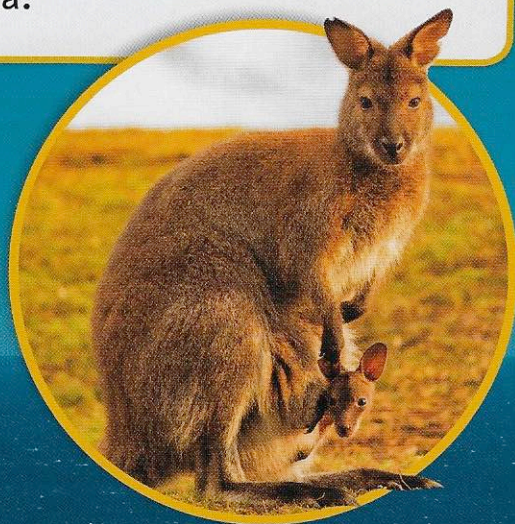


James Cook

In 1768, the British astronomer and explorer James Cook set off in his ship *Endeavour* to sail to the Pacific Ocean. He wanted to study how the planet Venus passed in front of the Sun. The voyage took him to the islands we now know as New Zealand and then on to Australia.

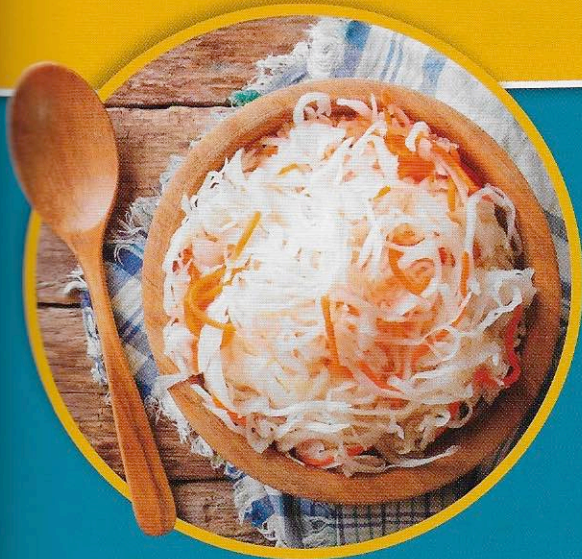
Plant and animal life

One of the ship's passengers was a famous scientist called Joseph Banks who discovered many different kinds of plants on the trip. Cook, Banks and the crew had to deal with snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, and the odd platypus during their travels. They didn't have to look too far to find a goat though – they took one with them on the ship to provide milk!



▲ The first kangaroos to be seen by Europeans were described as 'large as a greyhound, of a mouse colour and very swift'.

.....>
When *Endeavour* ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef, James Cook is said to have wrapped a sail around the bottom of the ship so that he could continue his voyage.



▲ Throughout his voyages Cook tried to get his crew to eat fresh fruit and vegetables so that they stayed healthy. He made his men eat sauerkraut (German pickled cabbage).

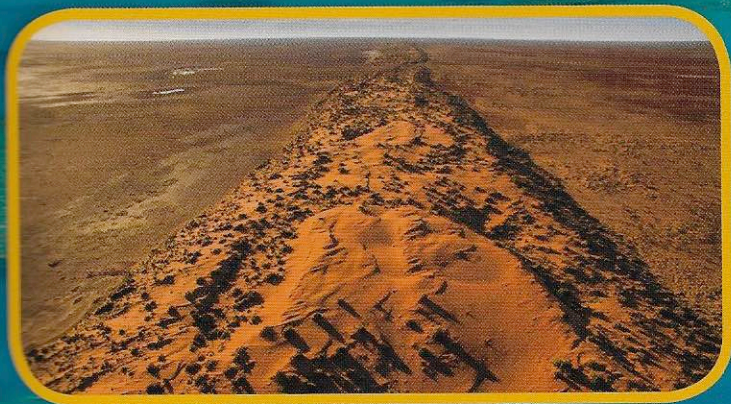
Further expeditions

Leaving in 1772, James Cook set off on a second voyage and he and his crew were the first to cross the Antarctic Circle. His ship sailed to within 2000 km (1250 miles) of the South Pole. After this voyage he returned to England in 1775. Unfortunately James Cook died on his third voyage when he was attacked by Hawaiian warriors as he tried to get back a ship that had been stolen by them.

An inland sea?

While James Cook explored the coast of Australia, the English explorer, Charles Sturt was very interested in finding out if there was a large sea in the middle of Australia. In 1830, he led an expedition to follow the Murray River inland, but he never came across the sea he was looking for.

▼ The Sturt Desert in Australia is named after the explorer Charles Sturt.



▲ NASA named their final space shuttle after James Cook's ship *Endeavour* from his first voyage.

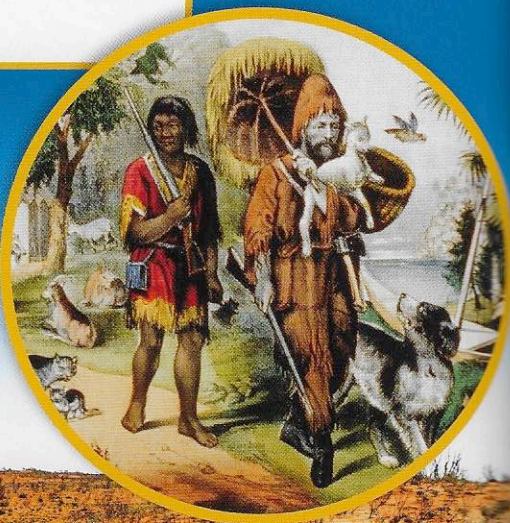
Matthew Flinders

Matthew Flinders started out on his dream to become a sailor when he joined the Royal Navy in 1789 at the age of 15. Just nine years later, he and his companion George Bass proved that Tasmania was an island by sailing right round it. They explored part of the Australian coast in an 8-foot (2.5 m) boat called *Tom Thumb*!

Matthew Flinders was inspired by Daniel Defoe's book 'Robinson Crusoe'.

All around Australia

In 1801 Matthew Flinders was the captain of *Investigator*, which was the first ship to sail all the way around Australia. Flinders managed to complete this voyage in two years, in spite of illness, attacks on his crew and even a leaking ship. In 1824, 10 years after Flinders' death, Australia officially took on the name Flinders had given it.



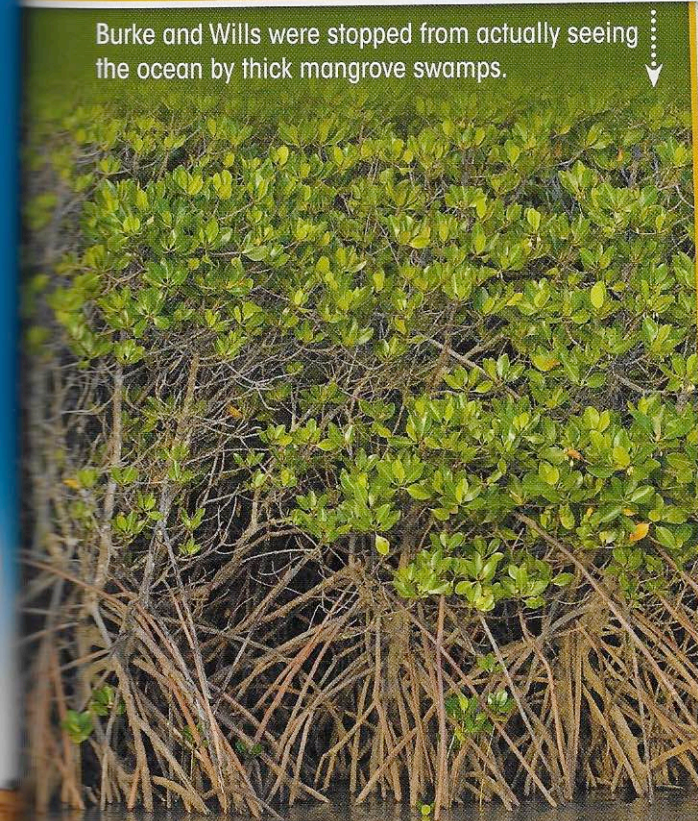
A mysterious disappearance

In 1848, the explorer Ludwig Leichhardt went missing while studying nature in the Australian outback. As well as the explorer himself, all of his men, horses, and animals also vanished. Their disappearance is still a mystery!

The part of the Australian outback where Leichhardt and his party disappeared is one of the most remote areas in Australia.

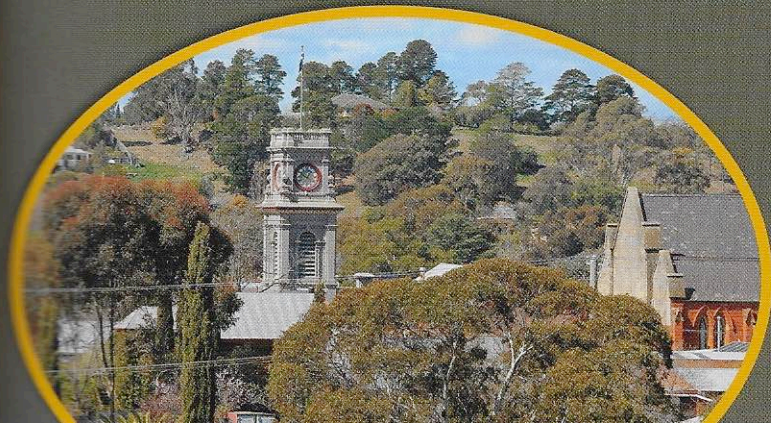
Robert Burke and William Wills

Burke and Wills were stopped from actually seeing the ocean by thick mangrove swamps.



In 1861, Robert Burke and William Wills set out to cross Australia from south to north in a bid to win a reward offered by the Australian government. Lack of experience, bad timing, and heavy rain made their trip very difficult. However, they did get to the mouth of the Flinders River on the north coast, becoming the first Europeans to do so.

After setting out on the return journey, Robert Burke and William Wills realised that they only had enough supplies for about half of the journey. Although helped by Aborigines, Burke and Wills became weaker and weaker until they died one after the other from starvation and exhaustion.



In 1862, a memorial was built in Castlemaine, Australia, to remember Robert Burke, William Wills and the other members of their party who died.