

Captain Cook's Exploration Medals

by Peter Lane

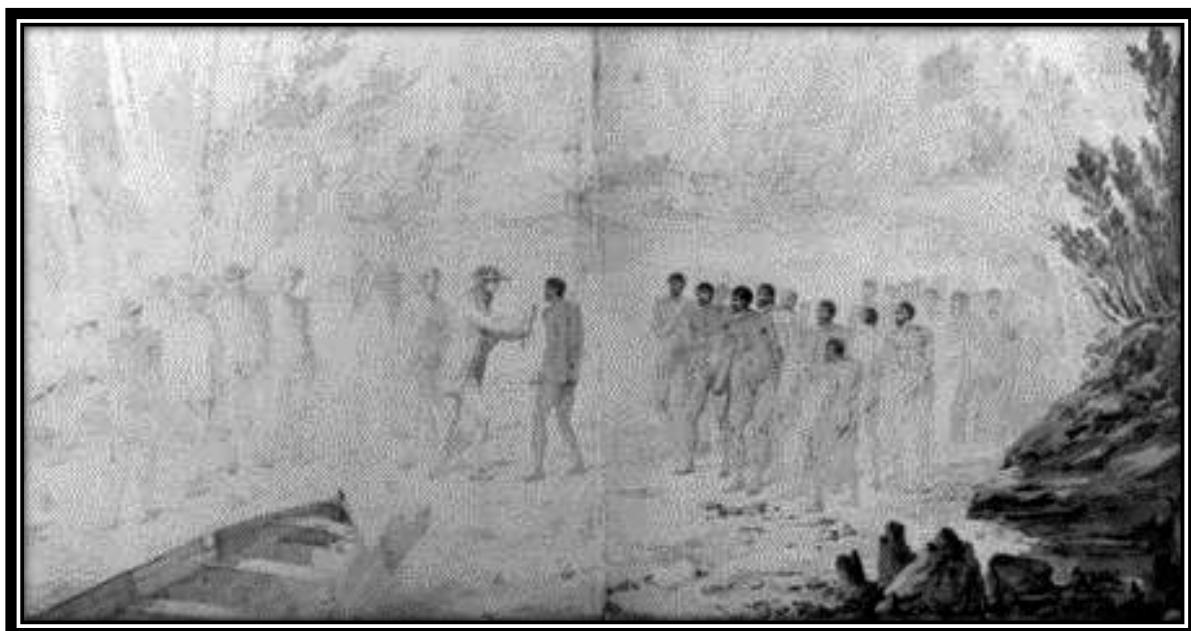
Abstract

On Saturday 2 December 2006, the South Australian Museum launched its refurbished Pacific Cultures Gallery. Proudly displayed in this gallery are two medals associated with Captain James Cook's voyages to the Pacific. Both are now considered of major historical significance to Australia and yet, only 19 years ago, a collection of Cook medals drew almost no interest when offered for auction.

In this paper I trace the story of the medals' original creation and use, track all known surviving examples and offer some thoughts about why perceptions of artefacts such as these seem to have changed in recent years from being seen as mere curiosities appealing only to a few collectors, to objects of national significance.

The Killora 'Resolution and Adventure' medal

On a summer's day in 1777, 11 years before the First Fleet arrived in Australia, ship's artist John Webber drew Captain Cook with his arms outstretched and about to place a medal around the neck of an Aboriginal man. To the left of Cook is his landing party of officers and sailors and to his right, a group of about 20 Aboriginal people. This drawing is the first to illustrate Europeans and Aborigines together, in a meeting which took place at Adventure Bay on Bruny Island, Tasmania.



Captain Cook's interview with natives in Adventure Bay, Van Diemen's Land, 29th January 1777 attributed to John Webber (courtesy British Ministry of Defence Library)

In *Discoveries: The Voyages of Captain Cook*, Nicholas Thomas observes that this pencil and ink study was based on field sketches and was drawn shortly afterwards: 'it was a contrived scene, which juxtaposed the parties theatrically — the Tasmanian men on one side and members of Cook's company on the other'.^[1] Surprisingly, this drawing has not been included in any recent publication relating to relations between Aboriginal people and Europeans, or to the concept of Australia being *terra nullius*. Had a painting ever evolved from the sketch, this encounter undoubtedly would have become iconic; instead it has been tucked away in the British Admiralty archives for several centuries, virtually ignored except by a handful of historians.^[2]

Even less well known than the drawing is the medal it features. The medal and the others that were distributed at the same time, were among the earliest gifts given by Europeans to Aborigines[3] and symbolise both the idealism and the reality of our country's pre-colonisation encounters.

The Webber drawing also provides the only record of Aboriginal people being presented with medals. The sketch is unique in a larger sense; no other contemporary drawing was made of medals being presented during either of Cook's second or third voyages.

We can only imagine what the recipients thought of the medals. Only one medal has been found in Tasmania, unearthed in a farmer's field, and it shows virtually no signs of wear, suggesting that it was either lost or discarded shortly after being given.

The Tasmanian medal is made of bronze, with high zinc content, and would have been bright and shiny like a newly minted penny. It must have intrigued the local Aboriginal people as their culture did not use metal, nor did they carve realistic images into their possessions. They do, however, have a long tradition of making and wearing shell necklaces, so they would have related to this pendant as an ornament or item of personal adornment.

The Tasmanian medal was found on a farm at Killora, on Bruny Island, at the opposite end of the island from Adventure Bay. Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, Janet Cadell, a four-year-old girl, found the medal while her father was ploughing his land. She was walking behind her father, collecting worms 'to feed her chooks' when she stumbled on the medal, with its suspension ring attached to it (the ring has long since been lost).[4] Her father, JL Cadell, recognised the significance of the medal & reported the find to the Hobart *Mercury*.

The newspaper published the discovery on 1 December 1914 on page four, but Janet's name was not mentioned; her father was recorded as the finder. The story of the find was retold in the *Mercury* on 20 February 1924.



The Killora *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal
collection of the author



(left to right) The author holding the Killora medal, with the late Tom Hanley, Australian Numismatic Society secretary, the late Mrs Janet Millar (née Cadell) the finder of the medal, about 1996.
courtesy Peter Lane

Up until the late 1960s Mrs Janet Millar (née Cadell) simply kept her medal in a safe place, and never intended to sell it until approached by Sir William Crowther, Hobart medical doctor, collector of Tasmaniana and major donor to the State Library of Tasmania. She sold the medal to him for \$60 and assumed that it would remain in Tasmania.[5]

On 26 January 1977, to mark the bicentenary of Captain Cook's landing at Adventure Bay, the State Library of Tasmania celebrated the event with an exhibition of pictures, books, maps and other material relating to sea explorers who had visited Tasmania. The items were mainly borrowed from public institutions and Sir William Crowther's collection. One of the highlights was his Cook medal and the opening address told the story of how he had located it.[6] The display ran from 26 January to 9 February 1977.

Crowther's numismatic collection, including the Cook medal, was sold by auction shortly after his death in 1981.[7] Despite its pre-auction estimate of \$500, Crowther's medal was sold to L Richard Smith, a Captain Cook enthusiast, for \$1300 — an unheard-of price for those times.

The 'WL' Resolution and Adventure medal



The 'WL' *Resolution and Adventure* medal, obverse collection of the author

In March 1990, L Richard Smith's research collection of eight *Resolution* and *Adventure* medals was put up for auction with an estimate of \$25,000 and went unsold. Shortly afterwards, Smith sold the Killora specimen, as well as another *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal, inscribed with the letters 'WL', to me. The medal's engraving and thread has the appearance of being made between 1780 and 1820 and it is reasonable to attribute the medal to sailor William Lanyon.

William Lanyon was born in Tregony, Cornwall, in 1747. He joined the Royal Navy when he was about 18 and served as an able seaman and midshipman on HMS Terrible before joining Cook's second expedition to the Pacific. Lanyon signed on as an able seaman on the *Adventure* and he was promoted twice during the voyage, replacing midshipman Samuel Kempe who died on 9 September 1772, then replacing master's mate John Rowe, who died on 17 December 1773. For the third voyage, Lanyon signed on as master's mate for the *Resolution* and, when Commander Charles Clerke died on 23 August 1779, Lanyon transferred to the *Discovery* and was promoted to second lieutenant. Thus, he sailed on all three ships of the second and third voyages and served under Clerke, Cook, Furneaux and King.

Lanyon probably set foot on Bruny Island on both voyages. Regrettably, contemporary records rarely identified members of landing parties. Lanyon is barely mentioned in the journals of the two expeditions, although his name was recorded on that fateful day, 14 February 1779, when Cook was killed in Hawai'i. Lanyon was in command of a small cutter some 30 metres offshore when Cook was slain. He and his men fired at the Hawaiians.^[8] There are no records of any of the expedition members acquiring medals except Anders Sparrmann, an assistant botanist, but it is reasonable to assume some medals fell into other members' hands one way or another. The 'WL' is the only *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal that is known to be personalised. The thread around the edge indicates that at one time it may have been enclosed in a metal object, perhaps the lid of a presentation box.

Little is known of Lanyon's history subsequent to the voyages. Linguist Paul Geraghty states that: Lanyon's subsequent [after the third voyage] record is sketchy. He is listed as commanding HMS *Genereux*, a prison ship, at Plymouth in 1805. In 1814, he was listed as a superannuated commander. He retired to St. Austell, Cornwall, a sick man, and died in March 1818.^[9] Lanyon left a will and his estate was divided between Tobias Lanyon, who inherited the leasehold property, and Frances Penns, his niece, who inherited 'Household Furniture, Plate, Linen and China whatsoever which I may be possessed of at the time of my decease (except the Bed and Bedding hereinafter bequeathed to my Servant Mary Eplett)'. The will also mentions his watch, and sleeve buttons. There was no mention of a medal or presentation box.^[10]

Jenny Loosley of BA Seaby Ltd, coin dealers of London, purchased the Lanyon medal in about 1980. The seller was a woman living in the south-west of England who claimed that it had been in her family a long time but could not explain the surname initial 'L'. Loosley subsequently bought the medal from her employer and sold it at a coin fair in Sydney in 1983. David Worland, a Sydney collector, purchased the 'WL' medal and brought it to the attention of David Allen, a well-known and respected Sydney coin dealer, who wrote a story about the piece in the *Australian Coin Review*.^[11] Richard Smith purchased the medal soon after Allen's article was published.

Cook's exploration medals



The 'WL' *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal, reverse collection of the author

Cook's medals were originally called 'Otaheti' medals^[12] and are now known as '*Resolution* and *Adventure*' medals, because they carry an image of the two ships from Cook's second voyage, showing the sloops at sea, with their names above. The departure details are placed below the ships: 'SAILED FROM ENGLAND MARCH MDCCCLXXII'.^[13] The obverse side of the medal depicts the head of King George III facing right with his title around the rim: 'GEORGE III, KING OF GREAT BRITAIN FRANCE AND IRELAND ETC'.^[14]

Some of the medals had a suspension ring attached to the edge and others had a hole drilled through the face of the medal, enabling a ribbon to be attached to them. With ribbon attached, the medal could be worn around the neck and made an ideal ceremonial gift. Cook could show the intended recipient an image of his king, George III, while the depiction of the ships would serve as a reminder of the European visitors.

Some correspondence has survived regarding the making of these medals, and past writers have attempted to piece together some likely scenarios about the ordering and manufacturing of them. We do know that Sir Joseph Banks, the famous botanist who sailed with Cook on the first voyage and had planned to go on the second voyage, had ordered medals, a variety of trinkets and other items to give as presents or for bartering with Pacific islanders. Orders were placed with Boulton and Fothergill of Birmingham, who made the medals and other trinkets, or procured them from nearby factories.^[15] Banks, acting as the agent for the Admiralty, ordered 2000 medals in base metal — these were struck in platina^[16] — plus 142 in silver and two in gold (for Banks's personal use).^[17]

L Richard Smith has postulated that Banks first intended to strike silver and gold commemorative medals for royalty and his friends, and that the idea of taking medals on the voyage for distribution to people in newly found lands was only an afterthought.^[18] However, there is little evidence to support this argument. Smith claims that Banks's idea came from de Bougainville, and he quotes from an 1825 publication.^[19] The engraving of the dies has been attributed to John Westwood Senior, as a unique cliché (a preliminary pressing) has his surname stamped on the truncation of the king's head. Westwood's name was subsequently replaced with the letters 'B:F' (Boulton and Fothergill), denoting the factory, for the official pressing.^[20]

Since it took five blows to strike the silver medals and only one for the much softer platina, Boulton decided to strike the silver medals first, while the die was new and showed little or no signs of wear. When the reverse die — depicting the ships — cracked on the 'first blow' of the silver medal, it created a dilemma for Boulton.^[21] He would not have wanted to fulfil Banks's personal order with medals showing the signs of a cracked die. So it appears that Boulton immediately decided to make all 2000 platina medals using the cracked die as there was little time to make a new die before the intended date of departure, and he thought the medals would good enough for the 'natives'. Then, if time permitted, he would make a new reverse die and strike the silver medals. Fortunately the sailing date had been delayed well beyond the month appearing on the medal, enabling Banks's private order to be completed before the expedition departed.

Although each of the platina medals was to have had a suspension loop screwed into the edge,^[22] this was apparently both time-consuming and difficult, and not all medals were fitted with the attachment. Some interesting variants have been caused by the fact that the dies were not locked in relative to each other. The loop was always placed above the king's head. Some medals that did not have the loop had a hole drilled through the face of the medal, and all were made above the ships regardless of the position of the king's head on the other side. These holes were probably made on board the ships by the sailors, who considered the ships the more important side.

The platina medals were completed and dispatched by 14 March 1772 and the silver medals were forwarded to Banks in several lots, the last being at the end of March. The Admiralty paid £50 — or sixpence per medal — for the 2000 medals, a sum that included the total cost of the dies.^[23] Prior to sailing, Cook wrote in his journal: '*their Lordships also caus'd to be struck a number of Medals, on the one side the Kings head and on the other the two Sloops & the time they were at first intended to sail from England, these Medals are to be distributed to the Natives of, and left upon New Discovered countries as testimonies of being the first discoveries*'.^[24]

The second voyage

The *Resolution* and the *Adventure* left England in July 1772, sailing to the Pacific via the Indian Ocean. Cook and his officers presented medals to islanders virtually wherever they went. Despite this liberal distribution, an unknown quantity of medals remained at the end of the voyage, and these were later taken on the third voyage.

From 11 to 15 March 1773, the *Adventure*, under the command of Captain Tobias Furneaux, lay at anchor in Adventure Bay (named after his ship), on the south-east coast of Bruny Island, Tasmania. He and his men went ashore on a number of occasions, to refresh supplies of water and wood, and the landing parties did not see any local people, although Furneaux did come across several Aboriginal shelters during their stay. Inside one shelter Furneaux found a spear, some bags and nets made of grass. In one of the bags was a flint stone, apparently used for starting fires, and some bark. He took all the items and left in their place 'Medals, Gun flints, and a few Nails, and an old empty barrel with Iron hoops on it'.^[25] This was the first occasion *Resolution* and *Adventure* medals had been used as an exchange or gift item. Although Furneaux only mentions distributing medals at Adventure Bay, he may have done so elsewhere and simply recorded them as 'trifles' or a similarly vague term in his journal.

The third voyage

For this expedition Cook was given his previous ship, the *Resolution*, and the *Adventure* was replaced by the *Discovery*. The expedition left England on 12 July 1776, and the cargo of trade and gift items included the remaining stock of medals.^[26] Apparently he was not concerned that these medals recorded the intended date of the previous expedition's departure from England or that the *Adventure* had been replaced by the *Discovery*. Cook had been meticulous in preparing for the previous two voyages, but for his last voyage it appears that his preparations were not anywhere near as fastidious and his use of the medals may be an example of his attitude. It may also have been a cost-cutting measure not to make new medals for this voyage. The message the medal conveyed would have still been the same: the English have been here.

Between 26 January and 30 January 1777, both of Cook's ships visited Adventure Bay. Again, the reason for this visit was to obtain supplies of wood and water and this time they did meet members of the local population. On 28 January, when a shore party was cutting wood, Cook met and gave presents to 'natives, eight men and a boy'.^[27] The following day, while on board the *Resolution*, Cook sighted 20 Aboriginal people on the beach. He took a group of men ashore, where they distributed gifts of iron tools, beads, medals, and fishhooks. Cook later wrote in his journal, 'I gave each of them a string of Beads and a Medal, which I thought they received with some satisfaction'.^[28] This is the meeting that features in John Webber's sketch.

Some distributions and all the known finds

Apart from the medal found on Bruny Island, it appears that at least 20 other medals have been found outside Australia: two within a couple of years of being distributed, 10 in the nineteenth century, five in the twentieth century and three date unknown. Not all platinum *Resolution* and *Adventure* medals were handed out to Indigenous people; indeed, some examples are still in pristine condition and from time to time have appeared in numismatic auctions. The vast majority of these medals to come on the market lack the usual corroded surface found on known distributed examples. Those specimens that seem to have been distributed and offered for sale over the years have regrettably lost their provenances. Some medals in museums were never taken on Cook's voyages, for example, the British Museum's gold piece, which came from the collection of George III, presented by George IV in 1823, and a silver and a bronze specimen from the collection of Sarah Sophia Banks, presented by Dorothea Banks in 1818.

New Zealand

On his second and third voyages, Captain Cook spent a combined total of some 20 weeks in New Zealand. He recorded that he left medals on three occasions at Dusky Sound at the southern end of the west coast of the South Island, and also three times along the north coast of the South Island. Cook probably left medals at other locations, including the North Island, but his journal does not specifically say so; often he or his officers simply stated that trifles or presents were given. Eleven medals have been found in New Zealand: three have been discovered on traditional Maori settlements, including one found by an amateur fossicker over 150 years ago; five have been recorded as having been found at apparently random sites; and the sites of the other three finds are unknown. Of the 11 specimens, eight have been confirmed as having been found on the South Island, and probably one was recovered on the North Island; this is not surprising as many more medals were distributed on the South Island than on the North.

On his visit to Dusky Sound during the second voyage, medals were distributed on at least three occasions. Cook recorded that 'to conciliate their good will, we left some medals, looking-glasses, beads &c. in the canoe, and embarked again'.^[29] Two weeks later, the expedition's botanist, Johann Reinhold Forster, recorded in his journal, 'Cook gave the old man a Medal & I [Forster] gave him one glass bead, the only thing we had about us'.^[30] The third time Forster, states in his journal that 'we saw this morning the whole family They all got beads & trinkets, Medals etc.'^[31]

No medals have been recorded as being found in the Dusky Sound region, the nearest finds being on a similar latitude but on the east side of the island. Cook did not visit this side of the island during his second or third voyages, which suggests these medals were exchanged by Maoris. Historian Robert McNab concludes that the medals' 'distribution up and down the coast shows the trade routes of the original holders or the course followed by them when northern warriors drove them from their old homes'.^[32] PP O'Shea, who has recorded New Zealand and other Pacific island finds, states that four have been found on the South Island's south-east coast.^[33] The first was discovered in 1850 at Katiki Beach by Matthew Andrew, in a sand dune burial ground of a former Maori settlement, with bones of the previous owner, and it is now in the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch. Another medal was found (pre-1908) near that location, but no other details are known about this specimen. The third medal was found in 1863, south of the other finds at Murdering Beach near Dunedin, by Mrs JW Hunter who was rummaging around at the site of an old Maori settlement on the sandhills behind the beach. It is now in the Otago Museum. In 1953 a fourth medal was found — at Ryan's Beach, also near Dunedin, by Richard Steele — at the entrance of a rabbit burrow, and is now believed to be in private hands.

At Queen Charlotte Sound in November 1773, Cook recorded in his journal that 'it required but little address to get three or four aboard to whom I distributed midals and nails, the latter they were extravagantly fond of'.^[34] The following year in October, while he was again at the Sound, he wrote: 'I made them presents of Hatchets, Knives, Cloth & Medals, and in return they gave us a quantity of fish'.^[35] The first of four medals found in this region was discovered in about 1860 when James Jackson discovered one on the shores of Otanerau Bay, Arapawa Island. This medal is now housed in the Canterbury Museum. The second find occurred in 1878 at Tuna Bay in Pelorus Sound by Thomas Henderson, on the site of a former Maori settlement, close to the beach. This is now on loan to the Marlborough Historical Society, Blenheim. The next medal find, in 1896, also at Pelorus Sound, was by Mr TD McManaway in a three-legged (European) pot. This medal was held in the Turnbull Library but went missing prior to 1969. A photograph of this specimen appears in McNab's book, *Murihiku* (1909 edition). The fourth medal was found in 1930 by Mr Charles Woolf, near Wairau Bar jetty, and is now owned by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand.

Whakatane District Museum and Gallery in the Bay of Plenty in the North Island has a 'found' example that it acquired in 1961 but, regrettably, the details of the find are a mystery. If the medal was found locally, it may have been used as a trade item, as the nearest to this location any of Cook's second and third voyage ships reached was some hundred kilometres away at Tolaga Bay. Only Furneaux in the *Adventure* visited the North Island during these voyages, where he met Maoris at Tolaga Bay and exchanged 'Nails Beads, and other trifles at an easy rate' for crayfish and fish.[36] As previously mentioned, it was not uncommon for the explorers to simply record medals and other small objects as 'trifles' in their journals. This medal may well relate to this meeting of Europeans and Maoris.

There are two other 'found' medals, but where they were discovered and who found them appears not to have been recorded. One example is in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa; the current whereabouts of the other is unknown, but during the nineteenth century it was owned by General Robert Carey, a British Army officer serving on the North Island of New Zealand during the Maori war. These two 'found' medals may in fact be one and the same medal.

Tahiti

During a visit to Vaitepiha Bay in Uitea, Tahiti, in August 1773, Cook's botanist Forster wrote, 'The canoe now came under our stern, and we let down a present of beads, nails, and medals to the men'.[37] A week later while still at Vaitepiha Bay, Cook mentions in his journal that 'the present I made him (a chief) consisted of a shirt, a sheet, a broad axe, several spike nails, knives, looking-glasses, medals, beads, &c. In return, he ordered a pretty good hog to be carried to our boat'.[38] Two years later, Spanish explorers visited the island and saw some of these medals and acquired two of them, the first ever to be recorded as being seen by other Europeans.[39] They took them back to Spain and the current whereabouts of these two medals are not known.

René-Primevère Lesson in his *Journal des Voyages* (1825) recorded finding a medal at Borabora, a small island near Tahiti. Lesson acquired it by bartering two shirts and two handkerchiefs, and we can assume it was taken back to France, but its present whereabouts is unknown.

Vanuatu

During August 1774 at the island of Tanna in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), Cook handed out medals on at least four occasions. On the first, he was greeted on the shore by islanders armed with clubs, darts, slings and stones, bows and arrows, and he gave them presents, including medals, in exchange for water. On the following two occasions, he entertained the islanders on board and gave them spiked nails, medals and other small trinkets. On the last occasion Cook and his men entered a hut out of curiosity, and this apparently caused alarm: to ease the tension, Cook presented medals and handkerchiefs of 'Taheitee' cloth. In the mid-1820s Captain Dillon, in the course of discovering the fate of the French explorer, Jean François de Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, acquired one of these medals at Port Resolution on the island; its current whereabouts is unknown.[40]

Society Islands

Huahine

In September 1773 at the island of Huahine, Cook, Furneaux and Forster rowed ashore to see Ori, whom Cook had met on his first voyage. This time the men had brought along three trees, which were decorated with looking-glasses, nails, medals and other small items, and placed them before Ori in a ceremonial fashion. They then hugged him and, in return, he gave them a hog and some cloth and promised to supply them with whatever they needed.

A few days later, the three gave a bag to Ori containing a small copper plate engraved with the words, 'Anchor'd here His Britannic Ships Resolution and Adventure September 1773', and some medals. He promised to take care of the items and agreed to show the next European ship that arrived on his island.[41]

Ra'iatea

In 1808 Mr Thomas Reibey, master and joint owner of the New South Wales colonial schooner, the *Mercury*, while conducting commercial activities in the Pacific, acquired a medal in Ra'iatea, Society Islands. The find was recorded on 17 July 1808, in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*. The *Mercury* anchored at Ra'iatea, the exact location where Captain Cook had anchored 36 years before. The father of Mahee, Chief Oree or Ori,[42] had been given a medal by Cook as a present, and Reibey was shown the piece. 'After some solicitation, he [Chief Mahee] gave it to Mr Reibey.'[43] The medal was then passed down through the family until the Reverend Thomas Reibey donated it to the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1875, whose collection was later absorbed into that of the Tasmanian Art Gallery and Museum. The next discovery of a medal on this island was in 1941. This find was recorded in the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, which stated that it was found some distance from the sea in one of the ancient sacred areas in the Valley of Faa-Hara-To on the north-west coast; the current whereabouts of this example is unknown.[44]

New Caledonia

Cook was in New Caledonia in September 1774 and medals were distributed there on at least three occasions. Cook and his men exchanged medals and other trifles for fruit, fish, a sling and some clubs. Normally medals were attached with ribbon and worn around the neck but, in New Caledonia, Clerke's (captain of the Discovery) log records a most unusual spot to wear a medal:

When we found them, they were totally naked to the Penis, which was wrapt up in leaves, and what-ever you gave them, or they, by any means attain'd; was immediately apply'd there; nor wou'd they care one farthing for any article of dress, that cou'd not be in some form, be made to contribute, to decorating that favourite part. I gave one of them one day a stocking — he very deliberately pull'd it on there — I then gave him a string of Beads, with it he ty'd the stocking up — I then presented him with a medal, which he immediately hung to it — in short let that noble part be well decorated.[45]

On 5 July 1884 the *Sydney Mail* recorded an example being found at Koné, and the article included a very crude drawing of the medal; the current whereabouts of this medal is unknown. Another medal was unearthed in 1950 on the property of Charles Jacques in the Diahot Valley, which is some distance from the sea. It was found 45 centimetres under the ground when an old native dwelling was being dug out. At the time of the find, consideration was given to presenting it to the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, but its present location is unknown.[46]

Canada

None of the third voyage logs recorded any medals being distributed at Nootka Sound, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The members of the expedition did trade with the local Aboriginal people, who exchanged all sorts of animals, clothing made of skins, weapons, fish hooks and carved human bones for knives, chisels, pieces of iron and tin, nails and buttons. The Aboriginal people showed little interest in beads and no interest in cloth. But at least one medal must have been left there because, in 1933 (or possibly a few years before that), Arthur Nicolay, from Nootka Sound, recovered a medal on the beach. He was given \$75 for it and later the medal was presented to the British Columbia Provincial Archives.[47]

Medals held in Australian institutions

Bronze and bronze-gilt *Resolution* and *Adventure* medals are in the collections of a number of public institutions in Australia: the State Library of New South Wales has five, the Powerhouse Museum has two and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has one. The Powerhouse Museum medals appear to have been presentation examples. One has corrosion similar to the Killora medal, indicating that it had been buried at one time;[48] the other was acquired when the museum purchased an 1830s collector's cabinet that originally belonged to Hanbury Clements (1793–1847).[49]

There is a tendency in Australian institutions to focus on what explorers collected rather than what they gave out. This is probably because the goods they distributed were everyday items of small monetary value, and are seen as of little importance. No Australian institution has built up a collection of exploration 'trifles'. All but one of the bronze *Resolution* and *Adventure* medals were donated to museums a century or more ago, and the one purchased just happened to be in an early collector's chest.

The significance of the Cook medal found at Killora, Bruny Island

Commissioned by Sir Joseph Banks, the *Resolution* and *Adventure* medals are historically very significant. Although the Killora example is corroded and made of a humble base metal, it is the earliest documented and surviving gift by a European to an Aborigine. In 1970 the Mitchell Library published a bibliography of Cook, in which it lists 4808 objects including manuscripts, artefacts, paintings, coins and medals. Not one item is recorded as having been a gift to an Aboriginal person. The medal, funded by the Admiralty, reflects the British government's intentions to foster a good relationship with those Indigenous people with whom Cook came in contact, as well as supporting territorial claims by providing evidence of being the first discoverers. In those times it was customary for Europeans to claim territory in the Pacific and elsewhere when seen for the first time by them. While Abel Tasman visited Tasmania and claimed it over a century before, no colony was established there and, by default, Governor Phillip formally claimed it for the British in 1788.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal people whom Cook met and gave medals to were known as Nuenonne.[50] While no individual names appear to have been recorded at the time, many years later Woorraddy told the Protector of (Tasmanian) Aborigines, George Robinson, that his father had met Captain Cook at Adventure Bay.[51] It is interesting to speculate that Woorraddy's father might have been given a medal by Cook.

The *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986* lists a number of coins and medals, but there is no mention of the *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal. Some years ago I raised the issue of Captain Cook relics with a heritage office and was informed that, as Cook had visited many parts of the world, no country had an overriding claim to his relics. In light of the significance of the Killora *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal, surely the heritage authorities need to review their numismatic list.

The Cook medals display at the South Australian Museum

The South Australian Museum invited the public to 'show off' their collections as part of that institution's sesquicentennial celebrations. Every month throughout 2006 a private collection was displayed in the museum's foyer. When my collection of coins and medals went on display in April, the Cook medals caught the attention of the museum staff and curators and they invited me to lend the two medals for display in the Pacific Cultures Gallery, which was undergoing renovation and was due to be opened later in 2006.[52]

It is hard to imagine that just 19 years ago no one showed any serious interest in Smith's collection of Cook medals when they were offered for auction.[53] The personalised 'WL' specimen attributed to William Lanyon, who visited Tasmania twice during Cook's voyages, and who became second-in-command of the *Discovery*, is of strong Tasmanian and international interest.

The historical significance of the Killora medal cannot be overstated. It remains the sole Australian exemplar of such tokens, which played an important part in the first encounters between Aboriginal people and Europeans, carrying as they did connotations of territorial interests and imperial acknowledgement of the Indigenous population.

Notes

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Endnotes 1–25

¹ Nicholas Thomas, *Discoveries: The Voyages of Captain Cook*, Penguin, London, 2004.

² The drawing has appeared in a small number of books, including John Mulvaney's ground-breaking work, *Encounters in Place: Outsiders and Aboriginal Australians 1606–1985* (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1989). At the time, Mulvaney was aware that one of these medals had been found nearby but, not knowing its whereabouts, he used an illustration of an example that had been found in New Zealand. The drawing also appears in John Ross's *Chronicle of Australia* (Chronicle, Ringwood, 1993), but the image has been incorrectly printed in reverse.

³ Three years earlier, Captain Furneaux had left some medals in an Aboriginal shelter during his stay at Adventure Bay: JC Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vols I–IV, The Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1955–74, vol. III, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery 1776–1780*, p. 536.

⁴ The *Mercury*'s original article recorded that the medal had a suspension ring attached to it and, when Mrs Janet Millar sold the medal in the late 1960s to Sir William Crowther, the ring was missing. When I interviewed Mrs Millar in the mid-1990s, she could not recall the medal ever having a ring.

⁵ Crowther's notes about how he tracked down Janet Cadell, together with a clipping of the original 1914 *Mercury* article can be found inside Crowther's copy of Robert McNab's *Murihiku: A History of the South Island of New Zealand*. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, Wellington, 1909, now held in the State Library of Tasmania. In 1995 I learnt that Janet Millar née Cadell, the finder of the medal, was alive and living at Collaroy Plateau (Sydney) at an army retirement village, and I visited her.

⁶ A copy of the opening address is in the State Library of Tasmania.

⁷ The auction catalogue described the medal in these terms: 'May have been left in Tasmania. Very corroded surface but not worn, rare. Ex Estate of the Late Sir William E. Lodewyk Crowther, D.S.O.' Four years later, L Richard Smith, the successful bidder, wrote a 36-page monograph in which he illustrates Crowther's medal but does not delve into its history, simply repeating the cataloguer's description. See L Richard Smith, *The Resolution & Adventure Medal*, The Wedgwood Press, South Sydney, 1985.

⁸ Beaglehole (ed.), *Journals*, vol. III, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery*, p. 536.

⁹ Paul Geraghty, 'Fijian Dictionary Project, Suva', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1983, 554–9.

¹⁰ Public Records Office reference no. PROB 11/1604, transcribed by Cliff Thornton, March 2005. The transcription can be found on the Captain Cook Society website, www.captaincooksociety.com/ccsu4552.htm

¹¹ David L Allen, 'Captain Cook surfaces again in Sydney', *Australian Coin Review*, May 1984, 47.

¹² Otahiti (Tahiti) was the initial objective of the first voyage and, being the Pacific location that most captured the British public's imagination, was often used in the eighteenth century to stand for Pacific islands in general.

¹³ The medals are not accurate in their portrayal of the second voyage: the expedition encountered numerous delays and in fact did not sail until 13 July 1772. The ships that eventually were depicted on the medal looked more like stylised men-of-war rather than Cook's converted colliers.

¹⁴ France was still part of the official title of the king at that time, although by then no French territory was held, and the 'ETC' would have mainly referred to the American possessions.

¹⁵ The *Resolution* and *Adventure* medal was the first medal made at the Boulton's Soho factory. Boulton later formed a partnership with James Watt (of steam engine fame) and, in 1797, they minted 15 million cartwheel copper coins for the British government, a small quantity of these coins forming part of New South Wales official coinage under an 1803 currency proclamation.

¹⁶ It was previously assumed that platina was a bronze with high zinc content. A recent test on a medal confirmed that platina is an alloy containing approximately 50% copper and 50% zinc.

¹⁷ In addition to the medals, Banks also had a number of Maori hand clubs, orpatu, struck in bronze, and also some Maori tiki. See Jennifer Newell, 'Collecting from the collectors: Pacific islanders and the spoils of Europe', *Cook's Pacific Encounters: The Cook-Forster Collection of the Georg-August University of Göttingen*, National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra, 2006.

¹⁸ Smith, *The Resolution & Adventure Medal*, p. 3.

¹⁹ ibid., p. 2. Smith's reference was to 'Médaille de Expédition de Cook, trouvée aux Iles de la Société, au passage de la corvette Coquille', in *Journal des Voyages*, 1825, pp. 249–51. However, no medals were struck for de Bougainville's expedition.

²⁰ At this time the factory's registration mark for gold and silver was 'B&F' and Boulton probably did not wish to use this mark on base metal medals as his integrity might have been questioned.

²¹ Smith, *The Resolution & Adventure Medal*, pp. 3–4. Smith references a collection of invoices for goods purchased by Banks for the second voyage held by the Mitchell Library, safe 1/11: p. 295. A silver medal sold by Noble Numismatics, sale 88 (July 2007) shows the small crack of the first die and is now considered to be the first medal struck (although Smith believes this was struck a few years after the official striking: see Smith, pp. 30–1).

²² ibid., p. 4.

²³ ibid., p. 5.

²⁴ James Cook, *A Voyage towards the South Pole, and round the World performed in His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Adventure in the Years 1772, 1773, 1774 and 1775*, vol. I, Australiana Facsimile Edition, Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1970, p. xxxiii.

²⁵ ibid., p. 113.

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²⁶ Although the ship's inventories did not record them, they were certainly taken, as Cook recorded in his journal that they were handed out, and '20 dozen yards of ribbon' was stored on board for attaching to the medals: see Beaglehole (ed.), *Journals*, vol. III, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery*, p. 1492.

²⁷ ibid., pp. 54–5.

²⁸ ibid.

²⁹ George Forster, *A Voyage round the World, in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop, Resolution, Commanded by Capt. James Cook during the Years 1772, 3, 4 and 5*, 2 vols, White, Robson, Elmsly and Robinson, London, 1777, p. 132.

³⁰ Michael Hoare (ed.), *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster 1772–1775*, vols I–IV, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1982, p. 132.

³¹ ibid., p. 249.

³² McNab, *Murihiku*, p. 59.

³³ PP O'Shea, *The Sutherland Memorial Lecture 1969, Captain James Cook R.N. F.R.S. and his Numismatic Associations*, Supplement to the *New Zealand Numismatic Journal*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1970, 6–17.

³⁴ Beaglehole (ed.), *Journals*, vol. II, *Journal of the Resolution and the Adventure 1772–1775*, p. 285.

³⁵ ibid., p. 571.

³⁶ ibid., p. 742.

³⁷ Forster, *Voyage round the World*, p. 151.

³⁸ Cook, *Voyage towards the South Pole*, p. 151.

³⁹ BG Corney, *The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti by Emissaries of Spain 1772–1776*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1914, pp. 69–70.

⁴⁰ Smith, *The Resolution and Adventure Medal*, p. 24.

⁴¹ Beaglehole (ed.), *Journals*, vol. II, *Journal of the Resolution and the Adventure 1772–1775*, p. 220.

⁴² Thomas refers to both spellings, *Discoveries*, pp. 197–8.

⁴³ *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 17 July 1808, p. 2.

⁴⁴ *Pacific Islands Monthly*, April, 1951, p. 45.

⁴⁵ Beaglehole (ed.), *Journals*, vol. II, *Journal of the Resolution and the Adventure 1772–1775*, p. 763.

⁴⁶ According to *Pacific Islands Monthly*, November, 1950, p. 39, this medal was 'likely' to go to the 'Nouméa Museum' (as the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie was known) shortly after it was found. However, the current conservator and collection manager, Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, has been unable to locate the medal. An article by G Pisier, 'Les médailles de Capitaine Cook', *Société d'Etudes Historiques de la Nouvelle-Calédonie*, no. 18, 1974, refers to two medals being found in New Caledonia: the 1884 Koné find, of which no trace exists, and the medal found by Charles Jacques in the Diahot Valley. At the time of the publication of the 1974 article, this medal was still held by the Jacques family.

⁴⁷ Allan Klenman, *The Faces of Captain Cook*, self-published, British Columbia, 1983, pp. 3–4.

⁴⁸ This may be one of the medals found in New Zealand and its provenance has been lost.

⁴⁹ Hanbury Clements was born in Dublin and, from the 1820s to the 1840s, made many voyages in the South Pacific. This fact, and the Pacific Island artefacts also in the cabinet, suggest he most likely acquired the medal during this time.

⁵⁰ L Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1981, pp. 15–16.

⁵¹ V Rae-Ellis, *Black Robinson, Protector of Aborigines*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p. 32. Woorraddy was the first partner of Truganini, who died in 1876, just less than a century after Cook had presented medals on Bruny Island. At the time of her death Truganini was incorrectly characterised as being the 'last' Tasmanian Aborigine.

⁵² The publicity surrounding the *Show Off* display caught the attention of the producers of the ABC television program *Collectors* and they filmed the collection. The segment went to air on 8 September 2006.

⁵³ Although this was partly due to the fact that the Killora example was not fully described in its historical context. The most commercially valued pieces were considered to be the high-grade silver examples that were dispersed in England by Joseph Banks.

END