

## English naval explorer's journal should not go abroad...

Please join us in our appeal to purchase an item of enormous historical significance to the nation.

The Culture Minister has placed a temporary export bar on a journal kept by explorer Sir John Narbrough. It gives the British Library a final opportunity to save it for the nation. This journal contains the fullest known account of his voyage to South America from 1669-71, which demonstrated the apparent viability of the English dream of trade in the Pacific. The beautifully illustrated journal together with intricate maps and drawings of animals and natives of the region enables Narbrough to be seen more clearly as a crucial figure in the history of English exploration. If his search for gold and dealings with the Spaniards look back to the heroic days of Francis Drake, his preoccupation with the welfare of his crew and his scientific interests look forward to the achievements of James Cook. On top of that, Narbrough, a contemporary of Samuel Pepys, was an excellent diarist.

Narbrough was instructed to investigate the possibilities of trade and survey the coasts of South America but without provoking the Spaniards! His journal and maps illustrate how he fulfilled the first two objectives and in the process he became the first British sailor to navigate the Strait of Magellan from West to East. Narbrough was a skilled mapmaker and was assisted by Greenville Collins who was later to become the first Englishman to create detailed charts of all of the coasts of Britain. The hitherto unknown manuscript charts accompanying his texts are in Narbrough's own hand. Narbrough's description of his passage of the Strait of Magellan provided the basis for British charts of the Strait until the time of Captain Cook. The charts are particularly striking visually with their naïve depictions of the peoples and animals of that part of South America unlike the soundings and descriptions of the coastlines which are highly sophisticated.

Peter Barber, Head of Maps at the British Library has stated that in his 34 years working in the Library he "cannot remember being offered an item that was both of iconic importance and of potentially enormous research value." This is a very exciting opportunity for the Library and we are appealing for donations to secure this acquisition. The purchase price is £310,000 and our deficit is £24,000. We are really hoping individuals passionate about naval history and exploration or just passionate about holding as much of the nation's history in the British Library as possible will help us to fill the funding gap.



**With your help we can keep this item at the British Library and make it freely accessible for all to consult.**

**To make an immediate donation by credit card, please go to**

**<https://www.bl.uk/supportus/supportersform.html>**

Alternatively, if you would like more information about this appeal, please contact Chloe Strickland in the Development Office on 0207 412 7238 or email [chloe.strickland@bl.uk](mailto:chloe.strickland@bl.uk)