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"Voyages of Discovery: Then & Now" Sets Sail for the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Traveling Exhibit Makes West Coast Debut May 5, 2002

- **Seven historic sea expeditions**
- **Thousands of discoveries**
- **One exhibit merging adventure, art and science**
- **MEDIA PREVIEW, Friday, May 3 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

LOS ANGELES - February 22, 2002 - Cast off on a voyage back in time and see what it was like to be a famous British explorer. Set sail on uncharted seas to exotic places yet to be recorded. As you face great dangers, encounter bizarre creatures, and record hundreds of new discoveries, little do you realize your work is part of a scientific revolution that will dramatically change the view of the natural world.

Voyages of Discovery: Then & Now takes visitors on an incredible journey with British explorers like Captain Cook, Charles Darwin and Sir Hans Sloane to explore Jamaica, Australia, the Galapagos, and other parts of the world. The exhibit showcases priceless scientific specimens and exquisite works of natural history art, which have a legacy of importance to this day. The exhibit makes its West Coast debut on May 5 and runs through September 2, 2002, at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

Exploring the human drama of the British voyagers themselves as well as the extraordinary places, animals, plants and people encountered in distant and unfamiliar lands, the exhibit brings together a collection of 119 artifacts. Collections on display include the actual finches brought back by Darwin from the Galapagos Islands - which helped form the basis of his theory of evolution by natural selection (1831-1836). Also included are Theobroma cacao, cocoa beans collected by physician Sir Hans Sloane on his voyage to Jamaica (1687-1689), which were the basis for his "milk chocolate" recipe that he eventually sold to Cadbury. Additionally there are also priceless artworks and journals kept aboard ship, which helped to illuminate the diversity of life existing on our planet.

"This exhibit is a perfect fit for Los Angeles, a truly global city with a long history of leadership in science and culture," says Jody Martin, curator of crustacea and chief of the division of invertebrate studies, who is acting as the Natural History Museum's in-house curator for the exhibit. "It documents one of the most exciting periods in the history of scientific inquiry, when scientists and their sponsors expended tremendous effort and

resources toward discovering the unknown. Perhaps more important, it awakens the realization that these efforts continue today, with our own curators making wonderful new discoveries all over the world."

Other significant expeditions featured in the exhibit include Alfred Russel Wallace's and Henry Walter Bates' exploration of the Amazon and Southeast Asia during England's Victorian Era, as well as the Challenger expedition (1872-1876), which gave rise to oceanography.

A complementary exhibit showcases modern-day discoveries and cutting-edge research technologies from the museum's own scientists. This small but exciting exhibit is designed to remind guests that classical voyages of discovery continue today. Artifacts on display include dinosaur skin and embryos from Patagonia discovered by museum paleontologist Luis Chiappe; new species of flies, some the size of a pin head, discovered in the tropics by entomologist Brian Brown; unique collecting equipment for studying marine biodiversity in the Caribbean designed and used by marine biologists Todd Zimmerman and Jody Martin; recently discovered reptiles and amphibians from Viet Nam found by herpetologist David Kizirian; rare and unusual gems and minerals found by Curator of Minerals Tony Kampf in Brazil; fossil coral reefs discovered in the Dominican Republic by invertebrate paleontologist Ken Johnson; and much more.

Voyages of Discovery is organized by the Natural History Museum, London. The Los Angeles presentation was made possible by BP. Local media sponsorship is provided by K-MOZART 105.1 FM.