

Voyages

By the middle of the 18th century the cost to commercial trade of undertaking major voyages of exploration was becoming prohibitive. The sciences, under the name of Natural Philosophy, had advanced so far that scientific observations of sufficient accuracy to be useful for the advancement of knowledge had to be undertaken by specialists. This was an unnecessary expense to commercial traders and beyond their requirements. In the interests of the advancement of science, governments commenced providing the resources for such major undertakings. New discoveries were to be claimed for the Crown and commercial activity would follow this enhancement of their respective empires. Merchant backed voyages continued but the detail and accuracy of their observations were of limited value unless the discoveries were totally new.

1770 *Endeavour*, Lieutenant James Cook, east coast of Australia, New South Wales

The first major voyage of exploration for scientific investigation was the voyage to Tahiti to observe the transit of Venus across the Sun's disc. This was used to calculate the distances from the Earth to Venus and from the Earth to the Sun, values which were essential to further the twin sciences of astronomy and navigation. After the successful observation of the transit of Venus, Cook explored eastwards. He made contact with the east coast of New Zealand, which was first discovered by Tasman in 1642, and circumnavigated both islands.

The east coast of New Holland, called New South Wales by Cook, was sighted on 19 April 1770. He turned northward to survey the major part of the east coast of Australia. Notably he could not connect his survey to Tasman's where he departed the coast of Van Diemen's Land. The *Endeavour* ran onto a coral reef but was repaired and returned to England via Torres Strait.

The success of Cook's first voyage in the advancement of science prompted other European powers, notably the French, to commission similar voyages of exploration.

- 1772** *Mascarin* and *Marquis de Castries*, Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne, Crozet and Duclesmere, south coast of Van Diemen's Land (VDL)
- 1773** *Resolution* and *Adventure*, Cook and Lieutenant Tobias Furneaux respectively, Furneaux separated from *Resolution* surveyed south and east coasts of VDL
- 1777** *Resolution* and *Adventure*, Cook and Gore, William Bligh, Master of *Resolution* surveyed south coast of VDL
- 1788** *Bounty*, Bligh visited Adventure Bay on the mutinous first breadfruit voyage
- 1789** *Mercury*, John Henry Cox, south and east coast VDL
- 1791** *Providence* and *Assistant*, Captain William Bligh and Lieutenant Nathaniel Portlock, Matthew Flinders, Midshipman in *Providence*, south coast VDL, Adventure Bay
- 1792-3** *Recherche* and *Esperance*, Rear Admiral Bruny D'Entrecasteaux and Huon de Kermadec, south coast VDL, D'Entrecasteaux Channel, east coast VDL
- 1793-4** *Duke of Clarence* and *Duchess*, Lieutenant John Hayes and Lieutenant William Relph, south coast VDL, D'Entrecasteaux Channel, Derwent River
- 1798** *Whaleboat*, Surgeon George Bass, into Bass Strait and coast of Victoria to Western Port
- 1798-9** *Norfolk*, Lieutenant Matthew Flinders, Furneaux Group, sailed through Bass Strait along north and west coasts of VDL thus proving its insularity
- 1800** *Lady Nelson*, Lieutenant Grant, south coast of Victoria, first passage through Bass Strait using Flinders' survey
- 1802** *Geographe*, *Naturaliste* and *Casuarina*, Captain Nicholas Baudin, VDL, Bass Strait
- 1819** *Mermaid*, Lieutenant Phillip Parker King, entrance to Macquarie Harbour
- 1837-43** *Beagle* and *Vansittart*, John Clements Whickham later John Lort Stokes, Bass Strait and Port Davey to South West Cape

The voyage of Stokes in the *Beagle* is considered to be the last of the great voyages of discovery in Australian waters.