

**AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT**

**SIR JOSEPH BANKS**

**Papers, 1773-1815**

**Reel M469**

**Fitzwilliam Museum  
32 Trumpington Street  
Cambridge CB2 1RB**

**National Library of Australia  
State Library of New South Wales**

**Filmed: 1964**

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), Baronet, was born in London and educated at Harrow, Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He became interested in botany as a schoolboy. His father died in 1761 and, inheriting considerable wealth, he was able to devote his time to natural science. In 1766 he joined HMS *Niger* and collected rocks, plants and animals in Newfoundland and Labrador. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1766. In 1768 he led a small party of scientists and artists on HMS *Endeavour* on its voyage to the Pacific. Supported by James Cook, they amassed a huge collection of plants, insects, shells and implements and produced extensive drawings and notes during their travels to Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia. On his return to England in 1771 he received a doctorate at Oxford University. In 1772 Banks led an expedition to the western islands of Scotland and Iceland.

In 1776 Banks bought a house at Soho Square in London where his library and collections were held and where he met and corresponded with scientists throughout Europe. Daniel Solander was his librarian, succeeded in time by Jonas Dryander and Robert Brown. In 1778 Banks became president of the Royal Society, an office he held for the rest of his life, and he was created a baronet in 1781. He was a member of numerous other learned societies and developed the royal gardens at Kew. The Government sought his advice on many subjects, including the colonisation of Australia, exploration, currency and botanic gardens. His collectors went to India, South Africa, Australia, West Africa and South America and great quantities of plants, specimens, seeds, drawings and notes were sent to his herbarium and Kew Gardens.

## THE BANKS PAPERS

During the second half of the nineteenth century the vast archives of Sir Joseph Banks was broken up and dispersed among libraries throughout the world. In Australia, the State Library of New South Wales holds an important collection of his papers, including his journal on the *Endeavour*, while there is a smaller collection in the National Library of Australia. In addition to the collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the AJCP filmed papers of Banks held in the British Library (reel M1192), the Natural History Museum (reel M2662) and the Kent Archives Office (reel M1903). It also filmed selections from the archives and collections of the Royal Society (reels M1927-40), which contain many references to Banks.

# SIR JOSEPH BANKS

## Reel M469

### Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

#### Perceval Bequest H.111

##### 1. Letters from Sir Charles Blagden to Joseph Banks, 1773-1805 (77 letters)

Written from London, Plymouth, Bath and Paris, the letters deal in particular with the affairs and publications of the Royal Society, of which Blagden was secretary from 1784 to 1797. They cover a wide range of subjects, including medicine and botany, and refer to correspondence and meetings with scientists throughout Europe. Among those mentioned are Daniel Solander, Jonas Dryander, Antoine Lavoisier, Joseph Priestley, Sir William Hamilton, Sir William Herschel, Henry Cavendish, Sir Nevil Maskelyne, Richard Kirwan, Sir George Chambers, Sir Benjamin Thompson (Count Rumford), Claude Berthollet, Alexander Aubert, Benjamin Wilson, Pierre-Simon Laplace and Georges-Louis Leclerc (Comte du Buffon).

##### 2. Copies and drafts of letters and papers written by Joseph Banks, 1784-1815

Banks to William Herschel, n.d.: Aurora Borealis.

Banks to Major William Price, 31 March 1796: curiosities collected on ships commanded by Bruny D'Entrecasteaux, including plants, birds, insects and snakes.

Banks to [William Price], 15 June 1798: restitution of natural history objects collected by scientists who accompanied Comte de la Perouse to the Pacific.

Banks to [Samuel?] Bentham, 4 Dec. 1786: forwards seeds.

Review of *The journal of Sir Joseph Banks during Captain Cook's first voyage in HMS Endeavour in 1768-71*, edited by Sir Joseph Hooker, *Athenaeum*, 26 Dec. 1896, pp 908-9.

Banks to Johann Merck (Hesse), 29 June 1784: thanks for dissertation on fossil bones.

Banks to Dawson Turner, 12 Dec. 1812: refers to Tupia, the Tahitian who was brought to England by Banks.

Banks to ?, 16 Nov. 1815: thanks for gift of tea.

Draft minutes of the trustees of the British Museum referring to the admittance of readers, 13 May 1801.

Draft report on valuable parts of the collection of the British Museum, n.d.

### **3. Letters written to Joseph Banks**

William Bishop (Maidstone) to Banks, 8 Feb. 1788: flints found in Kent.

Johann F. Blumenbach (Göttingen) to Banks, 18 March 1789: recommends Friedrich Hornemann; suggests he first spend some months in Göttingen working on natural history.

C.A. de Calonne (London) to Banks, 18 March 1789: a bust of Banks. [includes reply by Banks]

James Cross (Bristol) to Banks, 4 Oct. 1789: his discovery of a new star.

George Cumberland (London) to Banks, 18 Jan. 1787: his interest in studying antiques received from Naples and also a collection of prints.

Erasmus Darwin (Derby) to Banks, 1781-82: seeks a copy of Johan Murray's edition of *Regnum Vegetabile* for Lichfield Botanical Society; translation of botanical works of Linnaeus. (3 letters)

Mary Delany (London) to Banks, 1785-86: recommends a gardener for the Dowager Duchess of Portland. (2 letters)

J.A. Deluc (Kew) to Banks, 22 July 1791: requests loan of a journal.

Letters of Jonas Dryander to Banks, 1782-1802. (102 letters)

Dryander, who had been a pupil of Carl Linnaeus, succeeded Daniel Solander as Banks's librarian in 1782. The letters were mostly written from Banks's house in Soho Square at times when Banks was out of London. They deal in particular with the library, the acquisition of books and drawings, subscriptions and catalogues. In addition, there are references to the receipt of letters, visitors to the house, and botanical and zoological matters. Individuals mentioned in the letters include Johann Fabricius, Charles Blagden, Joseph Planta, Alexander Dalrymple, Charles Greville, Henry Cavendish and Edward Gray.

John Farey (Woburn) to Banks, 11 Feb. 1802: examination of soils.

Samuel Felton (London) to Banks, 22 March 1804: requests an inscription on the cabinet he has donated.

James Laird (Geological Society) to Banks, March 1809: a rift between the Geological Society and the Royal Society; attaches a resolution of the Geological Society rejecting the plan of Charles Greville for the Society to merge with the Royal Society. (2 letters)

G.B. Greenough to Banks, 1809-10: relations between the Royal Society and the Geological Society. (2 letters)

Robert Graham (Skail) to Banks, 12 Nov. 1790: sends piece of an ancient urn.

Green (Cambridge) to Banks, 14 April 1776: sends botanical specimens collected in the neighbourhood of Cambridge.

Matthew Gregson (Liverpool) to Banks, 13 Aug. 1791: offers to sell 800 drawings, including birds and shells by Sarah Stone and others under the direction of Ashton Lever.

Recommendation, signed by seven members, that Matthew Gregson be admitted as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, May 1822.

Charles F. Greville (Bath) to Banks, 27 Oct. 1776: forwards a box of potatoes, possibly a rare species; he is to be sworn in as mayor of Warwick.

J.W. Griffith (Abergele) to Banks, 12 July 1802: queries whether periwinkle is only the first state of a small species of lobster.

Charles Hatchett (London) to Banks, 1803-4: metals and minerals; papers of Smithson Tennant. (2 letters)

T. Henna (St Austell) to Banks, 18 March 1782: collection of minerals.

Charles Hutton to Banks and Daniel Solander, 19 March 1774: enquires about a master of a vessel from Topsham or Exeter.

J. Jeffries (Paris) to Banks, 7 Jan. 1785: account of ballooning near north coast of France.

James Lind (Edinburgh, Windsor, Cape Town) to Banks, 1775-95: visit to Cape Town (1779); plan to settle convicts on the north-west coast of America; insanity; reports on the health of King George III (1788); William Herschel; Tiberius Cavallo; drawings of elephants by Thomas Sandby; blue lights; presents from the Emperor of China. (33 letters)

Charles Lindegren (London) to Banks, 20 June 1782: collection of Daniel Solander.

Vincent Lunardi to Banks, 1787: discovery of a method of saving people from drowning; meeting. (3 letters)

James Matra (Constantinople) to Banks, 17 Aug. 1779: congratulations on his marriage; collection of plants of Abbé Sistius (?); difficulties of transplanting plants to England; the Sultan is generally shut up in his seraglio; many houses burnt down by mobs; hopes that Capt. J. Cook is not getting himself and his followers into a 'scrape'.

James Matra (Gibraltar) to Banks, 24 Sept. 1791: embarking on his last trip to Tangier; sends vocabulary of the Shillah language, some words translated into Arabic; hopes of retirement.

Arnold Mello (London) to Banks, 16 July 1776: meeting with Peter the Wild Man, found in a forest near Hanover; sends particulars. (3pp)

Letters and enclosures sent to Bank relating to mermaids, c. 1783-1809. The correspondents include Edmund Hussey, William Munro, Duncan Campbell and James Glen.

W.R. Notcutt (Bristol) to Banks, 3 March 1799: sends specimens of strontium sulphate; requests specimens of coal from Botany Bay.

Dr Pearce (London) to Banks, 4 Feb. 1791: specimens of ore from Cornwall.

George Rose to Spencer Percival, 26 Feb. 1812: enclosure from Banks concerning request of Mr Broad for a grant to destroy vermin.

J. Morrison (Mint Office) to [Banks?], 16 Nov. 1812: allowance to Matthews authorised by Spencer Percival for duties performed at the Mint.

Bishop Thomas Percy (Dromore, Ireland) to Banks, 1783-84: fossil deer bones found on his estate. (3 letters)

James Burnett (Edinburgh) to Banks, 16 Nov. 1780: evolution of animals and insects.

James Burnett (Edinburgh) to Banks, 30 Jan. 1783: Peter the Wild Man; question of his surviving on leaves and bark; refers to natives of New Caledonia eating bark of certain trees.

George Nicols (London) to Banks, 22 Sept. 1788: difficulties in transmitting a letter to King George III; printing of statutes [of Royal Society].

William (?) Purkis (Brentford) to Banks, 14 Oct. 1798: presentation of colours of the Brentford Armed Association.

William Richardson (Armagh) to Banks, 1803-5: submits papers for publication; geological specimens and drawings; books. (6 letters)

[Jean?] Royer (London) to Banks, 1 Sept. [1803?], correspondence with Robert Brown about a collection of birds, animals and plants captured from a French ship by a privateer.

Henry Salt (Cairo) to Hamilton, 10 June 1818: Egyptian antiquities. (extract)

William Sheffield to Banks, 5 Feb. 1774: refers to examination by Banks of coasts of Glamorgan and Pembroke; collecting of shells.

Daniel Solander to Banks, 1773-81: general news; capture of a whale; letter from Alexander Dalrymple to John Hawkesworth; Lord Sandwich; Charles Blagden; John Hunter; dissection of electric eels.

Charles Townley to Banks, 18 June: proposal that papers of Padre Antonio about Mount Vesuvius be placed in the British Museum.

Dawson Turner (Yarmouth) to Banks, 3 Feb. 1803: sends geese in gratitude to his admission to Society of Antiquaries: Banks's health: James Smith and *Flora Britannica*.

Walter H. Yate (London) to Banks, 3 Nov.: offers published catalogue of his museum.

Walter H. Yate to the Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Gloucester, 17 June 1802: duties of parliamentary representatives. (printed)

Walter H. Yate to Banks, 18 Oct. 1802: seeks support in publishing a history of Gloucestershire by Rev. T.D. Fasbrooke.

H. Ussher to Banks, 28 Dec. 1785: thanks for astronomical communications; William Herschel; his election to the Royal Society.

Luke Young (Wooller) to Banks, 15 June 1802: sends sketches.

Thomas Velley (Bath) to Banks, 24 Sept. 1790: Roman antiquities in Bath.

John Walsh (London) to Banks, 15 Jan. 1774: returns Labrador stone; description (3pp) of stone attached.