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# Nature's Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801–1805

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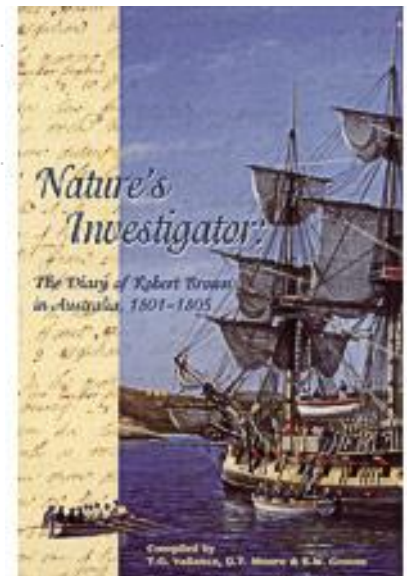
Robert Brown was one of the first professional botanists to visit Australia. He accompanied Flinders on his official circumnavigation of Australia in the ship *Investigator*, and later collected extensively in New South Wales and Tasmania. The result was published, in part in his *Prodromus* (1810), and in other shorter works, particularly on Proteaceae.

Brown came to be recognised as the leading British botanist of his day. His extensive herbarium, of which the main set is lodged in the British Natural History Museum, was also extensively consulted by other botanists, and is particularly rich in Australian type material.

While in Australia Brown also made zoological, mineralogical and anthropological collections. Many of these are now lodged in British institutions.

Brown's *Prodromus* was published before Flinders' account of the voyage, and Brown was therefore obliged to use his own manuscript names for localities visited ('Bay I' etc.). His specimen labels, too, were somewhat cryptic, containing only minimal information. This has presented later researchers with difficulties in properly localising the Brown collections.

However, Brown kept a diary during the 5 years of his Australian visit, and this provides additional notes about many of his collections and of the localities visited. The diary is housed in the British Natural History Museum, largely inaccessible to scientists. It has now been transcribed by the late T.G. Vallance, E.W. Groves and D.T. Moore, and the entries extensively annotated and interpreted. Brown used many temporary 'nicknames' for the plants he collected, and these are now tied to currently accepted names. Brown's diary entries are cross referenced to and supplemented by



*Nature's Investigator:  
The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia,  
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cover

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those of his companions, Matthew Flinders and Peter Good, as well as letters to and from Brown's patron, Joseph Banks, and others. Illustrations include maps of collecting sites, and paintings by the artist Ferdinand Bauer who accompanied Flinders and Brown on the *Investigator* voyage.

The book will be invaluable to botanists, zoologists, geologists and anthropologists, both for the background information supplied for the Brown collections, and for his incidental observations on the Australian landscape, its occupants and its biota at a time before extended European settlement.

## About this book

**Book series:** [Other publications](#)

**Publishers:** Australian Biological Resources Study

**Year:** 2001

**Authors:** T.G.Vallance, D.T.Moorek E.W.Groves

**ISBN-10:** 0 642 56817 0

**ISBN-13:** 978 0 642 56817 5

**Size:** 250 × 176 mm (B5)

**Number of pages:** xii + 666 pages, index, bibliography

**Binding:** Hardcover, section stitched

**Illustrations:** 33 colour plates, 4 black and white plates, 42 maps

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