and part of the coast of NSW. He presented his charts to Arrowsmith (Chart Maker) which were to accompany his publication.

His work was being acknowledged by his contemporaries and after presenting his plan to Banks of exploring Terra Australis and finding out whether it was one land mass, Banks agreed and a suitable ship was appointed for massive refurbishment. Despite England and France being at war good relations existed between the Institutes of Natural Science and Exploration of both countries. The Institut de France was also interested in exploration of New Holland. Noted Naturalist and Navigator Nicholas Baudin was to lead an exploration of the world and New Holland in his vessel *Le Geographe*, accompanied by Jacques Hamelin in *Le Naturaliste* which set sail in October 1800.

Incredible preparations were being made for Flinders' ship *HMS Investigator* and for the voyage itself and he became a Commander on 16 February 1801. The ship's compliment was 83 which consisted of 15 marines, naturalists, artists, astronomers, scientist, mineralogist and all the usual ship's crew. He received a French passport for *HMS Investigator* which would give him free passage in the event he was detained by a French ship, in much the same way as Baudin and Hamelin had received free passage from the English.

Flinders married Ann Chappelle on 17 April 1801 and his plans of taking her with him and settling her in Sydney while he did his exploration, were not approved by the navy. After Flinders' departure for Terra Australis on 20 July 1801, Ann suffered from ill health for quite some time as a result of their decision.

### Circumnavigation of Terra Australis

On 6 December 1801 his official survey began of the east coast of Australia at Port Lincoln where eight men disappeared in distant view of *HMS Investigator* in their cutter the *Thistle* while on a search for water. Despite a long thorough search nothing was





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found and it was a most unfortunate loss of lives and their exploration cutter. By 20 March their exploration of Spencer and St Vincent Gulf were completed though had unfortunately missed the mouth of the Murray River and had then encountered gale force winds. Kangaroo Island supplied their food shortages as they slaughtered with ease many kangaroos suggesting no previous human contact there previously.

Nearby Encounter Bay was named due to a chance encounter with the French vessel *Geographe* on 8 April 1802 which had already chartered 175 miles of the south coast which Flinders noted. Unbeknown to them both much of this land had recently been charted by the English. Baudin on this same voyage in 1801 had sailed up the west coast of Terra Australis to Timor and back before heading to Van Diemen's Land. It was agreed by both Flinders and Baudin that they were dealing with one continent.

The French vessels were heading to Sydney Cove as they had been at sea for 18 months and had explored the east coast of Van Diemen's Land. Some of their men had scurvy and they also reported the loss of men in one of their smaller vessels.

Flinders after sighting Cape Otway headed out to sea due to gale force winds. They eventually entered Bass Strait, passing King Island and entered Port Phillip Bay through the 1.75 mile opening and charted one side of the bay. He reached Port Jackson after 295 days at sea and reported to Governor Philip Gidley King that he had charted the entire southern coastline of Terra Australis confirming it had one coastline. King rendered assistance to *Le Geographe* and *Naturaliste* after their arrival with repairs and supplies before their return trip to France upon which Baudin died of tuberculosis.

King assisted Flinders with repairs, supplies, replacement crew (including some convicts promised freedom at the completion of the voyage), replacement of the *Thistle* and the accompaniment of another vessel the *Lady Nelson*. They left Sydney Cove sailing north to Hervey Bay on 22 July 1802 to continue their exploration. The section of coast between Port Jackson and Hervey Bay had previously been charted by Cook and Flinders. The setbacks were numerous including the unsuitable condition of the *Lady Nelson*, aborigines, ships grounded in mud, lost time through equipment and timekeepers forgetting to wind clocks.

The Great Barrier Reef though an incredibly beautiful scientific study is treacherous for ships and was still an expanse of 2000 km of unexplored coral reef reaching from





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Hervey Bay to Papua New Guinea. On 28 August 1802 the Northumberland Group of Islands was reached. Channels of water between the coral reefs cause fast rushing torrents of water with the changing tides and despite low tides exposing spectacular coloured and shaped corals the damage to both ships and their anchors from it were irreparable.

The *Lady Nelson* in a very poor state of repair with Captain Murray in command was sent back to Sydney, though not before equipment, supplies and crew were exchanged. Flinders then continued his voyage recharting Cook's coastline, now with the use of a chronometer. He named the 1250 miles of coral reef the Great Barrier Reef. The approaching monsoon season meant reaching Torres Strait Islands quickly before their onset, was important. The islands were entered on 28 October 1802 and signs of numerous natives and their huts were evident. They encountered natives in canoes wanting to trade and continued to survey with the use of Cook and Bligh's charts while making numerous corrections at the same time. He took his ship through the Strait in six days and realized it could be done in far less time (out of the monsoon season).

Rivers were again missed due to no rivers flowing at this time, ship repairs were constant as much of the ship's wood was rotten, scientific specimens continued to be collected and paintings of them and scenes took place. Flinders noted the "dreadful state of the ship" after close inspection. To return to Port Jackson heading into the monsoon season was dangerous and to continue in their present state was also dangerous as food shortages were a major problem. At one point 46 turtles were killed to aid their survival.

The mapping of Groote Island was completed on 17 January 1803 and the exploration of Arnhem Land, Melville Bay in the Gulf of Carpentaria took place, despite encounters with aborigines, a crew member being speared, a drowning and a marine dying as a result of sunstroke. Constant attacks from mosquitoes, sandflies, green ants, their vessel occasionally running aground and the debilitating conditions of scurvy and diarrhoea were some of the obstacles they encountered in the quest for the success of their circumnavigation. They met with a large friendly fishing fleet from Indonesia who had been coming there for many years.

They entered the Dutch settlement of Kupang off the Island of Timor on 31 March 1803 and remained there until 8 April for supplies and repairs and where three deserters remained behind. By 21 April the crew were extremely ill with fever and dysentery, likely due to water obtained there which resulted in some deaths. Bell, the ship's





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surgeon wanted Flinders to return to Port Jackson but the destination was Cape Leeuwin (the south western point of Terra Australis) where they arrived on 15 May 1803. More of the south coast was then charted, Kangaroo Island and around Cape Otway. They arrived at Sydney Heads on 9 June 1803 with the news Terra Australis was not divided by water. A week later the *HMS Investigator* was declared unseaworthy (it did however end up sailing again for many years after extensive restoration work took place).

### **Much Delayed Return Trip to England**

Sydney Cove was now a bustling port crowded with ships. Many of the crew were put under medical care and a few more died despite being provided with a good diet. Flinders whose own health was poor reported to the Governor. The sad news awaited Flinders and Samuel that their father had died. Flinders inherited 600 pound and as head of the family had to direct money appropriately to his family. He had letters waiting for him, letters to write and old acquaintances to renew as his health recovered.

George Bass' trade venture in his ship the *Venus* hadn't been successful as Sydney now had a glut of ships with similar imported goods. Bass obtained a contract from Governor King to import salt pork from the Pacific Islands and the initial voyage to Tahiti and Hawaiian Islands had been successful. Flinders however was unfortunately never to see Bass again as his ship and crew disappeared, place and circumstances unknown.

On 10 August 1803 as a passenger on board the *Porpoise* Flinders sailed to England with 21 crew from *HMS Investigator* including Samuel and were escorted by the *Bridgewater* and *Cato*. On 17 August both the *Porpoise* and *Cato* struck the reef and were wrecked. The *Bridgewater* under Captain Palmer had sailed on unaware of the situation. Flinders with some crew then sailed back to Port Jackson in an open boat covering 750 miles and then raised the alarm at Government House.

Three ships, the *Rolla*, *Francis* and *Cumberland* reached Wreck Reef much to the relief of the survivors. Samuel sailed in the *Rolla* via China to England and Flinders took the *Cumberland* to Torres Strait and then headed to Kupang Bay in Timor as the small ship was in a poor state and leaking. Kupang couldn't repair it so they then headed for the Cape of Good Hope but realizing they would not make it safely there and with both Flinders and two crew suffering bilious fever diverted to Mauritius, unaware that the war between England and France had resumed earlier that year.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## EXPLORER MATTHEW FLINDERS

He arrived in Mauritius 15 December 1803 and soon realized his passport for *HMS Investigator's Voyage of Discovery* did not apply to another ship. He was held captive there for over six years in which time he learnt the French language. His imprisonment there was not in a cell and he was treated reasonably well and given a certain amount of freedom. Despite letter writing being forbidden he managed to smuggle out some letters which reached England.

### Final Years

After nine years and three months away he returned to England on 24 October 1810. The Admiralty had confirmed his position of Post Captain on 7 October 1810. He was reunited with his wife Ann, family and friends. He successfully assisted Samuel with a naval matter. He worked for the common good of his past crew, some of whom had died and have their promotions recognized and therefore their pensions for their families provided accordingly. He assisted French prisoners, delivered their mail and assisted in the return of some to Mauritius.

By January 1811 Flinders was keen to have the accounts of his voyages written with charts updated and published so requested financial assistance from the Admiralty which was quite difficult to obtain and recognition of his Post Captain position was slow in coming. He and Ann shifted regularly to different rental accommodation over the following years. His books were written in three parts.

Samuel Flinders seems to have been treated poorly by the Admiralty and Board of Longitude. His Observational Astronomical books from the *HMS Investigator* which held his calculations and were essential for the recalculation of maps, were undermined and he had to fight for recognition of his contribution. Samuel remained in contact with his older brother until Matthew's death. At some stage Samuel married and had children and died in 1842.

Flinders' daughter Anne (with the added letter e) was born 1 April 1812 and was placed with a wet nurse away from home for 15 months which was the custom.

Flinders was aware of the problem of the compass bearings which were affected by the ship's magnetism. Later that month Flinders supervised experiments regarding ships' magnetism on the compass bearings which proved conclusive and a solution of the





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## EXPLORER MATTHEW FLINDERS

Flinders Bar was invented after his death which counteracted these deviations. With the future advent of metal ships this was in itself an amazing invention.

By 2 October 1813 his manuscripts were sent to the publisher and his charts to Arrowsmith. Even then none of this was straight forward however as they were still being proofed and corrected which required much time. Sir Joseph Banks was indecisive regarding the name Terra Australis which delayed things even further though finally agreed. The book was titled *A Voyage to Terra Australis; Undertaken for the Purpose of Completing the Discovery of that Vast Country, and Prosecuted in the Years 1801, 1802 and 1803 in his Majesty's Ship the 'Investigator', and subsequently in the Armed Vessel 'Porpoise' and 'Cumberland' Schooner. With an Account of the Shipwreck of the 'Porpoise', Arrival of the 'Cumberland' at Mauritius, and Imprisonment of the Commander during Six Years and a Half in That Island.*

Flinders was suffering from kidney stones which he noted from January 1814 as being more acute. By June he was extremely ill and at the age of 40 he died 19 July 1814 which was very likely due to renal failure. The completion of his true story for the world to see was a further achievement, considering his financial and physical wellbeing at the time of its preparation. It was testament to his perseverance, dedication, attention to detail, tenacity and loyalty, all traits which he demonstrated throughout his lifetime. Other than for navigators the book however was not a huge success and the royalties from it were relatively small. Ann's financial legacy was modest and she and baby Anne moved to different rental properties throughout Ann's lifetime. Ann died at Woolwich 1852. Their daughter Anne's son was William Matthew Flinders Petrie who became an eminent Archaeologist and Egyptologist.

Countless tributes recognizing Matthew Flinders as a great explorer and cartographer ensure he will never be forgotten in Australia. These are in the form of various monuments and in the naming of many geographical places, institutions, organizations and businesses located throughout the country.



# TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

<b>1768 - 1779</b>	Ocean voyages of James Cook.
<b>1770</b>	Dr. Matthew Flinders sets up a medical practice in Donington.
<b>16 March 1774</b>	Birth of Matthew Flinders to Matthew and Susanna Ward Flinders.
<b>1778</b>	England's commencement of war with the French.
<b>1779</b>	Commences Donington Free School.
<b>1780</b>	John Flinders (Matthew's cousin) joins the navy.
<b>1783</b>	Death of Susanna Flinders in childbirth.
<b>1784</b>	Remarriage of Matthew's father.
<b>1786</b>	Commenced boarding school.
<b>1788</b>	Matthew's cousin Henrietta, recommends Matthew to her employer Captain Pasley for a naval career.
<b>October 1789 - August 1790</b>	Name on muster list of <i>HMS Alert</i> .
<b>26 April 1790</b>	Commenced employment with surgeon and apothecary Joseph Dell which finished after two weeks.
<b>March 1790</b>	Lieutenant William Bligh returns 3,600 miles in an open boat after 'Mutiny on the <i>Bounty</i> '.
<b>1790</b>	Matthew commenced naval career as Midshipman <i>HMS Scipio</i> - Captain Pasley.
<b>1790</b>	Midshipman - <i>HMS Bellerophon</i> 74 guns - Captain Pasley.
<b>1791</b>	Served briefly on <i>HMS Dictator</i> .
<b>August 1791</b>	Flinders sails on <i>HMS Providence</i> - Captain William Bligh.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

<b>7 August 1793</b>	Completion of <i>HMS Providence</i> voyage.
<b>15 August 1793</b>	Meets Joseph Banks whilst delivering letter from Botanist Miles.
<b>7 September 1793</b>	Sails again on <i>HMS Bellerophon</i> under Captain Pasley.
<b>September 1793</b>	Cousin John Flinders dies of yellow fever in West Indies.
<b>1 June 1794</b>	<i>HMS Bellerophon</i> is part of Lord Howe's victorious first naval battle of the war over the French.
<b>10 August 1794</b>	Joined <i>HMS Reliance</i> under Commander Henry Waterhouse.
<b>February 1795</b>	Set sail to Southern Continent on <i>HMS Reliance</i> accompanied by <i>HMS Supply</i> .
<b>March 1795</b>	Both vessels arrive at Teneriffe, Canary Islands.
<b>7 September 1795</b>	<i>HMS Reliance</i> arrived at Port Jackson.
<b>26 October 1795</b>	Explored with George Bass the Upper Georges River and due to their findings were instrumental in the settling of Bankstown.
<b>January 1796</b>	Journeyed to Norfolk Island again with Bass on <i>HMS Reliance</i> .
<b>5 March 1796</b>	Returned to Port Jackson (Sydney).
<b>25 March 1796</b>	Flinders and Bass explored and chartered more of the East Coast to Lake Illawarra in <i>Tom Thumb 11</i> .
<b>September 1796</b>	Flinders and Bass voyaged to Cape Town via Cape Horn with orders to procure more cattle and supplies for the colony.
<b>24 Jan. 1797</b>	Flinders received Certificate of Lieutenant.
<b>9 February 1797</b>	Wreck of the merchant ship the <i>Sydney Cove</i> .
<b>May 1797</b>	Survivors of the ship <i>Sydney Cove</i> reach Port Jackson. Hunter sends sloops <i>Francis</i> and <i>Eliza</i> to assist and <i>Eliza</i> failed to return.



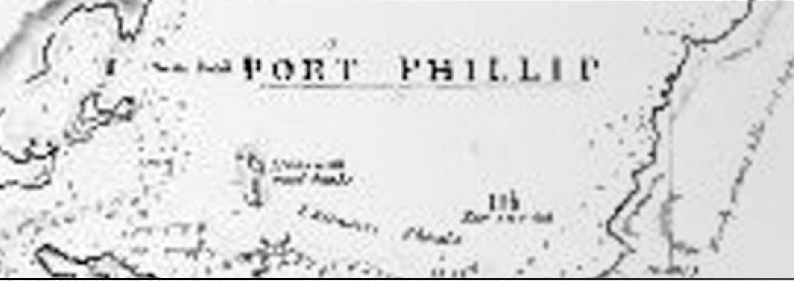


# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

- 26 June 1797** *HMS Reliance* arrived back at Port Jackson from Cape of Good Hope having effectively circumnavigated the southern part of the globe.
- 1 January 1798** Sloop *Francis* departed for Preservation Island again with Flinders on board to survey as much as possible.
- January 1798** Hunter gives both Flinders and Banks 100 acres of land in Bankstown for services rendered.
- 9 March 1798** *Francis* returns with cargo and Flinders' surveys.
- 7 October 1798** Flinders and Bass set out in *HMS Norfolk* to prove Van Diemen's Land an island.
- 11 January 1799** Returns to Port Jackson after charting and proving Van Diemen's land is an island.
- 17 May 1799** Bass and William Martin sail to England.
- 1799** Flinders sails to Norfolk Island on *HMS Reliance* with supplies and for other official duties. After four years away from home getting restless and thinking of his future prospects and poor income.
- 8 July 1799 - 20 August 1799** In *HMS Norfolk* explored north of Port Jackson as far north as today's Sunshine Coast.
- August - December 1799** Two further routine trips to Norfolk Island on *HMS Reliance*.
- January 1800** Acquires land grant of 300 acres at Bankstown NSW.
- 3 March 1800** Flinders and Samuel sail to England.
- 27 August 1800** They arrive in England after completion of second voyage to Southern Continent.
- October 1800** *Geographe* and *Naturaliste* set sail on a voyage of discovery.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

<b>18 October 1800</b>	Bass marries Elizabeth Waterhouse.
<b>16 February 1801</b>	Flinders made Commander of <i>HMS Investigator</i> .
<b>17 April 1801</b>	Marries Ann Chappelle (childhood friend).
<b>20 July 1801</b>	Departs England for Terra Australis on <i>HMS Investigator</i> .
<b>6 December 1801</b>	Started investigating the south coast of Australia at Port Lincoln.
<b>16 December 1801</b>	Loss of eight men and their cutter devastates Flinders.
<b>8 April 1802</b>	Encountered Baudin in the <i>Geographe</i> .
<b>8 May 1802</b>	Sailed into Port Jackson.
<b>22 July 1802</b>	Commenced continuation of circumnavigation of Terra Australis.
<b>28 October 1802</b>	Entered Torres Strait.
<b>31 March 1803</b>	Spent a week at Kupang.
<b>14 May 1803</b>	Reached Cape Leeuwin.
<b>May 1803</b>	News of England and France at war again had not reached Port Jackson.
<b>9 June 1803</b>	Completed voyage and returned to Port Jackson.
<b>10 August 1803</b>	Sailed on <i>Porpoise</i> to England.
<b>17 August 1803</b>	Shipwrecked on Great Barrier Reef.
<b>22 August 1803</b>	Sailed back to Sydney Cove in an open boat taking just under 13 days and raising the alarm.
<b>7 October 1803</b>	Returned in <i>Cumberland</i> with <i>Rolla</i> and <i>Francis</i> for rescue then sailed to Torres Strait.



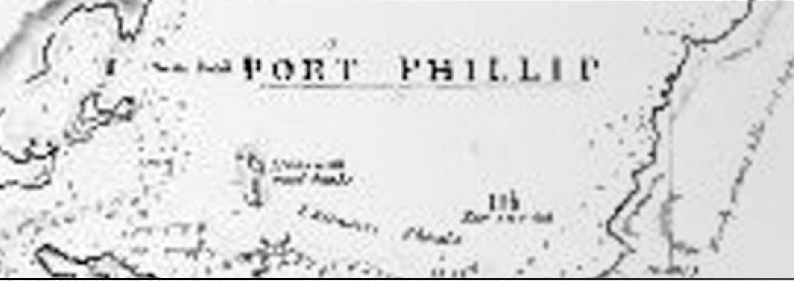


# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

- 15 December 1803** Taken prisoner on Mauritius after leaving Kupang and diverting there from Cape of Good Hope Course due to ill health and poor condition of ship.
- 1804** Uses name Terra Australis for first time on maps sent to Sir Joseph Banks - prior to this time it had been referred to as New Holland.
- October 1810** Returned to England after release from Mauritius.
- 1 April 1812** Daughter Anne was born.
- 13 April 1812** The Flinders Bar was invented.
- July 1812** Updated his will.
- 19 July 1814** Death of Matthew Flinders.
- 23 July 1814** He was interned at the St James Cemetery.
- 1840s** St James Cemetery became overcrowded. Initially intended for 16,000 plots, it had expanded to 60,000 plots. Euston Station expanded into the Cemetery in the 1840s and his headstone was removed at this time. His plot was then thought lost.
- 1852** Death of Ann Flinders.
- 2000** Portrait of Matthew Flinders (page one cover) gifted to the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
- 2015** Kathie Maynes commenced work on this factsheet.
- 21 October 2016** Published in eSplash160 as a Featured Factsheet.
- 25 January 2019** The remains of Matthew Flinders were discovered at a burial site beneath Euston Station in London during exhuming of bodies. A lead plate marked his grave. Tens of thousands of bodies were exhumed during work on the \$101 billion upgrade.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

### February 2023

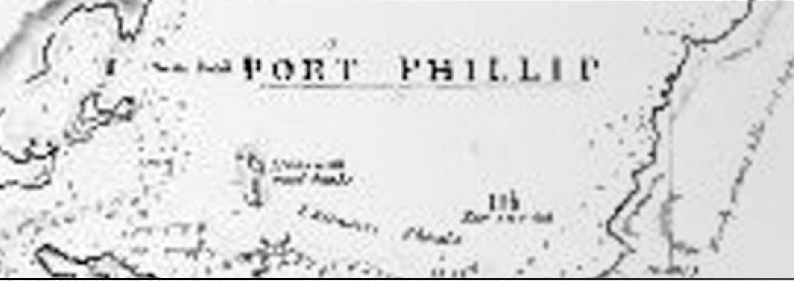
A collection of books used by Matthew Flinders during his mapping of the Australian continent in 1801 was purchased by Philanthropist Barbara Mason, returned to Australia, and donated to the National Archives of Australia. The collection had been in the possession of the Flinders' family in the United Kingdom and was not known about until it was presented to Christie's for auction in 2022. The books – second prints of edited versions of Captain James Cook's Pacific journals – are around 250 years old and contain notes written in the margins and on the maps by Flinders. Flinders also made record of Indigenous language while on the traditional country of the Minang/Menang Noongar people. The collection includes a letter written by Flinders to his 13 year old sister-in-law, Belle.



# GALLERY

SMALL GALLERY OF IMAGES





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Matthew Flinders  
Memorial, Swanson Street,  
Melbourne in August 2017**



GALLERY



**Flinders Memorial with Trim his cat outside the State Library at Sydney, March 2018**  
Copyright © Kathie Maynes 2018



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Bass & Flinders Reserve, Municipality of Penguin, Tasmania**

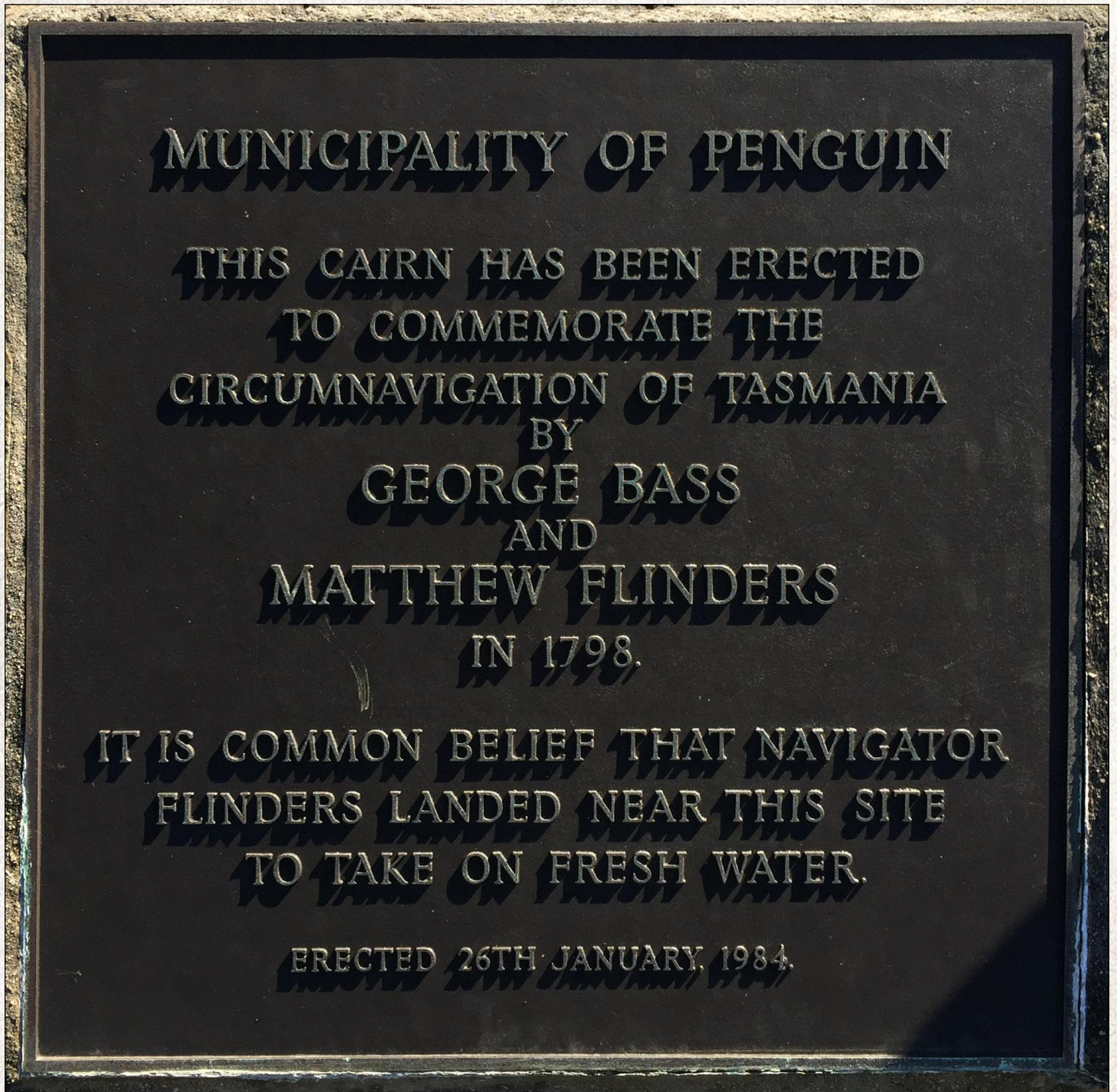
Plaque on following page

Photograph © David Hibbert 2017



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



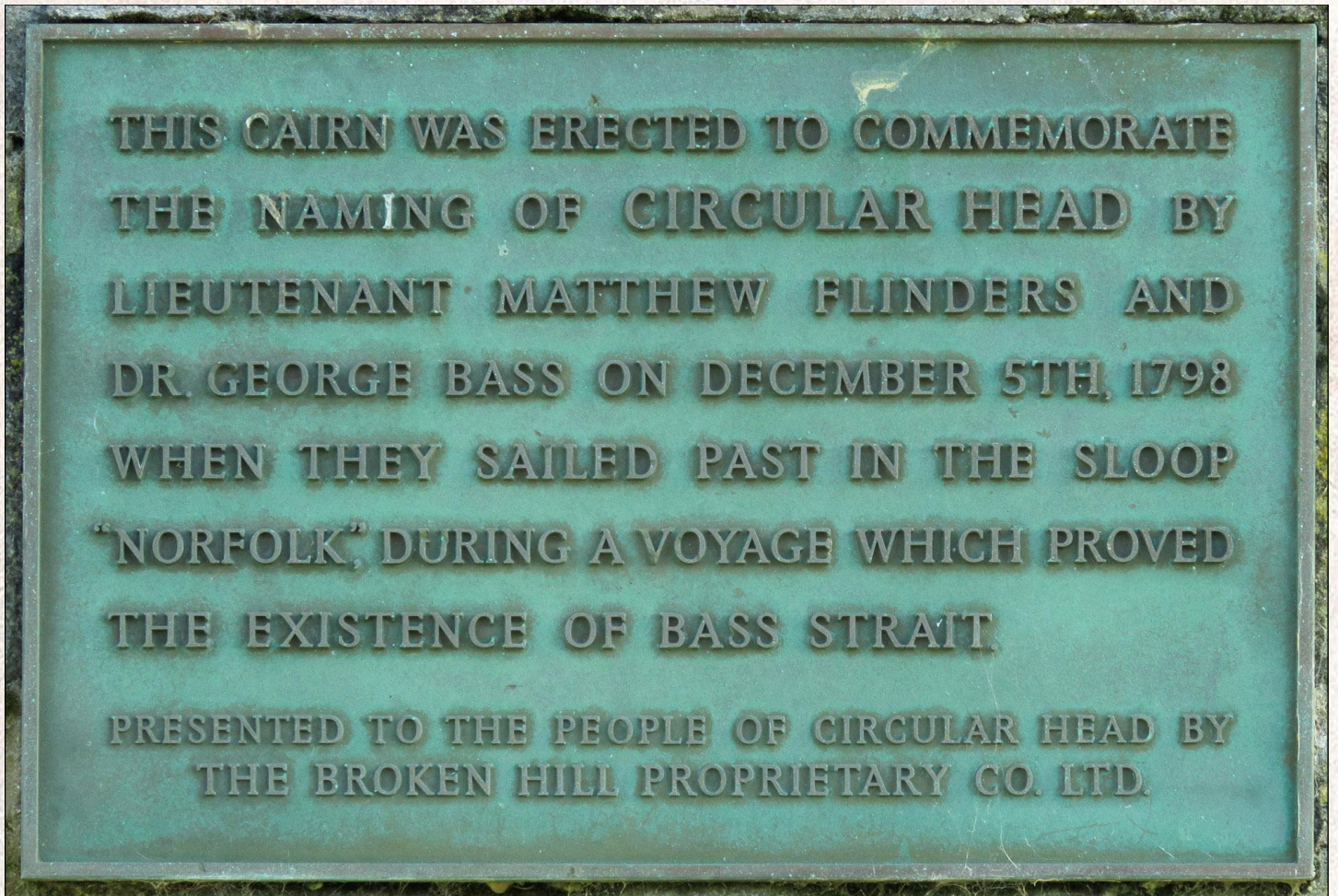
**Bass & Flinders Reserve memorial plaque, Municipality of Penguin, Tasmania**

Photograph © David Hibbert 2017



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



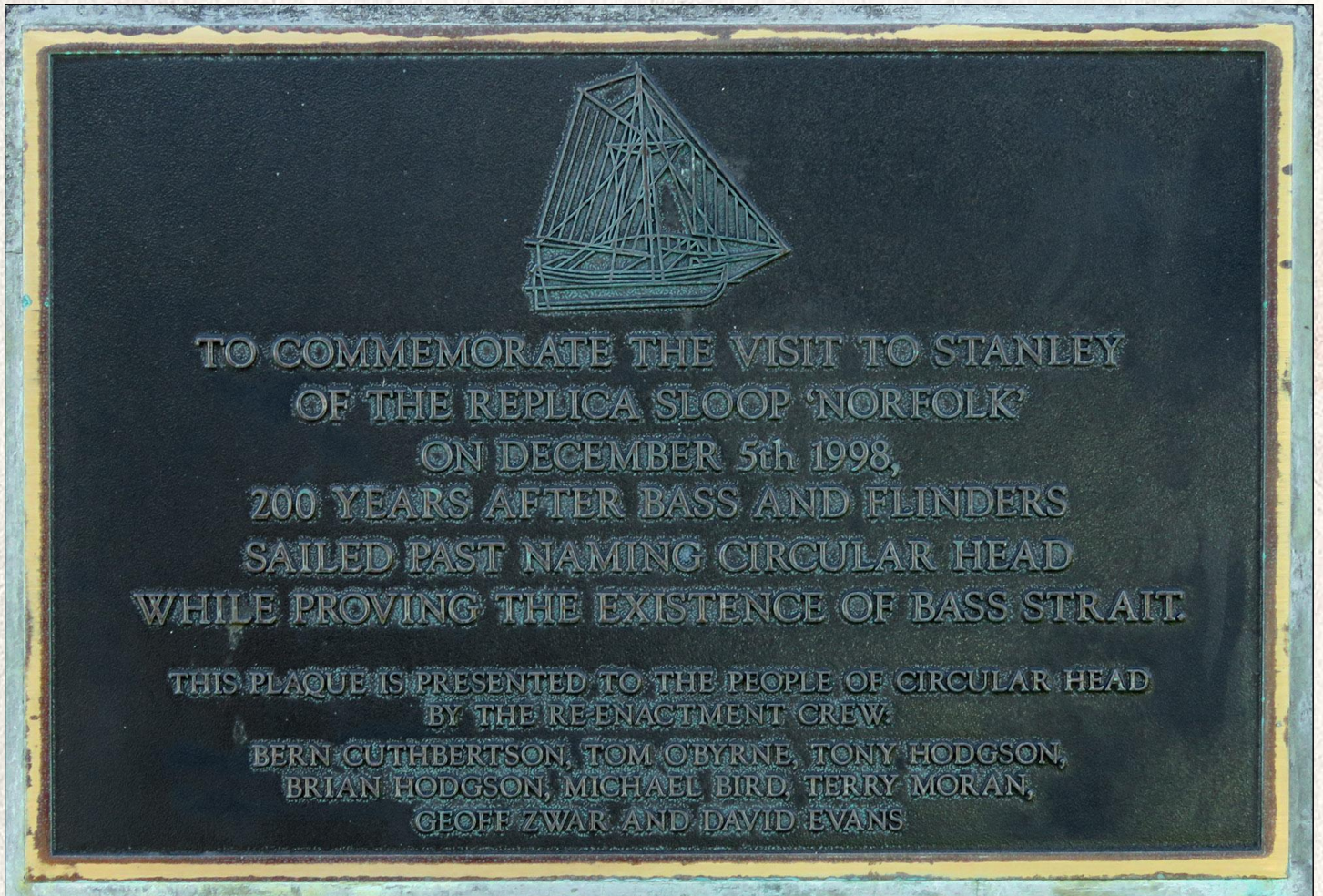
**Bass & Flinders memorial plaque, Circular Head, Stanley, Tasmania**

Photograph © David Hibbert 2017



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

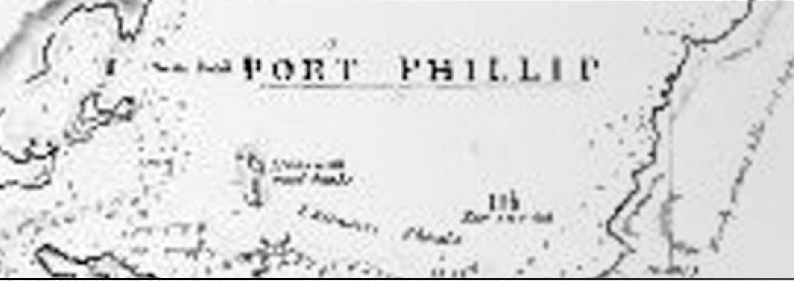
## GALLERY



**Bass & Flinders replica sloop memorial plaque,  
Stanley, Tasmania**

Photograph © David Hibbert 2017





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY

IN COMMEMORATION OF  
THE DISCOVERY AND NAMING OF WESTERN PORT  
— BY —  
**SURGEON GEORGE BASS.**  
JANUARY 4, 1798.  
AND THE PASSAGE OF BASS STRAIT, THE SAME YEAR, BY HIM AND  
**LIEUT. MATTHEW FLINDERS.**  
(BOTH OF H.M.S. "RELIANCE").  
ERECTED BY THE PEOPLE OF FLINDERS.  
ASSISTED BY THE NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION.  
— 1912. —



Memorial to the discovery of Western Port on 4 January 1798 at Flinders, Victoria in 2010

Courtesy Peter Ellis  
WikiCCL 3.0 2018





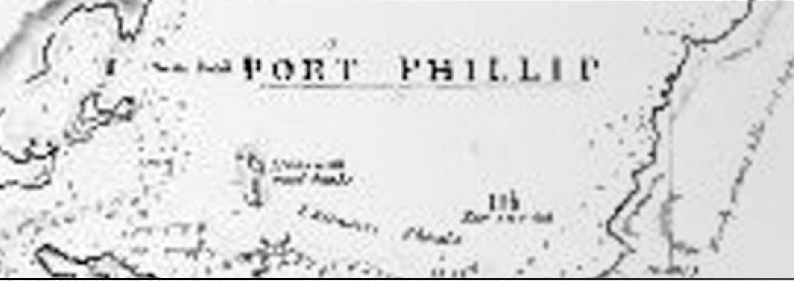
# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



A 2017 photograph of the Memorial Plaque commemorating Matthew Flinders standing on this Arthurs Seat on 27 April 1802





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY

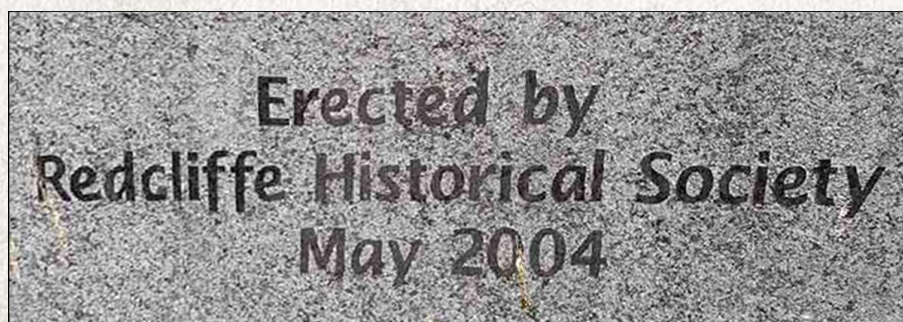


**Matthew Flinders Memorial,  
Redcliffe, Queensland**

Photographs Copyright  
© Scott Ward 2017

Lieutenant Matthew Flinders, in the sloop Norfolk, was the first English explorer to sail into Moreton Bay.

On 17 July 1799 he landed at Woody Point and named the area Red Cliff Point, after the iron-rich red soils cliffs that were visible from the water.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

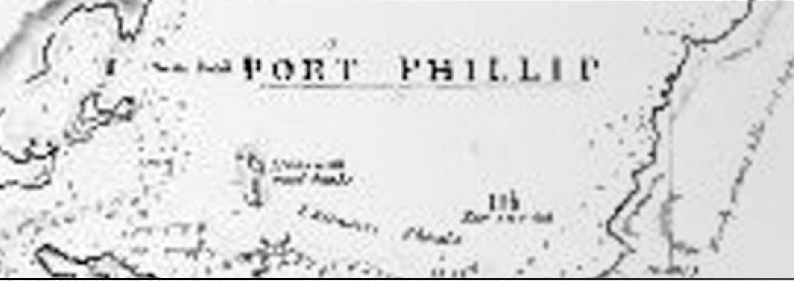
## GALLERY



Replica of the *Norfolk*, built on Norfolk Island from Norfolk Pine and without the use of nails. It is on display at the Bass and Flinders Centre, in George Town, on Tasmania's Tamar River.

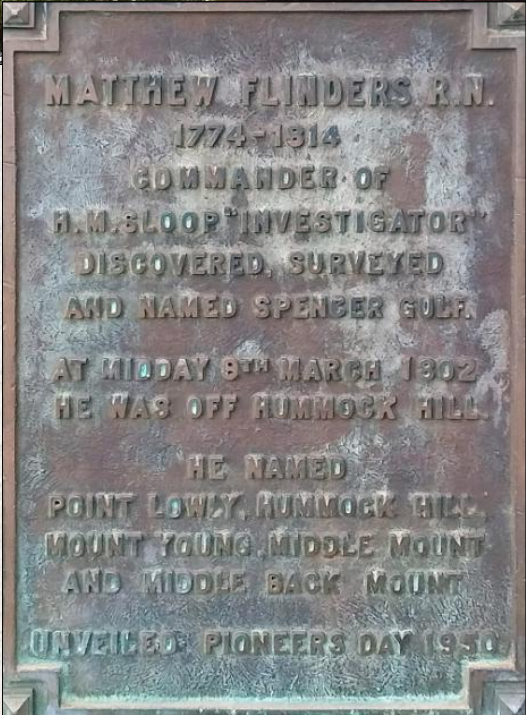
Public Domain Image





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Sculptures of Matthew Flinders (left) and Louis de Freycinet (right) at Whyalla, in South Australia.**

Photograph © Julie Kirby 2018





GALLERY



**Matthew Flinders plaque  
on the Sydney Opera  
House with the Sydney  
Harbour Bridge in the  
background**





