

VOLUME 6



JOURNAL OF THE
NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

OF AUSTRALIA INC.

<http://naa-online.com/>

THE KILLORA RESOLUTION AND ADVENTURE MEDAL

By Peter Lane



Fig. 1

After Captain Cook discovered the east coast of Australia, he made two further voyages to the Pacific. During these latter two voyages he distributed medals. These medals were presented to natives as tokens of goodwill, and also as evidence that he had visited the region. Only a few of these medals have ever been recovered, and only one has been found in Australia, at Killora, Bruny Island, Tasmania.

This article traces the history of an official British Admiralty medal that was distributed by Captain James Cook and his officers, to a Tasmanian aborigine at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island, and which was found nearby over one and a quarter centuries later.

During Cook's first voyage of discovery, imitation guineas, depicting King George III, were presented to natives and were proudly worn around their necks. These imitation pieces were also used as gaming tokens and were referred to as medals in Cook's Journals¹.

When plans were being made for the next voyage, Sir Joseph Banks arranged for an official medal to be made and he supposedly suggested the design². These medals are now known as the Resolution and Adventure medals because they depict and name the two ships used on Cook's second voyage of discovery. The medal was appropriately designed so that the natives could readily relate to the ships on it, as they actually saw the ships when the explorers arrived on their shores. The benefit of King George III's portrait on the medal was twofold, firstly Cook could show them his king, and secondly Europeans that came after Cook would know that the British had been there before. The date on the medal, March 1772, relates to the intended date of departure, however the expedition did not sail until July.

At the suggestion of Sir Joseph Banks, the Admiralty ordered 2,000 medals to be struck for the second voyage of discovery, in a bronze

1. Mira, W. *James Cook. His Coins and Medals*, A.N.S., Sydney, 1970, p.18.

2. Smith, L.R. *The Resolution and Adventure Medal*, The Wedgwood Press, Sydney, 1985, p.2.

alloy called platina³. Banks ordered the medals from Boulton & Fothergill of Birmingham, on behalf of the Admiralty and he also ordered 142 in silver and 2 in gold for himself⁴. He presented his medals to his friends and royalty, as souvenirs of the voyage. The Admiralties platina examples cost them six)pence each including the total cost of the dies, and Banks' silver and gold pieces cost him 5s.9d. and £161.4s.6d. each respectively⁵. Banks at that time was planning to go on the voyage, but later withdrew. Incidentally a quarter of a century later, the same private mint struck the famous copper cartwheel coinage that formed part of Australia's proclamation coinage.

The dies for the medals were engraved by the highly skilled John Westwood (senior)⁶ and unfortunately two reverse dies had to be made because the first broke. All the platina medals were made from this first die, and they all have signs of being struck with a cracked die⁷. The silver and gold medals were from the second die except for one in silver. This specimen, made from the first die has a very faint die crack below the ships, which suggests that the silver medals had been intended to be struck first⁸. To complete the Admiralty's medals before Cook sailed, they were hurriedly struck with the cracked die, and as Banks' orders were not so urgent and they were of a more prestigious nature, another die was made. One of the easiest ways to distinguish the two reverse dies is the location of the dot after the word ADVENTURE. The first die has the dot level with the bottom stroke of the letter E, and the second die has the dot level with the middle stroke of the letter E.

Some medals were made with a suspension ring fitted to the edge, whilst others had a crude hole drilled through the face of the medal. These rings and holes enabled a ribbon to be threaded through the medal so they could be worn, and "30 dozen yards of ribbon"⁹ were ordered for this purpose. Unfortunately, the dies were not locked into each other thus some medals were made normal



Fig. 2. First die: E.



Fig. 3. Second die: E•

and some upset and they even vary a few degrees from these traditional positions. Therefore a decision had to be made regarding the top of the medal, those that fitted the ring chose the King's head, and those that drilled through the face of the medal chose the ships.

A few medals in copper, bronzed copper and gilt are also known. Unfortunately little is known about these pieces, perhaps they were experimental pieces to see what the medal looked like in those metals. This practice is relatively common with medallists. Another theory regarding the gilt pieces is that they were gilded much later to enhance their appearance and value.

3. *ibid.*, p.5.

4. *ibid.*, p.22.

5. *ibid.*, p.5, 13-14.

6. *ibid.*, p.8.

7. *ibid.*, p.5.

8. Private correspondence with Chapman, J. 21 June 1990.

9. O'Shea, P.P. "Captain Cook R.N. F.R.S., and his Numismatic Associations", *New Zealand Numismatic Journal*, 12, 5, 1969, p.10.

The first group of medals to be distributed to “natives of new found countries” was at Bruny Island, then thought to be part of Tasmania. The two ships were sailing to Tasmania when heavy fog came up and the ships became separated. Cook sailed direct to New Zealand but Captain Tobias Furneaux in the *Adventure* managed to reach Tasmania. A reconnaissance party went ashore on 10 March 1773 and they finally anchored some distance to the east, off the coast of Bruny Island at Adventure Bay. They stayed there for five days and went ashore to replenish their supplies of wood and water. Furneaux saw a number of camp fires from his ship and whilst ashore came across several shelters, but never saw any aborigines¹⁰.

The year before Furneaux reached Tasmania, Marion duFresne, the French explorer, had visited the region and during his stay an aboriginal was killed. This fact may explain why the aborigines did not go near Furneaux. Incidentally, Tasmania was first discovered in 1642 by Abel Tasman, and Furneaux was only the third European to visit the island¹¹.

On March 15 Furneaux went into one of the aboriginal shelters and found a spear and some bags and nets made of grass. In one of the bags was a flint stone used for starting fires, and some bark. He took all of the items for the expeditions collection and left in their place “medals, gunflints, a few nails and an old empty barrel with iron hoops on it.”¹²

During the second voyage of discovery medals were also left at New Zealand, Tahiti, Society Islands, Tonga, Easter Island, Cook Island, Fiji, New Hebrides, New Caledonia and Tierra Del Fuego (the southern tip of South America)¹³.

As a considerable number of medals, perhaps a quarter of the original number, were left after the voyage had been completed, Cook took the remaining medals on his Third Voyage of Discovery. For this final voyage, which left in July 1776, the *Adventure* was

replaced by the *Discovery*. Thus it would appear that Cook was not too concerned that the wording on the medal was inappropriate for this voyage.

On 24 January 1777, Captain Cook sighted the coast of Tasmania and two days later, exactly eleven years before the first Australia Day, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* anchored in Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. During their stay there a number of shore parties collected water and wood as Furneaux had done some four years earlier. Captain Cook recorded that during the afternoon of 28 January, when he was with a shore party cutting wood, “some...natives; eight men and a boy” approached him and his men. The aborigines appeared to show no sign of fear and only one carried a weapon, a spall spear. This meeting was friendly and the aborigines were given “presents” which they showed little interest in. A little later one of Cook’s men fired off a musket to demonstrate its power and the aborigines immediately fled on hearing the noise¹⁴.

Zimmermann’s account of the Third voyage of Captain Cook, 1776-1780, records that Cook’s “presents” were “mirrors, bead necklaces and some medals of His Majesty King George III”¹⁵. No wonder they showed no interest in their presents, everything was totally alien to them!

The following day Cook was prevented from sailing as the sea was dead calm. He decided to send ashore two further parties to collect wood and fodder for the animals. Those sent to collect fodder were directed to the east end of the bay while the wood party returned to the same place as the day before. From the *Resolution* Cook sighted a number of natives along the shore and decided to go with the wood party in the hope of meeting them. As soon as he landed twenty male aborigines gathered around him and his party. Cook then proceeded to give each of them a string of

10. Reed, A.W. *Captain Cook in Australia*, Wellington, 1969, p.163.

11. Mulvany, D.J. *Encounters in Place, Outsiders and Aboriginal Australians 1606 – 1985*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1989, pp.29-31.

12. Reed, *op.cit.*, 163.

13. Smith, *op.cit.*, 20.

14. Reed, *op.cit.*, 169-170.

15. Henry Zimmermann was an Able Seaman on board *H.M.S. Resolution*. He kept a note book, written in his native language, German, recording all principle events. From these notes and his recollections he published an account of the voyage in 1781. This is available in English in Zimmermann, H. *Zimmermann’s Account of the Third Voyage of Captain Cook 1776* 1780*, (translated by Tewsley, U.), Alexander Turnbull Library Bulletin No.2, Wellington, 1926. The reference to “presents” is on page 13.

beads and a medal which he thought they received with some satisfaction¹⁶. This presentation was captured in a watercolour, which although unfinished, is not only important in a numismatic sense, but is also one of the first records of Tasmanian Aborigines. The painting has been attributed to John Webber who was serving on the *Resolution*¹⁷.

Shortly after Cook returned to his ship it appears that additional medals may have been distributed, this time to women and children from the same group. They hovered around Lieutenant James King's boat, and in another act of friendship he "gave presents to all of them, of such trifles that he had about him"¹⁸. Zimmermann wrote that on that day they met "forty nine native men and women...some of them also received presents"¹⁹.

The following morning, 30 January, the two ships weighed anchor and sailed up the east coast of Tasmania then headed for New Zealand leaving behind some thirty to fifty *Resolution and Adventure* medals.

The aborigines that Cook met were from the South-East tribe and their band was known as Nuenonne²⁰. Whilst no individual names appear to have been recorded at the time, many years later Wooraddy (who was also known as Count Alpha) told the Protector of (Tasmanian) Aborigines, George Robinson that his father had met Captain Cook at Adventure Bay²¹. Wooraddy was the first husband of Truginini, the last full descent Tasmanian Aborigine to die in Tasmania.

Further medals were distributed on this voyage as far away as Nootka (King George) Sound in Canada and in the Hawaiian Islands where Cook met his fate²².

One hundred and thirty seven years after Cook presented his medals to the Tasmanian aborigines, Mr. J.L.Cadell found a *Resolution and Adventure* medal on his property at Kill-

ora, North Bruny Island, about twenty five kilometres north of Adventure Bay. The discovery was recorded in the *Mercury*²³. The headline read: "A RELIC OF CAPTAIN COOK", and it stated that the medal had a swivel attached "and the relic was lost by a black owner at a camping place of the tribe, as the coin (medal) was found on the bank of a gully containing a permanent spring". A slightly different account appeared in 1978 when F. Oliver reported "One of these tokens (a *Resolution and Adventure* medal) was picked up at Rats Bay (Killora) in 1913 by Miss Janet Cadell, on a midden (a mound of discarded shells) in front of the house that is still standing there."²⁴.

The key to the subsequent history of the medal can be found in a pinned in a copy of the history of the South Island of New Zealand, *Murihiki*, which was donated to the State Library of Tasmania by Sir William Crowther.²⁵ The 1914 newspaper article had been pinned in this book by its first owner, Mr. F.D. Madding. The work was purchased from Madding's estate by Sir William in 1967. Sir William was aware of the existence of the medal and had long wished to acquire it. The acquisition of the book inspired him to renew his search. His success is recorded in red biro in the same book:

"Late last year with the interest in the Cook Bi-Centenary I set about finding a Cook medal of which I had heard in 1914 & was rewarded by the Mercury clipping attached to this page (recto). Eventually I found a descendant of Mr. Cadell & acquired it with data concerning its discovery for \$60.

W.C.

P.S. This is the only Tasmanian example of which I know?"

16. Reed, *op.cit.*, 171-172.

17. Joppien, R. *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987, Vol.3, 274.

18. Reed, *op.cit.*, 173.

19. Zimmermann, *op.cit.*, 13.

20. Ryan, L. *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1981, 15-16.

21. Rae-Ellis, V. *Black Robinson, Protector of Aborigines*, Melbourne University Press, 1988, 32.

22. Smith, *op.cit.*, 20.

23. *The Mercury*, 1 December 1914, 4. *The Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*, 22 June 1916, carried the same story under the title "The Bruny Island Story".

24. Gray, F.O. *Recollections of North Bruny Island*, Taroona, 1978, 23.

25. McNab, Robert *Murihiki*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Wellington, 1909 in the State Library of Tasmania. This study contains an illustration of a *Resolution and Adventure* medal found in New Zealand. See also State Library of Tasmania, *Notes prepared for an exhibition to commemorate the Voyage of Captain James Cook and more particularly his visit to Adventure Bay, Bruny Island 26-30th. Jan. 1777, c.1977, 2-3*



Fig. 4. The Killora Medal

Sir William E.L.H. Crowther C.B.E. D.S.O. (1887-1981) was born into an old established medical family in Tasmania. He was an eminent book collector and donated his vast library to the State Library of Tasmania in 1964²⁶. The price which he had to pay for the medal can be traced, as in 1969 the owner sought a valuation from the Secretary of the Australian Numismatic Society in Sydney²⁷.

Although the medal was reported to have been found complete with its ring, this had apparently been lost or removed before it came into the Crowther's collection²⁸. The medal was exhibited at the State Library of Tasmania in 1977 on loan from Sir William²⁹.

Shortly after the death of Sir William in 1981 his numismatic collection was examined. The medal was still in his collection at that time together with a note stating it was "found at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island"³⁰. This becomes important, as by the next appearance of the medal this strong link had been partly lost. In November 1981 it was offered by Spink (Sydney) but their description simply suggested that the medal "may have been left in Tasmania...Ex estate of the Late Sir William Crowther D.S.O."³¹. This inconclusive description was followed by L. Richard Smith in his study³². In March 1990 the medal was again offered through Spink, Sydney, this time as part of Smith's carefully collected research

holding³³. On this occasion the description read "a definite distribution item, believed found in Tasmania last century and from the W.L.Crowther estate". In the event, the collection was broken up and the Killora specimen acquired by the author.

Of the *Resolution and Adventure* medals that were distributed to the natives of newly discovered lands, only around one in a hundred have ever been found. Of these, eleven have been found in New Zealand, three of four in Tahiti, two in New Caledonia, and one each in the New Hebrides, Canada and Tasmania. The comparatively large number found in New Zealand reflects the fact that most medals were in fact left there³⁴.

The first recorded find of a distributed medal occurred in 1775 when a Spanish explorer found one in Tahiti. The last to be found was in 1953 in New Zealand in a rabbit burrow. Of these recovered distribution medals eleven still retain their provenances, eight of these are in institutional collections and three in private hands³⁵.

All known distributed medals have been affected by exposure to weather, soil and in particular salt air. The zinc component of the platina alloy reacts in a manner that causes the surface of the medal to bubble and swell up, sometimes even flaking off. Establishment of the exact find provenance and subsequent

26. Crowther, W.E.L.H. *Proceedings at the handing over of the Crowther Collection of Australiana*, 8 April 1964, State Library of Tasmania, Hobart, 1967, 1-7.

27. Hanley, T. private correspondence 3 October 1990.

28. McNeice, R. private correspondence, 3 February 1991.

29. *The Mercury*, 26 January 1977, 3.

30. Private correspondence with the authority who examined the collection, 26 December 1990.

31. Spink Auctions (Sydney). Catalogue of sale of 19th & 20th November 1981, p.27, lot 424, illustrated.

32. Smith *op.cit.*, 23 & 27-8. Smith was the owner of the medal at the time.

33. Spink Auctions (Sydney), 31, March 1990, Lot 1328 (d), illustrated plate 20.

34. Smith *op.cit.*, 24-29.

35. O'Shea, *op.cit.*, 15-16.

movements of the medal as undertaken in this paper remains of paramount importance however. The symptoms of burial, bubbles and surface swellings, do not prove that a particular medal was a genuine distribution piece. At least one medal bearing these characteristics has been dug up in England!³⁶

A small number of the platina alloy medals do exist in choice condition both in public and private collections. These suggest that some medals of this alloy were not distributed on the voyages, but were sold or distributed to interested persons in England or even collected by crew members.

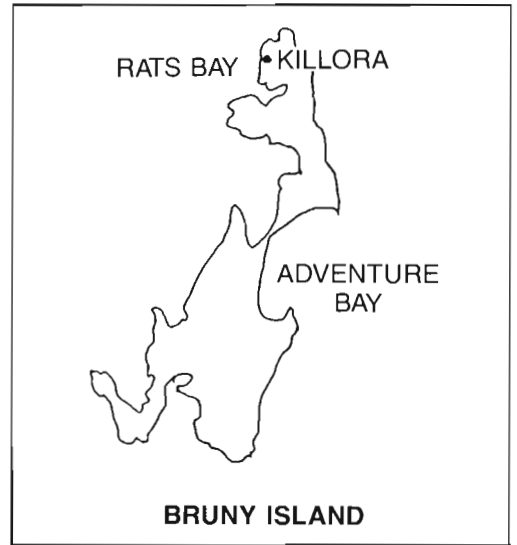
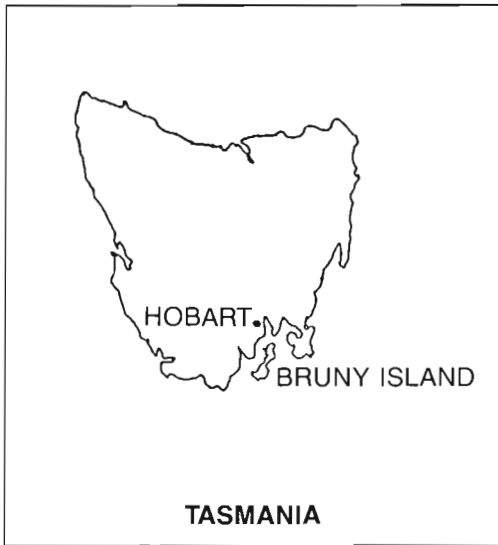
The overall condition of the Killora Resolution and Adventure is consistent with its history as a true distribution medal. Aside from the expected degree of platina degradation, the actual amount wear on the piece is minimal. This would indicate that it was not

worn or extensively handled by its aboriginal owner. While this may be historically significant, it is really impossible to truly gauge how the aborigines saw their “presents”. On the other hand the medal itself is a piece of indisputable physical evidence of the early contact between Europeans and Tasmanian aborigines.

Acknowledgments:

The author would like to thank the following people and institutions for their valuable assistance during the research for this paper:

Bligh Museum, Bruny Island, Tasmania; Dr. John Chapman; Elizabeth Crowther; Tom Hanley; Ray Jewell; Roger McNiece; British Ministry for Defence Library, London; L. Richard Smith; State Library of Tasmania, Hobart.



Additional Bibliography:

In addition to the works referred to in the footnotes, the following studies are recommended:
 Brown, L. *British Historical Medals 1760-1960*, Seaby Publications Ltd., London, 1980, Vol.1, p.38, 165.
 Klenman, A. *The Faces of James Cook. A Record of the Coins and Medals of James Cook.*, Canada, 1983.
 Munford, J.K. (Ed.) *John Ledyard's Journal of Captain Cook's last Voyage*, Oregon State University Press, Oregon, 1963.
 Vort-Ronald, M.P. "Bruny Island Medallions", *Numismatic Society of South Australia Newsletter*, 13, October 1990, 66-7.
 Westwood, A. *Matthew Boulton's "Otaheite" Medal*, Assay Office Museum, Birmingham, 1926.

36. Smith, L.R. private correspondence 5 November 1990.