

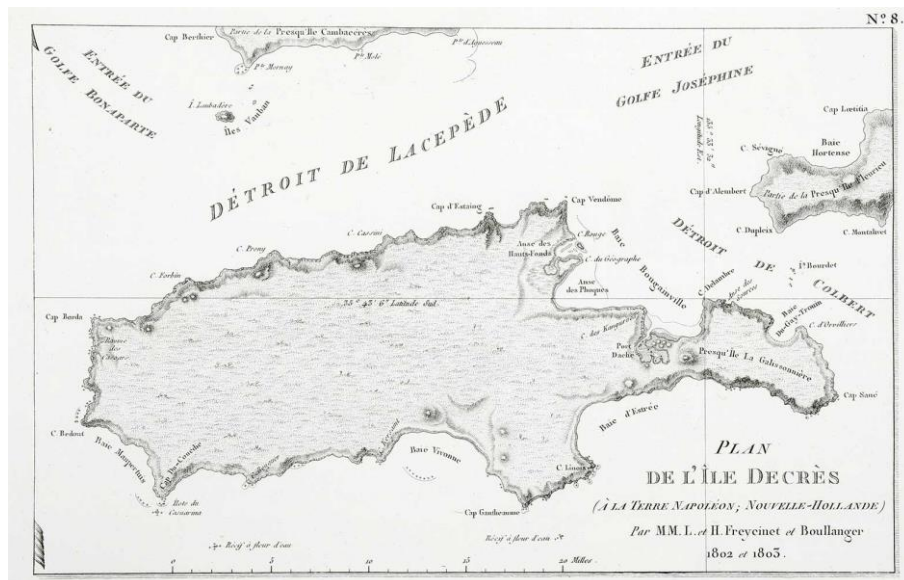
# A summary of shipping to Kangaroo Island 1800-1837

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The early shipping history of Kangaroo Island (KI) has been assembled from several sources, principally the works of J.S. Cumpston. This forms the Table at the end of this account. Prior to the establishment of Adelaide by free settlers in 1836, many ships were active in what became South Australian waters. This account only covers those officially recorded, and no doubt many more came and went unrecorded. Following the initial explorations of Nicholas Baudin and Matthew Flinders in 1802-3, the waters around Kangaroo Island were frequently visited by American, British and some French sealers and whalers. Shore bases were established at Pelican Lagoon, Nepean Bay and Flour Cask Bay. The colonial authorities in Sydney were hostile to the Americans, whom they perceived as aiding runaway convicts (which was probably true).

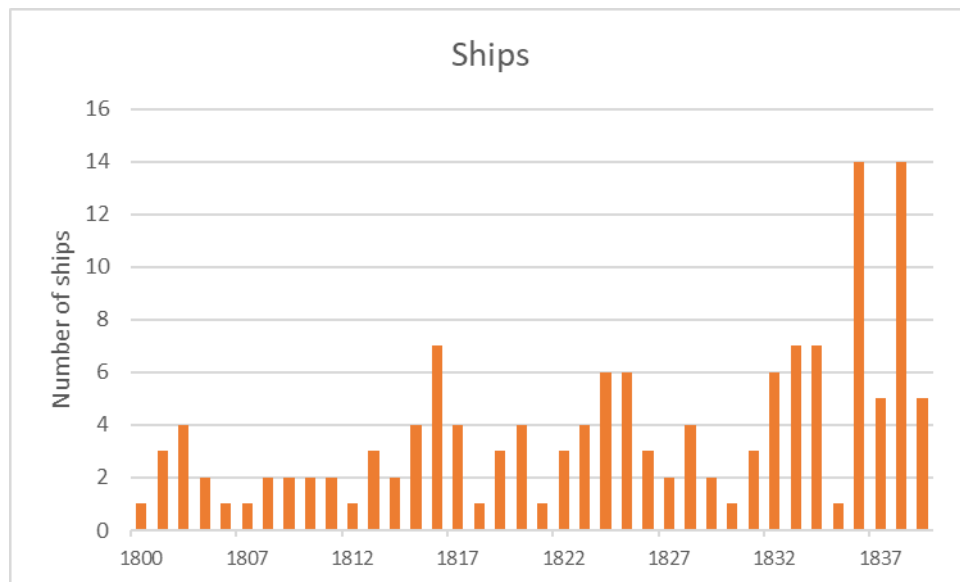


Map of L'Isle Decres (Kangaroo Island) by Freycinet and Boullanger, 1802-3



View of the north side of Kangaroo Island. Painted by William Westall, from Views of Australian scenery, 1814.

Following this early exploration stage, the main activity appears to have been sealing and the harvesting of salt from several lakes in the vicinity of Nepean Bay and Pelican Lagoon. The target of the sealers was the Long-nosed or New Zealand fur seal *Arctocephalus doriferus*, although some biologists believe a separate species *A. tasmanicus* was taken and is no longer extant on the island. Seal skins were highly prized, with the main markets being at Canton (modern Guangzhou) in China and in Europe. The dried skins were used for the lining of winter coats and for hats. The first sealer to call at Sydney (though not necessarily working the rookeries on KI) was the *Fairy* from Boston in 1793, followed by the *Mercury* from Rhode Island and the *Otter* of Boston in 1794. At Pelican Lagoon the brig *Union*, commanded by Isaac Pendleton of Stonington, Connecticut overwintered in 1803-4 and while there built the 35 ton sloop *Independence*. The frames were carried aboard in the hull and the cladding was locally sawn timber, probably cypress pine, she-oak and sugar gum. This was the first wooden vessel known to have been built in South Australia. Pendleton and his crew commenced sealing around Kangaroo Island and further afield in Bass Strait. The Furneaux Group, the Kent Group and King Island, among others, were all being visited by sealers. In 1804 Governor King issued a proclamation banning British sealers from serving on any American vessels, from building any vessel over 14 feet in keel (thus eliminating the construction of useful vessels like *Independence*) and ordering any vessels calling at Sydney to only clear for their original destination and not return (thus preventing them from returning with a cargo of skins and selling them there). The Americans were effectively excluded from British imperial commerce by the War of 1812 and did not return until Sydney re-opened to them in the 1830s.



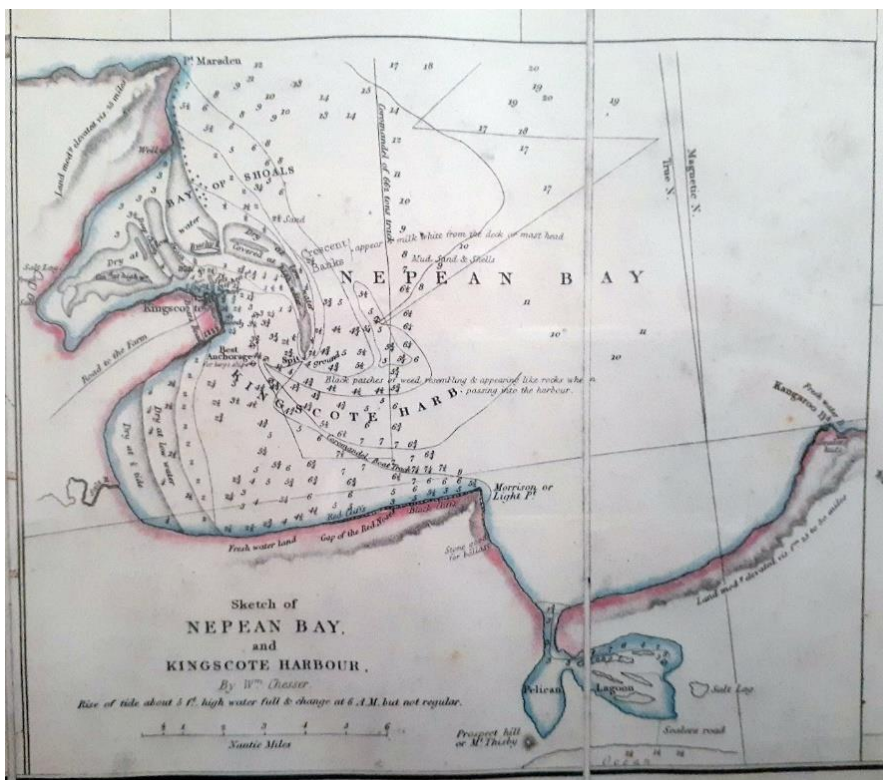
Number of ships recorded at Kangaroo Island, 1800-1837

A number of Sydney merchants and entrepreneurs, including Simeon Lord and Henry Kable, began to send vessels to Kangaroo Island for seal skins. Between 1803 and 1817 between two and four ships visited Kangaroo Island each year, with Nepean Bay and Pelican Lagoon being the most likely anchorages. Caches of dried skins have been found in caves on the south coast of the island. Salt was a much-desired commodity, as a preservative and for treating skins to be used for hat making. Significant quantities of salt (519 tons recorded) were harvested from lakes near Nepean Bay. Salt harvesting was later to become a major industry on the island, employing 100 people. Kangaroo skins (used for shoe leather) and whale oil were also exported from the island. Whaling in these waters was to achieve greater prominence in the 1830s. By 1816 there were 13 Europeans based on Kangaroo Island, and many of these had Aboriginal wives who had been taken from Tasmania and from the nearby mainland. Sydney was the listed port of origin for virtually all of the ships coming to the island until 1817, when vessels from Hobart also commenced sealing and salt harvesting activities there. By 1829 ships from Launceston were also active around the island and more whaling was being undertaken. This dominated the activities until 1836 when the first settlers under the auspices of the South Australian Company began to arrive. 194 passengers were listed on ships arriving at Kangaroo Island in 1836.



View of Sydney, 1803. Artist Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, Muséum d'histoire naturelle, Le Havre

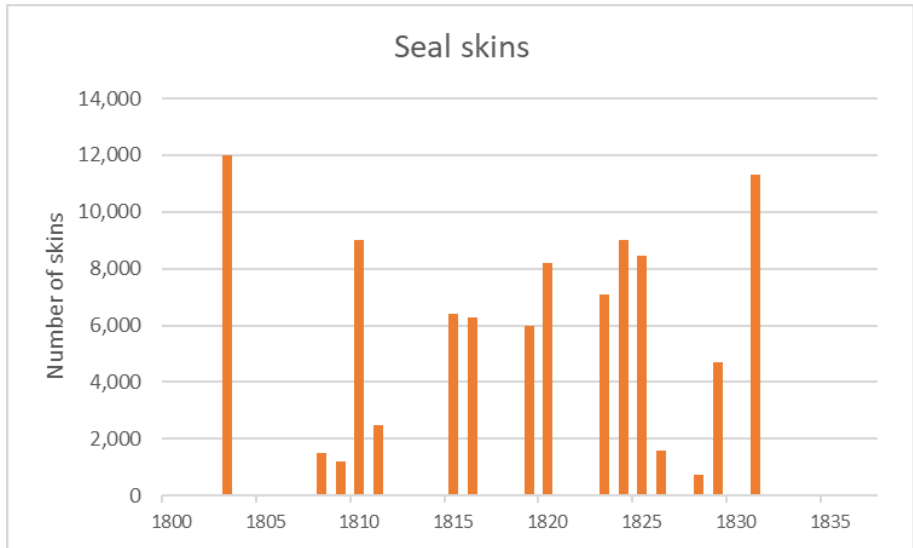
The map below was produced for the SA Colonists by John Arrowsmith of London, based on the surveys of Matthew Flinders and Colonel Light. It was one of the first foldable maps to be produced, constructed as a series of tiles mounted on canvas.



Detail of Nepean Bay and Pelican Lagoon, from the 1838 map of the South Australian colony by John Arrowsmith.

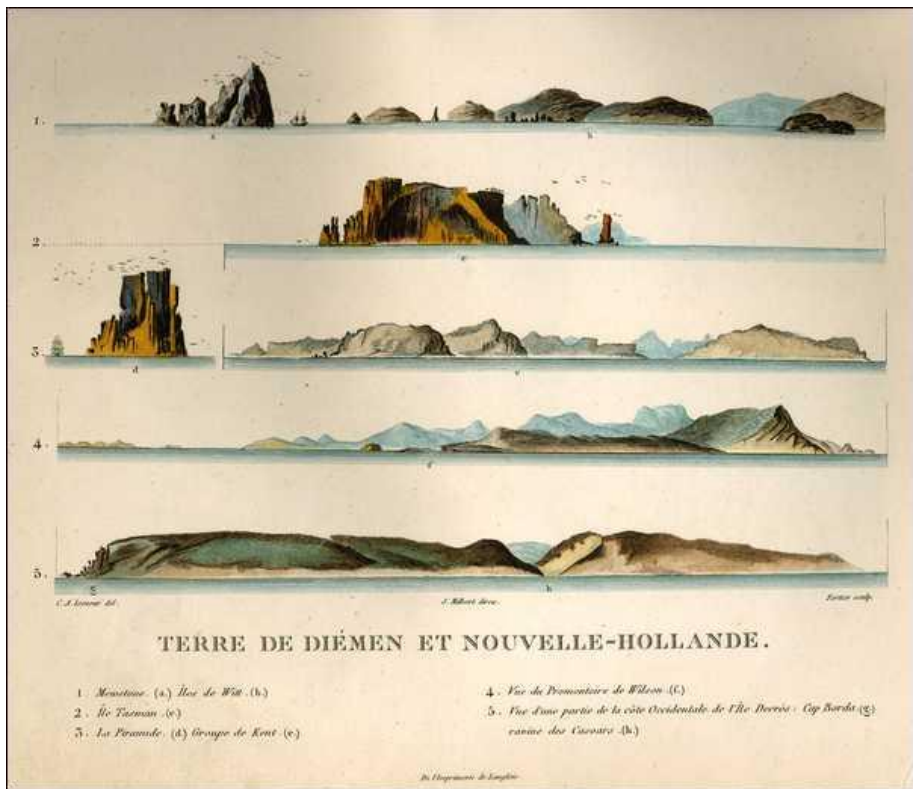
It is not possible to arrive at accurate figures for all of the seals killed on Kangaroo Island for their skins. The records are fragmentary and although the shipping records do cite some numbers, many just give “sealing” as the activity. The total of recorded seal skins exported is 96,020 between 1803 and 1831. Despite the limitations of the data, it is clear that very significant numbers of seals were taken from Kangaroo Island. Over the same period it is estimated that 150,000 seals were taken from the Bass Strait islands and a similar number from Macquarie Island and the islands to the south of New Zealand, such as the Antipodes. Early prices for seal skins in London were high, ranging from 15/- to 25/- for prime skins. A glut in supply brought the price down to 8/- by 1808. From 1792 to 1810 some 2,500,000 seal skins were delivered to China and would have earned their owners about £675,000 (US\$3 million) at the time. In today’s money that would equate to about \$20 million. The sealing crews who endured hardships for months or years on end would have individually earned from \$200 to \$300 for a season’s work. The seal colonies were greatly reduced by these depredations, and recovery has been slow right across their geographic range.





*Number of seal skins taken from Kangaroo Island, 1800-1837*

The illustration below is a series of topographic views produced by the artists on the Baudin expedition. These were essential guides for sailors and their production was an essential part of cartographic training. View 5 clearly shows Harvey's Return, Cape Borda and the Ravine des Casoars.



*Line 5 of this plate is a view of the west coast of Kangaroo Island, Cape Borda and Ravine des Casoars. Artist - Charles Alexandre Leseur. From: Atlas historique: du Voyage de decouvertes aux terres australes, by Charles Alexandre Leseur and Nicolas-Martin Petit, 1807-1816.*

Acknowledgements: Sincere thanks to Anne A'Herran for valuable editorial comments and useful leads in following the tracks of the early sealers and whalers. Thanks also to David Cowans and Gay Crowley for helpful comments and clarifications. Any errors or omissions are, of course, my fault.

**Table of ships known to be active at Kangaroo Island, 1800-1837.**

Sources: Cumpston, J.S. Kangaroo Island 1800-1836; Cumpston, J.S. Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Sydney 1788-1840.

Date	Numeric date	Count	Name	Type	Owner	Master	Port of origin	Cargo	# sealskins	Crew remained	Comments
1800	1800	1									"this is the place for fat meat" marked on tree at Pelican Lagoon
Mar 1802	1802	1	Investigator	Sloop	British Govt.	Flinders, M	Portsmouth				Landed on Kangaroo Island
Apr 1802	1802	1	Le Geographe	Corvette	French Govt	Baudin, N	Le Havre				East and north coasts of Kangaroo Island
Apr 1802	1802	1	Le Naturaliste	Storeship	French Govt	Hamelin, E	Le Havre				
Jan 1803	1803	1	Le Geographe	Corvette	French Govt	Baudin, N	Le Havre				Circumnavigation of Kangaroo Island
Jan 1803	1803	1	Le Casuarine	Schooner	French Govt	Freycinet, L	Sydney				30 ton schooner, built in Sydney Oct - Nov 1802
1803	1803	1	Integrity	Cutter	NSW Govt	Rushworth	Sydney				
1803-4	1803	1	Union	Brig	Fanning & Company	Pendleton, I	Stonington, Conn.	12000 skins	12000		Spent 4-5 months at American River
1805	1805	1	Integrity	Cutter	NSW Govt	Houston	Sydney				
1805	1805	1	Marcia	Whaleboat			Sydney			Jos. Murrell	Landed Murrell and party
1806	1806	1	Marcia	Whaleboat			Sydney				Pirated in Bass Strait
1807	1807	1	Marcia	Whaleboat			Sydney	sealing			
1808	1808	1	Fly	Sloop	William Stewart	Stewart, Wm	Sydney	sealing			
1808	1808	1	Eliza	Sloop	Underwood	Smith, T	Sydney	1500 skins	1500		Rescued Murrell and two others
1809	1809	1	Eliza	Sloop	Underwood	Smith	Sydney				
1809	1809	1	Endeavour of Norfolk Island	Schooner	Nichols, I	Siddons	Sydney	1200 skins; 40 tons salt	1200		
1810	1810	1	Endeavour of Sydney	Sloop	Henry Kable Jnr	Siddons	Sydney	4000 skins; 2 tons oil	4000		
1810	1810	1	Unity				Sydney	5000 skins	5000		
1811	1811	1	Elizabeth & Mary		Thorley	Murrell	Sydney	2500 skins; 60 tons salt	2500		

1811	1811	1	Elizabeth & Mary		Thorley	Murrell	Sydney	skins and salt			
1812	1812	1	Campbell Macquarie			Murrell	Sydney	skins and salt			
1813	1813	1	Brothers	Schooner		Kelly	Sydney	sealing			
1813	1813	1	Elizabeth and Mary			Rook, Wm	Sydney	sealing			Probably three visits
1813	1813	1	Fly			Stewart, Wm	Sydney	sealing, kangaroo skins, salt			
1814	1814	1	Spring			Bunster, Wm	Sydney	sealing, kangaroo skins, salt			
1814	1814	1	Fly			Stewart, Wm	Sydney	salt			
1815	1815	1	Governor Hunter			Murrell	Sydney	skins and salt			
1815	1815	1	Spring			Bunster, Wm	Sydney	5900 seal skins, 2500 kangaroo skins, 40 tons salt	5900		
1815	1815	1	Fly			Stewart, Wm	Sydney	seal skins and salt			
1815	1815	1	Spring	Brig	Abbott, Lord & Company	Dillon, Peter	Port Dalrymple	500 skins; 7 tons salt	500		Salt from Bay of Shoals
1816	1816	1	Brothers	Schooner	Blaxcell	Miller	Sydney	20 tons salt			Wrecked on Kent Group
Jan 1816	1816	1	Rosetta	Brig	Griffiths	Rook, Wm	Sydney	2000 skins; 50 tons salt	2000		
Oct 1816	1816	1	Rosetta	Brig	Griffiths	Rook, Wm	Sydney	4280 seal skins; salt	4280		
1816	1816	1	Spring	Brig	Lord	Bunster, Wm	Sydney	skins and salt			
1816	1816	1	Henrietta	Schooner	McCarthy	Feen	Hobart	skins and salt			
1816	1816	1	Sophia	Brig		Feen	Sydney	whaling			
1816	1816	1	Endeavour	Brig	Nichols, I	Hammond, T	Sydney	170 skins; 50 tons salt		John	13 Europeans then on KI
1817	1817	1	Henrietta	Schooner	McCarthy	Feen	Hobart	skins and salt		Antonio	Saw Rosetta and Spring at KI
Apr 1817	1817	1	Endeavour	Brig	Nichols	Hammond	Sydney	Salt and skins			Feen and Tomlins drowned at Bay of Shoals

Oct 1817	1817	1	Endeavour	Brig	Nichols	Hammond	Sydney				Severe weather, boat damaged
1817	1817	1	Jupiter	Brig		Bunster, Wm	Hobart	sealing			
1818	1818	1	Jupiter	Brig		Bunster, Wm	Hobart	salt			
1819	1819	1	Jupiter	Brig		Ainsworth	Hobart	skins and sslt			
1819	1819	1	Daphne			Howard	Sydney	skins and salt			Wrecked in Kent Group
1820	1820	1	Little Mary	Schooner	James, J	James, J	Sydney	8000 skins. salt	8000		
1819	1819	1	Governor Macquarie	Brig	Reibey M	Sutherland	Sydney	6000 skins: 40 tons salt	6000		Reported to SA Committee
1820	1820	1	Sophia	Brig	Birch, T W	Brown	Hobart	skins and salt		Henry Wallen	Wallen probably landed
1820	1820	1	Sophia	Brig	Birch	Read, L	Hobart	200+ skins: 42 tons salt	200		Experienced much bad weather
1820	1820	1	Glory	Brig	Griffiths	Griffiths	Hobart	skins and salt			
May-Aug 1821	1821	1	Sophia	Brig	Birch	Read	Hobart	whale oil			
1822	1822	1	General Gates	Brig	Winthrop & Company	Abimelech Riggs	Boston	seal skins			Woman and child taken to mainland
1822	1822	1	Newcastle	Schooner	Street	Rook, Wm	Sydney	10 tons salt; seeds			Wm Baxter, botanist, passenger
1822	1822	1	Snapper	Schooner	Edwardson		Sydney	sealing			
1823	1823	1	Alligator	Schooner	Hervell	Farley, T	Sydney	1600 seal skins	1600		
1823	1823	1	Samuel	Schooner	R Jones	Drysdale	Sydney	1500 skins	1500		Returned woman from NZ
1823	1823	1	Perseverance	Brig	Underwood	Craig, J	Hobart	4000 skins; 30 tons salt	4000		
1823	1823	1	Nereus	Brig	Emmett	Emmett	Sydney	Seal and kangaroo skins			
1824	1824	1	Nereus	Brig	Emmett	Swindells	Sydney	skins; 60 tons salt		George Bates left ship	Richard Wooton ashore at Shoal Bay
1824	1824	1	Minerva	Brig	Buckles & Company	Duncan Forbes	Sydney	7500 skins: 70 tons salt	7500		Forbes also at KI 1828
1824	1824	1	Water Mole	Sloop		Farley, Thos	Sydney				Nat Thomas in crew
1824	1824	1	Belinda	Brig	Coverdale		Sydney				Nat Thomas and Newman in crew

1824	1824	1	Perseverance	Brig	Underwood	Craig	Sydney	sealing			
1824-5	1824	1	Samuel			Drysdale	Sydney	1500 skins	1500		Saw Eclipse, Liberty at KI
1825	1825	1	Eclipse	Cutter	J H Reibey		Sydney	sealing			
1825	1825	1	Liberty	Schooner	S Levy	Young, Wm	Sydney	sealing			
1825	1825	1	Alligator	Schooner	Farley		Sydney	1460 seal skins	1460		
1825	1825	1	Governor Brisbane	Schooner	Kemp	Davidson	Sydney	3500 seal skins	3500		
1825	1825	1	Nereus	Brig		Swindells	Sydney	3500 seal skins	3500		Belinda may have rescued Nat Thomas
1826	1826	1	Duke of York	Gov. vessel		Whyte	Hobart				Recaptured runaways
1826	1826	1	Governor Sorrell	Schooner		Skelton	Sydney	1600 skins	1600		
1826	1826	1	Caledonia	Schooner		Smith	Hobart	sealing			
1825-6	1825	1	Hunter	Schooner	Robinson	Craig	Hobart	sealing			
1827	1827	1	Snapper	Cutter	S Levy	Goold, G	Sydney				
1827	1827	1	Pilot boat	Whaleboat			Hobart			Nat Thomas	Thomas landed at KI
1828	1828	1	Jackass			Goold	Sydney	sealing			
1828	1828	1	Snapper			Young	Sydney	750 seal skins	750		
1828	1828	1	Resolution	Schooner	J Griffiths	Young	Hobart				Unsuccessful no salt
1828	1828	1	Madeira	Packet		Meekan, M	Sydney	sealing			Wm Dutton visited KI
1829	1829	1	Prince of Denmark			Forbes	Sydney	1000 skins	1000		
1829	1829	1	Henry	Schooner	Griffiths	Griffiths	Launceston	3700 skins; oil, 20 tons	3700		
1830	1830	1	Dart				Sydney				
1831	1831	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart, John	Launceston	11330 skins; oil; salt	11330		
1831	1831	1	Isabella			Collett	Sydney				
1831	1831	1	Henry	Schooner	Griffiths	Baldwin	Portland	whaling			
1832	1832	1	Socrates			Gibbons	Launceston	whaling			
1832	1832	1	Henry	Schooner	Griffiths	Jones	Launceston	whaling			
1832	1832	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart	Launceston	skins and salt			Left Wm Dutton at Portland



1832(3)	1832	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart	Sydney	whale oil and salt			
1832-3	1832	1	Henry	Schooner	Griffiths	Jones	Launceston	whaling			
1832-3	1832	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart	Launceston	skins and salt			
1833	1833	1	Henry	Schooner	Griffiths	Jones	Launceston	whaling			
1833	1833	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart	Launceston	salt and whale oil			
18 33	1833	1	Mountaineer	Cutter	Wilkinson	Robson	Launceston				
1833	1833	1	Thistle	Schooner	Liddell	Liddell	Launceston				Hentys on board
1833	1833	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart	Launceston	whaling			
1833	1833	1	Henry	Schooner	Dutton, W	Jones	Portland	whaling			
1833	1833	1	Royal William	Cutter	Patterson		Hobart	sealing			
1834	1834	1	Henry	Schooner	Griffiths	Jones	Launceston				Landed at Cape Jervis
1834	1834	1	Mountaineer	Cutter		Johnson	Launceston				
1834-5	1834	1	Elizabeth	Schooner	Griffiths	Hart	Launceston	whaling			
1834-5	1834	1	Andromeda	Ship		Gales	Launceston	skins			
1834-5	1834	1	Socrates	Brig/ Whaler	Young	Dutton	Launceston	whaling			
1834-5	1834	1	Amity	Brig	James Kelly	Kelly	Hobart	whaling			
1834-5	1834	1	Thistle	Schooner	Liddell	Dutton	Launceston	whaling			
1835	1835	1	Rebecca	Cutter		Friend	Launceston	stores			
1836	1836	1	Duke of York	Brig	Angas & Company	Morgan	England	migrants			38 passengers
1836	1836	1	Lady Mary Pelham	Barque	SA Company	Ross	England	migrants			29 passengers
1836	1836	1	John Pirie	Brig	SA Company	Martin	England	migrants			28 passengers
1836	1836	1	Rapid	Brig	SA Company	Colonel Light	England	surveyors			25 passengers
1836	1836	1	Cygnets	Barque	Ward, T	Ross	England	surveyors			
1836	1836	1	Emma	Brig	Under charter	Nelson	England	migrants			
1836	1836	1	Vansittart	Brig			Sydney				
1836	1836	1	Success				Sydney				
1836	1836	1	Truelove				Sydney				
1836	1836	1	Africaine	Barque	Duff, J T	Duff, J T	England	migrants			

1836	1836	1	Tam O'Shanter	Ship	Dobson, T	Freeman	England	migrants			74 passengers
1836	1836	1	Coromandel	Ship		Chesser, W		migrants			
1836	1836	1	William Hutt	Brig	French & Co	Fleming		migrants			
1836	1836	1	John Renwick	Ship	Godwin & Co	Linnington		migrants			
1837	1837	1	William				Sydney				
1837	1837	1	South Australian	Barque	SA Company	Allen, Alex		stores			
1837	1837	1	Hartley	Ship	James Raven	Fewson		migrants			
1837	1837	1	Alice			Richardson	Sydney				
1837	1837	1	Solway	Ship	SA Company	Pearson	Hamburg	migrants			