

My Blog of the Endeavour Voyage

Pre-Voyage Blog

Sunday, Apr 11, 2010

The Beginning

Canberra, 11 April 2010



HMB Endeavour

I should be at sea today on HMB Endeavour. It sailed this morning.

But I'm here, at home, spending most of my time doing physio exercises to mend the damage I did to shoulder and foot on my [Old Mail Routes](#) trip.

But, fortuitously, I was able to swap from my originally booked Broken Bay voyage, on which I would have had to pose as Long John Silver, to next week's Jervis Bay voyage, giving me more time to convert my hobble to – at least, I hope – a well-disguised limple amble.

HMB Endeavour is a replica of the original HMB Endeavour in which James Cook (with the rank of Lieutenant, but commonly referred to as Captain) circumnavigated the globe 1768-1771. It was during this voyage that he visited lands that would come to be known as New Zealand and Australia.

HMB? Well, in James Cook's time it stood for His Majesty's Bark. Cook actually referred to it as His Britannick Majesty's Bark! But you can read all about what a Bark is and about the Endeavour on the [Endeavour Replica](#) site.

My initial interest in undertaking the voyage was to experience life at sea on a tall sailing ship as part of understanding and relating to the vicissitudes of an early immigrant making the voyage to Australia. It was another page in the life of my great grandfather, William Crick, along with the my interest in following his [Old Mail Routes](#). The Bark Endeavour was almost a hundred years earlier than the Barque Sibella, on which he and his brother Thomas emigrated, but it would be as close as I could get to going to sea on a vessel of a similar ilk.

With the Endeavour, there was the added attraction, which became an increased focus of interest, of being taken back not only to the voyage of James Cook himself, which remains of signal significance for Australia, but to the life, challenges and dramas of so many sea adventurers, both naval and civilian, of past centuries.

I once spent the best part of a day in the [Vasa Museet](#) in Stockholm, which houses an intact 17th century Swedish warship, the *Vasa*, salvaged from beneath the mud of Stockholm Harbour. According to the website, it's the only 17th century intact warship in the world. Quite a story; and an amazing experience to explore its every nook. I also kept filed away a folder of

reproductions of many original papers relating to the Endeavour and Capt Cook that was published by the Sydney Sun Herald to mark the 200th anniversary of the Endeavour's visit to what later became Botany Bay. That was in 1970.

The anticipation and interest in undertaking an Endeavour voyage, as I recall and re-discover my treasure troves, is expanding by the day, interrupted only by my desperation to recover from my foot injury incurred during my [Old Mail Routes](#) trip.

Monday, Apr 12, 2010

Cooktown

Canberra, 12 April 2010

Having posted yesterday's blog, I then noticed that HMB Endeavour hadn't quite put to sea. It had set sail into Sydney Harbour but had spent the day coping with a new lot of land lubbers learning the ropes. It anchored in the harbour for the night. No doubt, by now, it has glided through the heads with sails billowing and set a course for somewhere vaguely between north and east.

I was reminded by the current [Shen Neng 1](#) saga of another incident of damage to the Great Barrier Reef caused by a ship trying to short-cut its way across the coral shoals. That was in 1770. The ship's master was James Cook. The ship, of course, was HMB Endeavour.



[Cooktown Harbour](#)

On the assumption that the Endeavour's log-keeping was a deal more accurate than the Shen Neng 1's, the Endeavour ran aground on the reef at 11.00pm on 10 June 1770. Some seven days later, cautiously watched by the local native inhabitants, the [Guugu Yimithirr people](#), the badly damaged Endeavour slowly made its way into their protective estuary and beached at their river mouth.



[Endeavour in Cooktown](#)

The Endeavour and its crew spent 48 days there, repairing the hull, replenishing their food and water, documenting new plant and animal species and, importantly, making contacts with their hosts. Their sojourn there is considered the first settlement of Europeans in this Great Southern Land.

Today, the place is called Cooktown. The river is called the Endeavour (named by Cook). The offending reef is Endeavour Reef. And, there's probably more...

There's a very informative and interesting museum there, called the James Cook Museum. It tells stories from both the Endeavour crew's records and the traditional oral history of the Guugu Yimithirr people. It also has treasures from the Endeavour, such as its anchor and a cannon (or maybe more – I can't remember) that Cook had jettisoned on the reef to allow the Endeavour enough keel room to get across the coral.

I guess there would not have been any oil spillage from the incident.

Tuesday, Apr 13, 2010

At sea 240 Years Ago

Canberra, 13 April 2010

I wondered today where Cook might have been on this day 240 years ago as he approached a shore line whose length would stagger him.

On 13 April 1770, he recorded in his journal:

"Light Airs next to a Calm, with Clear pleasant weather; what little wind we had was from the North-West quarter. In the Course of this day found the Variation to be 12 degrees 27 minutes East, being at Noon, by observation, in the Latitude of 39 degrees 23 minutes South, and Longitude 204 degrees 2 minutes West; Course and distance since Yesterday noon South 62 degrees West, 26 Miles, and Longitude made from Cape Farewell 18 degrees 4 minutes West."

The Endeavour was in South Pacific cruise mode. Pretty much a calm, smooth ride; and only 26 miles covered in 24 hours. He could have gone faster in Broken Bay or Jervis Bay. I guess there has to some peaceful moments in a three year journey. Maybe even in a 5 or 6 day journey.

I discovered that Cook was right in the middle of a revolution in sea navigation. Accurate measurement of longitude had been an elusive goal. It was about the time of Cook's voyages that significant changes took place, especially with the invention of the chronometer. Cook, in fact used different methods of longitude measurement on his first and subsequent voyages: [James Cook](#) used [K1](#), a copy of H4, on his second and third voyages, having used the [lunar distance method](#) on his first voyage. (Wikipedia)

Interestingly, while longitude came to be measured and recorded in terms of 0°-180° E or W of Greenwich, Cook recorded his longitude today as 204°2'W. That threw me! Took a while for the penny to drop; and realise he was saying 180°-(204°2'-180°)W - no, that would now be E, or 180°-24°2'E, which was, in reality, was 155° 58'E!

Anyway, on this day 140 years ago, he was definitely at sea. You can view the map below to see just where he was. You can also zoom in or out and move it around - if only to see how much water surrounded him.

View map: [James Cooks Voyage April 1770](#)

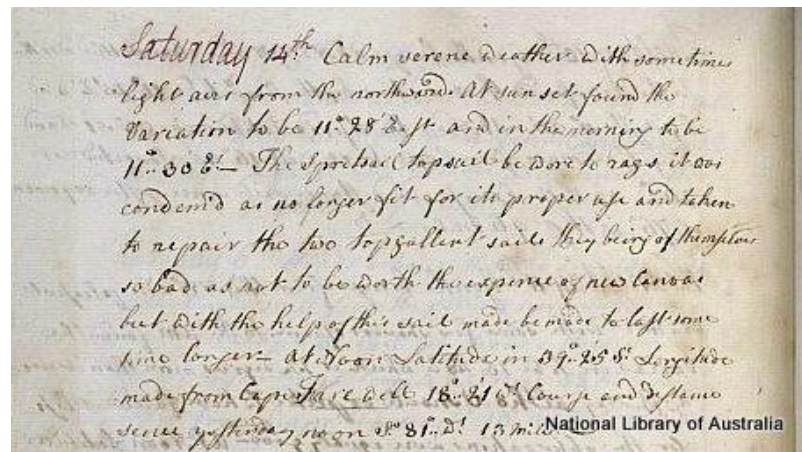
Wednesday, Apr 14, 2010

Frustrations and Repairs

Canberra, 14 April 2010

HMB Endeavour – the 20th century version – we are told, experienced a wind drop overnight and is currently easing its way to Broken Bay for lunch. The 18th century version, on this day 240 years ago, was making even slower progress as it inched its way westwards in “calm serene weather” towards the previously recorded (by Tasman) Van Diemen’s Land.

The Endeavour, by now, was over 21 months into its voyage. Cook reports today that the “spritsail topsail” (what our voyage crew manual calls the sprit topsail) was torn to rags and not fit for purpose. He used the remnants to repair two top gallant sails that themselves had become so ragged that he didn’t think it was worth using new canvas to repair them. He expressed the



Cook's Journal 14 April 1770

expectation that his makeshift repairs would at least make the top gallants “last some time longer.” The new canvas he would save for the time being. That’s recycling if ever there was! No room here for bringing out the new if the old could still be used somehow or other.

Having thought I’d worked out his longitude recording – by translating his 204°2’W to 155°58’E, I’m now not so sure. I’m missing something. Hopefully the navigator on the 20th century version has it all sorted out and can cast light on the issue!

Today, Cook records his longitudinal position only in terms of 18°21’ variation from Cape Farewell (NZ). Wikipedia tells me Cape Farewell is at 172°41’E. That places Endeavour at 154°20’E. He also included the corresponding variation in yesterday’s entry, which he gave as 18°04’. That would have placed him at 154°37’E. I’m still trying to work out what I’m missing.

I have started a slide show. It’s only got photos relevant to the blogs so far. But it will grow.

Thursday, Apr 15, 2010

Another Day, Another Voyage

Canberra, 15 April 2010

Life is a changing series of twists and turns. That's ideal for a motorcyclist. Sometimes the twists aren't always as you would like. You prefer them to be on the road rather caused by leaving the road, as happened on my *endeavour* to track down [Old Mail Routes](#).

My anticipation of sailing on HMB Endeavour has yet again taken another turn. With the combined efforts of physiotherapist and podiatrist to have my foot bundled like a baby in swaddling-clothes, only more strategically accomplished, I was ready to tackle anything on or below decks. But, in the interests of frank and fearless disclosure (no doubt from years of working for The Government), I had to admit that scuttling up and down the rat lines (they're the thinner, horizontal ropes of the rigging) wasn't an accomplishable prospect. Fortuitously, Neptune was again on my side; and transferring to the Botany Bay voyage from 25-29 April was on offer. I didn't take long to accept, bolstered by the confidence that another week of physio will deliver a safely ratlineable foot.

While initially disappointed in having to forego the Jervis Bay voyage (attracted by going south and having an extra day at sea), I soon came to appreciate that the Botany Bay voyage had a special dimension to



Cook's Journal 15-16 April 1770

it. In fact, two special dimensions. The

Endeavour sails into Botany Bay on the same day as Lt Cook did on his Endeavour exactly 240 years earlier. And the crew get to participate in a Two Cultures Ceremony to mark the anniversary.

On entering the bay or *kamay* (*pron Gamay*), as the local people called the area and which came to be called Botany Bay, Cook observed people "on both points of the bay". They would have been from the Gweagal and Kameygal peoples. On landing on the southern shore, he would have first encountered members of the Gweagal people, who lived on that part of the bay's shores. It's taken most of the 240 years since that encounter for the European settlers that followed to appreciate the upheavals that ensued from that day. Today, the Kurrnulla Aboriginal Corporation represents the local indigenous peoples.

What of Cook's Endeavour on 15 April 1770? The weather started to give it a bit more propulsion. A fresh gale moved in, allowing Endeavour to make 79 miles over the 24 hours from midday the day before. Its longitude is now 20°2'W from Cape Farewell. That makes it at 152°39'E. Cook reports that they saw a gannet: "these are Birds that we reckon never to go far from land. We kept the lead going all night, but found no soundings with 100 and 130 fathoms line." However, he still had a bit to go before he would see land.

Friday, Apr 16, 2010

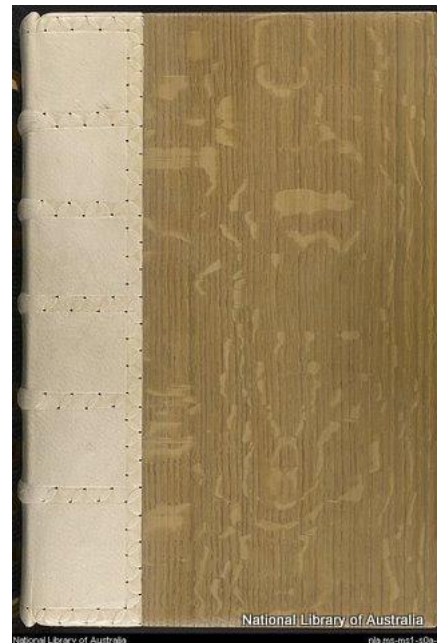
Cook's Journal

Canberra, 16 April 2010

I'm feeling very pleased at the way things have worked out. I'm pretty much mobile, but with a little effort. Another week will ensure a much greater degree of enjoyment and safety. And I've thoroughly warmed to the significance of the new dates...entering into Botany Bay on 28th as Cook did; and remembering the historical and cultural upheavals that began that day.

With my voyage another week away, I might content myself over the next week with a brief mention of where the 18th century Endeavour was on the corresponding day in 1770.

Today, Cook recorded that fresh gales continued. At noon the Endeavour was at latitude $39^{\circ}40'S$ and had made $22^{\circ}02'$ of longitude from Cape Farewell. That would put it at $150^{\circ}39'E$. Cook recorded that the Endeavour travelled 108 miles from midday the day before.

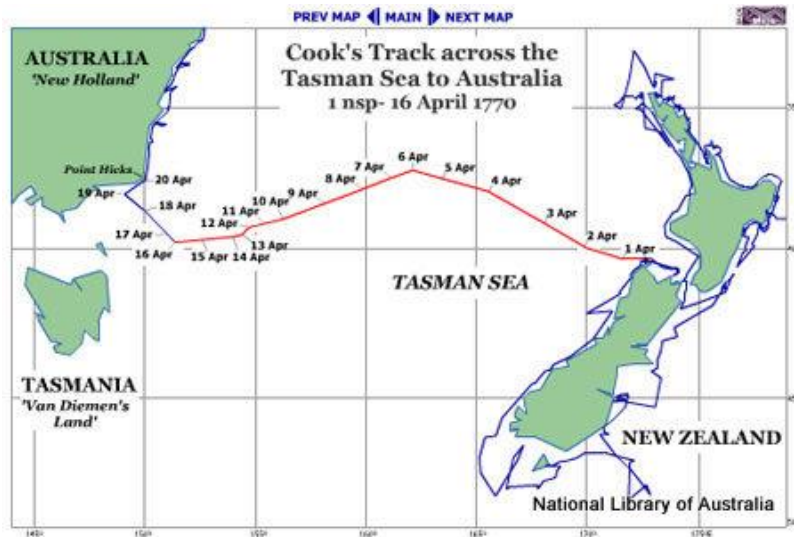


Cover of Cook's Journal

Cook's journal is worth a bit of your time.

Cook's journal was a combo log and journal. He started off by keeping his ship's log, which records vital information about weather, position, and other key data – a sort of 18th century version of today's black box in a plane. The journal was more a description of events, discoveries, observations, opinions and thoughts. Cook was taken by the journalising of Banks and took up the same practice. He eventually combined his log obligations within his journal.

Cook most probably wrote his entries more often than not after he had taken his midday measurements of his latitude and longitude. Several entries start with a sentence on the weather, which presumably is the weather as he writes. Then he often picks up from midday the day before and records events of the previous afternoon. This is followed by the morning's events of the day of writing. Finally, he records the log information of position, course and distance travelled.



NLA Map of Cook's voyage across Tasman Sea

There is a transcription of his journal housed by the South Australian Library: [transcription of Cook's journal](#).

You can even read the actual manuscript (actual, as in digitised!). It's housed by the National Library of Australia: [manuscript of his journal](#). You will need a small key to navigate it. The key is that Item 222r contains

entries from 10-13 April 1770. So start

somewhere around that number and work from there.

There is also a map on-line tracing Cook's voyage day by day. It's also on the site of the National Library of Australia: [Cook across the Tasman](#). My positioning of the Endeavour is out by several minutes compared to this map. I suspect that's due to a difference between Cook's longitudinal measurement for Cape Farewell and Wikipedia's, which I've been using. I haven't yet tracked down Cook's measurement.

Saturday, Apr 17, 2010

Coping with Longitude

Canberra, 17 April 2010

Today is another day on which I should have been heading out on HMB Endeavour; but am still at home. I've already started (again) to count down the days – this time to the Botany Bay voyage of 25-29 April.

For Cook and his Endeavour, the night of 15-16 April 1770 seemingly kept the evening and night watches on their toes. By 5.00pm on the 16th, they had to "close reef [the] topsails." At 8.00pm, they "wore and stood to the Southward." At midnight, they "wore and stood to the North-West". Finally, at 4.00am, they "wore and stood to the Southward, having a fresh Gale at West-South-West, attended with Squalls."

The situation improved with daylight: "the weather soon after Clear'd up, which, a little after 11, gave us an Opportunity of taking several observations of the Sun and Moon..." I hadn't been reading ahead so was unprepared for this, which included an acknowledgement of some error in longitudinal measurements. Maybe, he'll have an answer to my variations that I noted yesterday.

First, revealing enough slowness in fathoming longitudinal measurements to have me disbarred from setting foot on Endeavour, I finally twigged to the hows and whys of translating Cook's

longitudinal calculations into current conventional ones. I had actually come up with the correct formula on 13 April, but that had come about not so much by an analytical understanding as much by fiddling the numbers until I got into the 150s, where I knew I had to be. Today, in his journal, Cook makes it glaringly obvious what he's measuring. He records "the mean result [of the observations] gave

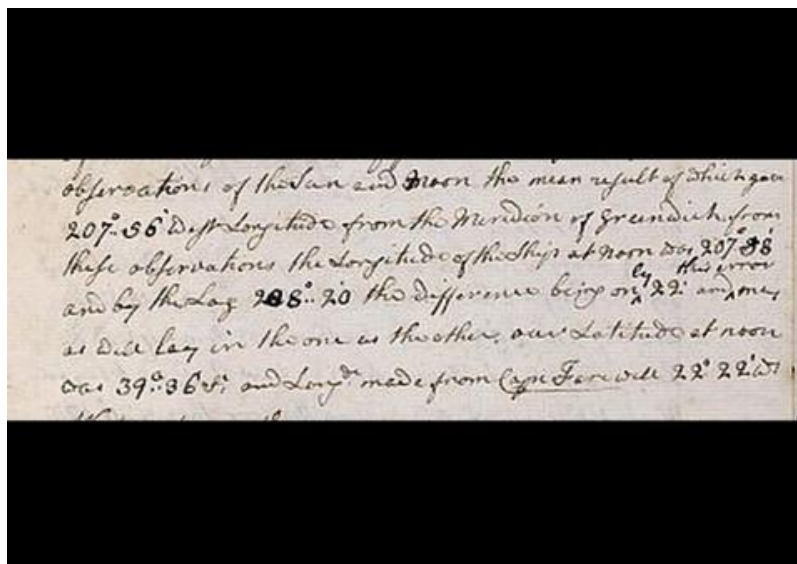


Cook's Journal 17 April 1770

207 degrees 56 minutes West Longitude from the Meridian of Greenwich." Of course! So, travelling westward, he gets half-way around the globe and crosses the 180° meridian; and keeps going further west beyond 180°. So, subtracting 180° from his "west of Greenwich" measurement, you're placing him at a point west (still west!) of the 180° meridian. That would be 27°56'W (of the 180° meridian). But the current convention is to measure Longitude in this part of the globe by counting east from Greenwich until you get to the 180° meridian. So, to translate a "west of 180° meridian" point to an "east of 0° (Greenwich) point", you then need to subtract the new measurement from 180°. That would be **152°04' East** (of 0° (Greenwich)).

Sorry if that seems all too obvious. I don't think I'll be navigating, but might get targeted for remedial training with the sextant.

Anyway, Cook then notes "From these observations the Longitude of the Ship at Noon was 207 degrees 58 minutes." But, more interesting, he continues by noting that the longitude "by the Log [is] 208 degrees 20 minutes" which he all but dismisses, "the difference being only 22 minutes; and this Error may as well be in the one as the other." His log measurement would put him at **151°40'E**.



Cook has second thoughts at times

He finally puts Endeavour at noon at 39°36'S and 22°22' west of Cape Farewell. This latter measurement puts him at **150°19'E** (using Wikiedia's longitudinal measurement of Cape Farewell).

So, all of this didn't really solve my variation issue, but, I guess, reinforced the obvious, namely, that it has to do with differences in placing Cape Farewell. I now wonder what

measurements were used to produce the map [Cook across the Tasman](#) because it's positioning of Endeavour at midday today is at **150°53'E** (or as close as I can calculate with a millimetre ruler!).

Perhaps I should simply heed the master's advice and be equally dismissive of a few minutes error, which, extending Cook's view, could well be in any of the calculations.

Saturday, Apr 17, 2010

Cape Farewell and Longitude

Canberra, 17 April 2010

I know I said I would be simply recording the position of the Endeavour as she made her way to New Holland and along the coast. One of the scourges of being anal retentive, however, is the need to get to the core of the issue and solve it! So the longitudinal conundrum got me intrigued.



Cape Farewell and Spit

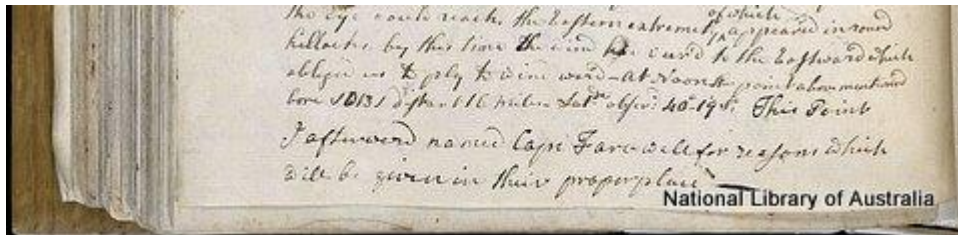
It would probably take more time than I want to devote to it to fully understand what's happening. It was time-consuming enough to try to get a hold on what Cook was recording about Cape Farewell. He passed it twice – once in each direction, but doesn't make it all that clear as to where he positions it. He says precious little the first time, going east, as he completes a circumnavigation of the South Island. Having sheltered and restocked over several days in a protected area of what he subsequently called Admiralty Bay, he headed out on the return journey home. He devotes a lot of time to the thinking behind that decision. It's worth a look. That was 31 March 1770.

On the first day out, he recorded a small island off the northern tip of the western arm of Admiralty Bay. The northern tip he called Cape Stephens. He didn't name the island, but it's now known as Stephens Island. He positioned it at 40°37'S 174°54'E (he actually recorded 185°06'W). He was pretty spot on with latitude, but out by about a degree longitude (the island's about 174°E). He then records their farewell to Cape Farewell. Interestingly,

he noted on the first pass, on 24 March, "this point I afterwards named Cape Farewell for reasons which will be given in their proper place." He's added these words later – obviously; and it shows from the ink colour and, possibly, a better nib. As they catch their last look at Cape Farewell, on 31 March 1770, he records the position of the Endeavour as 40°30'S 174°02'E (or, in his reckoning 185°58'W). He then says Cape Farewell (the most northerly tip of the South Is) "bore from us at 5 p.m. West 18 degrees North, distance 12 Miles." I assume he's saying the Endeavour is west 18° north of the cape. My rough calculation, on this basis (millimetre ruler and Google map), would put the Endeavour at about the same latitude as Cook does, but at about longitude 172°29'E. That's a difference of about 1.5°. Cook seems to be placing the cape at about 174°22'E. That's a little over a 1.5° difference compared to Wikipedia's number.

If I've got this close to correct, it goes some way towards explaining variations. Because Cook, as he sails towards New Holland, mostly records his position relative to Cape Farewell, there's always going to be a difference in his recorded position and his real position; but a lot more than the 22 minutes he thought (see earlier blog of 17 April immediately below).

Cook doesn't log his 31 March midday bearings, which is unusual.



Cook adds in reference to Cape Farewell

He

logged

his 1 April noon position as 40°12'S and 1°11' west of the cape. On his reckoning, that would have his longitude at about 175°33'E. Based on the Wikipedia longitude for the cape, it would have it at 173°52'E. Again, a little over a 1.5° variation. As if that isn't confusing enough, why does the [National Library map](#) have it at 170°12'E? That's almost 200 miles from where he likely was and over 280 miles from where he thought he was (based on [Zodiacal](#))!

I'm sure there is an answer. It's just that I haven't yet figured it out.

Sunday, Apr 18, 2010

So Close to Land - but it's not there

Canberra, 18 April 2010

Cook is manifestly very excited. He writes with some agitation about seeing birds that are sure signs of land, "indeed, we cannot be far from it." He's frustrated. He makes several comparisons with Tasman's log or chart that suggests he should be seeing land, but it's not there. He'd made soundings every 2 hours all through the night "but found no ground with 120 fathoms."

They were having a better day of it than they experienced during the night. Late on the previous afternoon, they were hit with the typical 'southerly buster', not that they were to know how typical it was. They "close reef the Topsails, handed the Main and Mizzen Topsail, and got down Top Gallant Yards." By 6.00pm, "the Gale increased to such a height as to oblige us to take in the Foretopsail and Mainsail, and to run under the Foresail and Mizzen all night." By morning on the 18th, they were able to "set the Mainsail, and soon after the Foretopsail, and before Noon the Maintopsail, both close reefed."

But still no land!

Cook wrote "At Noon our Latitude by observation was 38 degrees 45 minutes South, Longitude from Cape Farewell 23 degrees 43 minutes West; and Course and distance run since Yesterday noon North 51 degrees West, 82 Miles." 23°43' from the true location of Cape Farewell is 148°58'E.

Monday, Apr 19, 2010

Looking towards 25-29 April Voyage

This is a Special Prelude to the 25-29 April Voyage

Canberra, 19 April 2010

Now that the Jervis Bay voyage is under way, I find my interest focussing on my voyage – less than a week away.

I plan to continue tracing Cook's run along the coast, but I'll also start preparing for those few days before he sailed into Botany Bay on the 28th – the same day we do.

I have prepared a **PDF document** that reproduces the transcription of his journal for the days that my fellow crew members and I will be on Endeavour. I've broken the transcription up so it's more obvious to see what happened on each day, i.e the day it happened. You can download it here: [In and Around Botany Bay.](#)

As we spend 25 April in Sydney Harbour, Cook was sailing past Jervis Bay. Over the ensuing days, he was becalmed a bit so didn't make much progress. On the 27th, he tried to make a landing near today's Bulli but the surf beat him. Pity! We might have been able to attribute to his pinnacle the first surf boat event. Beaten by the surf, he went on and next morning, the 28th, "we discover'd a Bay, which appeared to be tollerably well shelter'd from all winds, into which I resolved to go with the Ship." And he did.

As for today, 19 April, that also was a significant day. He finally laid eyes on New Holland.

Cook was taking no chances at this stage. All his professional skills and instincts told him that land must be close; and the depth of water under him would reduce. He "brought too" at 1:00am but 130 fathoms of line wouldn't reach the bottom. He'd taken in the topsails during the night but reset them at



Point Hicks Lighthouse

5:00am "close reef't."

At 6:00am, it happened: "saw land extending from North-East to West, distance 5 or 6 Leagues, having 80 fathoms, fine sandy bottom." They spent a couple of hours managing the wind before

finally heading out north-east along the shore towards "the Eastmost land we had in sight." At this stage Endeavour was at 37°58'S 149°21'E (210°39'W).

Cook records their noon position as 37°50'S 149°31'E (210°22'W). By now, he's into noting land formations and giving them names. He will continue to do this all the way up the coast. The first of these was Point Hicks. (See map at blog of 13 April.)

The light was known as Cape Everard from 1843 until 1970 when it was changed back to Point Hicks. It seem that there was some doubt to whether this was Cook's first landfall in Australia, in 1770, because Cook had not taken account of crossing the International Date Line when recording his log. Therefore it was not challenged when the cape was latter named Everard. In the lead up to Cooks bi-centenary research was undertaken and the case was presented successfully to restore the rightful name. The area remains largely unchanged from the time it was first sighted back in 1770.

Tuesday, Apr 20, 2010

Start of the coastal run north

Canberra, 20 April 2010

Today, if effect, begins the long run up the east coast of what would be called Australia.

Cook records that yesterday they saw three water sprouts, two of them between the ship and the coast. I've never seen one!

The 19th was quite a day for them. They had a strong sou'westerly all afternoon with "severe weather."

At 6.00pm they "shortned sail, and brought too for the Night." Cook recorded that "The Northermost land in sight bore North by East 1/2 East, and a small Island lying close to a point on the Main bore West, distant 2 Leagues. This point I have named Cape Howe." He described how to recognise it and gave its coordinates that a GPS today would verify.



Gabo Is and Cape Howe...

However, here's something interesting. The island has to be Gabo Island, which lies off a very distinctive point, which logically would seem to be Cape Howe. Could he have seen beyond the island to the further northern point? Cape Howe today is the point further north, the border point between Victoria and New South Wales. So is there some doubt about which point Cook named?

Cook recorded his noon position, as usual, and then commented that "The weather being clear gave us an opportunity to View the Country, which had a very agreeable and promising aspect, diversified with hills, ridges, plains, and Valleys, with some few small lawns; but for the most part the whole was covered with wood, the hills and ridges rise with a gentle slope; they are not high, neither are there many of them."

I've now changed the map (see blog of 13 April) to show Cook's run up the coast and to include the days of the 25-19 April voyage.

Tuesday, Apr 20, 2010

Cook's Endeavour on 25-29 April

Canberra, 20 April 2010

With only four days to being signed on with HMB Endeavour, I figure it's a good move to review what happened to Lt James Cook on the corresponding days of 25-29 April. It won't be practicable to do it day by day as it happens. It might be hard enough sitting or standing in one place, let alone using a computer. And who knows how far away from *Next G* we might be!

I mentioned on 19 April (below) that, on 25 April, Cook was off Jervis Bay. He'd actually passed it, having been pretty much due east of it at noon on 24 April. Following his journal isn't always easy, as I've mentioned before and illustrate (possibly not always accurately) in the PDF document: [In and About Botany Bay](#).

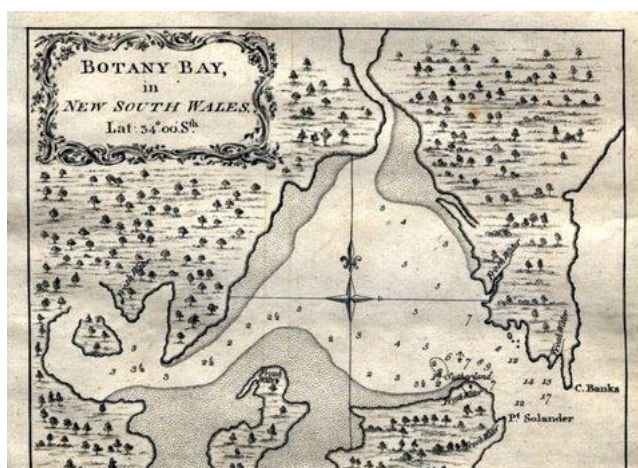


Chart of Botany Bay

On 25 April, he spends some time talking about Jervis Bay, even though, by then, he was well beyond it. In fact, while I'm far from even an amateur expert – and still don't know the meaning or significance of comments such as "In the morning we found the Variation to be, by the Amplitude, 7 degrees 50 minutes East, by several Azimuths 7 degrees 54 minutes East" – I'd wager that some of the scholars haven't always got his position or the location of some of his landmarks correct!

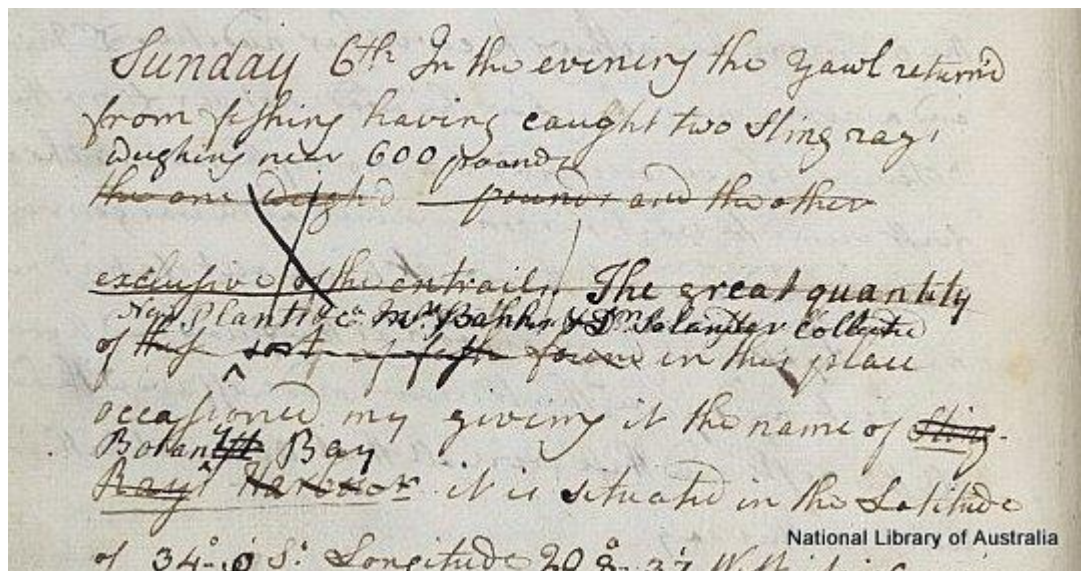
Anyway, on 25 April, while we watch in awe as HMB Endeavour eases away from its moorings and heads towards the Harbour Bridge, maybe by now wondering if we'd made a

good judgement as the real crew start to get us dragging sails to the base of 39 metre high yardarms, Cook was naming points on land as far north as Port Kembla. And while we stay anchored in the shelter of the harbour learning how to climb the rat lines ("Don't look down!"), Cook was enjoying some "calm, serene weather" and spent the late afternoon becalmed. He's had some very changeable weather up the coast. I guess April weather can be like that.

There wasn't much progress made over the 24 hours from noon on 25th. They got a bit of breeze in the early hours of the 26th and made some ground towards the northeast. At their midday latitude, Cook noted "White Cliffs, which rise perpendicular from the Sea to a moderate height." They were off the Royal National park at that stage, but about 15 nautical miles off shore. The afternoon and night of the 26th saw them tacking, standing in and standing off with light NE and NW breezes. Not sure what all that means!

All this time they were losing ground "owing a good deal to the Variableness of the winds." By noon on 27 April, they were only 3-4 miles from the shore but further south than they were the day before. They had an interesting afternoon of it. The closeness to land, the white sandy beaches and the presence of people and canoes on the shoreline were all too inviting. Cook launched the ship's yawl (smallish boat – I wondered if our Endeavour has a pinnace and a yawl!). Accompanied by Banks, Solander and Tupia (they seemed to accompany him a lot), Cook set off to make contact with shore and its inhabitants. They didn't make it to shore. They hadn't bargained on the size of the surf, which they appreciated only when they got close. If only they knew it was possible with the skills of a good sweep.

By the time they got back to Endeavour at about 5.00pm, things started to get a bit scary. Cook writes "At this time it fell Calm, and we were not above a Mile and a half from the Shore, in 11 fathoms, and within some breakers that lay to the Southward of us; but luckily a light breeze came off from the Land, which carried us out of danger, and with which we stood to the Northward."



Cook renames Stingray Harbour to Botany Bay

On 28 April, "At daylight in the morning we discover'd a Bay, which appeared to be tollerably well shelter'd from all winds, into which I resolved to go with the Ship, and with this View sent the Master in the Pinnace to sound the Entrance, while we kept turning up with the Ship, having the wind right out. At noon the Entrance bore North-North-West, distance 1 Mile.'

And so, after almost two years at sea (compared to our five days), he reaches what would become known as Botany Bay. Cook actually called it Sting-Ray Harbour, prompted by the large number of stingrays there. It was only some time later that he changed his mind and renamed it Botany Bay, in deference to the numerous botanical items collected by Banks, which Cook came to appreciate as

they sailed on several days later. You can see his second thoughts in the manuscript of his journal. On 6 May, he first records his naming the bay Sting-Ray Bay; then corrects it after that.

In the afternoon of the 28th, HMB Endeavour made its way into the bay.

Cook recounts that event and the first encounters with the bay's inhabitants thus:

"In the P.M. wind Southerly and Clear weather, with which we stood into the bay and Anchored under the South shore about 2 miles within the Entrance in 5 fathoms, the South point bearing South-East and the North point East. Saw, as we came in, on both points of the bay, several of the Natives and a few huts; Men, Women, and Children on the South Shore abreast of the Ship, to which place I went in the Boats in hopes of speaking with them, accompanied by Mr. Banks, Dr. Solander, and Tupia. As we approached the Shore they all made off, except 2 Men, who seem'd resolved to oppose our landing. As soon as I saw this I order'd the boats to lay upon their Oars, in order to speak to them; but this was to little purpose, for neither us nor Tupia could understand one word they said. We then threw them some nails, beads, etc., a shore, which they took up, and seem'd not ill pleased with, in so much that I thought that they beckon'd to us to come ashore; but in this we were mistaken, for as soon as we put the boat in they again came to oppose us, upon which I fir'd a musquet between the 2, which had no other Effect than to make them retire back, where bundles of their darts lay, and one of them took up a stone and threw at us, which caused my firing a Second Musquet, load with small Shott; and altho' some of the shott struck the man, yet it had no other effect than making him lay hold on a Target. Immediately after this we landed, which we had no sooner done than they throw'd 2 darts at us; this obliged me to fire a third shott, soon after which they both made off, but not in such haste but what we might have taken one; but Mr. Banks being of Opinion that the darts were poisoned, made me cautious how I advanced into the Woods."

They spent several days anchored at that spot. It's worth having a look at Cook's account of those days. The easiest option is the [transcription of his journal](#). Go to chapter 8: Exploration of East Coast of Australia.

A final bit of trivia. I have come across two intriguing, almost throw-away comments while delving into all this. One mentioned that Cook had not accounted for crossing the International Date Line; and another, in stating Cook did something or other on a specific day, added in brackets "ship's time." So, in 'real time' Cook entered Botany Bay on 29 April. I guess the concept of 'real time' is a bit of a non-sense in this context. Nobody in New Holland kept track of dates by the Gregorian calendar or any other conventional calendar. The only reference point on the ship was the ship's calendar, which said it was 28 April. Besides, a substantial part of the world was still on the Julian calendar, so, for them, it was neither 28 nor 29 April. [Note of 1 May 2010: having completed the voyage and learned about ship's time, I'll need to revise this para, so don't assume it's correct!]

It is a fortuitous coincidence that the Two Cultures Ceremony is on 29 April?

Wednesday, Apr 21, 2010

Moving Slowly Northwards

Canberra, 21 April 2010

At 6.00am this morning, Cook sights “a pretty high Mountain laying near the Shore, which, on account of its figure, I named Mount Dromedary.” At noon, sees “An Open Bay wherein lay 3 or 4 Small Islands, bore North-West by West, distant 5 or 6 Leagues. This Bay



Mount Dromedary

seem'd to be but very little Shelter'd from the

Sea Winds, and yet it is the only likely Anchoring place I have yet seen upon the Coast.” At some stage, Cook names the bay Bateman Bay, but it gets called today Bateman's Bay.



Point Uright (Durras)

Endeavour spent the afternoon sailing about 9 miles offshore with a gently sou'westerly pushing it along steadily. Cook noted that they saw smoke from fires at several places along the beaches. By 5.00pm, Endeavour was opposite “a point of land which, on account of its perpendicular Cliffs, I call'd Point Upright.” By today's maps,

this is the headland at the north of Durras Beach, a favourite place of

mine and where I have camped over many years – without ever realising what the headland was called or why. Cook records the position as 35°35'S, although this would seem to be a bit further north of the headland. (Cook notes on 22 April that “For these 2 days past the observed Latitude hath been 12 or 14 Miles to the Southward of the Ship's account given by the Log, which can be owing to nothing but a Current set to the Southward.” This would explain discrepancies, but I have no idea why you have the discrepancy!)

Thursday, Apr 22, 2010

More Naming - and Looking for A Rest

Canberra, 22 April 2010

After a sleepless night of changing directions, Cook laments in his journal “at daylight [we] found ourselves nearly in the same Place we were at 5 o’Clock in the evening, by which it was apparent that we had been drove about 3 Leagues to the Southward by a Tide or Current in the night.”

A case of starting again where you left off!

As with the day before, however, the morning provided a gentle sou’wester to run them easily up the coast – and so close in that they could “distinguish several people along the Sea beach.” In Botany Bay, Cook records that the local inhabitants were “quite naked.” Even now, the closest he has been, he writes “They appeared to be of a very dark or black Colour; but whether this was the real Colour of their skins or the Cloathes they might have on I know not.” He obviously wasn’t too close!



Pigeon House Mountain

As he records his noon bearings, he notes “A remarkable peak’d hill laying inland, the Top of which looked like a Pigeon house, and occasioned my giving it that name.”

By this time, he’s getting desperate to find somewhere to shelter – and, no doubt, replenish water supplies. His hopes are raised again by a small island he thought might have presaged a safe haven, but on coming closer he wondered if it even provided enough security for one of his small boats to land. This would have been off the southern part of Ulladulla. He said he would have tried it anyway had not the wind changed “we had a large hollow Sea from the South-East rowling in upon the land, which beat every where very high upon the Shore.”

That evening and next day (23rd), they “stood in... stood off... tack’d...stood to” but didn’t get far.

Friday, Apr 23, 2010

Passing Jervis Bay

Canberra, 23 April 2010

Since I'll be bussing it to Sydney tomorrow in advance of sailing on the 25th, I'll jump ahead a bit today and cover Cook's next few days up to the 25th.

As I noted yesterday, the 23rd was a quiet day 240 years ago. He gives a noon latitude observation but doesn't bother about his longitude, saying merely that they were about 6 leagues (18 nau miles or 33km) from the land. He also gives bearings for Mt Dromedary and Pigeon House Mt, so with a protractor and decent map, you could pin point his position better than I have. He also provides an estimate of the latitude and longitude of Pigeon House Mountain – putting it spot on in latitude and about 14' out by longitude. That's pretty good going!

In the afternoon, Cook notes that they are off "a point of land which I named Cape St. George, we having discovered it on that Saint's day." The feast of St George is still 23 April.

Cape St George is the southern promontory of Jervis Bay. That's what's due west of him, as he notes, when he took his noon bearings. In his entry on 25 April, after dealing with the afternoon of 24 April and giving his noon bearings, he seems to hark back to the 23rd with the observation

"About 2 Leagues to the Northward of Cape St. George the Shore seems to form a bay, which appear'd to be shelter'd from the North-East winds; but as we had the wind it was not in my power to look into it, and the appearance was not favourable enough to induce me to loose time in beating up to it. The North point of this bay, on account of its Figure, I nam'd Long Nose. Latitude 45 degrees 4 minutes South," This is Jervis Bay.

A lighthouse was built on Cape St George in the late 1850s, but it was a disaster. Its light wasn't visible from the north and barely visible from the south. It was later realised that it had been built several miles from its planned location. From 1864 to 1893 there were twenty three ships wrecked on the South Coast of NSW in the vicinity of Jervis Bay. A new one was built in 1889 at Point

Perpendicular, which was considered a far more suitable site. (Wikipedia)

He also notes a point further north, which he called Red Point because "some part of the Land about it appeared of that Colour." This is the southern end of Port Kembla.

Over 26-27 April, they were becalmed a few times and lost ground. He notes seeing smoke and a few fires along the shore before he tries a landing when



Ruins of Cape St George Lighthouse



Pt Perpendicular Lighthouse (looking towards Cape St George)

they were close in around today's Bulli.

I think I have mentioned a couple of times that it didn't work out because of the surf.

So, basically, they ploughed on north until, at last, he spots a bay that looks like they can rest up and re-stock.
