

Basic Detail Report

00028618

Title

A voyage round the world, in his Majesty's ship the DOLPHIN, commanded by the honourable Commodore Byron

Date

1767

Primary Maker

Commodore John Byron

Medium

Ink on paper, leather

Dimensions

Overall: 208 x 135 x 20 mm, 0.35 kg

Name

Book

History

This famous unauthorised account of "Foul-Weather Jack" Byron's command of the DOLPHIN on her 1764 - 66 circumnavigation of the globe was published anonymously but is usually attributed to midshipman Charles Clerke who later sailed on all three of Cook's voyages. Byron's expedition was an important precursor of the voyages of Wallis, Carteret and Cook, but its immediate contemporary impact was the sensation created by rumours of Patagonian 'giants' encountered by the expedition. These tall stories gained currency from a report sent in jest by Clerke to the Royal Society (and printed in the Philosophical Transactions for 1767), and from a similar account published in this book. Extraordinarily, the stories seem to have been encouraged by the British government to divert attention from Byron's taking possession of the Falklands, politically the most sensitive and controversial aspect of his voyage. The affair of the Patagonian 'giants' embroiled many great figures of the Enlightenment including Voltaire.