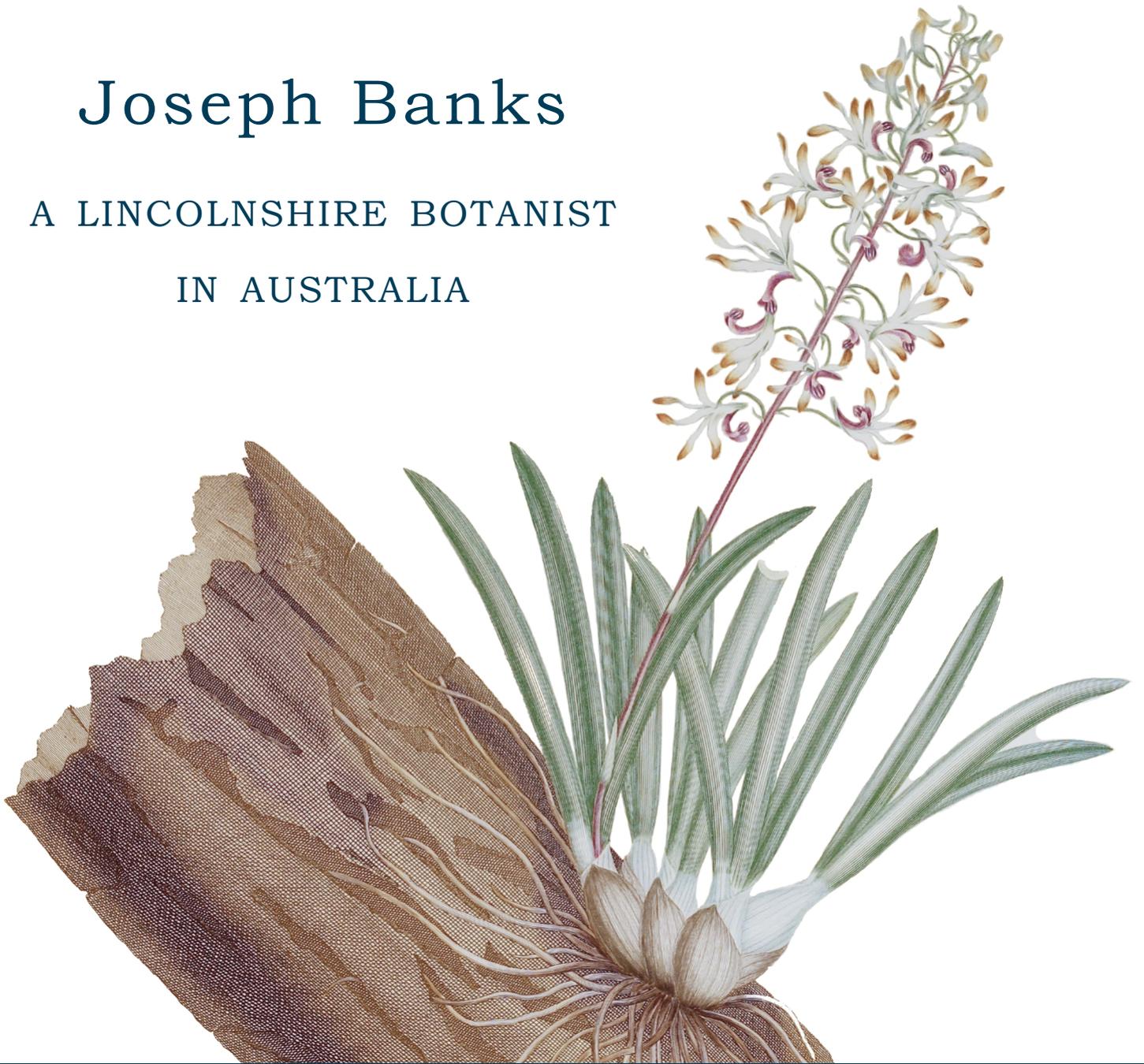


# Joseph Banks

A LINCOLNSHIRE BOTANIST  
IN AUSTRALIA



Engravings from Joseph Banks' *Florilegium*

## INTRODUCTION

250 years ago Captain James Cook and his crew - among them the Lincolnshire botanist Joseph Banks - became the first Europeans to set foot on the eastern coast of Australia. His Majesty's Bark *Endeavour* had been sent to the Pacific with the purpose of observing the 1769 transit of Venus across the sun, launching from Plymouth in 1768, and approaching New Zealand via Brazil and the Society Islands in the course of the following nine months. But it was Cook's decision to proceed via the east coast of the continent then known as New Holland in 1770 that would be the first step towards the British settlement of Australia – a fundamental moment in the history of exploration and science.

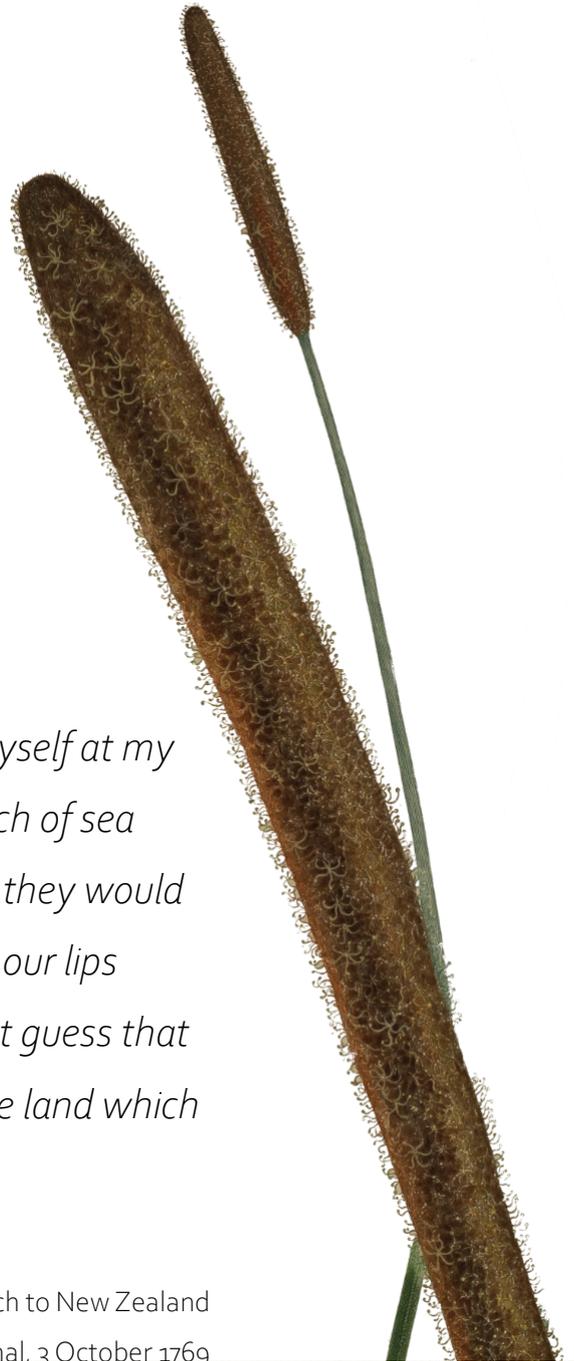
Joseph Banks' botanical discoveries – some 1,300 previously unknown botanical species – revolutionised European understanding of natural history. This catalogue commemorates 'the happy cooperation and sharing of experience of three great men, Cook, Banks and Solander, diverse but complementary in their talents, on that long hazardous voyage across uncharted waters' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 119).

The ten prints presented in this catalogue show the rich foliage, colourful flowers, and diverse species that Banks discovered as the *Endeavour* traversed the globe. Some of the plants would, in time, travel to Europe, and thus form part of our flora today; others have become extinct, meaning that Banks' specimens and drawings documenting them are especially important; and yet others will be familiar to those who have travelled to the shores on which the *Endeavour* first visited two-and-a-half centuries ago. Together they form a botanical history of parts of the world that had only been seen by very few, if any, western travellers before.

*Now do I wish our freinds in England could by  
the assistance of some magical spying glass take  
a peep at our situation:*

*Dr. Solander setts at the Cabbin table describing, myself at my  
Bureau Journalizing, between us hangs a large bunch of sea  
weed, upon the table lays the wood and barnacles; they would  
see that notwithstanding our different occupations our lips  
move very often, and without being conjurors might guess that  
we were talking about what we should see upon the land which  
there is no doubt we shall see very soon.*

Joseph Banks, notes on the approach to New Zealand  
The Endeavour Journal, 3 October 1769



Joseph Banks planned to publish his discoveries upon his return; but although descriptions were written by Solander, and the drawings were engraved as copper printing plates, his catalogue remained unpublished at the time of Banks' death in 1820. The full series of 743 engravings remained unpublished until 1980, when Alecto Historical Editions undertook the gargantuan task of producing a limited edition of them. The edition was limited to 116 sets, from which the following engravings are taken. All of the prints are numbered in pencil on the sheet, and those marked with an asterisk (\*) are also accompanied by a certificate of limitation. For further information on Joseph Banks' *Florilegium* and the remarkable story of how these engravings were produced, please see the appendix to this catalogue.

*The engravings in this catalogue are arranged chronologically according to the date of their discovery by Joseph Banks and his team. The story of the Endeavour voyage and the plant discoveries, and the practicalities of collecting and drawing them, are narrated through the following descriptions.*



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**PARKINSON, Sydney (artist).**

'Plate 348. *Temnadenia violacea* (Vellozo) Miers, *Echites pubescens* (Apocynaceae)'.

London: Alecto Historical Editions in association with the British Museum (Natural History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Charles White, printed *à la poupée* by Alecto Historical Editions.

*Limited to 116 impressions, this no. 3 of 3 for exhibition and numbered 'EP 3/3'. \**

**£510**



## SPECIES DISCOVERED AT RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

13 NOVEMBER - 7 DECEMBER 1768

After setting off from Plymouth, barring a stop for supplies, South America offered the first opportunity for exploration to the crew onboard HMB *Endeavour*. But although Joseph Banks and his colleague, the Swedish naturalist and pupil of Linnaeus' Daniel Solander, had been looking forward to reaching South America, landings on the continent were few, and that at Rio de Janeiro in November/December 1768 was particularly disappointing. The viceroy confined most of the expedition members to their ship and generally obstructed forays into the country by shifting the boundaries of forbidden areas on a daily basis. Cook complained that it was impossible for him to take full observations from the ship for an accurate survey of the coastline.

Once Banks and his team were allowed brief forays into Brazil, the climate and perishability of plants would have prompted them to quick action. It fell to the young Scottish natural history artist Sydney Parkinson to sketch the botanical finds as soon as possible, to record them while the plants – and his visual memory of them – were still fresh. 'In all, despite so many difficulties, this Brazilian stay yielded some 300 species, of which Parkinson portrayed 35' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 98).

Among the species previously unknown to science that Banks discovered in the coastal forests of Brazil was this vine, *Temnadenia Violacea*. It was reported that 'the residents [...] of the valley of the São Francisco river', from which its common name derives, 'use the kapok-like fibre from the seed capsules to stuff their pillows', while the 'reddish stems and leaves [...] are velvety on both sides' (Edwin Arnold Menninger, *Flowering Vines of the World: An Encyclopedia of Climbing Plants* (New York, 1970), p. 86)).

**PARKINSON, S. (artist).**

'Plate 657. *Boehmeria Virgata*  
(G. Forster) Guillemain, *Urtica*  
*virgate* (Urticaceae).'

London: Alecto Historical  
Editions in association with  
the British Museum (Natural  
History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Gabriel Smith,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

*Limited to 116 impressions,  
this no. 83 of 100 and  
numbered 83/100. \**

**£510**



## SPECIES COLLECTED AT TAHITI, SOCIETY ISLANDS

13 APRIL - 1 JUNE 1769 AND 4 JUNE - 13 JULY 1769

In the decade prior to HMB *Endeavour's* circumnavigation, the British had sent several Royal Navy vessels to the Pacific to explore the territories and trade opportunities. Samuel Wallis, the first European to visit Tahiti (then called Otaheite) in 1767, returned to England with news of an island he had named 'King George the Third's Island'. Cook then selected Matavai Bay as the location for his observation of the transit of Venus in June 1769.

Since Wallis' and (in 1768) Bougainville's visits to Tahiti had been friendly, 'when the *Endeavour* anchored on 13 April [1769] in Matavai (Port Royal) Bay, a great number of Tahitians in canoes, bearing branches of *Thespesia populnea* as symbols of peace and friendship and coconuts, breadfruit and fish as objects of barter, soon came out to the ship' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 103). While Cook, the astronomer Charles Green, and also Daniel Solander prepared for and observed the transit of Venus, Banks utilised much of the time to explore the local vegetation.

This plant of the nettle family, *Boehmeria Virgata*, is indigenous throughout Southeast Asia. A shrub or slender tree, it grows between one and eight metres tall and is mostly harvested for its fibres for sacks, rope, etc. The leaves are also said to have medicinal properties, and are used for example in dressings for broken bones.

**PARKINSON, S. (artist).**

'Plate 631. *Ipomoea Illustris*  
(Clarke) Prain, *Convolvulus*  
*grandiflorus* (Convolvulaceae)'.

London: Alecto Historical  
Editions in association with the  
British Museum (Natural  
History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Charles White,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

*Limited to 116 impressions, this  
no. 83 of 100 and numbered  
83/100. \**

**£1,290**



## SPECIES SEEN AT TAHITI, SOCIETY ISLANDS

13 APRIL - 1 JUNE AND 4 JUNE - 13 JULY 1769

The approach to Tahiti, after the stop at Tierra del Fuego in January 1769, had taken roughly five months, during which Banks and Solander perfected the art of sketching plants amidst the gales and rain on sea. 'Their procedure here and later was to put the living specimens in chests and cover them with damp cloth to keep them fresh for study during the next few days' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 103).

Once they arrived at the Society Islands (named thus because they form a group of closely related islands), of which they visited five, Banks and Solander had a wealth of previously unknown plants to explore. Parkinson prepared 14 sketches and 114 coloured drawings of the plants they gathered in these three months. Interestingly, Parkinson's artistic skill was appreciated by the indigenous peoples, as he recalls: 'I shewed [a middle-aged local man named Lycurgus] some of my drawings, which he greatly admired, and pronounced their names as soon as he saw them' (Parkinson, *A Journal of a Voyage*, p. 18).

The Ipomea Illustris, which is widespread among the Pacific Islands and belongs to the morning glory family, was among the new species Banks and his team discovered. Parkinson describes two uses of convolvulus leaves in his journal's account of Tahiti: 'boys drag for fish with a sort of net made of convolvulus leaves; and sometimes catch them with hooks made of mother of pearl oysters, large-pinna marina, and other shells; and the shapes of them are very singular'. They were also used in 'a peculiar method of staining [...] garments: a girl that was present shewed me the whole process, which is as follows: -- She took the young leaves of a convolvulus unfoliated, and then broke off the tops of a small fig, of a reddish hue, and squeezed out of it a milky fluid, which she spread on a leaf, rubbing it gently to mix it with the juice of the leaf, and then it became red; this she soaked up with the leaf of a solanum, and then daubed it upon some cloth' (Parkinson, *A Journal of a Voyage*, pp. 19 and 18).

**PARKINSON, S. and  
ANONYMOUS (artists).**

'Plate 471. *Coprosma Lucida*,  
Forster & G. Forster, *Pelaphia  
laurifolia* (Rubiaceae).'

London: Alecto Historical Editions  
in association with the British  
Museum (Natural History), 1980-  
1990.

Engraving by Daniel MacKenzie,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

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SPECIES GATHERED IN NEW ZEALAND  
OCTOBER 1769 - FEBRUARY/MARCH 1770

After observing the transit of Venus from the Society Islands, Cook had instructions to search for a conjectured southern continent, and after about ten weeks at sea, HMB *Endeavour* approached New Zealand. Cook decided to circumnavigate and chart the North, and then the South Island. However, difficult coastal conditions and unpredictably hostile encounters with the Maori made only a limited number of landings possible for short periods of time.

During the brief visits ashore, it was important for 'Dr Solander and myself [Banks] to get as many green plants as possible of sea stock for finishing scetches &c, so an enormous number of all these articles came on board' (Banks, *The Endeavour Journal*, 14 November 1769). They managed to gather ca 400 plant species, which 'were more than Parkinson could portray adequately in the time available, especially as the death of [the landscape artist Alexander] Buchan at Tahiti had obliged him to draw much else. He accordingly adopted the expedient of making a rough sketch of the plant as a whole, thus recording the pose of leaves, flowers and fruit, and also of drawing, especially as these sketches could be associated with herbarium specimens. As noted above, the boxes were chests in which newly gathered plants were put and covered with damp cloths to keep them fresh while Parkinson drew them and Solander studied and described them' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 106).

This shrub or tree, *Coprosma Lucida* (named after its strong smell), is common throughout New Zealand and generally known by the name of Shining Karamu. Historical accounts record its utility in medicinal preparations, e.g. infusions made from the bark, young shoots, or leaves for treating stomach ache, inflammation, or kidney troubles; its culinary uses (particularly its berries and leaves); and the traditional role of its branches in ceremonies.

**PARKINSON, S. and John  
CLEVELEY (artists).**

'Plate 30. *Boronia Parviflora*, J.E.  
Smith, *Gauroides purpurea*  
(Rutaceae).'

London: Alecto Historical  
Editions in association with the  
British Museum (Natural  
History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Edward Walker,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

*Limited to 116 impressions, this  
no. 3 of 3 for exhibition and  
numbered 'EP 3/3'. \**



£330

## SPECIES GATHERED AT BOTANY BAY, AUSTRALIA

28 APRIL - 6 MAY 1770

After completing the circumnavigations of both Islands of New Zealand, Cook had three possible options: he could go across the South Pacific to Cape Horn, but the season and state of HMB *Endeavour* would render this journey perilous; he could go south of Tasmania to the Cape of Good Hope, but 'no discovery of any Moment could be hoped for in that rout' (Wharton (ed.), *Captain Cook's Journal*, 31 March 1770); or he could go to the east coast of Australia and then north to the East Indies, and this was settled upon – an important first step in the 'sequence of events leading to the British settlement of Australia and the development of the Dominion' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', pp. 107-108).

Cook's first landing in Australia took place at the end of April 1770 near modern-day Sydney, at a place he first named 'Stingray Harbour'. However, as he later recorded in his journal, '[t]he great quantity of plants Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander found in this place occasioned my giving it the Name of Botany Bay' (Wharton (ed.), *Captain Cook's Journal*, 6 May 1770).

The local reception of HMB *Endeavour* and her crew was not entirely friendly, so Banks and his party had to proceed with the collection of plants both carefully and swiftly. 'By 3 May their collection of specimens had grown so large as to present difficulties of drying' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 108); yet even two days later, anticipating their departure the following day, Banks recorded that 'Dr Solander and myself were employd the whole day in collecting specimens of as many things as we possibly could to be examind at sea' (Banks, *The Endeavour Journal*, 5 May 1770). 'Rarely indeed can so many new and remarkable plants have been collected in so short a time' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 109).

This plant, *Boronia Parviflora*, was one of the many that was gathered at Botany Bay. It is now commonly known as 'Swamp Boronia', native to the area around Sydney, and is unique among the *Boronia* of eastern Australia in having 4, 6, or 8 stamens.

**PARKINSON, S. and Frederick  
Polydore NODDER (artists).**

'Plate 89. *Acacia Legnota*,  
Pedley, *Mimosa anceps*  
(Leguminosae)'.

London: Alecto Historical  
Editions in association with the  
British Museum (Natural  
History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Gerald Sibelius,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

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and numbered 'HC VIII/X'.*

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## SPECIES SEEN IN AUSTRALIA

17 JUNE - 4 AUGUST 1770

After the departure from Botany Bay, during the onward journey along Australia's east coast, HMB *Endeavour* struck a reef, and the necessary repairs – undertaken near the mouth of the Endeavour River, where modern-day Cooktown is located – delayed any further progress until August 1770. This second period spent on previously unexplored shores provided Banks and Solander with further opportunities to discover the flora of eastern Australia.

'As in New Zealand, the haul of plants was too great for Parkinson to do more than make sketches for elaboration later, by other hands, as it proved': Parkinson would not survive the journey back to England, so that others had to complete his work in England (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 108).

This Acacia tree, which Banks and his team saw during one of their plant gathering campaigns in Australia, is now known by the common name of 'heath wattle'. The Acacia Legnota can be found on the Queensland coast, often along streams and in groves that are beautifully populated with its bright golden-yellow blossoms in June. Its flat seed pods are up to 12 cm long.

Interestingly, while the mount states (possibly in error) that Joseph Banks and his party saw this species at Endeavour River, the National History Museum, which holds both the original sketches and the finished drawings for Joseph Banks' *Florilegium*, notes the place of discovery as Botany Bay and Bustard Bay.

**PARKINSON, S. and James  
MILLER (artists).**

'Plate 334. *Xanthorrhoea  
Resinosa*, Persoon subsp.  
*resinosa*, *Acoroides resinifera*  
(*Xanthorrhoeaceae*)'.

London: Alecto Historical  
Editions in association with the  
British Museum (Natural  
History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Gabriel Smith,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
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**£510**



## SPECIES SPOTTED AT ENDEAVOUR RIVER, AUSTRALIA

17 JUNE - 4 AUGUST 1770

Since Joseph Banks recorded experiences and observations with the same enthusiasm with which he gathered plants during the *Endeavour* voyage, his journal contains an extensive description of Australia beyond its plants. Banks 'much wishd indeed to have had better opportunities of seeing and observing the people, as they differ so much from the account that [the explorer William] Dampier (the only man I know of who has seen them besides us) has given of them. [...] Dampier in general seems to be a faithfull relater, but in the voyage in which he touchd on the coast of New Holland he was in a ship of Pyrates, possibly himself not a little tainted by their idle examples: [...] Dampier either was mistaken very much in his account or else that he saw a very different race of people from those we have seen' (Banks, *The Endeavour Journal*, 31 August 1770).

Ironically, Banks' account of this grass-tree, the *Xanthorrhoea Resinosa*, conflates the species found at Botany Bay with this northern variant, now known as *Xanthorrhoea Johnsonii*. He describes it as ' a small plant with long narrow grassy leaves and a spike of flowers resembling much that kind of Bulrush which is calld in England Cats tail; this yeilded a resin of a bright yellow colour perfectly resembling Gambouge only that it did not stain; it had a sweet smell but what its properties are the chymists may be able to determine' (ibid.).

'The two species are quite different. *Xanthorrhoea resinosa* has a trunk at most 60 cm (2 ft) tall and is found in the Blue Mountains and from Sydney south to eastern Victoria on sand or sandstone. *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* is often almost stemless, but can reach up to 5 m (16 ft) tall, and grows in eucalypt woodland and heath in Queensland south to the Hunter Valley of New South Wales. It is held to be poisonous to stock, but its foliage ('steel grass') is used commercially in floristry. The species name *johnsonii* commemorates Lawrence (Lawrie) A. S. Johnson (1925-1997), a versatile Australian botanist. The genus *Xanthorrhoea*, from *Xanthos*, yellow, and *rheo*, flow, referring to the yellow resinous gum, comprises 28 species and is restricted to Australia. They are slow-growing, long-lived and fire-tolerant plants, with thick stems that produce resins at the bases of old leaves. This resin, known as acaroid, was formerly used to fix spear-heads to shafts and is still utilized as varnish or lacquer for metals and leather. *Xanthorrhoea semiplana* subsp. *tateana* (yakka) is the basis of the yakka gum industry, on Kangaroo Island, South Australia, which once produced 1,000 tons per annum' (Gooding, Mabberley, and Studholme no 108).

*Literature:* Gooding, Mabberley, and Studholme, *Joseph Banks' Florilegium* no 108.

**PARKINSON, S. and F.P.  
NODDER (artists).**

'Plate 315. *Dendrobium  
Canaliculatum*, R. Brown,  
*Epidendrum canaliculatum*  
(Orchidaceae)'.

London: Alecto Historical  
Editions in association with  
the British Museum (Natural  
History), 1980-1990.

Engraving by Daniel  
MacKenzie, printed *à la  
poupée* by Alecto Historical  
Editions.

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**£630**



## SPECIES FOUND AT ENDEAVOUR RIVER, AUSTRALIA

17 JUNE - 4 AUGUST 1770

Remarkably, at the mouth of Endeavour River, 'Banks and Solander searched the whole neighbourhood thoroughly for plants and obtained a harvest of new species exceeding in number even those gathered at Botany Bay'. It is rather surprising, then, that – in contrast to Botany Bay – 'the Endeavour River remained virtually unknown for many years more, with its plants available only in the collections of Banks and Solander' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 111).

This 'tea tree orchid', *Dendrobium Canaliculatum*, is a striking example of a plant discovered at Endeavour River but not communicated widely: it would not be described scientifically for another forty years, when it appeared in Robert Brown's *Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae et Insulae Van Diemen* (London, 1810, vol. 1, p. 333).

A sweetly scented miniature orchid, the *Dendrobium Canaliculatum* naturally grows on the bark of gum or melaleuca trees, and blooms from mid-winter to mid-spring; its cultivation, however, appears to be very difficult. According to an article of 1868, '[t]he bulbous stems, after being deprived of the old leaves are eatable' (John Crawford, 'On the Vegetable and Animal Food of the Natives of Australia in reference to social position...', *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 6 N.S. (1868), pp. 112-122, at p. 114).

**PARKINSON, S. and F.P.  
NODDER (artists).**

'Plate 157. *Olearia Arguta*,  
Bentham, *Aster acclivis*  
(Compositae).'

London: Alecto Historical Editions  
in association with the British  
Museum (Natural History), 1980-  
1990.

Engraving by Daniel MacKenzie,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

*Limited to 116 impressions, this no.  
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'EP 1/3'. \**

**£330**



## SPECIES SEEN AT ENDEAVOUR RIVER, AUSTRALIA

17 JUNE - 4 AUGUST 1770

Cook's description of the Endeavour River – very much that of an explorer rather than a botanist – complements Banks' well: '[t]he Country, as far as I could see, is diversified with Hills and plains, and these with woods and Lawns; the Soil of the Hills is hard, dry, and very Stoney; yet it produceth a thin Coarse grass, and some wood. The Soil of the Plains and Valleys are sandy, and in some places Clay, and in many Parts very Rocky and Stoney, as well as the Hills, but in general the Land is pretty well Cloathed with long grass, wood, Shrubs, etc. The whole Country abounds with an immense number of Ant Hills, some of which are 6 or 8 feet high, and more than twice that in Circuit. Here are but few sorts of Trees besides the Gum tree, which is the most numerous, and is the same that we found on the Southern Part of the Coast, only here they do not grow near so large. On each side of the River, all the way up it, are Mangroves, which Extend in some places a Mile from its banks' (Wharton (ed.), *Captain Cook's Journal*, 4 August 1770).

The *Olearia Arguta* would have been a small but colourful part of this landscape. There are more than 100 species of the small- to medium-sized *Olearia* shrubs, or 'daisy-bushes', found in Australia, New Guinea, and New Zealand today, some of them threatened or on the verge of being extinct.

**PARKINSON S. and F.P. NODDER  
(artists).**

'Plate 173. *Stylidium Rotundifolium*,  
R. Brown, *Lobeliastrum latifolium*  
(*Stylidiaceae*)'.

London: Alecto Historical Editions  
in association with the British  
Museum (Natural History), 1980-  
1990.

Engraving by Daniel MacKenzie,  
printed *à la poupée* by Alecto  
Historical Editions.

*Limited to 116 impressions, this no. 2  
of 3 for exhibition and numbered 'EP  
2/3'. \**

**£125**



## SPECIES COLLECTED AT ENDEAVOUR RIVER, AUSTRALIA

17 JUNE - 4 AUGUST 1770

The *Stylidium Rotundifolium* is one of seven *Stylidium* plants discovered by Banks and Solander (out of ca. 300 known to belong to the species today). It is an annual plant found in northern Australia, growing up to 18cm tall, and flowering from April to October. Like the *Dendrobium Canaliculatum*, the *Stylidium Rotundifolium* would not be described scientifically until it appeared in Robert Brown's *Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae et Insulae Van Diemen* (London, 1810, vol. 1, p. 571).

'By 28 July the excitement to find new plants had vanished; there seemed to be none left to find. "Botanizing with no kind of success", Banks wrote in his journal, "The Plants were now intirely completed and nothing new to be found, so that sailing is all we wish for if the wind would but allow us". On 3 August the *Endeavour* set sail again' (Stearn, 'A Royal Society Appointment', p. 114).



## JOSEPH BANKS' *FLORILEGIUM*

SIR JOSEPH BANKS BT (1743-1820) first dedicated himself to the study of the sciences, especially botany, while a student at Christ Church, Oxford. Upon inheriting Revesby Abbey, Lincolnshire in 1761, he focused his research on collections of the Chelsea Physic Garden and the British Museum, where he met Daniel Solander, one of Linnaeus' students. In 1766 the young Banks 'served his apprenticeship as a scientifically trained Linnaean naturalist – as opposed to an indiscriminating virtuoso gentleman collector – by accompanying his old Etonian friend, the naval officer and future MP and lord of the Admiralty, Constantine Phipps, on an expedition [...] to Labrador and Newfoundland. Though Banks was the sole naturalist on board, Solander assisted him in his choice of equipment and reference works' (ODNB). This 'apprenticeship' with Phipps 'served as a virtual rehearsal for the great *Endeavour* voyage of 1768 to 1771' through which Banks became 'a figure of international scientific significance [...]. The *Endeavour* expedition made it possible for Banks to explore a whole portion of the globe hitherto largely unexposed to European gaze' (*loc. cit.*).

THE SEEDS FOR BANKS' *FLORILEGIUM* had been planted with his earliest expedition: on his return to London from Labrador and Newfoundland, Banks had commissioned the young Scottish natural history artist Sydney Parkinson to draw some of the natural history specimens from the expedition on HMS *Niger*. On the *Endeavour*, Banks took both Solander and Parkinson (who sadly died at sea in January 1771) with him as members of his scientific party. On his return to England Banks planned an account of the expedition's botanical discoveries, and employed a team of engravers to produce copper plates of Parkinson's drawings. 743 plates were engraved under Banks' supervision by eighteen engravers over a period of thirteen years, at a cost of more than £7,000. Manuscript descriptions of the specimens were prepared by Daniel Solander, but (apart from some small groups of proof plates) the long-anticipated work remained unpublished at Banks' death in 1820, nearly fifty years after he had returned from the *Endeavour* expedition.

ON BANKS' DEATH, the engraved copper plates were bequeathed to the British Museum, where they remained in storage until 1900-1905, when monochrome lithographic plates of the Australian flora were made after the original plates (British Museum, *Illustrations of Australian Plants*, reproducing 320 of the 743 images). The 1973 limited edition (100 copies) of *Captain Cook's Florilegium*, edited by Wilfrid Blunt and W.T. Stearn included a small number of engravings printed from the original copper plates in black ink only.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1979, following successful trial printings of the plates in colour, that Alecto Historical Editions and The British Museum (Natural History) agreed to jointly publish the full set of 738 plates (five of the original 743 had been stolen), printed in colour *à la poupée* (i.e. by applying the colour to the plate with a cotton ball, and then adding further colour if necessary with a brush). Only 100 sets of *Banks' Florilegium*, which appeared between 1980 and 1990, were printed for sale (of which all were subscribed), together with sixteen further sets, comprising three printers' proof sets (of which number 1 is at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew); three sets printed for exhibition purposes; and ten *hors commerce* sets (120 plates from set no. VII were sold by Sotheby's, London in 1988 to benefit the Banks Alecto Endeavour Fellowship, and sets IX and X went to The British Museum, Natural History).

THE RECEPTION WAS ENTHUSIASTIC: *The Book Collector* (vol. XXXVIII, 1989) considered the Alecto edition 'a triumph on many scores: a triumph of imagination, to conceive such an enterprise; a triumph of aesthetic sensibility, to realize that plates originally intended to be printed in black could be rendered in colour with such magical beauty, yet true to nature; a triumph of technical skill, to restore the tarnished plates and print them with unerring precision, maintaining the same high standard from first to last [...]; a triumph, above all of tenacity to bring such a colossal enterprise [...] to a final successful conclusion'.

SPECIFICATIONS: The engravings are all of a very similar size, with platemarks of *circa* 457 x 305mm, and are printed on acid-free Somerset mould-made 300gsm paper manufactured by the Inveresk Paper Company. Each sheet is watermarked 'AHE', measures 724 x 556mm, and bears blind embossed stamps incorporating the publishers' and printer's chops, the copyright symbol, and date of publication; the initials of the individual printer, the plate number, and the edition number are recorded in pencil. The engravings are protected by a bifolium of acid-free Somerset mould-made 300gsm paper, cut to form a window mount on which is recorded the modern and Banksian names of the plant, the location and date of its collection and the name(s) of the artist and engraver.

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A BRAZIL *Temnadenia Violacea*



B SOCIETY ISLANDS *Boehmeria Virgata*



C SOCIETY ISLANDS *Ipomoea Illustris*

D NEW ZEALAND *Coprosma Lucida*



E AUSTRALIA *Boronia Parviflora*





F AUSTRALIA *Acacia Legnota*



G AUSTRALIA *Xanthorrhoea Resinosa*



H AUSTRALIA *Dendrobium Canaliculatum*



I AUSTRALIA *Olearia Arguta*

K AUSTRALIA *Stylidium Rotundifolium*



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