

## **Bass & Flinders presentation**

**By David Salt**

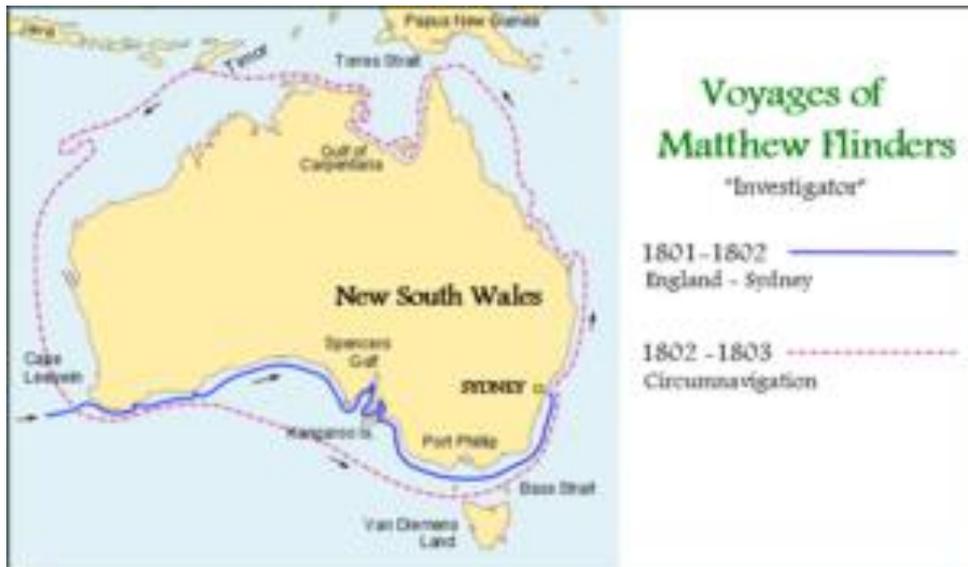
What a thrilling night of Australian Maritime History for the large audience of Squadron Cruisers on Wednesday 28 March. Andrew Phippen, from the Australian National Maritime Museum, gave an enthralling talk on the maritime exploits of Bass and Flinders: two great British Sailor-Explorers who did so much to help the fledgling Colony of Australia.



John Hancox and David Salt with Andrew Phippen, right.

Andrew spoke of the voyages of George Bass, sailor, surgeon, naturalist, entrepreneur and explorer, from the time of his arrival in Australia until his disappearance aboard the Venus which was lost at sea having left Sydney in 1803. His explorations included early voyages in the 2.4M Tom Thumb, an open whaleboat trip to Port Jackson, circumnavigation and exploration of Tasmania in the Norfolk, plus other trips including New Zealand. Flinders recommended the name Bass Strait be used following their successful circumnavigation of Tasmania together thus opening the passage which shortened voyages from the west to Sydney by three weeks.

Andrew then spoke of the voyages of Captain Matthew Flinders RN who was an explorer, navigator and cartographer. Flinders made three voyages from England to the Southern Ocean between 1791 and 1810, and identified Australia as a continent following his first circumnavigation. Whilst sailing back to England Flinders landed on Isle de France, now known as Mauritius, to make urgent repairs to his vessel and was captured and held captive by the French for six years. Whilst in captivity he recorded details of all his voyages and put forward the rationale for calling the continent Australia. Probably his most notable contribution to Maritime History is the circumnavigation of Australia, which was made in the Investigator, a ship that leaked badly and was condemned on return to Sydney.



### Voyages of the Investigator 1801-1803

George Bass is remembered for the seas that he explored and his works in charting parts of Australia. He was honoured in 1998 when both Bass and Flinders appeared on the Australian 50 cent coin. Flinders' name is featured in over 100 geographical features and places and he appeared on the Australian Ten Shilling note. Their contribution to Australian history is unique and as important as, if not more than, the works of the great Australian overland explorers.

All Members agreed that we look forward to Andrew's next appearance when we can learn more of our early Maritime History.