

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Piece of rock ballast from HMB ENDEAVOUR

Date

18th century

Medium

Rock

Dimensions

Overall: 215 × 370 × 250 mm, 22.5 kg

Name

Ballast

History

Cook's famous ship of discovery was built in 1764 and initially named the EARL OF PEMBROKE. It began service as a collier on the east coast of England and was later purchased by the British Admiralty in 1768, fitted out for a voyage to the South Pacific with the intention of viewing the transit of Venus and locating the Great South Land. The Royal Navy renamed the vessel HMB ENDEAVOUR. Under Cook's command and during his first expedition to the Pacific HMB ENDEAVOUR arrived in Tahiti to view the transit of Venus in June 1769. Cook then sailed south and reached New Zealand in October 1769, as 'discovered' by Abel Tasman in 1642. After mapping both the north and south islands, Cook started the journey home. It was during this voyage that he first approached eastern Australia. An attempt to land on 28 April 1770 failed due to rough surf, and Cook sailed ENDEAVOUR round to a calm bay, now known as Botany Bay. Here on 29 April 1770, Cook and his crew first set foot on Australian soil. The extensive report he compiled on Botany Bay, including the safeness of the harbour and availability of fresh water quickly became the 'sign post' for Captain Arthur Phillip to land the First Fleet there on 18 January 1788. During the expedition's return passage to England on 11 June 1770, ENDEAVOUR ran aground on what is now called Endeavour Reef in the Great Barrier Reef system. The ship was taking on water and two unsuccessful attempts were made to pull it into open water. Cook decided to lighten ENDEAVOUR's load, discarding about 40 to 50 tons of equipment and ballast before once more trying to float it off the reef. ENDEAVOUR eventually disconnected and Cook sailed up the far north Queensland coast, mooring in a river to make repairs, now called Endeavour River. When Cook returned to England from his great circumnavigation in 1771, the Admiralty once again refitted ENDEAVOUR. This time it was used as a store ship for voyages to the Falkland Islands. In 1775, the ENDEAVOUR was discharged from the Royal Navy and believed to have been sold to a merchant, who renamed the vessel LORD SANDWICH and used it as a troop transport. It is believed that the British sank the ship with nine other vessels in 1778 at the entrance to Newport Harbor, Rhode Island, USA during an attempt to blockade French ships.

