

There are three stories which I must tell ^{our Empire} ~~England~~ & of the only ^{circumstances} ~~reactions~~ I know from the Natives themselves, of their first-reaction to the ^{first} white men who stepped on their shores in the South West of Western Australia, in the ^{month of Dec 25/1801} 1801.

The following notes are from Flinders diary: Flinders reached King George's Sound in December 1801, & remained there for four weeks, during which a thorough examination of the adjacent country was made.

"December 12th 1801. Marks of the Country being inhabited were found everywhere but-as yet-there was nothing to indicate the presence of the Natives in our neighbourhood.

Monday Dec 14th: Smokes being perceived at the head of the harbour, Mr Brown & other gentlemen directed their excursions that day & next-but several of the Natives, who were shy, but not afraid.

One man with whom they had communication was admired for his manly behaviour, & they gave him a bird which had been shot & a pocket handkerchief, but like the generality of people hitherto seen in this Country, these men did not seem to be desirous of communication with strangers. A very early sign was made to our gentlemen, to return from whence they had come.

(~~15.1.1841~~)

2.

Next morning we were greatly surprised by ~~the~~
2 Indians & afterwards by others behind our tents. They
approached with caution, Mr. Purdie, assistant-surgeon,
going up unarmed, a communication was brought ~~about~~
about.

Wednesday 23rd. Formed a party well armed & provided
for 2 days in order to visit lakes behind West Cape
Howe. Walked N.W. of Princess Royal Harbour
& thence into country in a western direction - had
not gone far when a native was seen running
before us, soon after an old man, he was anxious
for us not to go further - was not able to prevail.
We accommodated him so far as to make a circuit
round the woods where it seemed probable his
family & female friends were placed - the old man
followed us, hallooing to give information of our
movements & when a parakeet was shot he
experienced neither fear nor surprise.
Later we took to the skirts of the Seesaw hills
& re-crossed swamps, & passed our way through
thick bushes before reaching eastern lake.
Then we retraced steps back to our tents.
On the 30th wooding & dewatering of the ship was
completed & sails repaired.

Only a limited number of Natives was seen
 they were shy but not afraid, and during the
 stay of the "Luventator" no disturbance whatever
 occurred although they visited the tents daily.
 (Writing a few days before his departure from
 King George Sound, Flinders says: -) Our friends,
 the Natives, continued to visit us, & the old man
 with several others being at the tents this morning.
 I ordered the Marines on shore to be exercised in
 their presence. The red coats & white crossed belts
 were greatly admired, having some resemblance
 to their own manner of ornamenting themselves;
 and the drum, but particularly the fife, excited their
astonishment; but when they saw these beautiful
red & white men, with their bright-muskets, drawn
up in a line, they absolutely screamed with
delight; nor were their wild gestures & vociferation
 to be silenced but by commencing the exercises, to
 which they paid the most earnest & silent attention.
 Several of them moved their hands involuntarily
 according to the motions; and the old man
 placed himself at the end of a rank, with a
 short staff in his hand, which he shouldered,
 presented, & concealed, as did the Marines
 with their muskets, without, I believe, knowing
 what he did. Before firing, the Natives
 were acquainted with what was going to take

place, so that the natives did not excite much terror."

The native women were kept out of sight, as the men appeared to think that there must be women in the ship, & that a similar jealousy actuated the company of the "Investigator".

The tents & observatory were already struck & every thing being sent on board, we took leave of the natives & embarked with intention of running into the Sound this evening, but change of wind prevented it. So it was 3rd of January 1802 in the afternoon, before we steered out of Princes Royal Harbour.

Our frequent & amiable communication with the natives of this Country had been mentioned. The women however were kept out of sight, with seeming jealousy. The belief that there must be women in the ship, induced 2 of the natives to comply with our persuasion of getting into the boat to go on board - but their courage failing, they desired to be re-landed, & made signs that the ship must go on shore to them.