



THE JOURNAL

VOL. 21

JULY 1968

NO. 3

COOK THE NAVIGATOR

In August 1768 James Cook sailed from Plymouth in the *Endeavour* on the first of his three great voyages. The first object of the voyage was to carry selected observers with their equipment to Tahiti to record the time of transit of Venus across the Sun in 1769. These observations, combined with similar results from an expedition to be carried by the Royal Navy to Northern Norway, were expected to provide the data which would enable the true distance to the Sun, and thus the scale of the Universe, to be computed.

Captain Cook also carried secret orders in the *Endeavour* which bade him, on completion of the observing at Tahiti, go in search of a Great Southern Continent which was believed to exist in the South Pacific. Cook's discovery of the east coast of New Zealand and of New South Wales resulted, but the second voyage was required to disprove the Great Southern Continent. The third voyage was made in search of the North-West Passage.

In the first article in this number the Hydrographer of the Navy, certainly a spiritual successor of James Cook, reviews the latest volume to appear in the monumental Hakluyt Society's edition of the Journals of Captain James Cook.

The second article was found among the papers left by the late Professor E. G. R. Taylor, whose many contributions to the history of navigation were made so largely through the medium of this *Journal*. It is here published with the permission of her literary executors.

The John Webber portrait of James Cook, printed as a frontispiece, is in the National Art Gallery, Wellington. It appears in the volume reviewed by Admiral Ritchie and is reproduced with the permission of the Hakluyt Society and the Cambridge University Press.