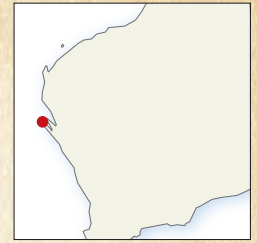


# Dirk Hartog Landing Site 1616 – Cape Inscription Area

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Dutch East India Company Captain Dirk Hartog, aboard his ship *Eendracht*, accidentally discovered the west coast of the mythical Great South Land or *Terra Australis Incognita*.

Hartog was following the southern route to the port of Batavia (Jakarta) in the East Indies (Indonesia).

On 25 October 1616 Hartog landed at what is now known as Cape Inscription, on the north-western tip of Dirk Hartog Island in Shark Bay.

To mark the first landing by Europeans on the west coast of 'New Holland', Hartog left a pewter plate inscribed with a record of his visit in a rock cleft. Now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the plate is the oldest physical record of a European landing in Australia.

Hartog's chart of the northern part of the Western Australia coastline appeared on world maps for the first time, prompting a series of landings and surveys by many notable Dutch, French and English explorers during the next 250 years.

Sent by the Dutch East India Company to chart the south-west coast of New Holland, Willem de Vlamingh landed at Dirk Hartog Island on 4 February 1697. Vlamingh replaced Hartog's pewter plate with his own inscribed plate.

Vlamingh's plate was in turn found in 1801 by Baron Emanuel Hamelin, a member of Nicholas Baudin's French expedition, who added his own inscription on a piece of lead sheeting.

One of Hamelin's junior officers, Louis de Freycinet, returned to Cape Inscription in 1818 and removed Vlamingh's plate (which was returned to Australia by the French Government in 1947).

British navigator, Philip Parker King, son of a former New South Wales Governor, also left a record of his visit to Cape Inscription in 1822 while attempting to complete Matthew Flinders' 1801 charts of the Australian coastline.

In 1858 Captain Henry Mangles Denham on HMS *Herald* also visited Cape Inscription to complete the first naval hydrographic charts of the Western Australian coastline.

These landings had a profound effect on cartography, changed the 18th century European world view and expanded knowledge about the great southern continent.



Hartog and Vlamingh's posts

In addition to Cape Inscription, two other sites on Dirk Hartog Island—Dampier Landing and Turtle Bay—are important in Australian exploration.

In 1699 British navigator and naturalist, William Dampier, landed on the north-western side of the island and named Shark Bay. Dampier made the first scientific collection of Australian plants, marking the beginnings of scientific interest in Australian botany and their taxonomic classifications.

In 1772 French navigator, Francois de Saint-Allouarn, landed at Turtle Bay. He buried two bottles, one containing a parchment claiming the west coast of New Holland for France. Each bottle was sealed with a silver French coin under the lead cap. One of the bottles, together with its coin and lead cap but without a parchment, was recovered in 1998.

Dirk Hartog Island was included in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area in 1991 in recognition of its outstanding natural universal values.

National Heritage List: 6 April 2006

Included in the Shark Bay World Heritage Area: 1991

