



Matthew Flinders Statue

Client State Library of New South Wales

Services Objects Conservation, Outdoor Heritage Conservation, Memorial Conservation

Overview

Matthew Flinders (1774-1814) was one of the most talented navigators and chart-makers of his day. A captain in the Royal Navy, in 1798 he sailed from Sydney and circumnavigated Van Diemens Land (Tasmania), proving that it was an island. From 1801 to 1803 he completed the impressive feat of circumnavigating mainland Australia, charting the coastline as he went. In 1925 a statue was erected in his honour outside the State Library of NSW in Sydney.

The statue of Matthew Flinders is made of bronze and stands upon a square trachyte pedestal and stepped podium. Behind it, on a window sill of the State Library building, a small bronze sculpture of a cat is perched. Often overlooked by passers-by, this small statue is in memory of 'Trim', Matthew Flinders' beloved ship's cat, who accompanied him on several of his voyages.

Condition

ICS was commissioned by the State Library of NSW to carry out conservation works to both the Matthew Flinders and Trim statues. Although in relatively good condition, constant exposure to the elements meant that the protective wax coating on each statue was deteriorating, and there was a build-up of bird droppings and other dirt/debris.

Treatment

- Washed Matthew Flinders statue and stone plinth using controlled high pressure hose
- Mechanically removed active corrosion using timber skewers and scalpel blades
- Applied wax with a soft brush to slow any corrosion and minimise further degradation
- Filled casting flaws and previous repairs to improve water resistance
- Buffed entire figure with stiff bristled nylon brushes
- Cleaned and waxed Trim the cat statue and all plaques, then buffed using stiff bristled nylon brushes



After treatment



After treatment



Before treatment