

Robert Brown's Australian Botanical Specimens, 1801–1805 at the BM

INTRODUCTORY NOTES TO THE BOTANICAL COLLECTION MADE BY ROBERT BROWN (1773–1858) IN AUSTRALIA, 1801–1805

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Note

 Search the Brown database using the fields noted below.

Introduction

The Investigator expedition was planned by the President of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820), who himself had sailed to Australia with Lt. James Cook R.N. some thirty years earlier. It was commanded by Lt. Matthew Flinders R.N. (1774–1814) and on board was a small contingent of scientific gentlemen. These included Robert Brown as naturalist, Ferdinand Bauer (1760–1826) as natural history artist, William Westall (1781–1850) as landscape artist, John Allen (b.1775) as practical miner, and John Crosley (c.1763–1817) as astronomer — although Crosley left the expedition at the Cape of Good Hope.

Publications on Brown's life and botanical work are available, including a biography of him by Mabberley (1985), and an account of his Australian collecting sites by Vallance (1990). There is a catalogue of his Zoological papers at the Natural History Museum, London, by Wheeler (1993) and of his Botanical papers by Moore & Beasley (1997). The Flora of Australia (1: 33, 2nd edn., 1999) also gives a bibliography of Brownian studies. Brown's Diary of the expedition is published by Vallance et al., (2001).

The botanical collections and supporting documents

For historical reasons Brown's main collection of dried Australian plants made between 1801 and 1805 (the top set), is at BM with smaller collections at E, K, and LE (Flora of Australia 1: 33). Duplicates of these collections, were distributed in the 19th and 20th centuries and the Flora of Australia (1: 33) lists the Australian institutions to hold them. These were often sent out with minimal background and locality information. The original labels of the top set contain much of this locality information, and help towards localizing the Dryander duplicates which are common in Australian herbaria following these distributions. The Botany Library of the Natural History Museum, London, also contains information in Brown's papers relating to the expedition, and much of these data are found in Brown's descriptive slips (B.65) and his other papers.

Brown's landing places and collecting localities

Brown (1810) published his *Prodromus* before Flinders (1814) published the geographical names of the landing sites, a point of great importance to the localizing of the collections (Burbidge, 1956; Stearn, 1960; Mabberley, 1985; Clarkson, 1988 and Vallance, 1990). However, as Clarkson (1988: 6) points out, Brown did not collect at all the localities listed by Burbidge (1956) and Stearn (1960). At the time of writing the most comprehensive list of Brown's collecting sites is that of Vallance (1990), but this too is incomplete for late 1804 and 1805. The published version of Brown's Australian Diary (Vallance et al., in press) should solve many of these problems (Clarkson, 1988; Groves & Moore, 1989; Vallance 1990). After the voyage Brown and Bauer remained in Australia when Flinders left the expedition late in 1803. His collection sites from New South Wales and Tasmania in 1804–1805 are listed below. There are many complications and consequent qualifications required concerning Brown's Australian plant collection of 1801–1805 that cannot be addressed here. For an outline and discussion of these points the reader should consult the Introduction to Brown's Australian Diary (Vallance, et al., in press). The most accurate list available to date of Brown's Australian collecting sites is given below, with a note of the relevant Flinders chart nomenclature. However, it is important to realise that the dates for the anchorages and collecting localities may not be the same.

Table 1. A summary of H.M.S. Investigator Australian anchorages and Brown's collection sites

Western Australia (see Willis, 1959, Mabberley, 1985: 76–79; Vallance, 1990: 66, and Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.4).	
8 December–5 January (1802)	King George Sound.
9–14 January	Lucky Bay (Bay I of the chart).
14–17 January	Middle Island, Archipelago of Recherche (Bay II). Goose Island Bay of the plant labels.
South Australia (see Cooper, 1953 and 1955; Vallance, 1990: 66 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chaps.5–7).	
28–29 January	Fowlers Bay (Bay III).
2–4 February	St. Francis Island, Nuyts Archipelago (Bay IV), first visit.
6–7 February	St Peter Island and Goat Island, Nuyts Archipelago (Anchorage V).
8 February	Second visit to St. Francis Island, Nuyts Archipelago.
9 February	Left Nuyts Archipelago
11–12 February	Waldegrave Island (Anchorage VI).
12–14 February	Flinders Island (Anchorage VII)
20–22 February	Thistle Island (Anchorage VIII or 8)
22–25 February	Memory Cove (Bay IX or 9).

25 February–6 March	In the vicinity of Port Lincoln (Bay X or 10 — three anchorages here all close together).
25 February	Inside Surfleet Point (Cape T1 of Brown's usage).
26 February	S.W. corner of Port Lincoln proper. Brown collected at Sleaford Mere.
5 March	Entrance to Spalding Cove. Collecting took place W. Of Cape Donington (Cape T).
6–7 March	Kirby Island, Sir Joseph Banks Group (Anchorage XI).
9–13 March	Head of Spencer Gulf (Bay XII); Mount Brown climbed, Brown and Good 'sleep' at Peter Good's Gulley. Servant camp at Woolundunga Creek
21–24 March	First visit to Kangaroo Island, anchorage between Hog Point and Kangaroo Head on the north coast (Anchorage XIII).
27 March–1 April	In Gulf St. Vincent.
29 March	Off Mangrove Point. (Flinders, Brown and Good reach the head of the Gulf by small boat).
29 March	At head of the Gulf (Anchorage XIV).
1–7 April	Second visit to Kangaroo Island, anchorage in Eastern Cove, north coast.
Tasmania (sens.lat)	
22–23 April	Anchorage at King Island, Bass Strait (Anchorage XV). Brown briefly collected.
Victoria (see Willis, 1955–56; Willis & Skewes, 1956; Vallance, 1990: 69 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.8).	
26 April–3 May	Port Phillip (Anchorage XVI or 16) Brown's first visit there.
New South Wales (See Vallance, 1990 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.9)	
9 May–22 July	Port Jackson. Local excursions to the Hawkesbury River, Greenhills [=Windsor], Richmond Hill, Old Toongabbie, North Rocks/Jerusalem Rocks, Parramatta, Grose Head, Botany Bay, Cooks River, etc.
Queensland (See Vallance, 1990 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.10–14).	
29 July–1 August	Hervey Cape (Fraser Island).
5–9 August	Anchorage between Port Clinton and Facing Island (Port I of the chart)
9–17 August	Keppel Bay.
21–24 August	Port Bowen, now Port Clinton (Bay II).
25 August	Clara Group, Hervey Island
26–28 August	Strong Tide Passage (Shoal Bay Passage III of the plant labels).
29 August–4 September	Shoalwater Bay.
5–8 September	Thirsty Sound (eastern end).
8–28 September	Broad Sound general area.
8 September	Broad Sound, S.E. of West Peaked Hill.

10 September	Near Flock Pigeon Island.
12 & 13 September	At Upper Head of the plant labels, near Charon Point,
20 September	Near Mangrove Islands, at the S.W. entrance to Thirsty Sound.
28 September–4 October	Vicinity of Percy Isles, Northumberland Isles.
29 September	Off West Bay of Middle Island, roughly E. of Pine Island. Shore work on Pine and Middle Islands.
5–14 October	In the area of the Great Barrier Reef.
15–17 October	Calder Island (Cumberland Island l2), Cumberland Isles.
29–30 October	Coral Sea.
30 October	Zuizin Island (Halfway Island of Flinders), Brown landed.
2 November	Good's Island [Prince of Wales Island e], Torres Strait.
7 November	Pennefather River, Cape York Peninsula. The Coen River of the plant labels
16 November–1 December	area of the South Wellesley Islands, Gulf of Carpentaria:
17 November	Shore work on Sweers Island (Island a) and Bentinck Island (Island b).
20 November	E.S.E of Allen Island (Island c).
21 November	Investigator Road. Ship leaking and found to be unseaworthy. Shore work on the islands round about.
1–7 December	South Wellesley Islands general area:
3 December	Bountiful Island (Island f , or Turtle Island)
6 December	Pisonia Island (Island e). Scurvy was now evident among the crew and Flinders concluded that the survey would have to be temporarily terminated.
Northern Territory (See Vallance, 1990 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.15–16).	
13–28 December	The area of Sir Edward Pellew Group, Gulf of Carpentaria.
14 December	Landed at Vanderlin Island (Island g).
15 December	Off Urquhart Islet (h2). The untraced Island g3 is in this area and Island g4 is Jolly Islet and Island g6 is Small Islet.
16 December	Off Cabbage Tree Cove, North Island (Island h). Island h4 in this vicinity is also untraced (it might be David Islet) and whether Brown landed on Centre Island (Island hh) also remains unclear — there are plants from there, but they may have been gathered by others. Observation Island (Island h3) visited, see Vallance (1990: 73–74) for summary.
19 December	Off Wheatley Island (Island g2).

20 December	At E. Entrance to channel between North and Centre Islands.
22 December	Off Cabbage Tree Cove, North Island again.
31 December–1 January 1803	Maria Island (Island l), Gulf of Carpentaria.
4 January	Malagayangu District, Arnhem Land. Carpentaria Main opposite Groote Eyland of the plant labels. It appears only Flinders went to Bickerton Island (Island n)
5–17 January	Groote Eylandt and vicinity. For example:
14 January	Cavern or Chasm Island, off Groote Eylandt.
16 January	Winchelsea Island (Island p) visited by Bauer, Good, and Allen.
18 January	Bustard Island (Island q1).
19 January–1 February	Blue Mud Bay, Arnhem Land.
20 January	Morgans Island (Island s).
26 January	Cape Shield (Point T).
2–11 February	Caledon Bay, Arnhem Land area. Arnhem/ Arnheim South Bay of Brown's plant labels and other writings.
3 February	Anchorage at Grays Bay.
13–17 February	Nhulunbury/Gove area, Melville Bay, Arnhem Land. Arnhem/Arnheim North Bay of the plant labels.
13 February	Anchorage at Gove Harbour.
17–27 February	At the English Company Islands: Wigram Island (Island y), Pobassoo Island (Island y2), Brown ashore on 18 February, Cotton Island (Island y1), Astell Island (Island y3) and Inglis Island (Island z) visited by the naturalists..
17 February	Off S. Point of Cotton Island.
23 February	Off N.E. pont of Inglis Island. Natualists collect here and at Bosanquet Island (Island z4).
28 February–5 March	Arnhem Bay area (North Coast Bay No 3 of Brown's usage).
28 February	Off Mallinson Island (Island), Brown collected here.
2 March	Off an island known as Y2, Brown collected here.
4 March	Off Everett Island (Island 1), Brown collected here, others collected at Low Island and Hardy island (Island 2) and on the nearby mainland (Y3).
12 March	New Year Island, only Peter Good collected.
Timor (Mabberley, 1985: 107–8; Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.17)	
31 March–8 April	Kupang, Timor. From here Investigator sailed back to Sydney, unfortunately now with tropical dysentery aboard.
Western Australia	
21 May	Goose Island Bay again, Archipelago of the Recherche.
New South Wales	
9 June	The ship and the surviving expedition members arrived at Port Jackson. Peter Good

the diarist, died soon after arrival.

Brown and the naturalists in Australia after the circumnavigation

The expedition could be said to have come to an end with the departure of Flinders in late 1803. However, Brown & Bauer remained in Australia until May 1805, making local expeditions and trips further afield. They continued collecting and drawing. Their itinerary is given below:

New South Wales (Vallance et al., 2001: Chap. 19).	
28 November	Brown sailed in Lady Nelson for Tasmania.
Bass Strait (See Vallance, 1990, Moore, 2000 and Vallance et al., 2001: 20).	
12–31 December	Stormbound at East Cove, Deal Island, Kents Group, Bass Strait.
Tasmania (See Vallance, 1990; Moore, 2000: Fig. 1 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chap. 20).	
1–19 January	Port Dalrymple, northern Tasmania. Several anchorages:
1 January	Anchorage off Lagoon Beach.
3 January	Anchorage at York Cove.
5 January	Off Inspection Head, entrance to Western Arm.
7 January	Above Middle Island also Egg Island and Nelsons' Shoal, River Tamar.
8 January	Above 'Upper Island' (= Tamar Island), River Tamar.
9–10 January	Boat parties visit the South Esk Gorge — the Cataract River of the plant labels (Moore, 2000: Photo 3; Vallance et al, 2001: fig.26).
11–18 January	At Lagoon Beach, Port Dalrymple.
Victoria (See Vallance, 1990, Moore, 2000 and Vallance et al., 2000: Chap. 20).	
21–30 January	At Port Phillip area. Brown's second visit.
24–25 January	Brown at Arthur's Seat.
Tasmania (See Vallance, 1990; Moore, 2000 and Vallance et al., 2001: Chaps. 21 & 22).	
9 February–9 August	Brown's Tasmanian records are particularly poor, but apparently he was based at Risdon Cove and occasionally Sullivans Cove (Hobart), River Derwent. During this time numerous overland collecting excursions were made and much collecting done. He climbed Mt. Wellington, Montis Tabularis of the plant labels, some ten times. Also visited were Anna Maria River [Margate Rivulet] of the plant labels.
11 January	Brown collecting at Risdon Cove.
12 January	At Herdsmans Cove.
18–20? January	First ascent of Mr. Wellington.
27–28 January	Another ascent of Mt. Wellington.
5 March	Start of boat journey up the Derwent.
6 March	At Lawitta (above New Norfolk).
8 March	At Sullivans Cove (Hobart).

12–15 March	A hollow tree at the foot of Mt Wellington, the summit reached and back to the tree (see Moore, 2000: 135 & Table 3).
27 March	Start of another boat journey up the Derwent. Places visited are difficult to determine, see Vallance (1990: 81), Moore (2000: 135) and Vallance et al. (2001: Chap. 21).
1 April	Return journey began.
5 April	Back at Risdon Cove.
11 April	Collecting on Mt Wellington.
20 April	Brown returned to Sullivans Cove from at attempt to reach the River Huon.
2–16 May	Journey to the Huon and return to Sullivans Cove.
7 May	At the site of present-day Huonville.
21 May	At Risdon Cove
28 May	Journey to the west of Mt Wellington.
1 June	At Sullivans Cove.
12 June	Start of a boat journey to Storm Bay
15 June	Brown at Bruny Island.
17 June	At Port Esperance.
20 June	Brown based at Risdon Cove again.
9–24 August	At sea on the Ocean bound for Sydney.
	Bauer meanwhile independently went to the Hunter River in March to April 1804 and sailed to Norfolk Island on the Albion in August 1804.
New South Wales (see Vallance et al., 2001: Chap. 24 and 25).	
24 August–11 October	Based at Sydney, Port Jackson.
12 October–20 November	At Newcastle and the Hunter River area. At the time Brown made his boat journey the names were but recently allocated and Brown was muddled. His 'Patersons River' is the Hunter River, his 'Williams River' is the Paterson River and his 'Hunters River' is the Williams River (Vallance, 1990: 83).
12 October	At Newcastle (Kings Town or Kingston of the plant labels). The new coal mine visited.
14 October	At Ash Island (cf. Vallance, 1990: 83).
16 October	Start of boat journey up the Hunter River.
17 October	Just below the junction of the 'Patersons River' [=Hunter River] and 'Williams River' [=Patersons River].
18 October	Boat journey up the 'Patersons' [=Hunter] River.
19 October	Above Mt Anna of the plant labels [=Comerfords Hill]
20 October	At Mt Elizabeth of plant records [=Mt Hudson]
21 October	Start of return journey.
23–28 October	Resident at Kingstown [=Newcastle]
28 October	Start of journey up the 'Hunter' [=Williams] River.
29 (and 31) October	At Clarence Town.
30 October	At the head of Williams River navigation and probably on to Boatfall Creek.
1	Banks of Williams River above the Cedar Arm [=Hunter River]

November	
2 November	Up the present day Hunter River to the junction with the Patersons River [Brown's Williams River]
3 November	Paterson area.
4 November	Mt Johnstone climbed.
21 November	Back at Sydney.
	Sydney area and Grose and Hawksbury River collecting, New South Wales (Vallance et al., 2001: Chaps. 25–26)
16–18 December	With George Caley (1770–1829) at Parramatta.
20 December–7 January 1805	Grose River valley collecting trip from Badgery's farm (see Vallance et al., 2001: Chap.25).
21 December	Start of excursion up the Grose River.
22–23 December	At the Grose tributary Burrell Creek.
25 December	At Badgery's farm ?
27–30 December	Second excursion up the Grose.
31 December 1804	Grose River / Burrell Creek area.
1 January 1805	Cabbage Tree Creek area.
2–7 January	At Badgery's farm.
8 January	At the Hawkesbury River near Green Hills [=Windsor] and Cattai Creek.
9–16 January	In the Hawkesbury River area.
Late January and February	Collecting locally in the Sydney neighbourhood, sometimes with George Caley.
11 March	Ferdinand Bauer returned from Norfolk Island on the sea-trial of the refitted Investigator.
16–20 March	Brown and Bauer collected in the neighbourhood of the Hawkesbury River.
23 May	Expedition members left Sydney in the patched-up
Homeward faring (Vallance et al., Chap. 27).	
23 May	Expedition members left Sydney in the patched-up Investigator.
14 July	Ship well south of Cape Horn.
19 August	The northern hemisphere reached.

The website

This site is a byproduct of a database made between 1983 and 2000 (Groves & Moore, 1986) in connection with the preparation of the Australian Diary of Robert Brown for publication by Vallance et al. (2001). In connection with this project the Diary editors found that Brown used temporary manuscript names for his gatherings because the plants he collected were new and unpublished. Correlation of these manuscript names with the published names is helped by this index. However, these data represent the state of knowledge on Brown's plant collections in mid 2001 and are almost certainly incomplete.

The Fields

The [Brown database and the search page](#) contain the following fields.

Bennett Number:

This was assigned in the mid 1870s when Robert Brown's collection of dried Australian plants dating from 1801–1805 was first catalogued at the British Museum (see Groves & Moore, 1989; Moore and Beasley, 1997). This catalogue, the Bennett Register (B.76), was instigated after Brown's death by J.J. Bennett (1800–1879) who had been Brown's assistant at the Museum. For the most part the top set of Brown's plants have a blue sticker on which is printed 'R. Brown, Iter Australiensis 1802–5 Presented by the direction of J.J. Bennett, 1876' and an ink-written number. This number appears in the Register. The Register itself was written by James Britten (1846–1924) and Henry Trimen (1843–1896) and is the 'Britten Register' of Maslin & Cowan (1995).

The 'Bennett Numbers' for the cryptogamic plants run from 1 to 306. For example, the ferns and allies are numbered from 1–141; the marine algae from 157–274; the freshwater algae (Charophytes) from 275–279 and the mosses from 280–294. The fungi were numbered from 142–156 (although these are no longer at BM) and the lichens from 500–579 (Groves & Moore, 1989: 68), although these numbers have no corresponding register entry. The Angiosperm numbers run from 2001–6371. For example, the Compositae are numbered from 2001–2308; the Proteaceae from 3235–3436; the Leguminosae (senu latu) from 4001–4387; 4829–4835 and 5000–5100; the Myrtaceae from 4555–4828; 5278; 6303–6304 and 6321 and the Graminae from 6088–6297. There is also a small collection of fruits and seeds bearing number from 6359–6371. However, the Register contains only names — which may be current or manuscript — and numbers (Groves & Moore, 1989: 68). For the locality of the gatherings Brown's original herbarium labels, his Diary papers (B.1. and B.12), his workbooks/fascicles (B.3.), and descriptive slips (B.65) should be consulted. Various Australasian institutions hold photocopies of the slips (see *Flora of Australia* 1: 33).

Last Determined Name:

The most recent determination is that used in BM herbarium.

Family:

The family name is that under which the BM herbarium was arranged in the nineteenth century

following the move from the British Museum at Bloomsbury. The order today is a modification of that used by Bentham and Hooker (1862–1883).

State:

The is the present-day Australian State.

Label data:

This is an unedited transcription of Brown's original label data of specimens in his herbarium. It contains (1) the manuscript name which the plant was given on collection; (2) other manuscript names; (3) some basic ecological data, e.g. '... In paludosis ad radices collium Bay I ora australis Nova Hollandia Jany 11 1802 desc ...' (see below); and (4) Matthew Flinders's original chart nomenclature where appropriate, e.g. 'Island y2' [= Astells Island, Northern Territory] and the few geographical names that were published in 1801–1805. The key to the chart names was given by Burbidge (1956) and this appears in Stearn's (1960) Introduction to the facsimile of Brown's *Prodromus* of 1810. These data have been qualified by Clarkson (1988) and Vallance (1990). Both these authors record that Brown did not collect at all the places listed by Burbidge (1965) and Stearn (1960). In a few cases the pagination of Brown's (1810) publication details was added later to the labels by Brown.

Some of the species noted here were drawn by the expedition's botanical artist, Ferdinand Bauer, but rarely the same specimen. There is one known exception (Mabberley & Moore, 1999: 84) and that is Bennett 2613, *Levenhookia pusilla* R.Br. (Stylidiaceae) from King George Sound. The original label records '... my best specimen and that from which Mr Bauer's drawing was made ...'. The drawing appears in Bauer (1813–16/17: t.15 bottom & and Bauer 1989: t.15 bottom). The catalogue of the drawn species (Mabberley & Moore, 1999) refers to completed drawings in the Botany Library of the Natural History Museum, London. The corresponding zoology drawings in the Natural History Museum, London, have been catalogued by Wheeler & Moore (1994). Bauer's surviving original field sketches are in the Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna (W).

Finally, it should be remembered that this field is, for the most part, a transcription, and contains Brown's 18th century abbreviations and spellings. Example:

Bennett number 2567. Last determined name, *Scaevola paludosa* R.Br. Family Goodeniaceae. State 'WA'. The original labels data reads *Scaevola paludosa* Nob prodr 586 In paludosis ad radices collium Bay I ora australis Nova Hollandia Jany 11 1802 desc

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