

Paper 4

I call the whole island Australia

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ABSTRACT

During 1804 Matthew Flinders compiled a chart of his surveys of the Australian coast whilst being held prisoner on Mauritius. He arranged for it to be smuggled to England in November 1804, but it languished in the archives of the British Admiralty, as they had lost interest in Flinders and his achievements as a result of his internment. After his release he returned to England to publish his works, but was forced to change the name to Terra Australis with Australia as a secondary choice on his compiled charts published in 1814.

The name Australia appeared on some maps before Flinders' 1804 chart but this was the first to authoritatively put the name Australia on a map as a defined landmass, providing us with an identity beyond the parochialism of individual states and cities. This 1804 chart is a significant cartographic document in Australia's history.

As a result of Flinders' preference for the name Australia, Governor Lachlan Macquarie used the name in his dispatches to England and in 1824 the Admiralty finally accepted that the continent should be known officially as Australia. The 1804 Chart could be seen as Australia's Birth Certificate.

The paper explores the background to this chart and how it languished in the archives virtually forgotten for two hundred years until discovered by a Sydney based Flinders enthusiast Bill Fairbanks, who arranged for the presentation of copies of the chart to hang in all State and Territory Parliaments in Australia and the High Commission in Mauritius, to raise an awareness of Flinders' achievements.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Lindsay Perry has been the Managing Director of Surveying Works Pty., Ltd., since its formation in 2002. He has practiced surveying in the private sector for thirty years and has been operating his own practice for twenty five years.

Lindsay is a Licensed Surveyor in Victoria and also holds a Graduate Diploma in Environment and Planning from RMIT University. He is a Fellow of the Institution of Surveyors, Australia, and a former President of the Victorian Division. He is also a Fellow of the Spatial Sciences Institute and a member of the Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association. He has participated on a number of Government committees relating to surveying and the spatial sciences and has an interest in surveying and mapping history and landmarks. He has more recently been a member of the committee celebrating the sesquicentenary of the Surveyor General of Victoria and a member of the Indi Expedition which proclaimed the Black-Allan line, Townsend's Corner and Indi Springs as part of the Victorian – NSW border.

Mapping Sciences Institute, Australia
400 Years of Mapping Australia
Darwin, 23-25 August, 2006

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Introduction

The mapping of Australia was a significant cartographic event carried out by explorers from many nations. There are many exciting stories of adventure and exploration, as it evolved from the search for the mystical land *Terra Australis Incognita* (The Great Unknown South Land). This was during the times that the printed map developed. It started with the discoveries of Capt Willem Janszoon in the *Duyfken* in March 1606; other ships gradually recorded parts of the coast eventually reducing the mystery of Terra Australis.

For every ship lost to enemy action, it was calculated that eight were lost through coming to grief by running aground. The British Admiralty were forced to address this issue and created the hydrographic office. In August 1795, Alexander Dalrymple was appointed the first Hydrographer of the British Navy with the task to sort the accumulated surveys and documents to produce the charts needed by the Navy. By the end of the eighteenth century, the methods of surveying, navigating and charting the sea bed developed rapidly and the discovery and mapping the coasts and oceans of the planet became a vital strategic naval and commercial task.

This task for our continent reached a significant stage of completion with Matthew Flinders, who authoritatively defined the land mass of Australia from his surveys and those of others and named it as we know it today.

Our education system taught us about Tasman, Dampier Cook, Bass and Flinders but very little about, Janszoon, DeHoutman, Nuyts, Thyssen, de Witt, de Vlamingh, Bougainville, Baudin, Freycinet, Grant, Thistle, La Perouse, D'Entrecasteaux The role of the Lady Nelson and subsequent early successful social interactions with indigenous inhabitants are also worthy of acknowledgement.

To sail the oceans charting new coast lines required a degree of skill, courage, and experience, the chart where appropriate was the way by which ships of trade, transport or conquest, navigated their course. Most of these explorers and early navigators died on the job or at an early age.

The Search for the Great South Land by the Spanish

Scientist-philosopher types as far back as the times of Pythagoras arrived at the fact that the earth was spherical. It was thought that the land masses of Europe and Asia and Africa must be balanced by a large continent dominating the southern portion of the planet. Terra Australis Incognita proved to be that elusive goal for many centuries. The early Portuguese navigators and their successors dispelled the myth that this land mass spread from Africa to South America. Instead legends developed that these lands were overflowing with spices and gold.

Hence they thought that King Solomon's mines existed somewhere west of South America. A Spanish sea captain Alvaro de Mendana de Neira believed fervently in lands of gold to the west. In 1567 two ships under his command sailed west from Lima Peru, with instructions to find and settle the Great South Land. They sighted only reefs and small islands and in February 1568 made landfall on an island in the Solomon Islands. It didn't take long for them to upset the Islanders and they were forced to move on to a couple of other locations before they returned in failure to Peru

later that year. Mendana refused to give up his conviction of the existence of the Great South Land and for many years pressed for another expedition.

Twenty seven years later in 1595, he sailed from the Peruvian port of Paita with 280 soldiers and 378 men, women and children, the purpose was to begin the colonization of Terra Australis. The Chief pilot and Captain of Mendana's flagship was Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, a Portuguese navigator (he was also claimed by the Spaniards). Errors in observed latitudes and failure to calculate longitude led the ships to the Santa Cruz group several hundred kilometres south of their intended landfall at Gaudalcanal. The settlers fell victim to rampant disease and massacre by the natives, Mendana was dead by the end of the first month; the settlement was eventually abandoned and de Quiros with only one ship and 100 people left alive finally reached Manila.

Quiros's dedication to finding Terra Australis intensified and he believed that he was chosen by God, who would guide him to complete discovery. The Spaniards did not understand that the reason the early Polynesians had spread throughout the Pacific was because they had the ability to navigate without instruments. Quiros believed that the Polynesians land of origin must be close by and that it had to be the Great South Land. Quiros spent nine years lobbying the Pope and the King of Spain for a new expedition and on 21st December 1605 two ships and a tender left Peru. Significantly, the second ship the San Pedro was commanded by Luis Baez' de Torres. Tempers flared between Quiros and Torres as they encountered barren and waterless islands one after another. On May 1st 1606 the three vessels entered an extensive Bay on the coast of a land Quiros named *Austrialia del Espiritu Santo* in acknowledgement of the King of Spains descent from the Royal house of Austria. In 1622 the Dutch cartographer Hessel Gerritsz renamed *Austrialia* in his book as *Australia*.

Quiros was certain he had discovered the Great South Land but it turned out to be the largest island of present day Vanuatu. At the beginning of June 1606, the ships attempted to leave the bay to continue exploring, but a violent storm separated the ships Quiros re crossed the Pacific to return to New Spain. Torres spent two weeks searching for Quiros' ship and after this time opened the sealed orders, which made him commander of the expedition. They sailed around *Espiritu Santo* to confirm it was an Island. Torres then headed to the Coral Sea seeking the Great South Land, but instead found only ocean. Torres then headed north and hit the eastern end of New Guinea then headed west through the strait which was later given his name. Arriving at Manila, Torres account of his voyage was filed in the Spanish archives and not discovered for another 175 years when the British briefly occupied Manila. These documents eventually found their way to Alexander Dalrymple, who was appointed the first Hydrographer of the Admiralty in 1765 and was the promoter of Cooks *Endeavour* voyage, he in turn passed them on to Joseph Banks before he sailed with Cook.

Torres disappeared from history in 1608 but Quiros remained passionate about the Great South Land and set out for Peru in 1615 to begin a new voyage, but died in Panama on the way there . Torres voyage is the only documented approach to *Australia* by Spanish Explorers. This was the last of the great Spanish sea voyages of exploration - the riddle of the Great South Land remained and would be confronted next by the Dutch the merchant mariners of a new nation the United Provinces of the Netherlands

The Dutch Merchant Mariners

The formation of the Dutch East India Company in 1602 as a result of successful voyages to the East Indies by Cornelis de Houtman from 1595-1597; saw the extension of the Netherlands commercial domain from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan.

Like the Spanish and Portuguese before them, the Dutch tried to keep their routes and discoveries secret, however a number of their ships encountered the western coastline of the unknown Terra Australis.

Discoveries by the Dutch meant the possibility of new trade and during the seventeenth century their discoveries were widened, as they were sponsored by trading companies seeking the huge profits that were to be made in the trade of gold and spices.

March 1606 was the first recorded European contact with Australia when Willem Janszoon (anglicized as Bill Johnson) on board the *Duyfken* charted about 300km of the west coast of the Cape York Peninsula although at the time he thought it was part of Nova Guinea (New Guinea). Today the only one of Janszoon's names remaining in use is Cape Keerweers. A replica of the *Duyfken* is visiting 25 ports in Australia this year, commemorating the 400th Anniversary of the event.

The earlier Dutch voyages to the East Indies, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope would make their way up past Madagascar then north east to Goa. There was a line of Portuguese forts along the African coast and part of the Indian coast and instead to save many months ships would turn south at the Cape of Good Hope to latitudes 35°-40°S and then head east until it was estimated they were immediately south of Sunda Straits and then turned north. The problem was when to turn north. Longitude could not be measured accurately and those who overshot the mark to turn north would find themselves on the shores of New Holland, in most cases following a ship wreck. In 1616 Dirk Hartog came across the coast and left his famous pewter plate as proof. A number of other Captains discovered and charted small sections of this coastline including Willem Janszoon again, unaware it was the same continent he landed on in 1606. The Dutch tried to keep their routes and discoveries a secret, however British Ships also copied this route

In August 1642 Abel Tasman on behalf of the Dutch East India Trading Company was sent from Java to find the Great South Land and take possession of all continents and islands he discovered on his journey in the name of the United Provinces of the Netherlands. He sailed first to Mauritius then south east through what later became the Great Australian Bight, charted part of Tasmania and continued on until he discovered the coast of New Zealand which he believed to be part of New Holland and then sailed across the Pacific to Chile, returning back to Java via the Solomon Islands and the north coast of New Guinea. This proved that New Holland as it was known was not part of *Terra Australis Incognita*.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the Netherlands through the East India Company had been occasionally visiting the coast of New Holland accidentally and deliberately for one and a half centuries. The continent to the Dutch appeared to be barren, devoid of any commercial development and occupied by hostile people. Although their combined charting of New Holland defined the western portion of a greater continent, the extent of the landmass to the east still remained uncertain.

By the end of the eighteenth century the world situation had dramatically changed, this was a period of considerable European turmoil. Around this time, the equivalent of three world wars had been fought, plus the French Revolution and the American War of Independence. These events produced massive social unrest and insecurity and the Navigators voyages during the period 1763-1803 were often ad hoc responses to these flash points. If the purpose of a voyage was purely for scientific or

geographic discovery enemy countries would issue special passports to confer immunity and protection to an expedition. This policy later had serious implications for Matthew Flinders.

The French carried out a number of expeditions in the Pacific during the latter part of the eighteenth century, inspired mainly by the pursuit of trade rather than the pursuit of science. Bougainville was one of the few who was able to return to France, after surviving his expedition, which was prompted by the seven years war and the consequent need for new trade routes and bases. Baudin's expedition from 1800 to 1803 was an achievement to have a lasting effect and prompted Flinder's expedition on the *Investigator*. Baudin's efforts led to the French equivalent of Cook's school of navigators.

As interest in the Pacific developed, the British gained a significant advantage over the French in particular and this was due mainly to two remarkable men, James Cook and Joseph Banks and the voyage of the *Endeavour*. During the campaign to take Quebec, James Cook befriended an engineer named Samuel Holland who introduced him to the science of surveying.

It was Cook who passed on these skills and created a lineage of navigators and hydrographic surveyors who laid essential foundations for charting the lands of the Pacific ie.

Cook

Bligh

Flinders

Franklin

King (who filled in the remaining gaps)

Stokes and FitzRoy whose ship was the *Beagle* and its naturalist was Charles Darwin, with the result of their voyages being publication of *The Origin of the Species*.

Cook played a significant role in determining that *Terra Australis Incognita* was nothing more than the frozen Antarctic continent, he constructed a map of the East coast of Australia which Flinders went on to further the task, charting the continent in an authoritative manner and proved that there was no north – south passage through continental Australia, destroying hopes of a new trade route to India.

Matthew Flinders Voyages of Discovery

Matthew Flinders is one who stands out as having made extraordinary contributions to Australia. He started his naval career at the age of fifteen and sailed with Bligh to Tahiti where he picked up many mapping and hydrographic skills under Bligh's guidance.

After a brief period of seeing action against the French he joined the *Reliance* to transport Governor Hunter to New South Wales in 1795. On this voyage he became good friends with the ships surgeon George Bass and together they resolved to complete the exploration of the West Coast of New Holland. They carried out surveys of the south coast and rivers in the Tom Thumb a 2.5m x 1.5m boat.

In 1798 Flinders carried out further surveys in the *Francis* as far south as the Furneaux Islands , believing the mainland and Tasmania might be separated by a strait. Around the same time Bass entered Bass Strait as part of an epic journey in a whaleboat. On their return to Port Jackson, the two studied each others sketches and reports and concluded that a strait did separate New South Wales from Van Dieman's Land. From October 1798 – January 1799 Flinders who had now been promoted to Lieutenant, sailed with Bass and eight volunteers and circumnavigated Tasmania in the *Norfolk*. On their return at Flinders suggestion, Governor Hunter named the new strait Bass Strait.

In the *Norfolk* in 1799, Flinders surveyed the coast up to Hervey Bay. On this journey he was accompanied by his brother Samuel and two other characters of significance; Trim his intrepid cat and Bungaree an aboriginal chief of Broken Bay who accompanied Flinders on many of his subsequent voyages.

Trim

Trim was born in 1797 on the *Reliance* in the Indian Ocean on a run from Cape Town and was to accompany Flinders on all his voyages, living through shipwrecks and the hardships of Flinder's voyages. As Trim was brought up by sailors and spent most of his life at sea, he developed skills and tricks like no cat on land ever had. He could swim without fear of the water and on the occasions he fell overboard, he would take hold of a rope and run up it to get back on board. Trim would share meals with everyone on board, first with the officers and then with the sailors. He would apparently be seated fifteen minutes before meals and would beg for morsels from everyone, but eat only after others had been served.

Trim was an exceptional rat catcher and defended the bags used to enclose the ship's bread. Flinders described him as the most affectionate of friends, a good swimmer and able to leap up the rigging to the topmast quicker than any sailor. Trim sadly disappeared on Mauritius assumed to be stewed and eaten. He regularly appears with Flinders statues. Flinder's wrote *A Biographical Tribute to the Memory of Trim* and although its intention was to provide him with practice in French translation, it became a classic in its own right.

Bungaree

Flinders is also remembered for his sympathy and understanding of aborigines and he recognised them as Australians. His observations and records of them were considered as part of evidence by the High Court recently, when considering a Native Title claim in Queensland. He befriended a local Port Jackson aborigine elder Bungaree, who became the first person to be called an Australian. Bungaree sailed with Flinders on his voyages of discovery and subsequently became the first Australian to circumnavigate Australia; some years later Bungaree sailed again with King on his discovery voyages.

Bungaree was seen as a valuable contributor on voyages of exploration and he was constantly sought after by exploration leaders and Government authorities. His disposition set him apart from other Aborigines, he was witty, intelligent and seen as a peacemaker and an eminent diplomat, who tried to bridge the Aboriginal and European worlds. He proved multiculturalism could work without spears and muskets.

As part of Governor Macquarie's "experiment in civilization" he tried to exert his authority over the natives without force, by creating leaders amongst them. He initiated an annual Native Conference to establish friendly relations between settlers and the ever increasing number of dispossessed Aborigines.

Bungaree was the first to be appointed and Macquarie bestowed him as the King of Broken Bay and presented him and his group, a gift of land in Mosman to experiment in farming. It became known as King Bungaree's farm, but they preferred to fish. With the row boat provided by the Governor, Bungaree exercised his right as elder to greet all ships entering Sydney Harbour. He was always mentioned favourably in the logs and journals of visiting ships. The Flinders – Bungaree connection in conjunction with the Flinders 1804 Chart is seen as a significant conciliatory benchmark, as from

that time we were all Australians. A Bungaree award was instigated by the Mayor of Mosman and is now being developed nationally to recognise this spirit of co-operation.

The Voyage of the *Investigator*

George Bass left the colony to become a merchant and disappeared in 1803, but Flinders decided that fame would hinge on him completing the European exploration of Australia so he returned to England to put his proposal to explore the entire coast of Terra Australis to Banks, who had great influence with the Admiralty. In 1801 Matthew Flinders was given command of the *Investigator* for a voyage of discovery that was to take four years. He also married at this time but was not allowed to take his wife and didn't meet her again for almost nine years.

During 1802-03 he circumnavigated the continent proving that New Holland was not separated from New South Wales by sea, arriving back in Sydney on the 9th June 1803. After two years the *Investigator* was found to be rotten beyond repair and Flinders decided to return to England as a passenger on the *Porpoise* to obtain another ship to complete his surveys. En route to England the *Porpoise* struck a reef off the Queensland coast and was sunk, Flinders returned to Sydney in a cutter and with ten volunteers was given the *Cumberland* to return to England. The *Cumberland* turned out to be very leaky and Flinders was forced to put in at Mauritius. Britain and France were at war again and because his passport referred to the *Investigator* he was promptly arrested as a spy and spent the next six years detained on Mauritius, in spite of his eagerness to get to London to share his discoveries.

The Naming of Australia

By August 1804 Flinders had completed a compiled general chart of his discoveries and he entitled his chart "**Australia** or Terra Australis" In doing so it meant that Australia was finally on the map and recognised as a defined landmass. As this chart was a compilation and not published, it never received the public acclaim it perhaps deserved. Flinders managed to arrange to dispatch the chart out of Mauritius on 14th November 1804 for delivery to Sir Joseph Banks, but Flinders found on his return to England in 1810 that Banks hadn't even bothered to unpack the chart. Because of Flinders imprisonment, the British Admiralty had lost interest in what Flinders was doing. This chart has nevertheless become a most significant document in Australia's history as it is the first authoritative representation of the landmass as we know it today named as Australia.

Now that Flinders had established that the landmass was not divided in two as many had previously believed, he reasoned that the whole landmass therefore should be named *Terra Australis* or even more appropriately *Australia*. In a letter to his brother Samuel on 25th August, 1804 he first used the word Australia "*I call the whole island Australia or Terra Australis . New Holland is properly that portion of it from 135° of longitude westward; and eastward is New South Wales according to the Governor's patent.*"

Flinders also gave his reasons in a letter to Banks dated 23rd August 1804 (redated 4th November 1804) "*I send you Sir Joseph, a copy of my general chart of New Holland which is lately finished. It is abridged from the eleven sheets which contain the original work. The propriety of the name Australia or Terra Australis which I have applied to the whole body of what has generally been called New Holland must be submitted to the approbation of the Admiralty and the learned in Geography.....*
.....New South Wales therefore, ought to remain distinct from New Holland; but as it is required that the whole body should have one general name, since it is now known that it is

certainly all one land, so I judge that one more acceptable to all parties and on all accounts cannot be found there than now applied”.

Flinders was certainly not the first to use the name Australia, but he reinvented the name, as he felt that there was the need for a single name for the continent and sowed the seeds for its eventual adoption. Others had used the name before him, but not always referring to the landmass that we know today. He would have been aware of the name from previous 1799 charts by Capt. James Wilson from his missionary voyages in the *Duff* in 1797.

Nevertheless, it would appear the Flinders had decided upon the name Australia during the period January to August 1804 as from after that time he repeatedly used the name “Australia” in his correspondence and dispatches. An entry in *A Voyage to Terra Australis* on 3rd March, 1802 also referred to the natives at Port Lincoln as Australians, but this word was chosen when writing his journal at Mauritius in 1804.

The imminent release of Flinders from Mauritius in 1810 spurred the French to publish an Atlas of their expeditions. They also released an 1811 Chart which proclaimed the continent as Terre Napoleon and littered it with Bonapartist place names claiming Flinders work.

In 1810 after his release and return to England, Flinders spent 4 years writing his report of “*A Voyage to Terra Australis*”. Banks and Arrowsmith, who was to publish the charts, did not like the name Australia or Terra Australis, Bligh had no objections, but some resistance from the Admiralty remained. Flinders fought hard for the name *Australia* to be adopted.

By August 1813, Banks reluctantly agreed to the term Terra Australis (he preferred New South Wales) and the Admiralty forced Flinders to reverse the names to Terra Australis and Australia second on his updated chart published in 1814, which up until recent times was thought to be the first compiled chart of his exploits. However in spite of opposition to the name Australia, Flinders boldly renamed the head of the “*Great Gulph of New Holland*” as he initially named it, to the “*Great Australian Bight*” in his chart of 1814. The Great Australian Bight becoming the first coastal feature to contain the name Australia.

Flinders passed away the day after “*A Voyage to Terra Australis*” was published. When discussing the naming of the continent in his book, he managed to include a footnote in the introduction to his book where he said “*Had I permitted myself any innovation upon the original term, it would have been to convert it into Australia; as being more agreeable to the ear and an assimilation to the names of the other great portions of the earth*”.

The name did come into general use after the publication of Flinders book, especially by those born in the colony. In June 1815, Governor Macquarie on learning of Flinders preference for the name Australia, asked for a copy of Flinders book and charts. He received them in April 1817 and adopted the name that Australians have come to cherish in his official dispatches, giving it implied vice regal approval. Prior to this period of time, there is also an entry in Macquarie’s diary on the 16th September, 1816 asking his Secretary to commence preparation of “*a documented history of New South Wales alias Australia*”.

Phillip Parker King was Flinders successor filling in the gaps in his Charts between 1818-1822. All of Kings Charts embraced the name Australia and led to greater acceptance of the name. In 1824 the British Admiralty finally accepted that the continent should be known as Australia and it became the first government office in England to use this name in its publications.

The 1804 Chart

There are something like three million items of original survey data and 120,000 hydrographic surveys and related documents held in the archives at the British Hydrographic Office at Taunton.

The 1804 chart and its significance was discovered in 2004 in these Archives by a Sydney based Flinders enthusiast and former secretary of the bi-centennial authority, Bill Fairbanks. He arranged for copies of this chart to hang in all state and territory Government Houses and Parliaments in Australia and the High Commission in Mauritius to raise an awareness of Flinders achievements. Copies of the map are also in the Australian embassy in Washington.

He believes the chart is such a symbol of Australian Heritage that it should hang on the walls of all council offices where citizenship ceremonies are conducted. The prime minister has acknowledged the significance of the chart and has a copy in his study at Kirrabilli. However his advisers say only the original can hang in our Federal Parliament.

Here is a challenge; the Americans paid \$10,000,000 for the 1515 Waldseemuller map which they see as *America's Birth Certificate* when the name America first appeared on the map. What would the Australian Government be willing to pay for the 1804 equivalent or would the British even consider parting with such a document? Alternatively, there has been some corresponding with the Queen and there is a possibility of the map being loaned to Parliament for a couple of years as starters. However any artwork presented to the Federal Government has to be through an appropriate non commercial organisation and the Spatial Sciences Institute has been nominated as the most appropriate professional organisation to do this. Flinders skills encompassed surveying, cartography and hydrography and slot perfectly within an organization such as this.

Flinders Memorials

Flinders never named any of his discoveries after himself; his recognition came from hydrographic surveyors and others who followed him. There are around forty features along the Australian coastline named after him and his name has been attached to countless commercial enterprises, but many without substance. Flinders has the distinction of having more statues in his honour than any other person, except Queen Victoria.

The map of Australia and his Atlas of Charts are perhaps his greatest memorial, but there are many other memorials including:-

- A stained glass window, a bust and a tablet erected in the local parish church St Marys in his home town of Donnington. His brother Samuel, who accompanied Matthew aboard *The Investigator*, is also buried in the graveyard there
- A memorial in the church of St Thomas Southwark, London was removed in 1973 to St Johns Anglican Church in Flinders, Victoria.
- In 1841 John Franklin a former midshipman to Flinders, erected at his own expense when Lieutenant Governor of Tasmania, an obelisk and tablet on the summit of Stamford Hill near Port Lincoln as a memorial to his former Captain.
- In 1923 an obelisk was erected on Observation Island in the Sir Edward Pellew Group by Commander Harry Bennett of *HMAS Geranium* the first survey ship of the RAN.
- The Surveying Ship *HMAS Flinders* carried his name from 1973-1998.

- The “Flinders Bar” will keep his name known to mariners. It helped to minimise the effects of induced magnetism in a ships structure. He was not permitted to patent his invention at the time and now every ship in the world has one.

There are statues of Flinders in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Gosford and also one at Bay du Cap on the southern part of Mauritius. Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie [1853-1942] a famous Egyptologist and grandson of Flinders, promised to donate his collection of Flinders papers to the first Australian State to erect a statue in recognition of Flinders. Statues were erected in Melbourne and Sydney by public subscription in 1925 with Sydney winning by a week. An imposing statue of Flinders (with Trim in the background) stands outside the Mitchell Library in Sydney. In Melbourne a statue of Flinders is situated outside St Paul’s Cathedral near the corner of Flinders and Swanston Streets.

Matthew Flinders home town of Donnington has recently recognised his contributions to cartography and exploration and earlier this year on the sixteenth of March a statue of Flinders and Trim was unveiled in the Donnington Market place near where he grew up. In June copies of the 1804 map were presented to the local high school and Donnington church.

There are currently plans being discussed to erect a memorial statue of Flinders, Bungaree and Trim at Circular Quay recognizing their contribution to the naming Australia and their spirit of co-operation and conciliation.

In Melbourne, the current home of the Australian Tennis Open was known as Flinders Park, but a decade ago a zealous Melbourne centric State Government at that particular time, changed the name to Melbourne Park. A search of the Place Names Register reveals that Flinders Park is still the registered name and Melbourne Park comes up as “not known”. The names of Flinders and Australia are synonymous and the Australian Tennis Open would not have had that name if it was not for Flinders. He surely doesn’t deserve having his name removed form a significant landmark such as this.

An inherent duty remains for us to protect the icons that are a memorial to him.

Conclusion

Matthew Flinders has been described as the “most generous” “most learned” and “most modest” of all Australian explorers. Sometimes arrogant and occasionally reckless, his legacies to Australia were great. Very few navigators shared the misfortune that he did, boats rotting beneath him, shipwrecks that were not of his doing, parting from his wife for over nine years, imprisonment for over 6 years on Mauritius, French journals and maps claiming his work. He suffered greatly at the hands of bureaucrats.

Flinders fought for many years to have the continent officially known as Australia, but was forced to settle for the more commonly used Terra Australis. He liked the way the name Australia rolled off the tongue and saw it was an enlargement of our identity beyond the parochialism of individual colonies. He saw that Australia had the flavour of future greatness.

It is predominantly as a result Flinders resolve that we can all be called Australians.

Thank you Matthew!

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