

Captain Cook's Landing at Botany Bay

Recount of Captain James Cook

Sunday 29th April 1770

Almost a week had passed since Lieutenant Hicks shouted 'land ahoy' and heralded our discovery of the east coast of New Holland.

Since then, we have sailed the Endeavour steadily northwards, keeping land in sight all the while. We have been kept busy mapping the coastline of this new and mysterious land.

On the morning of Sunday 19th April, we reached a place of great interest. It was a wide but shallow inlet. We immediately dropped anchor off a low headland covered with sand dunes. The great number of stingrays caught that morning prompted me to rather uncreatively name this place 'Stingrays Harbour'.

Around lunchtime we lifted anchor and sailed the Endeavour into the inlet. On either headland, we saw natives.

Soon after we dropped anchor again, a number of fellow sailors and myself set out in a rowboat to investigate. As we drifted toward the shore I said to sailor Isaac Smith, 'Jump out, Isaac,' thus making him the first European to set foot on the fabled east coast of New Holland. We all soon followed and waded through the shallow, warm water to the shore.

Before long, two natives came down from a group of six or so huts not far from our landing point. One was an old man, the other a younger fellow. We offered them gifts but they would not accept them. Perhaps they had misunderstood what we had said. Nonetheless, one of my men then took up a



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musket and fired a shot over their heads, wounding the old man slightly. They promptly retreated back to their huts and came back with a number of other men. Not a moment later, they threw long spears at us - all landing harmlessly I am glad to say. We fired two more musket rounds over their heads and fortunately they left us.

Slowly we crept up to the group of huts. Inside we found only a small huddle of children but no sign of adults. Unable to communicate with the youngsters, we left a gift of colourful beads and returned to our boats.

I am now back in my cabin. What an eventful day. We shall stay here another week or so I should think, then continue our explorations up the east coast of this most curious land. Who knows what wonders we might find?

