## First Voyage: Endeavour 1768 - 1771

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>John</th>
<th>READING</th>
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**Personal Details:**
- Born 1744 in Kinsale, Co. Cork.
- Died of ‘an excess of rum’, on 28 August 1769, and buried in the Pacific Ocean.

**Position on board:** Boatswain’s Mate

**Biographical Summary:**
- **Joined the Endeavour on 1 June 1768.**
- He was punished with 12 lashes 30 November 1768 at Rio de Janeiro for not doing his duty in flogging two other members of the crew - Robert Anderson and William Judge.

*Endeavour* left Tahiti on 9 August 1769, and headed south in search of the legendary continent “Terra Australis”.

According to Cook’s journal, Reading’s death resulted from the Boatswain, “...out of mere good nature, giving him part of a bottle of rum last night, which it is supposed he drank all at once, he was found to be very much in Liquor last night, but as this was no more than what was common with him when he could get any, no farther notice was taken of him than to put him to bed where this morning about 8 o’Clock he was found speechless and past recovery.”

Lieutenant Zachary Hicks recorded that Reading had drank three half pints of rum. Joseph Banks believed that Reading had drunk far more than that.

**Sources:**
- Beaglehole, The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771

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This information sheet was produced by the Captain Cook Society to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Captain Cook’s first voyage of exploration. For further information visit: www.captaincookociety.com