

THE VOYAGE OF HIS MAJESTY'S COLONIAL SCHOONER
"CUMBERLAND," FROM SYDNEY TO KING ISLAND AND
PORT PHILLIP IN 1802-3

A Journal of the Exploration of Charles Grimes, Acting Surveyor-General
of New South Wales. Kept by James Flemming

A JOURNAL TO AND FROM KING ISLAND,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

NOTE BY GOVERNOR KING.- The writer of this journal (James Flemming) was, sent to examine the soil, timber, &c., of King Island and Port Phillip; he is very intelligent, and a man in whom I could place great confidence in his knowledge of the objects that fell to his share. – (Signed) P.G.K.- [PHILLIP GIDLEY KING]

CHARLES GRIMES (1772-1858) is most remarked in our history for his discovery of the Yarra River. He was born on 22 February at Aylesbury, England, the son of a laceman.

Trained as a surveyor he was appointed when only eighteen years old as Deputy Surveyor of Roads on Norfolk Island. There he did useful work surveying the lands of settlers and of the ship-wrecked crew of the supply ship, *Sirius*, which became a total wreck there in March 1790. In 1791 he made corrections to earlier surveys of the island, and was appointed Head Constable of the island's administration.

In 1794 he was in Sydney as assistant to Surveyor-General Alt who was in ailing health. In the next few years he made surveys of towns and settlements in the Hawkesbury River district. He also drew up the first general plan of all the settlements, names and locations in the colony. His only recompense for doing virtually all of Augustus Theodore Henry Alt's work was to receive the services of ten extra convicts. Governor King finally appointed him to Alt's post in April 1801, an appointment confirmed by the English authorities the following year.

Grimes was an efficient surveyor and a conscientious administrator and was highly praised for his work. But politically he was not 'with' the establishment. He sided with John Macarthur in his quarrels with Governor King and Colonel William Paterson, and in 1808 he joined the rebels in deposing Bligh.

The usurpers appointed him Judge Advocate, in which post he participated in the examination of the pro-Bligh officials, and at the trial of Macarthur. He had no qualification for the post, and was completely ignorant of the law. Brought to realise this, he resigned his post and was sent to England with despatches concerning the Bligh affair.

As the British authorities did not recognise the government that had taken over from Bligh, Grimes was considered to be absent without leave. His salary was stopped and applications for his return to New South Wales were ignored. This stranded him in England and in July 1815 he resigned his post as Surveyor-General. He held several military administrative posts until he retired on a pension in 1848. He died near Gravesend on 19 February 1858.

1802

Tuesday, 23rd November.-Sailed from Sydney Cove on board the *Cumberland*;¹ a fine wind after we cleared the Heads; nothing remarkable except the jolly boat drifting it night off the Five Islands.

Wednesday, 24th.-Sailed along a high shore; at night off Cape Dromedary.

Thursday, 25th.-Saw Cape Howe, between which and Ram's Head there appears several spots of clear ground.

Friday, 26th.-A gale of contrary wind; drifting all day.

Saturday, 27th.-A calm; drifting a day.

Sunday 28th.-Righ wind; drifting all day.

Monday, 29th.-A fine day; opposite the same shore as on the 26th.

Tuesday, 30th.-Got past Ram's Head.

Wednesday, December 1st.-Went but a few miles.

Thursday 2nd.-Calm.

Friday, 3rd.-Stood for Kent's Group.

Saturday, 4th.-Anchored in Kent's Group; in the morning went on shore, collected some specimens and seeds, killed some ducks and a kangaroo. One dog was bit by a snake and died. Saw many seals and sea lions. The islands are covered with a thick brush and oak.

Sunday, 5th.-Went on shore to another island; barren; caught a kangaroo. The rock is granite. Sailed from Kent's Group; a fine wind.

Monday, 6th.-High wind and heavy rain; laying-to till morning.

Tuesday, 7th.-Little wind; half knot an hour.

Wednesday, 8th.-Saw smoke on Elephant Island (east coast of King Island); we did not think we were so near land. At five p.m. saw two ships at anchor, the *Geographe* and *Naturaliste*, dropped anchor near them. Capt. Robbins and

Grimes went on board; the *Naturaliste* sailed the same night.

Thursday, 9th.-Early in the morning the captain and Mr. Grimes went to the Commodore's ship and on their return heard that two vessels were lost off the 'Sisters.' A party of us went on shore; a fine sandy beach; we walked to what is called the Great River; there is a bar at its entrance into the sea. It is salt for a mile up when it begins to be fresh water; we did not go far up. If the trees were cleared away boats might go up it even at low tide. In our walk met with eight prisoners the French Commodore had turned out of his ship. He gave them 10lbs of bread each; they told me that there were three more on board. It being a rough sea it was 11 o'clock before we got on board. Elephant Island is covered with seals and mutton birds.

Friday, 10th.-Weighed anchor and came a few miles nearer land. The captain and Mr. Grimes dined with the commodore; in the afternoon the boat went for an anchor stock. McCallum, the surgeon, and self went on shore, stayed all night at some huts belonging to the ship *Margaret's* gang.

Saturday, 11th.-Went a little way into the country; being in expectation of the boats coming on shore, went along the beach to the French tents. It is a fine sandy beach with several runs of fresh water; the north-east part rocky. Went on board p.m.

Sunday, 12th.-High wind; a great swell; no one on shore.

Monday, 13th.-The captain and Grimes dined at the French tents. McCallum and self went on shore in the afternoon; joined the captain and went to the huts we were at before.

Tuesday, 14th.-The captain went on board; McCallum and self examined the country a little way towards the sea; it is high and sandy about half a mile in deep black vegetable mould, mixed with sand; timber small. There are the remains of some very large gum trees, but they are all rotten; the low ground is a little swampy. Mr. Grimes joined us in the evening and was informed that the captain [Robbins] hoisted His Majesty's colors behind the French tents.

Wednesday, 15th.-The party (seven) set off in the morning; at three miles crossed the Great River about three feet deep at low water travelled along a sandy beach. About six o'clock came to a spring of water and stopped the night; high hills and thick brush. Caught a kangaroo and three porcupines.

Thursday, 16th.-Went inland; at one mile found a fresh water lagoon; about 20 acres between it and the shore; the ground is high and sandy. Ascended a hill where I could see some miles. The tops of the trees appear dead and a thick brush; all the ground is sand with black vegetable mould. I went several times to the top of the hills; a white sand appears on them as far as the eye could reach; there appears to be a chain of lagoons about two miles from the sea. Came to Coomber's Bay where we stopped the night.

Friday, 17th.-A wet morning. Started about twelve; travelled along a rocky shore; the rain and hail annoyed us much, there being no shelter. Walked till about six o'clock and finding no fresh water came back about a mile to a spring; erected some bushes to protect us; stopped the night. Caught some kangaroos; rain and hail all night. The country barren; the shore high rocks, many of them projecting far into the sea.

Saturday, 18th.-Continued our course on the rocky shore till we came to a spring, and being told by our guide that there was no fresh water for some miles, halted. Mr. Grimes and self went to the top of a high hill where we could see ten miles. The land appeared barren, a scrubby bush, and but little grass; in bottoms are many rushes.

Sunday, 19th.-A wet morning. At noon continued our march, rain and high wind. The beach sandy; came to a salt lagoon opposite New Year's Island. Stopped the night; caught some emus and ducks.

Monday, 20th.-Mr. Grimes and men went back to continue his survey and I went along the salt lagoon till I came to a fresh-water river; traced it about two miles; came to a large lagoon. At the entrance are two small islands; it appears to be three-quarters of a mile long and three or four hundred yards wide; it is covered with bullrushes; a hill on one side, level on the other. Returned through the bush which is about half a mile from the sea. There is some tolerable grass where the brush is thin. Saw some fine trees by the river side but in every place I have seen the large trees are decaying and fresh ones are springing up.

Tuesday, 21st.-The weather is still wet. Made a signal for the *George's*⁷ boat to come on shore as we had no bread for some days. We moved our camp two miles further to where the boats usually land. Mr. Grimes went on board and procured us some biscuit until our vessel arrived.

Wednesday, 22nd.-The wet continuing sent a party to hunt while the others made the huts more secure. In our journey saw many sea elephants, but few seals. The elephants are in the greatest plenty at the mouths of fresh-water streams. The country round the place is hill and dale, sands and vegetable mould very light. The hunting party returned with three emus, three porcupines, and two kangaroos.

Thursday, 23rd.-Being a fine day went to shew Grimes and McCallum the fresh-water lagoon, and the wind being shifted began to expect our vessel which we did about 3 p.m. Not having seen her for eleven days we began to have serious apprehensions of her safety.

Friday, 24th.-The *Cumberland* anchored off New Year's Island. In the morning the boat came on shore, I went on board; was informed she had been drifted to Kent's Group and lay there till the wind shifted.

Saturday, 25th.-Went on the islands. Their shore is rocky, covered with seals. I came on shore with a washing party, the captain intending to follow in the morning, to proceed into the interior. On examining the specimens⁸ gathered at Kent's Group found them all damaged with wet.

Sunday, 26th.-The captain, and Mr. Grimes, and the doctor came on shore in the morning; remained at marquee all day.

Monday, 27th.-Set out at six o'clock, back the same coast as we had been before. Met a hunting party sent out the day before with four kangaroos and four badgers;⁹ stopped at about seven miles for Mr. Grimes to continue his survey;

on his return dined. Afterwards went to a lagoon about three miles from the sea. The road to it is through a thick brush and sandy hills. There are some clear spots covered with rushes and appears at times to be flooded. Dug a spot of ground and sowed some seeds. The soil is a light black sand about 8 inches deep on the hills, and from eighteen inches to two feet in the valleys, at bottom white sand. At the end of the lagoon, next the sea, there are some forest land with large gum trees; the soil sandy, and in the marshy grounds are large fern trees with deep black soil.

Tuesday, 28th.-Went along the side of the lagoon a little way, it is of considerable extent. Afterwards divided into two parties, Mr. Grimes, the doctor, and two others to examine the lagoon; the captain, self, and two others to look into the country. The ground is alternately forest and swampy; the soil is shallow on the hills, and deep black earth in the bottoms. The wood is principally blue-gum, from two to three feet in diameter and about twenty on an acre. A little way from the beach was taken ill by drinking some bad water. Stopped some time behind the party. I soon recovered and arrived at headquarters before sunset, where I found all the others arrived about two hours before.

Wednesday, 29th.-Made a signal in the morning for the boat to come on shore. Sowed some seeds, and the boat not coming, we set off after dinner, twelve in number, having been joined by one Smith, belonging to Cable's¹⁰ gang, and two natives from Sydney. Travelled about three miles, and being informed that we should not find water for a long way, stopped for the night. The shore is rocky, projecting a considerable way into the sea in many places. On our departure each man took thirty-two biscuits with him, as we expected plenty of game. In the evening caught three young emus, twenty-three seal, and eight kangaroos.

Thursday, 30th.-One man went back to the tent with the emus, and we proceeded along the shore. Crossed a fine stream of water and several springs. I am of opinion that the springs issuing from the hills come all from lagoons in the interior. We were joined in the afternoon by the man sent back in the morning. This day caught four emus, three badgers, three porcupines, and a kangaroo. The shore appears the same as on the preceding day.

Friday 31st.-Set out at six o'clock. At about three miles parted, the captain, self and three others into the country; Mr. Grimes, the doctor, and the other five proceeded to survey the coast.¹¹ At about a mile from the sea found a small spot of grey loam. Proceeded up a run of water the ground swampy; came to the head of it at about half-a-mile, the ground rising a little. Travelled about three miles over a level country, the timber being chiefly gum and tea-tree; the soil sandy. There have been very large trees, most of which have fallen. The standing timber is from 60 to 100 foot high, and from one to three feet in diameter. Returned to the beach nearly the same road we went, and, after dinner, went to the stream of water seen on the 30th ult. Went up it a little way, and stopped the night.

1803

January 1st (Saturday).-Started early in the morning to examine another stream seen as above. The brush was so thick that we could not proceed. It goes up between hills, as far as we could discern, three or four miles. There is a little waterfall near the beach. Returned back, and stopped the night.

Sunday, 2nd.-Set off at eight o'clock up another stream. There is a considerable current for about a mile, when it became dry at bottom, soon afterwards water, at about three miles swampy, about 18 inches deep of water, and very thick of trees; the water began to extend a considerable width, and, being so very thick of brush, left the swamp and went over some dry ground for about mile and came to a lagoon. Came up with it at the west end. It appeared to turn to the right and left at the east end and three-quarters of a mile long, but could not distinctly see its form. From thence to the sea, about four miles, is a very thick brush, with many fallen trees, which make travelling nearly impossible. The land dry and sandy, and many large gum trees. At five o'clock came to the place we set out from, and stopped the night.

Monday, 3rd.-Started at six o'clock, and made straight for headquarters, where we arrived between nine and ten o'clock a.m. Made a signal for the boat to come on shore, which soon arrived. Went on board for some necessaries, and came back to the tent in the afternoon.

Tuesday, 4th.-A party of the crews of the *Cumberland* and *George* were coming on shore for blubber. The surf being very strong, two of the men belonging to the latter were drowned; six more were in the water, but got safe out. The men who perished were Cato,¹² late gardener to Mr. Palmer, and Emmanuel, late gunner on board the *Anne*. The day was spent in finding them and sending them to the New Year's Island to be buried.

Wednesday, 5th.-Went with the captain and two others to the lagoon seen on the 20th ult.; traced it from end to end. At top there is a small run of water comes into it down a sandy hollow. Went on the top of a hill and ascended a tree; the appearance - dead-topped gum trees, sandy hills, and thick brush. It is with the greatest difficulty that one can pass through it. Returned in the afternoon, and found Mr. Grimes and party returned. From what I was informed they had not been so far as they intended to have gone when they set off.

Thursday, 6th.-Made a signal early in the morning for the boat to come on shore, as we wanted some necessaries previous to our setting off into the country. The boat not coming, remained at marquee all the day.

Friday, 7th.-Continued the signal in the morning, and, it not coming, the captain went on board in the *George's* boat in the evening, which came on shore for some men that had come from Elephant Bay. They informed me that the French commodore had sailed about eight days before, and that he had lost two anchors and a launch. Rain and thunder p.m., with high wind most of the night.

Saturday, 8th.-The captain arrived early in the morning, and, it being a showery day, remained at the marquee all day.

Sunday, 9th.-At nine o'clock the captain, self, Harry, and a seaman set off with an intention to cross the island. We

went along the shore to the stream of water we were at on the 2nd inst. Went to the lagoon we had been at before; we came to it at another place than we had previously been at. It appeared much larger, and fuller of tufty grass, the brush being very thick round it, and the water only knee deep. We ventured through it. It was nearly the same depth all the way over, which we supposed to be about two miles. It is full of tufty grass and bull-rushes, of a circular form. We afterwards kept an easterly course through a level country, sometimes dry, at others swampy. Trees small and very high, except some very large gum trees. It rained most of the day, which made it very disagreeable travelling. Marched till sunset, and it was with difficulty we could make a fire.

Monday, 10th.—Started at four o'clock in the morning. Met with some fine land, the soil more strong and of a loamy nature. Went over some miles of it - some of a reddish, other of a grey cast. The trees are very high. I measured a gum tree that appeared lately fallen; 100 yards clear stem, and between five and six feet diameter. As near as I could judge there are about 20 per acre. The others small and straight. The poles are only two or three feet apart, very high and straight, from six to eighteen inches in diameter, of various sorts; high fern and sword-grass; a fine deep black soil. Passed a spot of moory ground, where we saw some badgers and kangaroos.

Tuesday, 11th.—Started at six; continued our course. The country nearly as on the preceding day. At about two or three o'clock came to a swamp, with some very high fern trees. A little further came to a small stream of water. Traced it a little way, but finding it did not run directly in our course, the captain left for about a mile, when we fell in with it again. It was considerably larger, and I supposed it to be the head of the Great River, which runs into Elephant Bay.¹³ We traced it by crossing several times, there being many trees fallen across it. At about two or three miles from the place we first discovered it the water became salt, where the river is wider and fit for a boat to pass, between which and the beach are several small islands; on each side a tract of clear marsh, one side green, the other dead rushes; the side of the marsh next the sea hilly, the other level forest land. Saw many swans and ducks, and at six o'clock arrived at the mouth of the river in Elephant Bay. I suppose it may be about five miles from the place we first fell in with it to the bay. The same night we went to Cooper's,¹⁴ and stopped the night, being very tired and hungry.

I was informed that the French commodore took on board four of the prisoners which he landed on our arrival and one Lyons, an Irishman.

Wednesday, 12th—Set out at six o'clock, along the shore. Walked till four o'clock, when we shot a kangaroo. Sat down to broil it, but, the brush taking fire around us, was obliged to move a little further where we made another fire; and it was our intention to have stopped the night, but, the wind being high and the smoke troublesome, about eleven o'clock the captain set fire to the bush, and we marched on towards the marquee, where we arrived at four o'clock in the morning.

Thursday, 13th.—Remained at head-quarters all the day. A party went out foraging, and returned with five emus, two young live do.,¹⁵ and a kangaroo.

Friday, 14th.—The boat came on shore in the morning, and Dr. McCallum went on board, and I went into the country with two men to get specimens of wood.

Saturday, 15th.—Looking over specimens and seeds; the captain taking observations.

Sunday, 16th.—The boat came on shore in the morning, but, the wind being high and much surf, we did not go on board.

Monday, 17th.—In the morning two men went after some game; the boat went to the vessel with part of the luggage, and in the afternoon returned with the *George's* long boat, when we all went on board.

As far as I went round the island the hills are high and sandy for 2 or 3 three miles in, the brush very thick, and little grass. The interior is level, and in many cases swampy, with large lagoons. There is some good land in the middle of the island, but the timber is so thick and lofty that I could form no idea of its extent. The timber in general is gum-tree, mimosas of sorts, some ash, cotton bark, *Banksia* and *Rhamnus*; saw no cedar. The best place for a settlement is either in Elephant Bay or opposite New Year's Island,¹⁶ but as we saw but little of the interior there are perhaps better places. The shore is in every place difficult of access for vessels. Elephant oil and spars are the only articles of commerce the island produces; on the adjacent islands there are plenty of seals.

Tuesday, 18th.—All hands up at daylight; the Captain went sounding whilst the others were weighing anchor. At half-past nine o'clock sailed from New Year's Island, and at two saw land; supposed it to be Cape Albany (*Albany Otway*).¹⁷ Our company consisted of eighteen, the captain having taken on board Smith and Jones, who had been with us since our arrival on the island. This day had my provision served out by myself.

Wednesday, 19th.—Out of sight of land; a calm. At five p.m. saw land; at nine came to anchor.

Thursday, 20th.—In the morning off high land; the hills high and verdant. The trees inward appeared large. There appeared an opening like a small river to the eastward; at noon a valley with gentle rising ground, behind which the timber appeared large. At eight o'clock anchored in PORT PHILLIP; hot winds most of the day.

Friday, 21st.—Weighed anchor early in the morning, and came further into the bay; dropped anchor.¹⁸ The Captain, Mr. Grimes, doctor, and myself went on shore, and walked across a neck of land to the sea, whilst the carpenter repaired the boat. The land is a light, black-sand pasture, thin of timber, consisting of gum, oak, *Banksia* and thorn. Saw the scaites of some lagoons, all dry except one salt one; the land is about a mile and a half over; came on board in the afternoon.

Saturday, 22nd.-All hands up at daylight. The captain went sounding; on his return Mr. Grimes, doctor and self, two marines and two assistants to the surveyor went on shore; as we went on met with two huts, apparently built by Europeans; a little farther met with fresh water in a swamp about fifty yards from the beach; farther on a small run of water. The country level; timber as the preceding day. Saw three natives at a distance; they made off as we approached them.

Sunday, 23rd.-Early in the morning the same party as yesterday, with the addition of the captain, went on shore; we ascended a high hill;¹⁹ the land good until we got near the top, where it is stony. On the north and south sides of the hill there are from 2,000 to 3,000 acres of good land, a specimen of which is taken. Mr. Robbins and self went to the top of a hill; it appeared fine land at a distance, but only stones and short brush as we approached it; saw Western Port distinctly from the top of it; we supposed it to be about five miles from the beach. Returned through an extensive swamp. On the side of the hill with two dingles with some fresh water in deep holes. Mr. Grimes and the others took another way at the bottom of the first hill; we found them on board at our return. The country all newly burnt. Caught plenty of fish; a shark took a mariner's jacket out of the boat.

Monday, 24th.-At seven o'clock the same party as on the 22nd went to continue the survey. At three miles a swamp, several runs of water, only one good, and all blocked up the beach. The rest of this day's journey hills, rocky land,²⁰ light black sand, fine grass, and the trees low and scrubby. Several dingles on the side of the hills; found a little water in two holes.

Tuesday, 25th.-Having a sore foot stopped on board. Mr. Grimes and party went on shore at the usual time, and continued the survey till about two o'clock. From what the doctor informed me the land as on the preceding day; looked over seeds and specimens, &c.

Wednesday, 26th.-The Captain, Grimes, doctor, self, and three seamen set off for Western Port; at two miles a Swamp, without trees, and fine grass; over a swell another of the same sort. Found no water till we came near the Port; saw some ducks, which was a sign of water; made to the place; it was salt, but I went a little further up and found it fresh. I stopped there with one man, and the Captain, Mr. Grimes, and another went on to the Port:²¹ they got into a swamp and did not reach the beach in two hours; they returned, and after dinner we returned back the course we came. Previous to our reaching the water the doctor was so fatigued for want of water that he could not go on; he was left with a man, gun and compass, to make the best of his way back to the vessel. He sent the man off to the vessel for water with the gun and compass, and he moved from the place where we left him. On our arrival found the man but not the Doctor, and it being dark nothing could be done till morning

Thursday, 27th.-When four men set off to the place where he was left, they found his fire but he was gone. After searching all the day they arrived in the evening without him.

Friday, 28th.-In the morning two parties went different ways in search of the Doctor; in an hour after they were gone saw the Doctor walking on the beach, when a boat was sent to bring him on board. Immediately three muskatoons were fired to bring the parties back, but they did not hear them, and they returned in the afternoon. Thunder, high wind, some drops of rain, and excessively hot for two days past.

Saturday, 29th.-At eight o'clock Mr. Grimes, self, and four others went on shore to continue the survey from the 25th. There is a small river²² where we began; a little further some fresh water; crossed several dingles, all dry. At about two o'clock came to fresh water; it appears to be a considerable stream in wet seasons. I went but a little way in the country being alone. The land is a light, black sandy soil, timber small and low, the shore rocky, iron-colored stone,²³ but sand when broken.

Sunday, 30th.-The same party as yesterday went on shore at eight o'clock. About a mile from the fresh water there is a deep gully; I crossed it about half a mile from the beach; it appears to run a great way into the country. I ascended a hill²⁴ where I could see eight or ten miles, hills without trees, narrow valleys with scrubby brush. The soil black, g[r]avelly sand; at a mile-and-a-half from the beach a run of fresh water to a lagoon. Came to a river;²⁵ it was salt; traced it to the beach; crossed it up to the knees about a mile further; went in about a quarter of a mile found a fine fresh water river about 30 feet wide, and deep enough for a boat; Mr. Grimes took the bearings of it; traced it six or eight miles; it runs in a parallel line with the sea. Fell in with a body of natives, fourteen men, besides women and children; they pointed to us to follow the ship; I gave them some biscuit; some of the men gave them some old hats and a handkerchief; they followed us a considerable way, seemingly asking for more. There are some huts on the side of the river. The land sandy, with shell bottom; wood small. At five o'clock got on board.

Monday, 31st.-It looked like a wet morning; we did not go out early. At ten o'clock the Captain, Grimes, self, and two mariners, went on shore; crossed a neck of land about half a mile over;²⁶ went along the beach a little way and ascended a hill; the country appearing very barren. Returned to the vessel about one o'clock.

Tuesday, February 1st.-The same party as before went onshore about seven o'clock to continue the survey from 30th. There is a slip of trees from four to six chains from the beach within which is poor sandy land with short brush, and no trees inwards for several miles. In the afternoon the country more woody and land something better. The day very hot, and found no water. Saw two large emus.

Wednesday, 2nd.-At the usual time the same party as yesterday, with the addition of the doctor, went on shore; for about a mile the land dry, a light sandy soil; afterwards a large swamp, with three lagoons in it, all dry. The land appears to be covered with water in wet seasons. Came to a salt lagoon about a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide; had not entrance to the sea. Soon afterwards came to a large river;²⁷ went up it about a mile when we turned back and waited for the boat to take us on board. The ground is a swamp on one side and high on the other. Saw many swans, pelicans, and ducks. Were obliged to go up to our middle to get to the boat, and got on board between five and six o'clock.²⁸ Rain and

thunder in the night.

Thursday, 3rd.-At six o'clock the captain, Mr. Grimes, self, and five seamen went in the boat up the Great River; at between two and three miles it divided into two;^[28] we took the left hand stream at half past eight o'clock. The land became high, where we landed and went on a hill. The soil a reddish loam from ten to fifteen inches deep. Saw a large lagoon at a distance. Went over the hill to a large swamp.²⁹ Soil black, eighteen inches, with blue clay at bottom. No trees for many miles. Came to the boat and proceeded on; passed two dingles; no water; came to a third where we found some water, where we dined and proceeded on. Opposite this the land is stony soil, stiff blue clay, and no trees only some straggling oaks by the side of the river. We went up the river till we came to rocks;³⁰ could not get the boat over; crossed it at a place the natives had made for catching fish.³¹ It was still salt though a great fall; went about two miles on the hills which are level at top and full of stones, the land very bad, and very few trees, and appeared so to the mountains, which appeared clothed with timber. On our return back came to the river a little higher up and found it excellent fresh water, where it divided and appeared deep enough for a boat. Just as we got to the boat it began to thunder and rain. Stopped a little time and came back till we could procure wood to make a fire, and it being sunset stopped the night.

Friday, 4th.-Started at six and came to the branch we passed before, at the entrance the land swampy; a few miles up found it excellent water, where we saw a little hill³² and landed. The time dinner was getting ready Messrs. Robbins, Grimes, and self went on the hill, where we saw the lagoon seen from the hill where we first landed. It is in a large swamp between two rivers; fine grass, fit to mow; not a bush in it.³³ The soil is black rich earth about six to ten inches deep, when it is very hard and stiff. It is better farther back. About two miles further went on shore again; the land much better and timber larger. Soil black, ten to fifteen inches deep; bottom sand or gravel. I went to the other side where the ground was the same; went in about two miles; it began to rain. I returned to the boat and after dinner we all got on board and arrived on board the vessel at dusk. Saw a canoe and two native huts.

Saturday, 5th.-Early in the morning the captain went with some casks for water to the place we were at the preceding day; they returned in the evening. Mr. Grimes and the doctor were on shore but returned in about an hour.

Sunday, 6th.-The captain, Mr. Grimes, and self went up the river opposite to the place that the survey was left off on the 2nd.³⁴ The Captain sounded the mouth of the river; the other party along the shore. I went up a creek about a mile and a half; it was salt, and ended in a swamp; a run from the plains comes into it in wet weather. There is a few trees by the sea side; behind, a level plain to the mountains. Soil six inches deep of stiff black earth, white clay at bottom, and many large stones. The country appears the same for fifteen or twenty miles.

Monday, 7th.-Early in the morning the party that went up the river before with the doctor went up to the little hill we had been at on the 4th, when we stopped to breakfast; proceeded on to a creek,³⁵ where we dined. Saw some natives. The land in general is a fine black soil, ten to eighteen inches deep. Timber; gum, Banksia, oak, and mimosa of sorts, but not large except the gum. The river appears to rise to the height of eight or ten feet at times by wreck on the trees. Went alternately into the land on both sides the river; it continued nearly of the same quality. The greatest part of the land is above the floods. Proceeded on till sunset; stopped the night.

Tuesday, 8th.-Sowed some seeds by the natives' hut where we slept. Continued our course up the river; the land high; rocks by side of the river; it is a freestone, the strata on edge. Came to a fall,³⁶ where we could not get the boat over. We went inland a little way. It is stony, about six inches black stiff soil, white clay at bottom. Mr. Robbins got up a tree; saw it to be gently rising hills, clothed with trees, for ten or fifteen miles. A little above the fall there is a small island, and the river divides in two. The timber in general is gum, oak and Banksia; the two latter are small; the gum two to four feet diameter, and from ten to thirty feet high; on some of the low ground they are something larger. We were not more than half a mile from the river. Returned back, and crossed a neck of land 330 paces over³⁷ whilst the boat went round. Came to our old station at the large lagoon. I went about two miles inland and fell in with seven natives. I saw Messrs. Robbins, Grimes, and McCallum, at the lagoon. From the hill saw the vessel; returned to the river, and after dinner set out for the vessel, where we arrived about seven o'clock; the land at two miles inland is of a better quality than the specimen.

Wednesday, 9th.-Continued the survey from the mouth of the river.²⁸ The land for two or three miles is a gentle rise from the beach, which is muddy, with large stones; the land stiff clay, the stone appearing at top; a little further, near the beach, a swamp light black sand, white shells at bottom. There is a slip of trees about half a mile from the beach, then a clear level plain to the mountains, which I suppose to be fifteen or twenty miles.³⁹ Passed two inlets of salt water. Got on board at two.

Thursday, 10th.-At six o'clock the same party went on shore. The slip of trees by the beach continued about a mile, when the shore became more high, about eight or ten feet above high water mark; we proceeded on for four or five miles, and the wind being contrary we observed the vessel 'bring to,' and we walked back and got on board about three o'clock. Several nautilus shells picked up.

Friday, 11th.-At eight o'clock the captain, doctor, self, and carpenter, went on shore. We observed a hill at a distance and made to it; we crossed the two runs seen on the 9th; one ends in a swamp, the other salt water where we crossed it, the country very level, some plains, stony, and much water to lodge in it in wet weather.⁴⁰ Went to the top of the hill; it is stony; could see about ten miles around us a level plain⁴¹ with a few straggling bushes. The face of the ground is one-third grass, one-do. stone, and one-do. earth, mostly newly burnt. Returned back nearly the same course, and found some brackish water in one of the runs we crossed before. Got on board about three o'clock.

Saturday, 12th.-Anchor up at sunrise; proceeded up the bay opposite to the place where the survey was left off on the 10th,⁴² the vessel being about the middle of the bay. We crossed over in the boat to the other shore. The party

consisted of the captain, Mr. Grimes, the doctor, self, and seven seamen and marines - in all eleven, with four days' provisions; got on shore at five o'clock. I went on the top of a hill, where the land is good and fine pasture from ten to eighteen inches deep, fine black earth with white sandy clay or gravel bottom. The timber small and the same as before-mentioned. Came up with the doctor, and we went about two miles in, the country appearing the same.

Sunday, 13th.-Set out at six o'clock, the captain and three men in the boat, the rest on shore. The land and timber is of the same quality for several miles, and there are five dingles, which are runs of water in wet seasons, but all dry. The shore became swampy. Crossed the mud up to the knees; it continued low and muddy a considerable way. We stopped and dined opposite to a salt lagoon; started soon after, having but little water. The swamp continued for some miles farther, when I saw a high point of land, which I crossed, and it being near sunset stopped the night. We dug for water, but it was salt; we had not half a pint per man.

Monday, 14th.-Continued our course as soon as it was light. A large swamp two or three thousand acres, a brush of saltwort.⁴³ Crossed two places up to the middle. Came to a fine green hill, very fine land, eighteen inches deep of rich black soil. The captain went on before in search of water, but found none. I crossed over the hill to the beach, and found an acid spring. Hailed the boat, and the surveyor came up about ten o'clock, when we breakfasted, and filled the cask and proceeded on. The land behind the hill high and woody. Came round to a river;⁴⁴ went up it about a mile in company with the doctor. At the end of the salt water found a hole made by natives; drank of it and returned back to the beach where the boat had 'brought up.' I went back to the hole and dug it larger, and brought some of the water. The land is not of so good a quality after I crossed the river; timber small and crooked, mostly oak and Banksia.

Tuesday, 15th.-In the morning two men went for some water; set out about eight o'clock. I went over a plain and met with a river⁴⁵ went up about a mile and a half; it continued salt and wide. Returned to the beach, where the party was waiting for the boat to take them over; it being low water, the boat could not get up; crossed it up to the middle and a little further, dined. Proceeded on round a point,⁴⁶ the land stony and no wood; came to a swamp and another river.⁴⁷ I did not go up it as it was near night. Had much difficulty to find wood.

Wednesday, 16th.-Breakfasted before daylight. The captain and crew went back to the native hole for water, whilst the others proceeded on the land. Swamps, with gentle rising stony ground; some scaites of lagoons and small runs, all dry. About two o'clock the boat came up with us; our provision was all out. We had got four geese; stopped and dressed them and walked on till sunset; a bad fire this night. Five pounds of bread per week. Passed three islands, one large and two small; some mangroves on the large island, only a few scattered trees on the plain.⁴⁸ Many swans, ducks, and lugs.

Thursday, 17th.-A bad fire and swampy beach this night. Had about 1 lb. flour; boiled it for our breakfast for all hands. Mr. Grimes would not go any farther without provision; the captain went off to the vessel for some, and inadvertently took what water we had left with him, Mr. Grimes called him back, got the water in a camp kettle, and proceeded on about a mile. Came to a river; went up it about two miles in company with the doctor, where we found excellent fresh water. There is no run above the fresh water, only some pools; it appeared to be a considerable run in wet seasons. Crossed over to the other side, and came opposite to Mr. Grimes and party, and they went round. The land was a little better by the river side, but swampy near the sea. Proceeded on to another river; it ended in a swamp about a mile up. Soon after the boat returned from the ship, when we sat down to dinner. Afterwards continued our march to another large river.⁴⁹ The boat being at hand, it took over Mr. Grimes and his party; he proceeded to the place where he left off on the 10th, and I went up the river a little way in the boat. It is the second in size we have met with. The captain did not think fit to go further, and we returned and were soon joined by the surveyor, &c. Got on board about seven o'clock.

Friday, 18th.-Anchor up at sunrise; came opposite the place we slept on the 12th inst. As we went out of the boat eleven natives met us; they were very civil. I gave one of them a biscuit; he looked at it; I took it again, eat of it when he did the same; whatever we said they said it after us. There was one who appeared to be their chief. They handed us their spears to look at; one of them was barbed and one with two prongs. They followed us as we went on, and Mr. Grimes seemed much frightened and hailed the boat to follow us; when the boat came up we went on board. I made signs for them to come into the boat, but they would not venture. *Two of them appeared to be marked with the smallpox.*⁵⁰ After dinner we went onshore with an additional guard; they all met us again. Gave them some fish, a tomahawk, and an old hat; they put our hands to their breast, and looked into my haversack. The boat loitered behind us, and the sailors said that they took the lead-line and a hoe out of the boat, and some fish; got the line again but not the hoe. The land is a light sand from the point of the hill, and in some places swampy; the timber something larger, consisting of gum, oak, Banksia, and mimosa, some small pine, one half of it dead by the country being lately burnt. Got on board at dusk.

Saturday, 19th.-Weighed anchor at daylight; came opposite to the place we left last night. Dropped anchor and breakfasted. Got on shore about nine o'clock. The beach muddy; the land a swamp, timber as before. Came opposite to an island.⁵¹ The vessel 'brought to,' and we went on board about one o'clock. Soon after our arrival on shore two of the natives we had seen on the preceding day came to us. They looked much at my buttons; I cut two off and gave each of them one, and some biscuit. They went with us upwards of a mile and returned. After dinner Mr. Grimes went to take some bearings, and the captain to sound.

Sunday, 20th.-All hands on board till after dinner. The captain went to sound, and arrived at dusk.

Monday, 21st.-Anchor up at daylight; dropped ditto at about seven. The captain, Mr. Grimes, and a party of seamen and marines, went on shore; we were now in sight of the entrance of the port. Mr. Robbins told me not to go on shore; it began to blow and rain, and they all came on board at two o'clock.

Tuesday, 22nd.-Weighed anchor at sunrise, and came to the opposite shore. Mr. Grimes and assistants went to finish the survey on the south-east point of the entrance; the captain to sound. They returned on board about four p.m.

Wednesday, 23rd.-Weighed anchor about seven o'clock, and came opposite to the watering place. The wooding and watering parties went on shore. I went to examine the run of water; it was dry, except a small pond near the beach. Traced the run about a quarter of a mile; it ends in a lagoon, which was dry.

Thursday, 24th.-All hands wooding, watering, and washing. I sowed a variety of seeds by the watering place; the land is light and sandy. I went towards the bottom of Arthur's Seat, and met with lagoon with fresh water. The captain and Mr. Grimes came on shore in the evening, and all hands got on board at dusk.

Friday, 25th.-About nine o'clock the captain, Grimes, and doctor went to examine a shoal and take some bearings; they came on board about two, and in the afternoon some of the crew went on shore to finish their washing. About ten at night the man on watch observed the small boat gone; the whaleboat was immediately sent in search of her.

Saturday, 26th.-About four o'clock in the morning the party that went in search of the boat returned without her, when another Party was sent at daylight. The captain saw the boat at a small distance from the vessel; weighed anchor and took her in tow, and made a signal for the whaleboat to come alongside. Dropped anchor, and after breakfast the captain and Mr. Grimes went on shore; they returned about one, and in the afternoon weighed anchor and dropped down to the Heads and took in the whaleboat.

The most eligible place for a settlement that I have seen is on the FRESHWATER RIVER (*Yarra*). In several places there are small tracts of good land, but they are without wood and water. I have every reason to think that there is not often so great a scarcity of water as at present from the appearance of the herbage. The country in general is excellent pasture and thin of timber, which is mostly low and crooked. In most places there is fine clay for bricks, and abundance of stone. I am of opinion that the timber is better both in quality and size further up the country, as I saw some what is called ash on the banks of the Freshwater River, and the hills appear to be clothed with wood. As to the quantity of good land at the different places, I shall be better able to describe when I am favored with a sight of a chart, as I have not been permitted to see one since I came out. There is great plenty of fish in PORT KING.⁵² The country in general is newly burnt.

Sunday, 27th.-Anchor up at sunrise; cleared the Heads between seven and eight o'clock; about one off Western Port; a fine breeze in the afternoon.

Monday, 28th.-The breeze continued all night. This morning saw Wilson's Promontory, Rock Dunder (*Rodondo*),⁵³ Curtis's Island, with several small islands. A fine breeze all the day; at night out of sight of land.

Tuesday, March 1st.-A calm in the morning; about noon saw land from the mast-head, supposed to be Point Hicks. Contrary wind all day.

Wednesday, 2nd.-In the morning saw Ram's Head. The shore from Point Hicks to Ram's Head is sand hills, further inland high hills covered with timber. The wind continued at north-east, and soon after twelve lay to, there being a wind and sea; out of sight of land at dusk.

Thursday, 3rd.-The wind abated in the night. At sunrise opposite to the shore we were at when the vessel lay to; a hazy day; could see little of the shore.

Friday, 4th.-About eight o'clock the wind shifted to the south; in the afternoon a fine breeze from south-west. Day hazy. This day Mr. Robbins called me down to the cabin to acquaint Mr. Grimes with the quality of the land and timber in PORT KING. I looked over the chart and had a glance of the chart of King's Island.

Saturday, 5th.-A fine southerly breeze at daylight; going four and a half knots, increased to five and a half. Saw no land this day; thunder and some rain in the evening.

Sunday, 6th.-A hazy morning; wind at south. About ten o'clock saw land, Cape St. George, lat. 35° 21'. At three o'clock opposite to Jervis Bay; the land high at the heads of the bay, a small island at the entrance.

Monday, 7th.-At daylight the heads of Port Jervis bearing southerly about seven or eight leagues; the land is high to Port Hacking, where it is low; at six o'clock abreast of Botany Bay; at eight abreast of the Flagstaff,⁵⁴ and at half-past ten anchored in SYDNEY COVE.

1. The *Cumberland*, a schooner of 29 tons, was launched in 1801 in Sydney, lightly armed 'for pursuing deserters'. Late in 1803 she was carrying Matthew Flinders to England with his despatches and papers when she was forced to run in heavy weather and leaking badly for Mauritius. There Flinders was detained by the French governor, General De Caen, from December 1803 until June 1810.
2. This group of islands at the eastern end of Bass Strait was discovered by Flinders in the small schooner, *Francis*, in 1798. The strong westward set of the current made Flinders suspect the existence of a strait, and with Surgeon George Bass he established this in the 25-ton sloop, *Norfolk*, later that year.
3. The French ships had anchored in Sea Elephant Bay during December 1802.
4. In a letter to Governor King, written from King Island, Baudin gave the names of eight convicts who had stowed away on his ships at Port Jackson. Although Grimes' *Journal* says Baudin turned the convicts out of his ship on the island, King noted later: 'Most of those found means to go on board the *Geographe* before she left the island.'
5. The islands of Bass Strait abounded with seal and sea elephants when the first fishery was established on Cape Barren Island in 1799 by Captain Charles Bishop in the brig *Nautilus*. The first King Island fishery was set up

during 1802, but the slaughter by some hundreds of sealers and their native female labour rapidly decimated the herds. The Bass Strait fishing both for skins and for oil was economically profitable for about forty years. It was Australia's first export industry, making substantial earnings for the first twenty years of white settlement. The peak of the fishing was reached by 1810; however, by 1835 the seal population had been reduced to an uneconomical level by almost uncontrolled slaughter.

6. The *Margaret* was a British brig of 120 tons; she was used in the Bass Strait seal fishing in the early 1800s.
7. The *George* was a colonial-built sloop of 28 tons used as a transport in the early 1800s; she was owned by John Palmer, the first Commissary-General of the settlement, who later became wealthy as a trader, land owner and owner of sealing-ships.
8. It is not known what became of the specimens of plants collected by Flemming on King Island and during the later survey of Port Phillip.
9. The name badger was given to the wombat by early colonists because of its broad head and greyish colouring.
10. Henry Kable (earlier renderings were Cable or Cabell), a convicted housebreaker, arrived at Port Jackson in a transport with the First Fleet in January 1788. From the early 1800s he traded in Bass Strait seal-skins, associated with Simeon Lord, a pioneer Sydney merchant and ship-owner who was transported for stealing in 1791.
11. Grimes traversed the coast of King Island on foot in December 1802.
12. Cato could have worked in the garden of John Palmer's fine home which he built on the shores of Woolloomooloo Bay.
13. This would be Sea Elephant River which empties into Sea Elephant Bay on the east coast of the island. The island is well watered by several streams, of which Sea Elephant River is the largest.
14. Cooper was probably Cowper, an Englishman and the leader of a party of sealers who entertained some of Baudin's naturalists at his establishment. Cowper showed them the carcasses of two emus hanging in his larder and also said that he had domesticated wombats. A small emu, a distinct species that was native to King Island, was quickly exterminated by sealers and early settlers, being mostly killed for food. The King Island wombat (*Vombatidae ursinus*), a small greyish-brown animal, is now extinct.
15. Grimes' *Journal* makes no further reference to the two live emus; they were probably killed for food.
16. Currie, the chief town on the island, situated on the west coast, has a sheltered harbour suitable for small vessels.
17. Lieutenant John Murray discovered the cape in the *Lady Nelson* on 7 December 1800. He named it after William Albany Otway, a captain in the Royal Navy. The name was shortened to Cape Otway some years afterwards.
18. The anchorage was near present-day Sorrento.
19. Arthur's Seat, so named by Lieutenant Murray on 14 February 1802 from its resemblance to the Edinburgh hill of the same name.
20. On the western slopes of Arthur's Seat.
21. Shillinglaw noted this as being between Sandy Point and Hastings.
22. Balcombe Creek.
23. Shillinglaw identified this as Mount Martha.
24. Shillinglaw noted this hill as being 'back of Frankston'.
25. Cannanook Creek.
26. Shillinglaw noted this as referring to the Long Beach and Carrum Swamp.
27. Yarra River.
28. Yarra River and Saltwater (now Maribyrnong) River.
29. Moonee Ponds.
30. Shillinglaw identified this as the crossing-place later named Solomon's Ford after Michael Solomon who settled in the Keilor district, north of Melbourne, during 1835-41.
31. This could have been a type of seasonal fish-trap constructed from a framework of sticks. Such traps were not necessarily set in the same place each year.
32. This hill was later named Batman's Hill, after John Batman. It was levelled in the mid-1850s and is now part of the site of Melbourne's Spencer Street railway-station.
33. Batman's or West Melbourne Swamp, drained long since.
34. Near present-day Footscray.
35. Probably Gardner's Creek.
36. Dight's Falls, at Studley Park on the Yarra. A substantial cairn, unveiled on 19 February 1937, indicates this spot as the limit of Grimes' navigation of the Yarra River. The Falls were named after John Dight, a miller, who erected a water-powered mill there in 1839. The mill was operated by a company for a short period, but not successfully, and was then destroyed by fire.
37. Present-day Studley Park.
38. Williamstown.
39. This could have been a reference to the You Yangs.
40. Koroit and Skeleton Creeks.
41. Werribee River.
42. Near present-day Point Cook, a low-lying projection of the western foreshore of Port Phillip Bay.
43. *Salsola kali*, a prickly annual with winged fruits.
44. Werribee River.

45. The Little River, which flows into Corio Bay on the western arm of Port Phillip Bay.
46. Point Wilson.
47. Duck Ponds.
48. Bird Rock.
49. This would be Cowie's Creek, named after J. A. Cowie who took up a run on the creek in 1836.
50. The italics are Shillinglaw's and seem to suggest doubt as to the identity of the marks. Governor King, in a despatch to Lord Hobart on 9 May 1802, asked for a supply of Jenner's vaccine, although, he said, 'smallpox has never been introduced to the Sydney settlement.' (*Historical Records of Australia*, Series 1, vol. IV, p. 661) But King was wrong. A note on page 82 of Volume IV by the editor of the *Records*, Dr Frederick Watson, said that a virulent epidemic smallpox had occurred among the natives fifteen months after the settlement was established in 1788. He added: The disease probably spread over the greater part of the modern States of New South Wales and Victoria. It caused great mortality amongst the Aborigines, and it was estimated that fifty per cent of the natives in the neighbourhood of Port Jackson perished.' Aldo Massola, in *The Aboriginal People*, Melbourne, 1969, confirms these early smallpox visitations. He estimated that 'at least a third of the Aborigines of the South-east died of smallpox, undoubtedly introduced by a British ship and probably passed on to the natives of Botany Bay by a gift of cast-off clothing.'
51. Swan Island, off Queenscliff, west of the entrance to Port Phillip.
52. This was the name Lieutenant John Murray, its discoverer, gave to the Port. It was intended to honour Governor Philip Gidley King who changed it to Port Philip, honouring Governor Arthur Phillip, under whom King had served.
53. Rhodondo is a steep-sided, large cone of granite standing in the sea about six miles off Wilson's Promontory. In 1947 a party of boys from Geelong College, led by John Bechervaise, author and Antarctic explorer, landed on the rock. This had not been done before, nor has it been done since.
54. The Flagstaff was at Dawes Point where a fort (the first in Australia) was established in 1802; the fort was designed, built and commanded by Lieutenant William Dawes. Flagstaff Hill is the site of the present-day Sydney Observatory, built in 1858.

Extract from HISTORICAL RECORDS OF PORT PHILLIP, John J. Shillinglaw
 Shillinglaw, J. J. (ed.), *Historical Records of Port Phillip*. Melbourne, 1879.

Map attributed to Flinders (but may have details from Grimes/Robbins eg. Yarra/Maribyrnong Rivers). The Bay was first reported by Ltnt. John Murray from the LADY NELSON in Jan/Feb 1802. Flinders entered and circumnavigated Port Philip Bay from 26 April to 3 May 1802. Grimes/Robbins were in the Bay from 20 Jan to 27 Feb 1803.

