

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

CAPTAIN MATTHEW FLINDERS

Papers, 1801-12

Reel M444

**The National Archives
Kew, Richmond
Surrey TW9 4DU**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1960

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Matthew Flinders (1774-1814) was born in Donington, Lincolnshire. He entered the Royal Navy in 1789 and in 1791 made his first visit to the Pacific, serving as a midshipman on HMS *Providence* under William Bligh. In 1795 he sailed to New South Wales on HMS *Reliance* and, with George Bass, explored the coast south of Sydney. In 1798-99 he and Bass explored Bass Strait and made the first circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land. He returned to England in 1800.

In 1801 Flinders was promoted to the rank of commander and given command of a sloop, HMS *Investigator*. He received orders from the Admiralty to explore the unknown southern coast of Australia. He reached Cape Leeuwin in December 1801 and sailing eastwards he charted the Great Australia Bight, Spencer's Gulf, St Vincent's Gulf, Kangaroo Island, and Encounter Bay, where he met the French explorer Nicolas Baudin. He explored Port Phillip Bay before reaching Sydney in May 1802. In July 1802 Flinders resumed the survey, sailing north to Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria. He found that the *Investigator* was in a very poor state and was forced to abandon the survey, but he was able to return by way of the western coast and thereby complete the circumnavigation of Australia. He reached Sydney in June 1803.

In August 1803 Flinders sailed as a passenger on HMS *Porpoise*, but the ship was wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef. He sailed the ship's cutter back to Port Jackson and organised the rescue of the stranded crew. Intending to return to England, he took command of the *Cumberland*. The ship, however, leaked badly and in December 1803 he sought assistance at the Isle de France (Mauritius). Instead of assistance, the governor, General De Caen, treated him as a spy and Flinders remained a virtual prisoner on the island for six years. He finally reached England in October 1810 and was promoted to post captain. In failing health, he worked on *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, which was published the day before his death.

RELATED MICROFILMS

Most, although not all, of the documents filmed on reel M444 were also filmed by the Australian Joint Copying Project as part of the Admiralty records in the Public Record Office series. They can be located by checking Part 7 of the Australian Joint Copying Project Handbook.

Other papers of Matthew Flinders, held at the National Maritime Museum in London, were also filmed by the AJCP and are on reels M3033-3037.

CAPTAIN MATTHEW FLINDERS

Reel M444

The records filmed comprise letters, manuscripts and other documents written by or relating to Matthew Flinders and held in two classes of Admiralty records at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office). They were originally filmed at the request of James D. Mack, the author of *Matthew Flinders 1774-1814* (Melbourne, Nelson, 1966).

The records are listed below in the order that they were filmed.

Adm. 1. Admiralty and Secretariat. Papers

Adm. 1/1800. Captains' letters (F), 1801

Letters from Flinders (HMS *Investigator*) to E. Nepean (Admiralty): appointment of crew members; procurement of charts, books, stationery and articles suitable as presents; repairs needed on the ship; conduct to be observed towards French vessels; departure from Spithead; performance of ship. Also instructions from the Lords of the Admiralty to Flinders (n.d.) and copies of letters from the Admiralty to Flinders.

Adm. 7. Admiralty and Secretariat. Miscellanea

Adm. 7/707. Narrative by M. Flinders, 1806

Manuscript (332pp + 38 appendices) written by Flinders at Mauritius, July 1806, entitled 'A narrative of the causes that prevented His Majesty's Ship *Investigator* from completing the examination and discovery of the coasts of Australia, the embarkation of the commander and company on board His Majesty's armed vessel *Porpoise*, the loss of that ship, and of the *Cato* of London, upon a coral reef between New Caledonia and New South Wales, a voyage of 250 leagues to Port Jackson in an open boat, and the subsequent embarkation of the commander of the *Investigator*, with the charts etc of his discoveries, for England, in the *Cumberland* schooner of 29 tons. Also an account of his voyage as far as the Isle of France, his reception there by the French captain-general De Caen, and the treatment he has received during an imprisonment of --- years, interspersed with notices upon the voyage of Monsieur N. Baudin, and various observations and remarks'.

Adm. 7/708. Narrative by M. Flinders, 1806

Manuscript by Flinders entitled 'Abstract of the *Investigator's* proceedings and discoveries on the coast of New Holland from 22 July 1802 when she sailed from Port Jackson to 12 March 1803' (4pp).

Also a shorter version of the manuscript in Adm. 7/707 (132pp + 27 appendices), with a covering letter from Flinders to W. Marsden (Admiralty), 28 July 1806.

Adm. 1. Admiralty and Secretariat. Papers

Adm. 1/1803. Captains' letters (F), 1802

Includes Flinders (Mauritius) to Admiralty, 30 Dec. 1804: his continued captivity; sends copies of letters to Governor De Caen.

Adm. 1/1804. Captains' letters (F), 1805-6

Includes Flinders (Mauritius) to W. Marsden (Admiralty), 13 March 1805: sends copy of letter to M. Fleurieu on erroneous statement about Flinders's intentions on travelling to Mauritius; refers to the friendly reception that the *Geographe* and *Naturaliste* received at Port Jackson.

Adm. 1/1806. Captains' letters (F), 1808-9

Flinders (Mauritius) to W. Marsden, 20 Jan. 1808: continued imprisonment despite an order from the French Minister for the Marine; seizure of letters by De Caen; sends copies of letters to Minister and Col. Monistrol.

Adm. 1/1807. Captains' letters (F), 1810

Letters from Flinders (London) to J.W. Croker and J. Barrow (Admiralty): request for compensation payment for his time imprisoned at Mauritius; efforts by P.G. King, the Minister for the Marine and others to secure his release; De Caen's retention of the third volume of the *Investigator's* logbook.

Adm. 1/1808. Captains' letters (F), 1812

Letters from Flinders (London) to J.W. Croker: observations on the magnetism of ships; experiments on compass variations at Sheerness and Portsmouth. Also minutes by Capt. Hurd (Hydrographic Office) on the observations of Flinders.

Manuscript by Flinders, 4 July 1812, entitled 'An account of some experiments to ascertain the effects produced on the compass by the attractive power in ships, with the modes by which the error may be obviated' (45pp). Also a summary by Flinders, 'Magnetism of ships', 26 Aug. 1812 (3pp).

Draft circular to captains of the Royal Navy on Flinders' research, 29 Aug. 1812.

Adm. 1/2020. Captains' letters (K), 1803

Letters from P.G. King (Sydney) to E. Nepean (Admiralty): reports on warships arriving at Sydney; explorations in Bass Strait by French ships; King's decision to form a settlement in Van Diemen's land; return of HMS *Investigator*; transfer of officers and men to the *Porpoise*; wreck of *Porpoise* on reef.

Letters from Flinders to P.G. King: condition of *Investigator*; transfer of crew to *HMS Porpoise* to complete exploration of Australian coasts; wreck of *Porpoise*.

Letters from P.G. King to Flinders: transfer of command of the *Porpoise* to Flinders; different modes of carrying out explorations; loss of the *Porpoise*.

Orders issued by King concerning a survey of the condition of the *Investigator*.

Account by Flinders of the loss of HMS *Porpoise*, 9 Sept. 1803.

Adm. 1/2021. Captains' letters (K), 1804-5

Letters from P.G. King (Sydney) to W. Marsden: sends copies of letters from Flinders to King written at Timor and Mauritius and a copy of a letter written by King to the Governor of Mauritius.

Adm. 1/177. Admirals' despatches: East Indies, 1806

Flinders (Mauritius) to Sir Edward Pellew, 13 Aug. 1805: account of voyage of Cumberland from New South Wales; reasons for putting in at Mauritius; seizure of schooner, charts, books and papers; degrading treatment of Flinders and crew; contrast with treatment accorded to French officers by Governor King; attaches documents. Also an acknowledgment by Pellew, 15 Jan. 1806.

Adm. 1/3762. Letters from Transport Department, 1811

Board of Transport to J.W. Croker, 31 Jan. 1811: sends letter from M. Riviere (Department of Marine) concerning Flinders at Mauritius.

Adm. 1/3763. Letters from Transport Department, 1812

Board of Transport to J.W. Crocker, 1 Jan. 1812: sends letter from M. Riviere on loss of Flinders' journal.

Adm. 1/4379. Promiscuous letters (B), 1805-6

Memorandum by Sir Joseph Banks, Jan. 1806, on collections made by R. Brown and F. Bauer on voyage of HMS *Investigator*; requests that salaries be continued in manner similar to those of artists

of J. Cook; proposed publication of engravings and descriptions of most interesting objects. Also covering letter to W. Marsden.

Adm. 1/4382 Promiscuous letters (B), 1811-12

Letters from Sir Joseph Banks to the Admiralty on the charts and drawings of Flinders' voyage and the report by Flinders on variations of the compass. Also an unsigned memorandum on Flinders' paper on compass variations (7pp).

Adm. 1/4698. Promiscuous letters (H), 1811

Letters from Hope to J. Barrow: refers to his relative Hugh Hope who secured the release of Flinders at Mauritius; promise made by Hope to secure the release of French prisoners of war in England.

Adm. 1/1200. Admirals' despatches: Portsmouth, 1812

Sir Richard Bickerton (Portsmouth) to Admiralty, 30 May 1812: sends reports received from various ships on compass variations.

Adm. 1/4382. Promiscuous letters (B), 1811-12

Draft letter to Sir Joseph Banks on the plates and charts of Flinders' voyage.