

Tickets-of-Leave are small self-contained additions to the [Convicts & Cthulhu](#) setting for Lovecraftian roleplaying in the early penal colonies of Australia. Each includes a selection of game elements which can either be used collectively as a thumbnail sketch of a mini-scenario, or can be used in isolation to provide pieces that enhance a scenario of your own invention.

Convicts & CTHULHU

TICKET of LEAVE #2

Tricolour Terror

CREDITS

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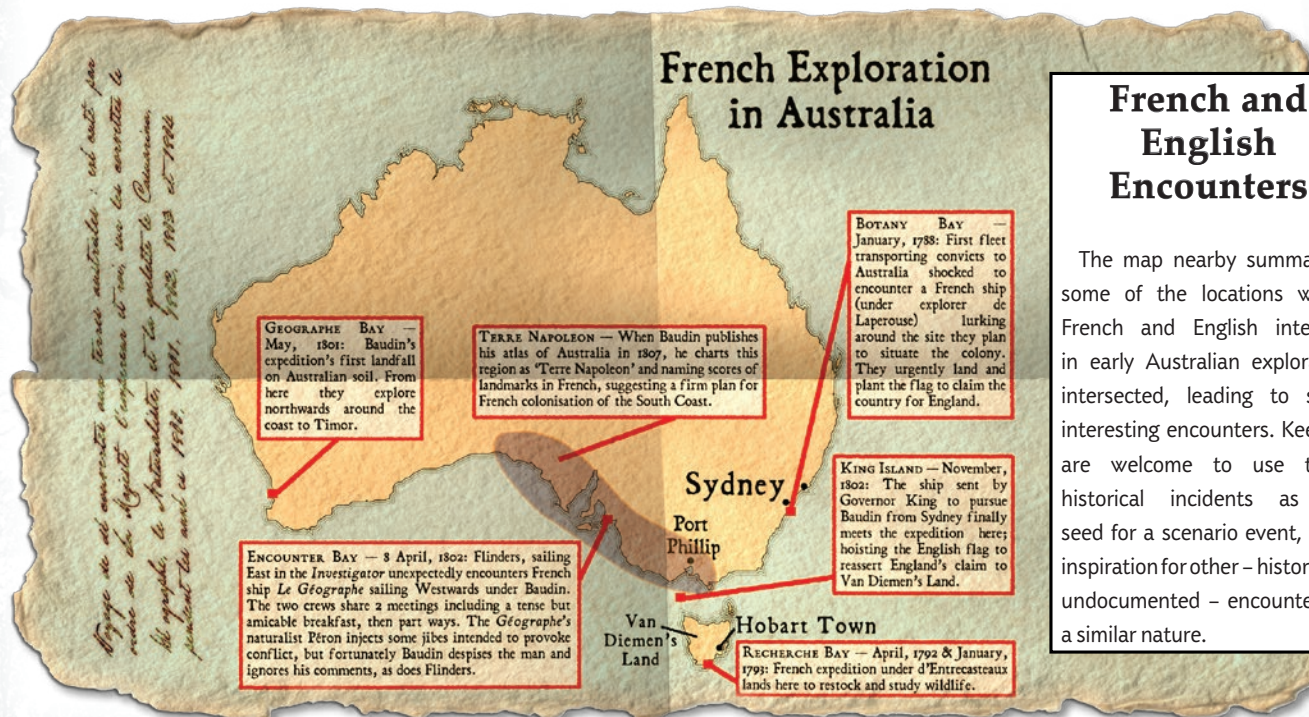


Introduction

As described in [Convicts & Cthulhu](#), the early days of colonial Australia coincide with momentous events occurring half a world away in Europe. During these years, France's population first rises up to overthrow the monarchy in the French Revolution and then just a few years later England finds itself at war against the newly-formed French Republic. It would be easy to think that these events, taking place far away from the remoteness of the new colonies in Australia would have had little direct impact on the daily lives of people in New South Wales. Such was not the case.


Even despite the lack of any rapid means of communication (news of great events took many

months to arrive), the fledgling colonies were amply aware of the hostilities between France and the great British Empire. And to the colonials, France was not just an abstract threat but – thanks to its great seafaring voyages and active naval presence in the region – also something of a direct potential source of conflict. These worries, and the sometimes irrational terrors they inspired, weighed heavily on the minds of early settlers and government officials alike. This dark and looming fear offers interesting story potential for *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios set in early Australia. Some of these influences have been sketched out already in *Convicts & Cthulhu* but the notes which follow provide Keepers with some additional resources for injecting Gallic-inspired elements into their tales of Antipodean terror.



French and English Encounters

The map nearby summarises some of the locations where French and English interests in early Australian exploration intersected, leading to some interesting encounters. Keepers are welcome to use these historical incidents as the seed for a scenario event, or as inspiration for other – historically undocumented – encounters of a similar nature.



Fear of French incursion in the Pacific actually predated the French Revolution (and even the settling of Australia itself). Indeed it was such concerns that contributed significantly to the British decision to found colonies in Australia, first in New South Wales and later Van Diemen's Land.

French visitors to the colony of NSW during times of peace also provided some key historical resources via their thoughtful and observant accounts. French maps and illustrations from their explorers are not well-known to English-speaking audiences but are both beautiful and instructive.

The notes which follow offer a timeline of French activity where it impacts on the colonies during the *Convicts & Cthulhu* period of 1788–1809, a new character template, and a short adventure concerning French naturalists.

Timeline

1778 Beginning of the Anglo-French war following France signing a treaty with the United States. War is fought in the Indian Ocean and the West Indies as well as Europe. Much of the war in the Indian Ocean is seen as fighting over South Asian territories.

1783 End of the Anglo-French War with peace treaties between the combatants.

1787–1788: French Explorer Comte de Laperouse embarks on a voyage of exploration to Australia. He arrives in Botany Bay a week after the First Fleet in 1788. He stays in Sydney for six weeks where he gets on well with the English. He departs on March 10 and is never heard from again. His disappearance prompts the later exploration of Joseph-Antoine Raymond Bruny d'Entrecasteaux to find him (see below).

1788–1792: Governorship of Arthur Phillip.

1789 French Revolution.

1792 Beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars. This encompasses a vast range of battles against various belligerents including Great Britain.

1791-1793: Bruny d'Entrecasteaux explores the Australian coast searching for the Laperouse expedition in the ships *La Recherche* and *L'Esperance*. He lands on the far southern tip of the island of Van Diemen's Land and names the harbour Recherche Bay. He continues to explore the Tasmanian coast until 1793.

1792–95: NSW administered by Grose and Paterson.

1794 The Tricolour (the famous red, white and blue standard) is first adopted as France's national flag.

1795–1800: Governorship of John Hunter.

1798 The French and British fight the Battle of the Nile.

1799 Napoleon installed as Consul of France.

1800–1806: Governorship of Philip Gidley King.

1800 Baudin expedition surveys Australian coast with his artists and mapmakers providing invaluable records of the landscape and the Aboriginal society. His expedition includes noted French naturalist and historian Francois Peron.

1802 (March): Treaty of Amiens is signed signalling peace between France and Britain's conflict in the French Revolutionary Wars.

1802 French explorer Nicolas Baudin surveys south-east Tasmania making many valuable notes. In April, Baudin meets British explorer Matthew Flinders – the foremost surveyor of the Australian coastline – and sails to Sydney arriving in June. Baudin is entertained hospitably in Sydney but relations are not always easy. He buys an additional ship in Sydney and departs again in November. A day or so after he leaves, Governor King receives word that the French are considering settlement in Van Diemen's land; he sends a boat (and a strongly-worded) letter after Baudin reasserting Britain's claim over the island. See nearby replica.

1803 Commencement of the Napoleonic Wars and the return of war between Britain and France. This is to continue until 1814.

1803 Not long after he completes the first circumnavigation of the Australian continent, Australia's foremost explorer of the era, Matthew Flinders, makes a sea journey back to England which is rudely interrupted. During a stop-over at the French-owned island of Mauritius (in the Indian Ocean near Africa) the explorer is arrested by French forces as a prisoner of war. His detention lasts until 1810.

1804 After hearing rumours of French interest in the area, Governor King sends Lt-Governor David Collins to establish a settlement in Van Diemen's Land an attempt having failed the previous year. This is intended to firmly establish the island as a British claim despite previous French interest.

1804 Baudin expedition concludes.

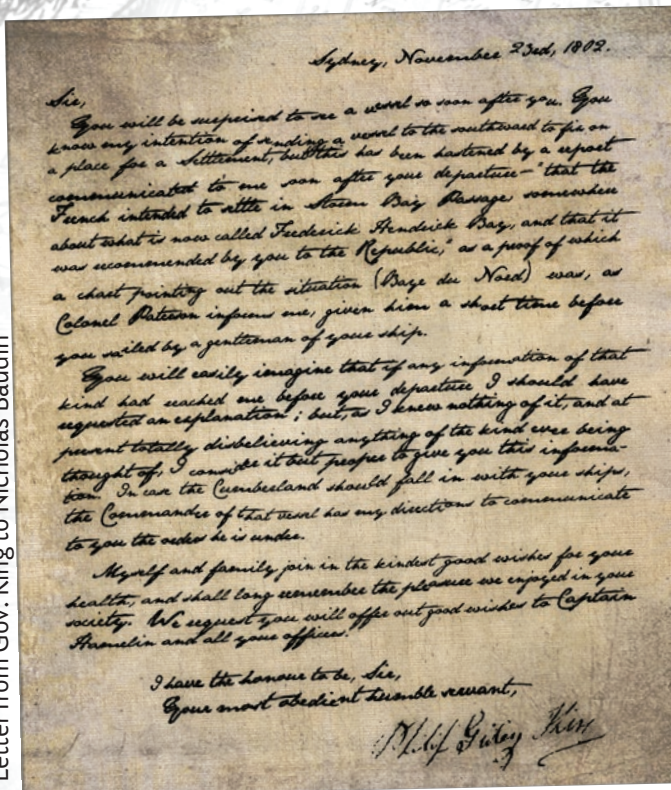
1804 Napoleon crowns himself Emperor.

1805 Battle of Trafalgar. British victory cripples the French fleet but Admiral Nelson is killed by a French sharpshooter.

1806–1808: Governorship of William Bligh.

1808-1810: Military interregnum governing NSW.





Les Nouveaux Mystères: French Occult Exploration in the South Pacific

The Kingdom and Republic of France, together with the French people, have long and significant associations with many of the esoteric traditions that form the basis for European occultism. It should thus come as no surprise that – even during the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era – numerous French societies and associations exist which possess significant knowledge of hidden aspects of the Cthulhu Mythos. Most of these groups operate in the shadows, but their influence stretches far – some believe even to the highest levels. With this in mind, it is interesting to speculate upon the singular focus with which France pursued the exploration and colonisation of the South Pacific, a part of the world known to house several sites of major Mythos significance. Could it have been the case that many of the incredible sea-faring “scientific” expeditions to the Pacific undertaken during the 18th and early 19th Centuries were more than mere voyages of exploration but also Mythos searches?

Investigators who study the vexing question of the level of influence exerted by Mythos cults or societies upon the great French naval explorations of the South Pacific, might run into mention of a (fictional)

group known only as *Les Nouveaux Mystères* (“The New Mysteries”). Several key officers – usually only of middling rank – who participated in significant French expeditions held some form of nebulous affiliation to this group. Though disputed by some, many scholars believe this organisation to be a kind of society of Mythos discovery which sponsored or influenced expeditions, guiding captains to explore certain island groupings and ignore others. Their ultimate purpose or goal remains unknown.

When constructing a Mythos mystery set in the penal colonies of Australia, the peripheral involvement of French occultist groups such as *Les Nouveaux Mystères* (whether Mythos-aware or not) provides a great opportunity to introduce some of the traditional elements of *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios. While most convicts and English soldiers serving in New South Wales would have little reason to possess musty old tomes of arcane lore, the same might not be true for exiled French noblemen fleeing the Revolution, or secretive members of French naval explorations sniffing around the shores of Australia. Conceivably such individuals might have brought any kind of occult or Mythos forces or influences with them, even as they journeyed half-way around the world.

New Occupations

To explore the conflict between Colonial Australians and the French from a different perspective, the Keeper might be interested in running a scenario where some or all of the investigators are French mariners. For the most part such characters can be created using the profession templates provided in *Convicts & Cthulhu*; a pair of French-specific additions are provided below.

FRENCH NATURALIST

The French naturalists, like many of the English naturalists were a combination explorer, sailor, navigator, scientist and artist. Many of them came from a military background and may have some martial skills.

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art (Cartography or Painting), Natural World, Persuade, Pilot Ship, Navigation, Science (Meteorology or Zoology), any one other skill.

Credit Rating: 0—99 (within the French community, halve when dealing with the English. Credit Rating becomes a Hard Test in times of war)

Occupation Skill Points: EDU × 2 + DEX × 2



FRENCH OCCULT EXPLORER

This template is intended to cover members of secretive French occult orders who have been given missions to accompany naval voyages of exploration to the South Pacific.

Occupational Skills: Craft (any maritime-related), History, Navigate or Religion, Occult, Other Language, Science (Astronomy), one interpersonal skill (Charm/Bootlick, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), any one other skill.

Credit Rating: 20–50 (within the French community, halve when dealing with the English. Credit Rating becomes a Hard Test in times of war)

Occupation Skills Points: $EDU \times 4$

French Explorers of Australia

The sketches below provide capsule summaries of some of the key French explorers who were present in Australia during the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era. Keepers may wish to use these historical figures as NPCs in scenarios of their own devising, or merely authorities who direct the course of events from “off-camera”.

Jean-Francois de Galaup La Perouse (1741-1788)

A navigator and oceanographer La Perouse had been in the navy since age 15. He fought in the American war against the British; even in war he noted as a very humane man. In 1783 he was commissioned by King Louis XVI to conduct an ambitious expedition to the Pacific. This included his visit to Botany Bay in 1788. He disappeared mysteriously one month later. In 1828 it was discovered he had been wrecked north of the New Hebrides.

For more info, see: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/la-perouse-jean-francois-de-galaup-2329>

Joseph-Antoine Raymond Bruny d'Entrecasteaux (1739-1793)

Bruny d'Entrecasteaux was an Admiral and navigator. He also had an interest in hydrography. In 1786 he was made commander of the Indian station for the French navy. While there he sailed to China and explored Southeast Asia. In 1791 he was

appointed to lead an expedition to trace the missing La Perouse. He sailed the Pacific and explored the coasts of Australia and Van Diemen's Land. He died off the coast of New Guinea in 1793. His successor d'Ariveau, a royalist, handed the expedition over to the Dutch when he learned a republic had been proclaimed in France. It was some time before the records of the expedition made it back to France.

STR 55 CON 55 SIZ 60 DEX 70 INT 75
APP 70 POW 65 EDU 70 SAN 60 Hit Points: 11
Damage Bonus: none Build: 0 Move: 6 Magic Points: 13

Skills: Accounting 45%, Charm 50%, Credit Rating 60%, Lore (Aboriginal) 30%, Natural World 25%, Navigate 85%, Science (Botany) 50%, Science (Meteorology) 75%, Survival 40%.

For more info, see: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bruny-dentrecasteaux-joseph-antoine-raymond-1841>

Nicolas Thomas Baudin (1754-1803)

Baudin was a cartographer and naturalist. He had served in the merchant marine and the navy. He had made many voyages of exploration in the 1790s and in 1800 was selected to make a French cartographic survey of the coast of Australia in two ships *Le Geographe* and *Le Naturaliste*. Baudin was known as a hasty if affable man struggled as a leader. By the time the expedition reached Mauritius 46 seamen and 10 experts had left owing to shipboard fights and illness. Baudin surveyed Van Diemen's Land and met with British explorer Matthew Flinders and later in Sydney Governor King. King was suspicious of the Frenchman's motives. Baudin died of tuberculosis on Mauritius in 1803. In 1804 his voyage was concluded by his team under Louis-Claude Desaulces de Freycinet. One of Baudin achievements was to dispel the myth started by early explorer William Dampier that the west coast of Australia was barren. De Freycinet published an atlas in 1807 which had the most complete map of Australia up to that time.

STR 60 CON 35 SIZ 40 DEX 55 INT 70
APP 65 POW 40 EDU 60 SAN 65 Hit Points: 7
Damage Bonus: none Build: 0 Move: 7 Magic Points: 8

Skills: Accounting 70%, Firearms (Flintlock) 40%, Natural World 40%, Navigate 65%, Pilot Ship 80%.

For more info, see: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/baudin-nicolas-thomas-1753>

Francois Péron (1754-1803)

Péron lost an eye in the army and was captured and imprisoned. There he read books on explorers and after being repatriated out of the army because of his lost eye studied natural history. He joined Baudin's expedition as natural historian and anthropologist. By the time the expedition reached Australia's west coast death and desertion had left Péron the only zoologist. He classified 2,500 species and collected 100,000 specimens of animal life. He also made many observations of the Aboriginal people the expedition encountered. His work was the foundation of the later work of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, one of the early proponents of evolution. He wrote the official account of Baudin's voyage on his return to France. Péron was a great patriot and upset some of the English he encountered, including Governor King.

STR 45 CON 30 SIZ 60 DEX 70 INT 85
APP 55 POW 35 EDU 75 SAN 45 Hit Points: 9
Damage Bonus: none Build: 0 Move: 7 Magic Points: 7

Skills: Accounting 55%, First Aid 25%, Lore (Aboriginal) 25%,
Medicine 40%, Natural World 75%, Navigation 35%, Sci-
ence (Meteorology) 45%, Science (Zoology) 65%.

For more info, see: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/peron-francois-2545>

Adventure Seed: Tricolour Terror

The adventure seed concerns a lost party of French explorers off the coast of New South Wales. The adventure can take place any time in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* setting and may take place during peace or war. See notes for difference depending on hostilities. Players may take the role of French sailors or naturalists or British officials or their convict servants investigating the claims of the French. Keepers may elect to allow a merchant vessel to sail after the French expedition, in which case merchant characters may also be allowed.

Beginning the Adventure

A ship's boat from the French ship *Remarquable* fetches up in the Hawkesbury region and is brought south to Sydney. It contains six men, all suffering from exhaustion. If the French are hostile the crew will be arrested and marched to the Governor; if



Francois Péron

France is not presently warring with Britain they will be treated civilly but eventually still brought to the Governor's attention as visiting foreigners. The crew claims they were part of a French voyage of exploration and science in the Pacific and were separated from their ship which has now vanished mysteriously. They claim they were south of Coal River and had ventured ashore for water in the ship's boat. When they returned the ship was gone and a sea of mysterious bell-shaped things was floating in its place. They look like coral but have the sliminess and smell of seaweed. The French tried to get one into the boat but it vibrated strangely and they tossed it back overboard for fear it would destroy their boat. They sailed south only to be attacked by natives and then a week later drifted into the Hawkesbury waterway, by then starving and desperate.

The Mission

The Governor assembles a team, including the investigators to find the French ship but also to determine if the French have any hostile intent. (This would also be the case of France and Britain are at peace, since suspicious ran deep). He avails them of a navy ship or pays for a merchant vessel, depending on the Keeper's and investigator party and preferences.

The ship sails to the north and spends two weeks at sea trying to find the location of the French vessel. This includes visiting the Hawkesbury waterways, but no sign of the mysterious bell-shaped things or the French are to be found.

Complications

The following complications can be used to enliven the voyage:

- **Language and politics.** If the French are currently a republic or under Napoleon this could make for some interesting shipboard conversations, and not a small chance for arguments to erupt. Likewise language barriers may be an issue, though at least one of the French officers will speak English (it is he who has made the reports thus far).
- **One of the Englishmen on board has lost two brothers who were fighting the French.** He determines this is a chance to have his revenge.
- **Secret Charts and Documents:** The French explorers carry with them a battered notebook from their recent voyage from Tasmania northwards along the coast of mainland Australia. It includes detailed accounts of all the shipping as well as the shorelines of areas held by the British (Sydney, St Georges River, even Tasmania if it is after the settlement at Hobart Town). This may lead English investigators to wonder whether the French are spies or merely completists. Keepers may also use this notebook to provide clues regarding the French voyage if solutions 2 or 3 below are used.

The Solution

Three possible solutions present themselves, depending which the Keeper prefers:

- **Option 1: Antipodean Shoggoths** – The bell-shaped things are actually weird young of a local Australian variant species of Shoggoths. They have attached themselves to the French ship and have now carried it on land, so as to consume the crew. Investigators can hear stories from local Aboriginal people or find the bay just north of where the French ship's boat went to find water, and follow the bizarre tracks from there.

- **Option 2: The Gulf between the Oceans** – The French naturalists inadvertently opened a portal in the Pacific to a certain cyclopean ruined city. A Star-Spawn of Cthulhu has come through the portal to their currently location and made off with the ship. Wreckage and injured crew can be found floating between where the ship went missing and east off the coast. But the Star-Spawn will return if they trespass on its newfound gate.
- **Option 3: The Floating Fungi** – The floating bell-shaped things are actually a bizarre by-product of Mi-Go technology. The Fungi from Yuggoth have used this isolated spot to study the local conditions. Intrigued by human scientists on an endeavour they believe is like their own, the Mi-Go have suborned the French crew (extracting the brains of some into travel cases). The vessel now plies the waves on some sinister business of the Mi-Go.

Further Reading

The NSW state library has an online collection on The French in Australia, which includes information and illustrations of many of the early expeditions. http://www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/discover_collections/society_art/french/

Sir Ernest Scott's 1911 book *Terre Napoleon: A History of French Explorations and Projects in Australia* is dated but rich in detail and available free on Australian Gutenberg <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00067.html> (Scott also wrote a book on Laperouse).

The Western Australian Museum has a Baudin expedition page which looks at some of the expedition's work <http://museum.wa.gov.au/exhibitions/voyages/about/audin.html>.

For readers of French, the original French account of Baudin's voyage is at archives.org <https://archive.org/details/voyagededcouve02pr>

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