

Basic Detail Report



00015906

Title

Sir Joseph Banks Bt

Date

1788

Primary Maker

J R Smith

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 953 x 695 mm

Name

Engraving

History

Sir Joseph Banks was born at Westminster, England on 13 February 1743. Schooled at Harrow and Eton he displayed an early interest in the natural sciences. In 1764 after receiving his family's inheritance Banks left Oxford University where he was studying botany and decided to spend his time examining plants in the practical world. In 1766 he went on board HMS NIGER as it travelled to Newfoundland and collected many rock and natural specimens. Banks also conducted a number of field trips collecting and studying plants, historic sites and rock formations. In 1766 he was made a fellow of the Royal Society. Banks' most famous survey work was completed as part of the Royal Navy's expedition in HMB ENDEAVOUR to the Pacific under Captain James Cook. Equipped with a large fortune and a wealth of natural history experience Banks was recommended to the British Admiralty by the Royal Society. Banks had a staff of eight in attendance including naturalists Daniel Solander, H D Sporing and the artists Alexander Buchan and Sydney Parkinson. Between 1768 and 1771 Banks and his staff collected large amounts of specimens including seeds, shells, insects, bottled organisms and animals. He took many of the pieces back to England and formed an extensive collection of natural history objects. Banks had his portrait painted twice, once by Joshua Reynolds and the second time by the newly appointed President of the Royal Academy, Benjamin West. These portraits helped Banks build his celebrity status and establish his authority as a spokesman for Pacific exploration and botany. Benjamin West's original painting is held in the collection of the Usher Art Gallery, Lincoln, England.