

Discovery Early Voyagers

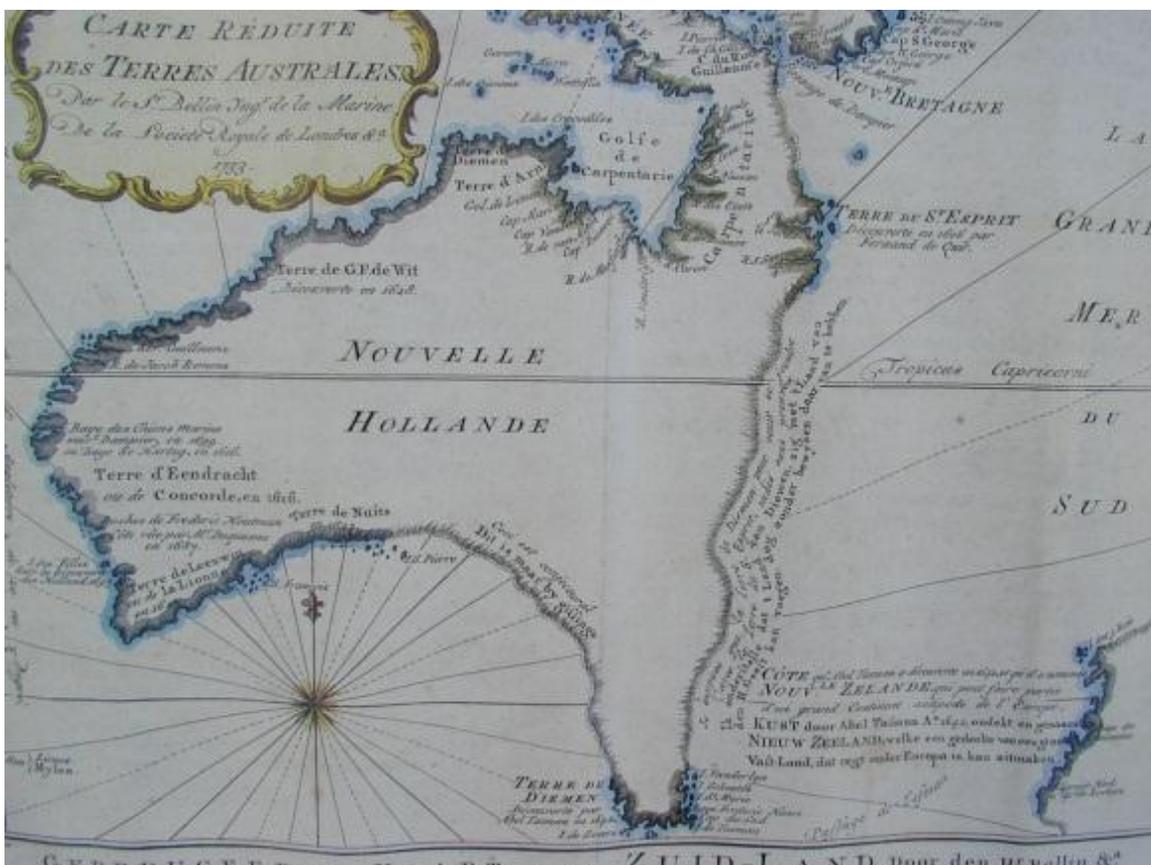


There are some (notably British historian Gavin Menzies) who claim that the Chinese were the first mariners to discover Australia. These assertions are yet to be proved.

The first records of European mariners sailing into Australian waters date to 1606, and includes their observations of the land known as *Terra Australis Incognita* (unknown southern land).

The first ship and crew to chart the Australian coast and meet with Aboriginal people was the *Duyfken* captained by Dutchman, Willem Janszoon.

Between 1606 and 1770, an estimated 54 European ships (many being Dutch and French) made contact. Prominent among these were merchant ships from the Dutch East Indies Company and included the vessels of Abel Tasman. Tasman charted parts of the north, west and south coasts of Australia which was then known as New Holland.



This map was made in 1753 by Frenchman Jacques Nicolas Bellin.

The east coast had not yet been charted so an imaginary line was drawn between Tasmania and Papua New Guinea.

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Australian Studies

In 1770, Englishman Captain James Cook charted the Australian east coast in his ship *Endeavour*. Under instruction from King George III of England, Cook claimed the east coast on 22 August 1770 at Possession Island, naming eastern Australia *New South Wales*.

The coast of Australia, featuring Tasmania as a separate island, was mapped in detail by the English mariners and navigators Bass and Flinders, and the French mariner, Baudin.

A nearly completed map of the coastline was published by Flinders -who was the first to circumnavigate Australia- in 1814.

Talk about or Write about

1. Suppose that some day it is proven true that the Chinese were the first to discover Australia. If they *were* the first, and if Australia had been claimed as a Chinese colony (just as the British claimed Australia as theirs) how do you think our country might be different from what it is today?
2. Dutch mariners were the first to meet with Australia's Aboriginal people. When these two very different groups first encountered one another what might have been some thoughts, feelings and emotions experienced by (a) the Dutch and (b) the Aboriginals?
3. Merchants are traders...buyers or sellers of goods. Why might merchant ships from Europe have been in waters near Australia, so far from their home countries?
4. The 1753 map by Frenchman Jacques Nicolas Bellin (above) clearly shows that the west coast of Australia was more thoroughly mapped before the east coast. Yet it was the east coast where settlements began and flourished; why do you think this might have occurred?
5. King George III of England holds a special place in Australia's history. For what reason(s) might the King have instructed Captain Cook to claim the east coast of this distant land for England?



Discovery

European Mariners

Below are some of the first Europeans to visit Australia's shores. Each of these voyagers ventured from a different country. Complete the Table by providing the missing information.

Willem Janszoon



Country of origin:
Date(s) of voyage(s):
Name of ship:
Why is this explorer important in Australia's history?

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.....

Antoine Bruni
d'Entrecasteaux



Country of origin:
Date(s) of voyage(s):
Name of ship:
Why is this explorer important in Australia's history?

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.....

William Dampier



Country of origin:
Date(s) of voyage(s):
Name of ship:
Why is this explorer important in Australia's history?

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Discovery

Captain James Cook

Obtain factual information from research. Then give brief but thoughtful answers to each question below.

James Cook



Why is Captain Cook such an important figure in Australia's history?

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HMS Endeavour



Tell how Captain Cook's 'HMS Endeavour' was almost shipwrecked on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

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Joseph Banks



Why do you think Joseph Banks, a botanist, was sent with Captain Cook on the long voyage to Australia?

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More on Australia's discovery coming soon.