

Research to accompany the Log Books  
of  
JOHN SEPTIMUS ROE  
found in Lower Plan Room.

D.F. Tomlin

7th August, 1962.



Report to accompany the log book

of

JOHN SMITH'S BOAT

Found in lower plain road.

D.P. Smith

Feb August, 1962.



In 1817 the English Admiralty sent an expedition to complete the survey of the North and North-West coast of Australia. Lt Philip P. King, R.N., F.R.S., F.L.S., was given command and among the officers was Lt John Septimus Roe, who subsequently held so honourable connection with the Colony of Western Australia.

A. Cunningham was the Botanist.

The outfit for the expedition was obtained in Sydney, and among the company was Boongaree, Chief of the Broken Bay (N.S.W.) tribe of natives, who had accompanied Flinders on some of his explorations.

The "Mermaid" of 84 tons left Sydney on the 22nd December, 1817, and reached King George Sound on 20th January, 1818. In the evening the party landed on Seal Island in the Sound, and there they found the skeleton of a goat's head and the remains of a glass case bottle left there by Lieut. Forster, R.N., who put into the Harbour in 1815, outward bound on the hired transport EMU from Port Jackson to Europe.

The main shore was then visited.

Two rivers connected with Oyster Harbour in which they anchored on the following day. One was the "Riviere de Francois" previously discovered by Captain Baudin. 3

Mr Roe counted eleven weirs constructed of crescent shape by natives for catching fish. Great numbers of sea fowl and land birds were observed and Mr Cunningham "made a large collection of seeds and dried specimens from the vast variety of beautiful plants and flowers with which nature has so lavishly clothed the hills and plains of this interesting country." After taking in water and wood the MERMAID sailed along the south coast and rounded the Leeuwin. Owing to sickness on board, Lieut. King found it impossible to examine any part of the West Coast as he desired, until he came near to North-West Cape.

After passing the Cape, they came on in a good bay, where they remained for three days, and being exceedingly fatigued, they not inaptly named it the BAY OF REST. Elaborate examinations were made of the coast and islands, by the officers, the weather was hot and the country showed few pleasing features.

On the 18th February, they sailed down the Gulf which was named Exmouth after Viscount Exmouth. A small river was found in this Gulf, the shore was lined with Mangrove and a species of Eucalyptus, and native fishing weirs were also seen.

Cape Locker, Cape Preston, and Enderby Island were named after friends of King. In memory of his friendly communication with the natives in the vicinity, King named the group of islands between Lewis Island and the Mainland, Intercourse Islands.

On the 4th March, he anchored in a bay named at Mr Roe's request "Nickol's Bay" and made many researches in the neighbourhood. Part of the North Coast were visited and the vessel MERMAID went to Timor, whence it sailed down the West Coast quickly making its way South and round to Sydney. Replenishing stores, King again visited Cambridge Gulf in 1819, which he called after the Viceroy of Hanover, the Duke of Cambridge. There the party discovered Mt Cockburn, named after Sir George Cockburn, G.C.B., one of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and spent some days in exploring and giving names to numerous points.

A group of islands was afterwards surveyed and named Sir Graham Moore's Islands, after a member of the Admiralty Board.



The Eclipse Islands, Vansittart Bay, Admiralty Gulf and Port Warrender were all surveyed and named. In Vansittart Bay they had an encounter with the natives. The precise spot being now known as Encounter Cove.

Vansittart Bay was named after a late Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Owing to sickness they left the coast and bore up to Savon, after which they returned to Sydney.

In September, 1820, the MERMAID visited the North West Coast a third time and extended the surveys. York Sound was named in honour of the Duke of York: at Careening Bay the vessel was beached and repairs made and Mr Cunningham took the opportunity of examining the indigenous trees. Among these were the Mountain Ebony, Acacia podded inga, paniele flowering olive, Laurel leaved date plum, lime tree leaved hibiscus, tropical native cherry and the Australian Cycas or Sago Palm. Prince Regent River was next examined.

In December, 1820, they anchored again at Sydney.

King left Sydney a fourth time on 26th May, 1821, to complete his surveys, but on this occasion the Brig. BATHURST was used for the work.

He sailed North and through Torres Straits, and again visited Prince Regent River.

At Hanover Bay the Surgeon was speared by the natives. The coast was examined to Cape Latouche Treville, and a course set for Mauritius to refit. He returned to the South West Coast and in December, 1821, anchored in King George's Sound. Wood and water were obtained and on 6th January, 1822, the BATHURST left the Sound, rounded the Leeuwin. Bathurst Island was explored, and then soundings taken in the region of the Abrolhos. They landed on Dirk Hartog Island to search for the plate of De Vlaming, but to their regret, saw only two posts where the memorial had been affixed.

Observations were taken along the Coast and finally King sailed to Sydney and from there to England in September, 1822.

In 1827 the "SUCCESS" sailed from Sydney on 17th January in company with a cutter. Captain Gilbert in command.

Mr Charles Fraser, the Government Botanist, was on board.

The cutter was too slow and returned to Port Jackson.

The SUCCESS proceeded alone and anchored on 6th March, 1827, about 3 miles off the mouth of the Swan River.

Mr Fraser made a large collection of plants.

On 12th May, 1829, Captain Stirling drew up instructions headed "PARMELIA at Sea, 12th May, 1829". The duties required of the Surveyor General were set down and provided that the books were to be submitted to the Lieut. Governor on the first day of each month. These instructions were handed to Mr Roe.

In the document presented to the Colonial Secretary, Mr Brown, he is desired to open his office for the despatch of business, at eight in the morning, to close at 2 p.m. and to call on the Governor at 10 a.m. each day to submit documents and to transact other business.



On 16th May, a document was issued on board, constituting a "Board of Council and Audit in the management of the property of the Crown and of Public property within the Settlement".

Commander Mark J. Currie was appointed Presiding Commissioner and Lt John S. Roe and Mr William Stirling, his co-adjutors all without salary.

This was in fact the birth of the "Lands and Surveys Department". On the same date, Mr James Drummond was appointed to the Honorary position of Superintendent of Government farms, gardens and plantations.

Mr G.W. Mangles, Superintendent of Government Stock, Mr H.W. Reveley, Civil Engineer to Settlement. Mr William Stirling, Registrar. Mr John Morgan, Storekeeper. Mr H.C. Sutherland, Assistant Surveyor.

These appointments were confirmed on 8th June, after landing. Most were purely honorary and bore no salary.

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