



Rethinking Joseph Banks: New Directions for Research

UCL, Haldane Room

Thursday November 10 and Friday November 11, 2016

THURSDAY

9.30 Coffee

9.45 Introduction by Simon Werrett (UCL, STS)

1. JOSEPH BANKS & THE INDO-PACIFIC WORLD

Chair: Simon Werrett (UCL)

10.00 Paper 1. Vanessa Smith (University of Sydney) "Banks's Friends."

11.00 Paper 2. David Lambert (Warwick University) "Joseph Banks's Assignments in Space."

12.00 Paper 3. Jordan Goodman (UCL) "Following Joseph Banks Around: More Historical Geography than Biography."

13.00 Lunch

2. BANKS & MATERIAL CULTURE

Chair: Hannah Wills (UCL STS)

14.00 Paper 4 Amiria Salmond (University of Auckland) and Hera Ngata-Gibson, "Banks and Tupaia's legacy as collectors: the East Coast of New Zealand."

15.00 Paper 5. Daniel Simpson (Royal Holloway) "Collecting after Cook: Joseph Banks, Material Culture and the question of authority in early colonial Australia."

16.00-17.00 - General discussion

7pm: Dinner for speakers at Balfour, 73-77 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AP
www.balfourrestaurant.co.uk Tel: 0207 713 6111

FRIDAY

3. BANKS, SCIENCE, & EMPIRE

Chair: Megan Barford (National Maritime Museum)

9.30 Coffee

10.00 Paper 6. Sujit Sivasundaram (University of Cambridge) "Joseph Banks, Seals, and the Colonisation of the Tasman Sea."

11.00 Paper 7. Janet Browne (Harvard University) "Joseph Banks as a Correspondent of Empire."

12.00 Paper 8. Edwin Rose (University of Cambridge) "From the South Seas to Soho Square: The Library of Joseph Banks and the Practice of Natural History."

13.00 lunch

14.00 visit to Natural History Museum

17.00 end of the workshop

Abstracts

Vanessa Smith – “Banks’s Friends.”

I will look at a variety of relationships Banks forged, both in Oceania with figures such as Purea and Tupaia, and in London with Inuit visitors and Mai, and via correspondence with a range of settlers across the British Empire. Viewed by recent historiography through the lenses of patronage or Imperial collecting, I suggest that these relationships can be fruitfully reconceptualised in terms of shifting models of class subjectivity. More broadly I am interested in the conundrum of what we can know about historical intimacies, and in Banks’s case, how confidently we nonetheless dissect the politics of his attachments.

Daniel Simpson – “Collecting after Cook: Joseph Banks, Material Culture and the question of authority in early colonial Australia.”

Scholarship on Joseph Banks’s involvement in the collection and study of indigenous material culture has tended to focus upon his own acquisitions, as well as his participation in the dissemination of, largely, *Endeavour* objects to contemporary museums. In consequence we know little about what role Banks might have played in the subsequent, nineteenth-century, development of object collecting as a vehicle for colonial and ethnographic knowledge. In this paper, I raise two associated questions deserving of more research, arising from my study of the early Australian context. First - what, if any, evidence do we have that Banks considered the collection of objects a productive intellectual pursuit? Second - with respect to such collections, to what extent does evidence of Banks’s competitive and sometimes fractious relationships with Australian explorers and colonial administrators suggest a need to revise current understandings of his influence and power as a scientific patron, and his primacy as a metropolitan collector?

Jordan Goodman – “Following Joseph Banks Around: More Historical Geography than Biography.”

In a rare moment of self-description Banks referred to himself as a ‘Projector’. Projects, mostly concerned with plants, were the focus of his life. With this in mind, I will discuss my approach to Banks – not through the biographical method but through his changing practices, from 1780 to 1820, during which time he convinced and assembled people, objects and plants, in specific ways and places, to help him realize his global projects. What emerges is a Joseph Banks who is more complex, more innovative and less ‘calculating’ than we have been led to believe.

David Lambert – “Joseph Banks’s Assignments in Space.”

In reflecting on the spatial turn in the historiography of science, Nicolaas Rupke (2011) reminds us that the sites and spaces that have been examined by scholars are not realities ‘out there’, but ‘assignments’ of science to locations, which reflect the contextually-grounded values and purposes of these historians. This paper examines how modern scholars have assigned Joseph Banks’s activities to different spaces and spatialities, including how these relate to the ‘apparently contradictory’ (Vanessa Smith, 2013) elements of his career as travelling naturalist and sedentary, hyper-connected patron of science. It also considers other

spaces and spatial formations to which Banks's activities might be assigned and how these relate to the values and purposes of the associated scholarly approaches.

Amiria Salmund and Hera Ngata-Gibson, "Banks and Tupaia's legacy as collectors: the East Coast of New Zealand."

During the course of October 1769, the *Endeavour* crew sighted New Zealand for the first time, making several landfalls along the East Coast. Banks, Cook, Tupaia and others met and transacted with local Māori, in the process killing several people and acquiring important *taonga* or artefacts that now reside in European collections. Today the legacy of those early exchanges is more relevant than ever, as plans to commemorate their 250th anniversary are being vigorously debated. Toi Hauiti, a group from Uawa (Tolaga Bay) have long been interested in locating and reconnecting with material collected from their area, as part of an ongoing program of cultural and artistic revitalisation. Here we present on a number of specific *taonga* (artefacts) some of which, it has been speculated, are likely to have been personally collected by Banks working together with Tupaia.

Sujit Sivasundaram – "Joseph Banks, Seals, and the Colonisation of the Tasman Sea."

This paper uses Joseph Banks' interest in the trade in seals as a starting point from which to explore how knowledge about fishing, sealing and whaling, and maritime passages, served as a template for land-settlement around the Tasman Sea and Bass Strait. In this sense it is more a history of the afterlife of the Banksian project than an exploration of Banks himself. How did the natural history prized by Banks fit within the broad contours of the imperial transition from sea to land and from maritime trade to 'systematic colonisation'? In looking ahead from Banks' world, the paper therefore charts the implications of his writings at the violent interface of the Tasman frontier.

Janet Browne – "Joseph Banks as a Correspondent of Empire."

Drawing on recent studies on correspondence networks, this paper addresses Banks's extensive correspondence as a function of empire. Rather than characterising his correspondence as the self-conscious creation of a useful network of intelligencers, as might be suggested for some of his contemporaries, it will be proposed that the metaphor of estate management is more fruitful.

Edwin Rose - "From the South Seas to Soho Square: The Library of Joseph Banks and the Practice of Natural History."

Scholarship on Joseph Banks's library tends to focus on its later development, following his move to 32 Soho Square in 1777 and its use as a scientific resource by Banks's contemporaries, whom regularly acknowledged Banks for providing access to his library in their publications. As a result of this, little is known about the precise scholarly use of this library by Banks and his successive curators, these being Daniel Solander, Jonas Dryander and Robert Brown, and how this extensive collection of natural historical books was interlinked with Banks's natural historical collections. In this paper, I will give an overview, using a

selection of extensively annotated printed books I am using for my own research, of how Banks and his curators used the library in the field and in London, and its relationship with natural historical specimens from the South Seas. These include the books in Banks's possession during the 1760s and the library Banks and Solander took on the *Endeavour* in 1768, providing a new insight into the relationship between natural historical collecting, classification and print during the late eighteenth century. Banks's vast library and collections, which undoubtedly requires further research, formed one of the most comprehensive and widely used scholarly research libraries of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, opened the South Seas to contemporary naturalists and reflected Banks's lifelong interest in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

This meeting is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. With thanks to Sally Archer at the National Maritime Museum and Susan Walsh at UCL for their invaluable assistance in organizing this workshop.



Arts & Humanities
Research Council