

# Learning



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# Flinders travels

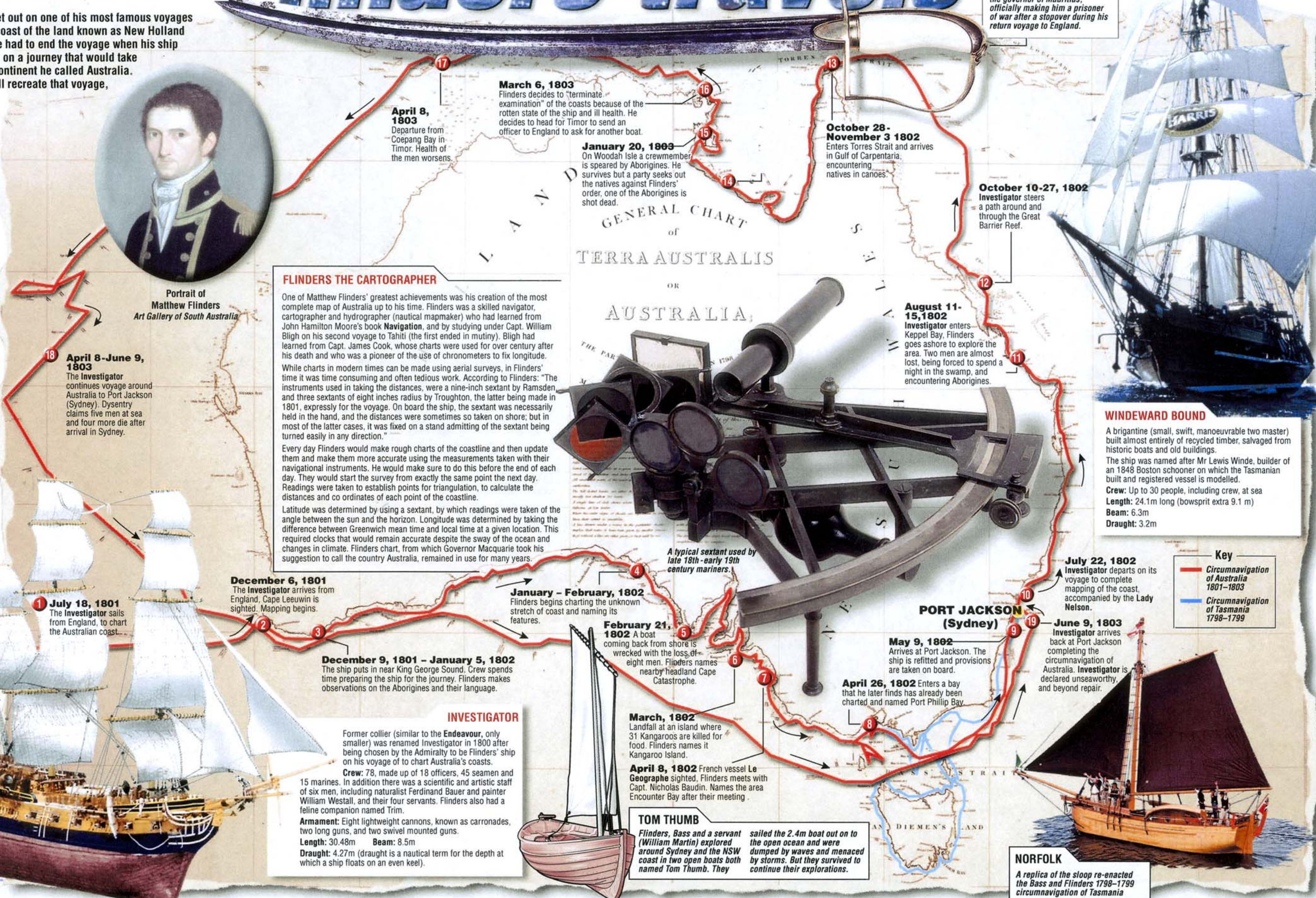
In July 1802 Matthew Flinders set out on one of his most famous voyages to complete the charting of the coast of the land known as New Holland and New South Wales. Although he had to end the voyage when his ship became unseaworthy he continued on a journey that would take him right around the coast of the continent he called Australia. In March the *Windeward Bound* will recreate that voyage, with the help of school students.

## THE LIFE OF FLINDERS

- 1774:** Born 16th March in Donington Lincolnshire.
- 1789:** Reads *Robinson Crusoe*, decides against career in medicine, enters Royal Navy as a servant on the *Alert*.
- 1790:** Joins the *Scipio* under Capt. Sir Thomas Pasley. Transfers to the *Bellerophon* in July as a midshipman.
- 1791-93:** Accompanies Capt. Bligh on his second voyage to Tahiti on the *Providence*. Sees Australian coast for first time.
- 1794:** Back on board the *Bellerophon* he takes part in French Revolutionary wars, firing cannons at a French ship without orders during the famous Battle of June 1st.
- 1795:** Departs on the *Reliance*, as master's mate, for New South Wales. Meets George Bass. On arrival the two explore Botany Bay and Georges River in the *Tom Thumb*, a small open boat.
- 1796:** Briefly posted to Norfolk Island.
- 1796:** Returns to Port Jackson, explores south coast of NSW with Bass in the *Tom Thumb II*.
- 1798:** Flinders voyage on the *Francis*.
- 1798-1799:** Circumnavigates Tasmania and explores Queensland coast with Bass in the sloop *Norfolk*.
- 1800:** Returns to England in the *Reliance*.
- 1801:** Promoted to commander. Publishes *Observations on the Coasts of Van Diemens Land* and he marries Ann Chappelle.
- 1801 (18 July):** Sails in command of the *Investigator* to chart the Australian coast.
- 1803 March:** Because of deterioration of his ship he is forced to end the coastal survey. He continues his counter-clockwise course toward Port Jackson to become the first known person to circumnavigate Australia. The *Investigator* is later declared unseaworthy.
- 1803:** Sails for England on the *Porpoise*, which founders on reef off the coast of Queensland. Flinders sails 1100km to Port Jackson in ship's cutter to get help.
- 1803 (September):** Makes second attempt to sail to England on board vermin-infested schooner *Cumberland*, but on a stopover he becomes a prisoner of the Governor of Ile de France (Mauritius).
- 1806:** Napoleon orders Flinders to be released, the Governor refuses.
- 1810:** Flinders released in March, sails for England in June. Promoted to rank of post-captain. Returns to England in October.
- 1812:** Daughter Anne born.
- 1814 (18 July):** Publication of *Voyage to Terra Australis*. 19 July he dies from bladder complaint.



Portrait of Matthew Flinders  
Art Gallery of South Australia



## FLINDERS THE CARTOGRAPHER

One of Matthew Flinders' greatest achievements was his creation of the most complete map of Australia up to his time. Flinders was a skilled navigator, cartographer and hydrographer (nautical mapmaker) who had learned from John Hamilton Moore's book *Navigation*, and by studying under Capt. William Bligh on his second voyage to Tahiti (the first ended in mutiny). Bligh had learned from Capt. James Cook, whose charts were used for over century after his death and who was a pioneer of the use of chronometers to fix longitude.

While charts in modern times can be made using aerial surveys, in Flinders' time it was time consuming and often tedious work. According to Flinders: "The instruments used in taking the distances, were a nine-inch sextant by Ramsden and three sextants of eight inches radius by Troughton, the latter being made in 1801, expressly for the voyage. On board the ship, the sextant was necessarily held in the hand, and the distances were sometimes so taken on shore; but in most of the latter cases, it was fixed on a stand admitting of the sextant being turned easily in any direction."

Every day Flinders would make rough charts of the coastline and then update them and make them more accurate using the measurements taken with their navigational instruments. He would make sure to do this before the end of each day. They would start the survey from exactly the same point the next day. Readings were taken to establish points for triangulation, to calculate the distances and co ordinates of each point of the coastline.

Latitude was determined by using a sextant, by which readings were taken of the angle between the sun and the horizon. Longitude was determined by taking the difference between Greenwich mean time and local time at a given location. This required clocks that would remain accurate despite the sway of the ocean and changes in climate. Flinders chart, from which Governor Macquarie took his suggestion to call the country Australia, remained in use for many years.



A typical sextant used by late 18th-early 19th century mariners.

**December 6, 1801**  
The *Investigator* arrives from England. Cape Leeuwin is sighted. Mapping begins.

**December 9, 1801 - January 5, 1802**  
The ship puts in near King George Sound. Crew spends time preparing the ship for the journey. Flinders makes observations on the Aborigines and their language.

## INVESTIGATOR

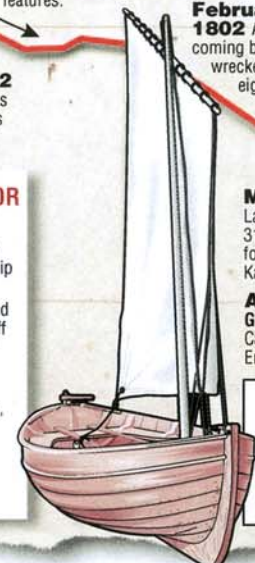
Former collier (similar to the *Endeavour*, only smaller) was renamed *Investigator* in 1800 after being chosen by the Admiralty to be Flinders' ship on his voyage of to chart Australia's coasts.

**Crew:** 78, made up of 18 officers, 45 seamen and 15 marines. In addition there was a scientific and artistic staff of six men, including naturalist Ferdinand Bauer and painter William Westall, and their four servants. Flinders also had a feline companion named Trim.

**Armament:** Eight lightweight cannons, known as carronades, two long guns, and two swivel mounted guns.

**Length:** 30.48m **Beam:** 8.5m

**Draught:** 4.27m (draught is a nautical term for the depth at which a ship floats on an even keel).



## TOM THUMB

Flinders, Bass and a servant (William Martin) explored around Sydney and the NSW coast in two open boats both named *Tom Thumb*. They sailed the 2.4m boat out on to the open ocean and were dumped by waves and menaced by storms. But they survived to continue their explorations.

Matthew Flinders' sword was surrendered to General Decaen the governor of Mauritius, officially making him a prisoner of war after a stopover during his return voyage to England.



## WINEWARD BOUND

A brigantine (small, swift, manoeuvrable two master) built almost entirely of recycled timber, salvaged from historic boats and old buildings.

The ship was named after Mr Lewis Winde, builder of an 1848 Boston schooner on which the Tasmanian built and registered vessel is modelled.

**Crew:** Up to 30 people, including crew, at sea

**Length:** 24.1m long (bowsprit extra 9.1 m)

**Beam:** 6.3m

**Draught:** 3.2m

**Key**

- Circumnavigation of Australia 1801-1803
- Circumnavigation of Tasmania 1798-1799



## NORFOLK

A replica of the sloop re-enacted the Bass and Flinders 1798-1799 circumnavigation of Tasmania