

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Wedgwood commemorative plate featuring Matthew Flinders

Date

1974

Primary Maker

Josiah Wedgwood & Sons Ltd

Medium

Ceramic

Dimensions

Overall: 25 x 210 mm

Name

Plate

History

Matthew Flinders was the first European to circumnavigate Australia. He was also the first to consistently use the term 'Australia' and his charts were so accurate that they were still being used in the 20th century. Family records describe Flinders as 'slight and active' with a 'pale complexion' and having 'extreme energy and activity'. He was a devout student of navigation and cartography, impressing many associates with his enthusiasm and perseverance. Flinders sailed to New South Wales in 1795 onboard HMS RELIANCE. He received a number of appointments with the colony's government to explore the coastline of New Holland (Australia), and with the help of the explorer George Bass, Flinders confirmed that Van Diemen's Land was separate from New South Wales. His most important command was HMS INVESTIGATOR - with the backing of the notable and highly respected Sir Joseph Banks. The purpose of the voyage was to make 'a complete examination and survey' of the southern coast, the north-west coast, the Gulf of Carpentaria and parts westward, Torres Strait and if time permitted 'the whole of the remainder of the north, the west and the north-west'. On his return voyage to England in December 1803 Flinders was forced to stop at lie de France (Mauritius) for supplies and repairs. At the time England was once more at war with France. Flinders was detained as a suspected spy for seven years on the French island, spending time completing survey work, charts and his expedition narrative. After being released in 1810 Flinders made his way back to England and endeavoured to complete his three volume publication detailing the INVESTIGATOR expedition, titled 'A Voyage to Terra Australis'. He died in London on 19 July 1814, aged 40- the day his publication was released.