

LINCOLNSHIRE LONG HOMECOMING



Matthew Flinders was born in March 1774 ,in the small Lincolnshire village of Donington, and would have heard the Thomas Hedderly five sounding out over the village. He was educated in Donington and subsequently at a private school in the nearby village of Horbling.

At the age of 15 he joined the Navy, rising through the ranks as a navigator and cartographer. Favouring exploration rather than battle, he enlisted aboard HMS Reliance in 1795 and became friends with the ship's surgeon George Bass from an even smaller village – Aswarby - a mere 11 miles from Donington. Three years later now in command of HMS Norfolk together they sailed through the strait between the southwestern tip of Australia – then known as New Holland and the island of Tasmania (then known as Van Diemen's Land). The strait they successfully navigated was named as Bass Strait and the largest island in the strait was subsequently named Flinder's Island. Their circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land confirmed it to be an island. Rejoining HMS Reliance for the return journey to England – they discovered the Antipodes Islands. On his return his work came to the notice of Sir Joseph Banks a notable scientist– whose family owned Revesby Abbey and Estate – and who persuaded the Admiralty of the importance of an expedition to “chart the coastline of New Holland”. As a Flinders was promoted to commander and given command of HMS Investigator and set sail for New Holland in July 1801 – with a group of scientists attached to the expedition.



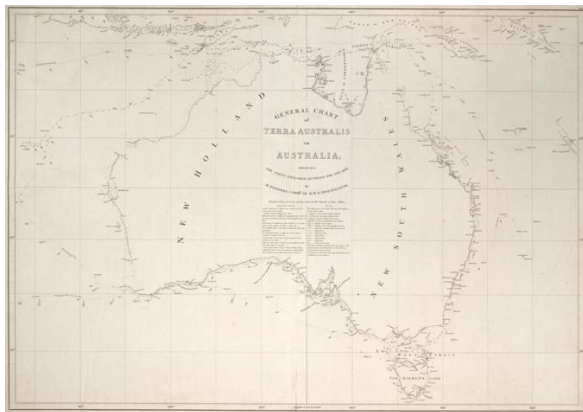
(Tony Walker)

Donington memorial to Flinders plus TRIM

Also on board was his faithful cat – Trim, and a member of his crew was his cousin – from Spilsby - John Franklin – future explorer – Sir John Franklin who perished with his crew attempting to find the North West Passage and immortalised on the 1970 Pentangle album – “Cruel Sister” -see YouTube link below

https://youtu.be/ysFKjWG_W54?si=ofcdvjOyTMy-agys

HMS Investigator reached Western Australia in December 1801 and started charting the southern coastline and studying the flora and fauna along the way. At the same time a French expedition with two ships – independent of Flinders – were carrying out the same exercise in the opposite direction. In late March they reached a large island named by Flinders as Kangaroo Island and in early April encountered the French expedition in a bay named by Flinders as Encounter Bay. They shared details of their discoveries and went on their way passing through the previously named Bass Strait and past Flinders Island arriving in Sydney in early May. Investigator embarked on its circumnavigation of Australia in late July 1802 and completed its voyage – which was not without incident – returning to Sydney on 9th June 1803. HMS Investigator was discovered to be decaying rapidly when surveying the Northern Territory coastline and a decision was made to chart the remaining coastline less extensively. On its return to Sydney on 9th June 1803 HMS Investigator was deemed unseaworthy and condemned.. Flinders return to England was however not without incident. Aboard HMS Porpoise he was ship wrecked off the Great Barrier Reef. Taking a small sailing boat he, along with a small crew sailed back to Sydney to organise the saving of the remaining crew members. Undaunted he took command of HMS Cumberland to return to England. This ship also was in poor condition and had to land in what is now Mauritius for repairs., In mid-December 1803 War with France had again resumed and since Mauritius was a French territory, he was arrested and jailed. Despite being detained in Mauritius, once re-united with his documents and charts he produced and sent back to England the first map of his journey – the first time the name “Australia “– or “Terra Australis” was used, in November 1804. He finally returned to England in October 1810 and resumed work preparing – “A Voyage to Terra Australis” and an Atlas of maps. These were finally published the day after his death. In poor health he died in his London home on 19th July 1814 - aged 40 – and was buried in his local church – St James Church, Piccadilly 4 days later.



Flinders chart of Terra Australis

That was essentially the end of the story – the cemetery where he was buried became St James’s Gardens – Camden and subsequently much of it became Euston Station which years later meant that Flinders coffin would eventually be found and the journey back to Lincolnshire could begin.

In January 2019 archaeologists were on hand as excavation at Euston Station started as part of the development of HS2 and revealed the burial ground of some 40,000 bodies – the coffin of Flinders had a plate made of lead – which meant that it had not decayed and his coffin could be positively identified in January 2019. It is more than a coincidence that Flinders's grandson was Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) – acclaimed archaeologist and regarded as the “father of modern archaeology”. Donington rose to the occasion with the formation of the “*Matthew Flinders Bring Him Home*” project. Lincoln Diocese gave planning consent for him to be re-buried in the church. Plans were made for his return to Donington which were delayed by the Covid pandemic.

At last the weekend of 12th, 13th and 14th July were earmarked for his return and burial. The event was covered in the national papers, and on local and national television and radio.



(Luke Tobin)

Matthew Flinders home-coming

Briefly the Donington peal (Plain Bob Triples – composition by the Lincolnshire Lad Roger Bailey) was heard on Radio 2 and again on Look North. Matthew Flinders is seen as a hero in Australia – with over 100 geographical features are named after him. A number of Australian dignitaries attended the three day celebrations.

In addition to the peal at Donington, a quarter peal was rung at Horbling but sadly a peal attempt of Donington Delight Major was lost. The successful peal was obviously overseen from above – on ringing the bells up the following day for service ringing – a rope broke!!

Lincoln Diocesan Guild

DONINGTON

Lincolnshire

St Mary and Holy Rood

Saturday, 13 July 2024 in 3h (14-1-24 in F)

5040 Plain Bob Triples

Composed by Roger Bailey (No1)

- 1 Martin F Mitchell
- 2 Joanne Pearson
- 3 Robert Simpson
- 4 Christopher P Turner
- 5 Luke Tobin
- 6 Mark Mumby
- 7 P Barry Jones (C)
- 8 Anthony D Walker

Rung half muffled prior to the burial of Captain Matthew Flinders RN here after his remains were discovered under a carpark in London during the start of work on HS2. He was born here on 16th Mar 1774 and charted much of Australia's coastline.



The peal band - as they stood anti-clockwise from front right

HORBLING

Lincolnshire
St Andrew's

Saturday, 13 July 2024 in 48m (9–1–17)

1440 Plain Bob Minor

(being two 720's)

(composed by Roger Bailey)

- 1 Christopher C P Woodcock (C)
- 2 Robert H Harvey
- 3 David W Bee
- 4 Revd Geoffrey Spencer
- 5 Michael Christie
- 6 Paul Sharp

Keith Butter