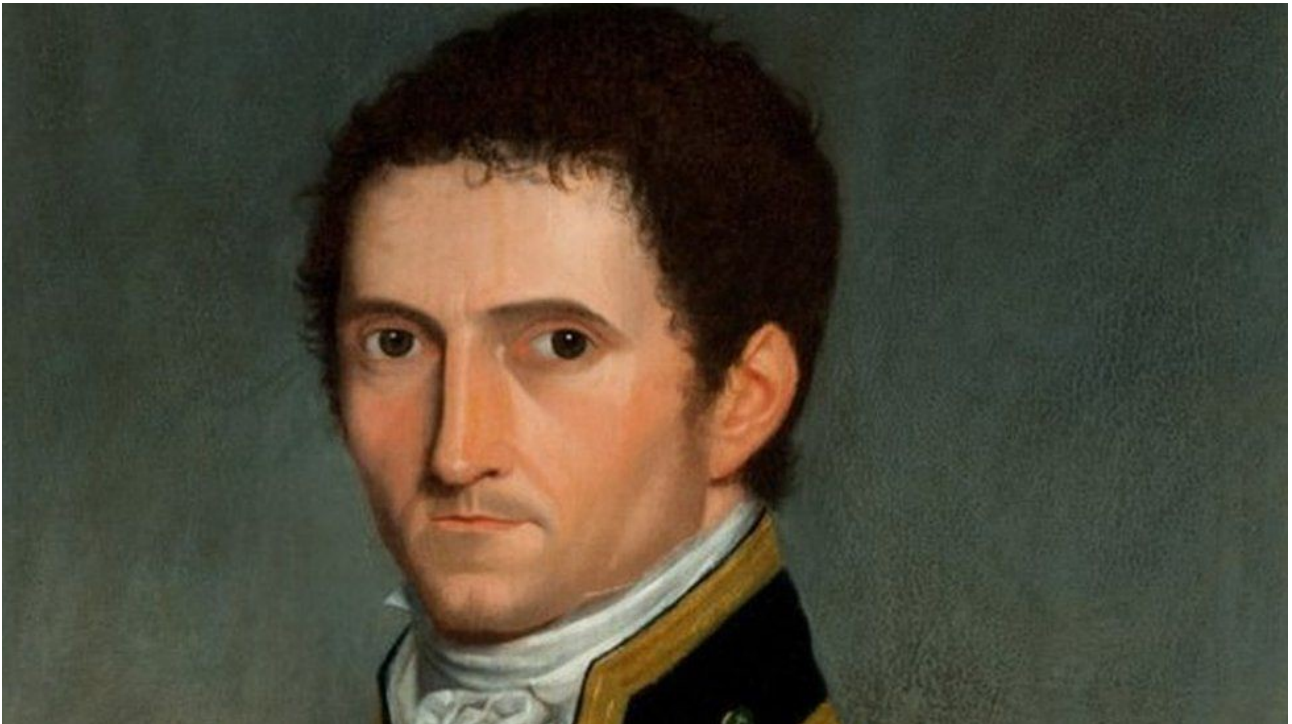


CAPTAIN MATTHEW FLINDERS R.N. - 'THE ADVENTURER RETURNS'
THE FINAL ENDING OF A 220 YEAR VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY
(A case for official recognition by The Royal Society of his life's achievements).



The main criterion for the election as a Fellow of The Royal Society is scientific excellence.

Having completed school at the age of 15 Matthew Flinders spent a year studying mathematics and navigational theory before joining the navy in 1790.

He had just turned 17 when he commenced service as a midshipman aboard the *Providence* under the command of William Bligh. It was whilst shipping cargoes of breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indies that he began to hone his skills as a navigator and cartographer producing his first charts whilst negotiating the hazardous, reef strewn Torres Strait. They were to form part of Bligh's report to the Admiralty.

Flinders was already recognised as a skilful chart-maker and marine surveyor when he was stationed in New South Wales as a lieutenant on the *Reliance* in 1795. Together with the ship's surgeon, George Bass, with whom he had become close friends, he made a series of exploratory voyages on the small sloop the *Norfolk*, that included the first circumnavigation of Van Dieman's Land, now Tasmania, shattering the long held theory propounded by James Cook that this was somehow connected to the mainland.

The outcome of these expeditions along the east and south east coasts inspired Flinders to write directly to Sir Joseph Banks, long-term President of the Royal Society. 'A very great part of that still extensive country remains either totally unknown, or has been partially examined at a time when navigation was much less advanced than at present. A person, or persons should examine into the natural productions of this wonderful country – the mineralogical branch would probably not be the least interesting.' The importance of their contribution as Flinders had predicted is to be seen today when Australia's economy remains heavily reliant on her mineral wealth.

After meeting Flinders, Banks was so impressed by his intelligence, character and knowledge of his

subject that he had no hesitation in recommending him to the Admiralty as commander of the expedition, aboard the *Investigator*, even though he was still only 26.

Most important among the crew were the 'scientific gentleman' of all disciplines that Flinders would regularly accompany on their field expeditions, as they undertook the first circumnavigation of the island continent.



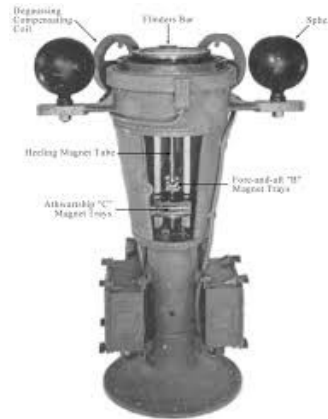
*'General chart of Terra Australis or Australia' showing the parts explored between 1798 and 1803 by Matthew Flinders. (National Library of Australia nla.map t1494)
Many of Flinders charts were still in use upto and including WW2*

Even his almost seven years detention on Mauritius, known then as Ile de France, was fruitful. Flinders produced two significant papers that were smuggled out by Captain Robertson and presented to the Royal Society on March 27th and 28th 1806 by Sir Joseph Banks.

The first, 'Observations upon the Marine Barometer', drew upon hundreds of recordings proving that wind direction could be predicted from barometric pressure and latitude. The widely praised paper was distributed by the Navy to all navigators.

Flinders paper, 'Concerning the Differences in the Magnetic Needle' had far reaching consequences to the extent that the 'Flinders' Bar' can still be found on modern ships. He realised that the direction of the ships head in correlation with the amount of iron in the ships construction, canon and cargo could seriously impair the accuracy of the compass, in some cases putting them several degrees off course.

With the advent of steel ships several decades after Flinders death this became ever more critical. A major discovery in the field of navigation that was recognised in his day to the extent that work on his '*Voyage to Terra Australis*' was put on hold by the Admiralty who instructed him to continue his experiments on various ships in different ports with his findings, table and calibrations distributed to the commanders of all naval ships.



Flinders Bar

Flinders contribution to the geological history of Mauritius has also been recognised. From his many excursions with his French friends across the island, visiting Grand Bassin and several subterranean caverns he is regarded in many circles as the first to identify the volcanic origins of the island and how the various waterfalls are created, most notable today's Seven Cascades at Tamarin, which were just 3 in his time - but he knew would grow in number over the years.

His description of the topography of Australia also proved prescient. 'The country surrounding Port Phillip has a pleasing and in some parts a fertile appearance,' he wrote, going on to comment, 'It is in great measure grassy country capable of supporting much cattle, though better calculated for sheep.' A rural industry along with agriculture that was to establish itself over the coming decades.

His observations of the avian, animal, geological and botanical composition of Australia led the famous botanist and friend, Robert Brown, to name a new genus of tree '*Flindersia Australis*', to commemorate the many merits of Captain Flinders 'who was the able and active commander of our expedition'.

There is no doubt that Matthew Flinders hyperactive mind delved into every aspect of creation and saw evidence of the interconnectedness of the physical and natural sciences.

Flinders work clearly evolved in the service of British national interest and was used by the Admiralty, the British Secretary of State for the colonies and the New South Wales colonial administration to develop British overseas territories, but from his personal experiences on Ile de France Flinders' geographical and scientific studies were rooted in the collective and global

adventure that connected inquisitive and intelligent people working simultaneously to expand the knowledge of the world they coinhabited.

At the very least Matthew Flinders should be granted an Honorary Fellowship as an academic title awarded to individuals who have given distinguished service to the cause of science, but do not have the kind of scientific achievements or recognised qualifications required of Fellows.

Matthew Flinders remains were discovered in January 2019 during excavations for the HS2 rail link. His reinterment will be conducted at St.Mary and The Holy Rood Church, Donington, Lincolnshire on Saturday July 13th 2024.

It is our intention to be able to hold the Premiere of the feature film, 'Flinders – Uncharted Waters' at this time and simultaneously announce the formal recognition of Matthew Flinders scientific achievements by The Royal Society.



Presented by: TIM PURCELL
Screenwriter/Producer
'FLINDERS – UNCHARTED WATERS'
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TREATMENT FOR A TV DOCUMENTARY

THE PRESENTER'S OPENING QUESTION: "Why has Captain Matthew Flinders, possibly Britain's greatest navigator, hydrographer and cartographer been all but forgotten in his homeland?"

A VOX pop in any UK town or city will reveal that the vast majority of the population have never heard of Flinders yet virtually all of them will know Captain James Cook.

FAME DENIED

This writer has never doubted Flinders loyalty; but there would have been some in the admiralty, parliament and general public in his day who might. There was not the media saturation we have today. News could take months to disseminate. For a huge number of people Mauritius was a French colony, Governed by Napoleon. Therefore, the enemy. Pure and simple. Flinders was openly socialising and doing business with them. By inference, he was fraternising with the enemy. *Fraternization involves improper relationships, ranging from overly casual relationships to friendships to romantic relationships.* A punishable offence. Or worse, *colluding with the enemy*, that was regarded as treason. That universally carried the death penalty - as did spying.

They would not understand the position of the colonists, who were largely monarchists who wanted to see Napoleon deposed, and replaced by the British as a better option. In a contemporary situation this might be likened to whether Trump and/or his team did or did not collude with the Russians in the 2016 Presidential campaign. In the eyes of Napoleon and Decaen the colonists would be deemed traitors to France., even though most were born in Mauritius, and saw themselves as Mauritian.

With the British blockade of the island growing each year, Flinders quickest route home, would be to see the British attack and take the island.

It is known that the British often fired canon shots - to test the French defences; without suffering any counter attack. Having knowledge of those defences, their location and strengths would be invaluable military information in planning a full blown attack.

It would not have been difficult to escape. There is evidence that several British POW's held in Flacq did indeed do so. Getting through the lagoons to the reefs was easy - they are shallow. Cutters were waiting beyond the reef to ferry them to the frigates.

AND, to prove this point, the British often made excursions ashore to gather food. On one occasion they captured Etienne Bolgerd, the officer who had arrested Flinders in 1803. He and two soldiers were taken to a British frigate; but released within a few days in exchange for 3 pigs.

It is known that Flinders managed to smuggle out documents, including his treatis that was read at the Royal Society by Sir Joseph Banks. Could other 'military' documents have also been smuggled out. (Dr Marina Carter concurs; as there is no evidence for or against - but if it was so, there certainly would be no record of it in any of the official documents or his private journals).

Similarly he would have exercised discretion regarding his relationship with Delphine D'Arifat.

The Director and President for the RIN (Royal Institute of Navigation) explain why they are supporting the initiative to secure the title FRS for Matthew Flinders.

THE PETITION and PROPOSAL for the Royal Society to recognise Matthew Flinders with a posthumous Honorary Fellowship is delivered to the current President.

Flinders was just 17 when he joined the crew of the *Providence*, commanded by the infamous Captain William Bligh. It was during the three years under him that Flinders learnt the sheer satisfaction of skilled navigation. His grasp of hydrography as they threaded their way through the Torres Straits, probably the longest stretch of intricate terrestrial navigation which a sea-going ship may have to face, due to its shallowness and narrowness of the deepest route. The charts he produced, Bligh felt worthy enough to be included in his report to the admiralty.

It was in these early years that he started to ponder upon the effects of a ship's own magnetism on the compass. Thoughts that would linger and expand as his own expertise as a natural navigator were displayed during his rise through the naval ranks on voyages that would take him to the far side of the world.

Whilst it is acknowledged that Cook was the first to discover the new land, that Matthew Flinders was later to christen, Australia, initial exploration spread no further than the periphery. Even when transportation to these new colonies began in 1788 there had still been no further exploration beyond those early settlements where the convicts outnumbered the crew, soldiers and their families.

It was to be Matthew Flinders' restless, enquiring mind that would lead to further examination of the new territories during his first voyage aboard the *Reliance*, which was to last almost six years. Coastal explorations in a small skiff the, *Tom Thumb*, with the ship's surgeon, George Bass, led to more extensive ventures as Lieutenant in command of the *Norfolk* which was to prove Tasmania to be an island.

This encouraged Flinders to propose a more comprehensive investigation of this magical continent of the antipodes. His proposal to Sir Joseph Banks was met with immediate encouragement, perhaps not least because the French navigator, Nicholas Baudin, had recently applied for and been granted a passport to explore these same lands.

The race was on.

When the two like-minded naval officers and explorers met in what Flinders was to dub, Encounter Bay, in the Great Australian Bight, the French ship's crew was decimated by scurvy and dysentery. Having directed the Governor of Port Jackson, modern day Sydney, to give all succour and assistance to the French, despite being currently at war with that nation, Flinders embarked on what was to prove to be the first circumnavigation of the island continent we now know Australia to be.

It was on this voyage that Flinders honed both his navigational and cartography skills resulting in a comprehensive, accurate map of the country that remained the main chart for international naval captains into the Second World War and beyond. Whilst also demonstrating his scientific prowess.

Many scholars in numerous branches of the sciences and academic disciplines from Australia and abroad have investigated Flinders' life and activities. One example is Dr Lance McCarthy, a physicist at the Flinders University, who had an abiding interest in Flinders' scientific pursuits on the *Investigator* voyage. Dr McCarthy initiated a garden on the Flinders University campus with specimens of the plant species collected on the *Investigator* voyage, and did important research on the natural history outputs from the voyage.

Flinders' scientific expertise and curiosity are evident throughout his writings, especially in his *Private Journal*, where he would often make observations on scientific phenomena.

He had two papers read at the Royal Society in his absence during his detention on Mauritius,

which were published in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions* in 1806, 'Observations upon the Marine Barometer' and 'Concerning the Differences in the Magnetic Needle'.

INTERWOVEN into the story will be the reasons for Matthew Flinders detention in Mauritius as a suspected spy. The evidence for doing so is to be found in his Third Log Book in which he wrote as a reason for calling in at Mauritius – 'Acquiring a knowledge of the periodical winds and weather there – of the port, and the present state of the French colony; and how far it and its dependencies in Madagascar may be useful to Port Jackson.'

He was also carrying letters from Governor King to General Magallon, Governor of Ile de France, who had been replaced by General Decaen when war between the two nations had once more broken out. A fact Flinders had been unaware of.

The log book was never returned. When the British finally took the island in December 1810 Decaen took this with him, along with various translations, copies and transcripts which over the years were to be distributed to various sources. Some finding their way into the Biblioteque in Caen, France, the Institut de France in Paris and the Public Records Office in South Australia.

What was said to be Flinders original was returned to the Admiralty in 1820 and remains in their archives.

On this remote Indian Ocean island, encircled by a blockading English naval squadron, threatening the safety and very subsistence of the French inhabitants – and their English prisoners – Flinders overcame initial feelings of awkwardness and social isolation to become a *cause celebre*, made lifelong friends and created the historic first map of Australia.

Flinders interactions with the great and the small provide a fascinating case study of the networks of support he engendered and that are a tribute to man's humanity to man in the midst of war. Flinders wrote that 'the friends of science are ever the friends of humanity' and valued those among his peers who, like him, had 'learned to appreciate the labours of those employed in the cause of science and humanity, to whatever nation they might belong.'

To his close friend and benefactor on Mauritius, Thomy Pitot he wrote 'Oh how I wish that all the French and English shared the same views for each other as you and I. Then peace would reign in Europe and we would contest nothing other than friendship, arts and science.'

Having sight of these various copies of that infamous Third Log Book, in both languages, will provide a greater understanding of why Matthew Flinders was not only held as a spy by the French but even thought to be a traitor to some of his peers in Great Britain. Facts that combined have denied him his rightful place in the country's history of navigation.

Anwyn Martin from the Royal Society of Victoria provided an excellent summary of Flinders' scientific credentials in her article 'Captain Matthew Flinders, RN, Scientist' for the Journal of the South Australian Historical Society.

His work on compasses, undertaken at Portsmouth and other English ports has had a profound impact on navigation. As early as 1812, Captain Matthew Flinders suggested that deviation caused by induced magnetism should be compensated with soft iron.

The causes for the needle variation and the means of compensating for it stemmed from his simple onboard experiments as described in his Private Journal:

Tuesday 19th May, 1812

Went off with Mr Inman and Mr Payne to the *Loire* with our instruments. I took the dips of the needle, whilst the ship's head was East, and found it to be less than on shore, which I attribute to the attraction of the guns on each side of the ship, drawing the needle near to the horizontal line; but on the fore-castle the dip was greater, owing perhaps to the coppers, as they are called, and a greater quantity of other iron under the fore-castle than elsewhere.

The CONCLUSION will be at The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1, when they agree to bestow the Honorary Fellowship or pronounce their reasons for not doing so.

POSTSCRIPT: The official announcement as part of the Matthew Flinders reinterment ceremony at St Mary and Holy Rood church, Donington, Lincolnshire, on Saturday July 13th 2024.

FILMING LOCATIONS & CONTRIBUTORS

UK – Director: Mark Cornwell

RIN – I Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AT

John Pottle – Director, Cynthia Robinson – President

THE ROYAL SOCIETY - 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG

President – Adrian Smith

THE ADMIRALTY ARCHIVES

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES KEW – with Dr Marina Carter

PORTSMOUTH - Tall ship – recreating Flinders experiments May 1812.

Shane McCarthy – Square Sail.

FRANCE – Director: Mark Cornwell

LE INSTITUT DE FRANCE (formed 1795) – 23 Quai de Conti, 75006, Paris

Xavier Darcos – Chancellor

BIBLIOTHEQUE DE CAEN

MAURITIUS – Director: Kunal Jankee

BAIE DU CAP – where Flinders landed.

Raymond d'Unienville – Historian, Barrister and descendent of Major D'Unienville who first met Flinders when he arrived in December 1803.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

With the Minister for Arts & Culture

SEVEN CASCADES, (which was 3 in Flinders time) – he explained how it would become 7.

Owen Griffiths – Historian.

One of the Pitot family, descendents of Thomy – Flinders friend who accompanied him on his explorations of the local flore, fauna and geographical features.

AUSTRALIA – Director: Nadia Tass

VARIOUS

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY, ADELAIDE – Including the Memorial Garden.
Gillian Dooley.

RGSSA (Royal Geographical Society of South Australia)
Leigh Radford - President

RSSA (Royal Society of South Australia)
Professor Wayne Harvey – President

This short teaser has been produced, not as a trailer, but to show how Matthew Flinders, who has more than 2,000 places, geographical features and institutions named after him in Australia, has been all but forgotten in his home land, and why this has to be rectified.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OT5V9Jj66c>

This will be developed as a series of podcasts leading up to the documentary and film's release.

PRESENTED BY:

TIM PURCELL

Associate Member of the RIN



Letters of Support from:

Sir John Hayes CBE – MP, South Holland and The Deepings

Gillian Dooley – Associate Professor – Flinders University

Dr. Marina Carter – Historian – University of Edinburgh



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

9th September 2023

To whom it may concern

Dear Sirs,

Captain Matthew Flinders

As you may be aware the human remains of Captain Matthew Flinders were discovered by HS2 archaeologists whilst working on the site of St James's Gardens Burial Ground.

The discovery of Captain Flinders was wonderful news for my constituency because he was born in Donington. Indeed, many other members of his family are laid to rest in Donington Churchyard. His memory has been fondly upheld in Donington where there is a bronze statue situated close to his birthplace and many memorials to his ancestors. So, it was even more exciting news when the Bishop of Lincoln agreed Captain Flinders could return home to be laid to rest in Donington, where he had started his journey.

Captain Flinders will be returning to Donington very shortly so, it would be a fitting tribute if he were made a posthumous Fellow of The Royal Society. His lifetime of achievements reflect his scientific excellence. Indeed, at the age of 15 Matthew Flinders spent a year studying mathematics and navigational theory before joining the Navy in 1790.

Flinders was widely recognised as a skilful chart-maker and marine surveyor. He made the first circumnavigation of Van Dieman's Land – now Tasmania – shattering the long held theory of James Cook that this island was somehow connected to the mainland.

Not only did Flinders navigation and exploration work of Australia resulted in many of his charts being used right up to and including the Second World War, he also produced papers proving wind direction could be predicted from barometric pressure and latitude – 'Observations upon the Marine Barometer' and the paper 'Concerning



the Differences in the Magnetic Needle - with the Flinders Bar still being found on modern ships.

Matthew Flinders' work and distinguished service in Australia and Mauritius certainly demands recognition and I fully support the consideration for Captain Matthew Flinders to be made Fellow of the Royal Society.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hayes', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Rt Hon Sir John Hayes CBE MP
South Holland and The Deepings

Associate Professor Gillian Dooley

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14 September 2023

To whom it may concern

Captain Matthew Flinders R.N.

I am writing to endorse the proposal that the Royal Society award Captain Matthew Flinders (1774-1814) a posthumous Honorary Fellowship of the Society.

I am an Honorary Associate Professor at Flinders University in South Australia, having been the Special Collections Librarian at that University from 1999 to 2015. In that role, and since that time, I have had dealings with many scholars and researchers from Australia and abroad in many branches of the sciences and other academic disciplines who investigate Flinders' life and activities. One example is Dr Lance McCarthy, a physicist at the University, had an abiding interest in Flinders' scientific pursuits on the *Investigator* voyage. Dr McCarthy initiated a garden on the Flinders University campus with specimens of the plant species collected on the *Investigator* voyage, and did important research on the natural history outputs from the voyage – see the Flinders University Museum of Art collection <https://www.flinders.edu.au/museum-of-art/collections/lance-mccarthy-collection>

I am also an Associate Fellow of the Royal Society of South Australia, and I serve as the Honorary Librarian on the RSSA Council.

My main focus on Flinders is historical and biographical but his scientific expertise and curiosity are evident throughout his writings, especially in his *Private Journal*, where he would often make observations on scientific phenomena. He had two papers read at the Royal Society in his absence during his detention on Mauritius, which were published in the Society's *Philosophical Transactions* in 1805 and 1806. Anwyn Martin from the Royal Society of Victoria provided an excellent summary of Flinders' scientific credentials in her article 'Captain Matthew Flinders, RN, Scientist' for the *Journal of the South Australian Historical Society* (Volume 43, 2015).

In 2014, to mark the bicentenary of Flinders' death, I presented the Royal Society Matthew Flinders Memorial Lecture at the Royal Society of Victoria. I have also presented on Flinders at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, the Sir Joseph Banks Society in Lincoln, and for many other organisations in Australia and the UK. My Matthew Flinders website gives details of some of my more significant publications and other Flinders-related material which is available online. <https://sites.google.com/view/matthew-flinders/home>

Yours faithfully,



Gillian Dooley
*Honorary Associate Professor, College of HASS
Flinders University, South Australia*



14 September 2023

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Captain Matthew Flinders

I write to support the initiative to recognize the extraordinary achievements of Matthew Flinders in the award of a posthumous Fellowship of the Royal Society.

As a historian with a specialist interest in colonial Mauritius and the author of *Companions of Misfortune Flinders and Friends at the Isle of France, 1803-1810* I have spent many hours researching the life and labours of Captain Matthew Flinders and in particular recounting the story of his exile in a French territory during the Napoleonic wars, and the relationships he forged there. On this remote Indian Ocean island, encircled by a blockading English naval squadron, threatening the safety and very subsistence of the French inhabitants – and their English prisoners – Flinders overcame initial feelings of awkwardness and social isolation to become a *cause celebre*, made lifelong friends and created the historic first map of Australia. His experiences offer us a timely lesson in tolerance across borders and demonstrate how nobility of spirit can transcend cultural and national divides.

We are fortunate to have a large collection of Flinders' personal correspondence and his diaries which throw much light on his interactions with the great and the small, and provide a fascinating case study of the networks of support he engendered and that are a tribute to man's humanity to man in the midst of war. Flinders wrote that 'the friends of science are ever the friends of humanity' and valued those among his peers who, like him, had 'learned to appreciate the labours of those employed in the cause of science and humanity, to whatever nation they might belong.' To his close friend and benefactor on Mauritius, Thomy Pitot he wrote 'Oh how I wish that all the French and English shared the same views for each other as you and I. Then peace would reign in Europe and we would contest nothing other than friendship, arts and science.' He cultivated a wide circle of literary and scientific acquaintances, and his case was taken up by the most famous intellectuals of his time, including the explorer Louis Antoine de Bougainville, the astronomer Joseph Jerome de Lalande, and other savants. A French friend wrote of him: 'Mr Flinders has become the representative of all civilized nations, adopted by all, seen by all as a friend devoted to the welfare and happiness of mankind.'

For these reasons I am delighted to offer my full support to the project and I am sure that the esteemed members of the Royal Society will agree that Flinders is eminently fitted to join their ranks.

Yours,

Dr Marina Carter
Honorary Fellow
School of History, Classics & Archaeology
University of Edinburgh