Joseph Banks exhibition to be opened by David Attenborough

31/01/2014

Joseph Banks, A Great Endeavour: a Lincolnshire Gentleman and his Legacy will be officially opened on 14 February by the broadcaster and naturalist Sir David Attenborough during a private event. The three-month exhibition, which has been made possible thanks to nearly £140,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, will then open to the public on 15 February.

Andrea Martin from The Collection said: "The exhibition will centre on Benjamin West's portrait of the explorer surrounded by artefacts he brought back to England after he accompanied Captain James Cook on his first Pacific Ocean voyage aboard the Endeavour between 1768 and 1771. Examples include a cloak from New Zealand and a headdress from Tahiti, along with images made by artists of the people, plants and animals that they saw on the journey.

"Much of the material will rarely have been seen in Lincolnshire before, and it is a great privilege for us to borrow objects and drawings from many museums across the country, including the British Library, British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. And we're delighted that David Attenborough has agreed to open the exhibition."

David Attenborough added: "I am looking forward to opening the Banks Exhibition at The Collection in Lincoln on 14 February 2014. Young Joseph Banks's voyage on the Endeavour in 1768-1771 set the scene for much in the world of botany and of natural sciences. The Collection and the Sir Joseph Banks Society have done well to bring together samples from round the world. This will be the first and only time when they will be seen in Lincolnshire, the home county of Banks."

There will also be educational material, family activity days and lectures to accompany the exhibition, which runs until 11 May.

For more on all that The Collection has to offer, please visit The Collection website.

Notes to editors

Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) was born in London, son of William Banks, a wealthy Lincolnshire county squire and member of the House of Commons. He grew up at Revesby outside Horncastle and inherited his father’s estates in Lincolnshire and considerable wealth in 1761. He is most famous for his expedition on board HMB Endeavour with Captain James Cook, which left England in 1768. Banks became a friend of George III, with whom he shared an interest in agriculture and rural affairs. From 1773 he acted as the unofficial director of the Royal Gardens at Kew which became one of the foremost botanical gardens in the world.

Banks is credited with the introduction of Acacia, Eucalyptus, Mimosa and the Genus named after him, Banksia. Approximately 80 species of plant bear his name. He was involved in most British voyages of discovery of his day. He was elected President of the Royal Society in 1778, a position he held for the remainder of his life, and High Sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1794.