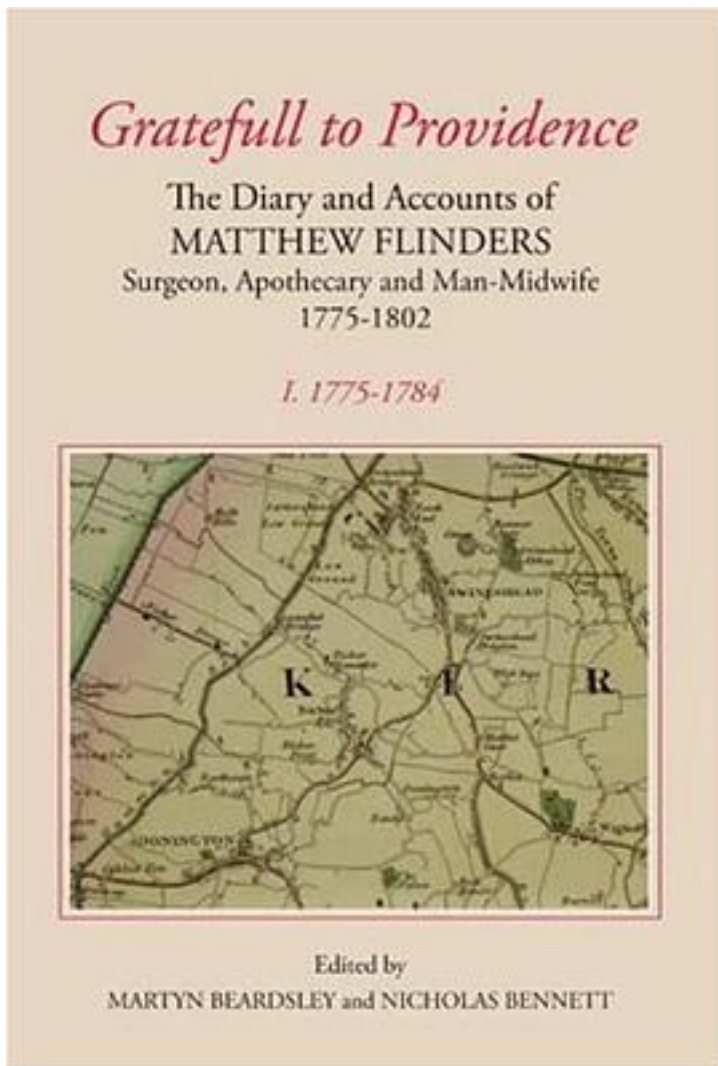


Gratefull to Providence



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Matthew Flinders, surgeon and apothecary of Donington, in south Lincolnshire, in the late eighteenth century, was the father of the Matthew Flinders, sailor, navigator and explorer, and one of the central figures in the early history of the Australian nation. His diaries, published here in full for the first time, reveal a wealth of detail about the home, the family and the village in which the future explorer grew up. The daily routine of business, socialising with neighbours, unusual events such as the beaching of a whale near Boston, or the visit to Donington of Mr Powell the famous fire-eater are recorded alongside family joys and sorrows, the births and deaths of children, the passing of Flinders' beloved wife Susanna and his subsequent remarriage. The childhood and schooling of Matthew junior are a recurring theme, and the purchase of a two volume edition of "Robinson Crusoe" in 1782 gives a hint of things to come, though as the diaries reveal, his later career was a radical diversion from the original plan for him to follow in his father's path.

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