**WAGOLL – What a good one looks like…**

Captain James Cook

**Early Life**

Captain James Cook was born in England on 27th October, 1728. He began working on coal ships down at the docks in when he was 13 years old, eventually securing an apprenticeship. The war broke out in 1755 between England and France so Cook joined the Royal Navy.

While in the Navy, Cook became known for his abilities as a surveyor and mapmaker. He was not to know that these skills would lead him to become one of the most famous explorers.

In 1762, Cook married Elizabeth Batts. They lived in Shadwell before moving to Mile End. They had a large family, five sons and one daughter.

**What is he famous for?**

Captain James Cook became a famous explorer. His first voyage saw him sail the HMB Endeavour from Plymouth in 1768. He was headed for Tahiti and arrived in 1769 to map the transit of Venus across the Sun. Tahiti was the best place for this to be done so he stayed for 3 months to complete this task. While Cook was in Tahiti, he was to open the secret orders from King George III. The secret mission involved searching for the Great Southern Land (Terra Australis).

Captain Cook set sail once again. It took him two months to reach New Zealand. Once there, he circumnavigated the country and created the first complete maps of New Zealand. Upon completing this, Cook set off for Van Diemen’s Land. The crew sighted land, Tasmania in 1770.

They continued heading up the coastline and stopped at Botany Bay. The crew encountered some Aboriginals who they tried to make friends with, upon instruction from the King. The Aboriginal people were not very happy to see the explorer and his crew. Captain Cook observed the Aboriginal people and found they had a very healthy lifestyle, continuing to work on the relationship between them. The Aboriginal people seemed very happy; much happier than Europeans.

Cook continued sailing up to Cape York, claiming the East Coast for Britain before calling it New South Wales. The crew had been reasonably healthy given the time spent at sea, with scurvy claiming the lives of many sailors on previous expeditions. However, on the return journey, 30 crewmen lost their lives from dysentery and typhoid. The HMB Endeavour returned home in 1771.

Captain Cook completed two other voyages, discovering Antarctica before being killed by the natives in Hawaii on his third voyage. He died on 14th February, 1779.

**Character Traits**

* Loved learning
* Hard worker
* Risk-taker
* Leader
* Well-dressed
* Clean
* Caring
* Driven
* Intelligent

**Fun Facts**

* Captain Cook was not the first explorer to discover Australia.
* The voyages of Cook and the maps he created were very important.
* Cook took a range of people with him on his first voyage. These included scientists and a botanist, Joseph Banks.
* Cook and Banks were the first Europeans to record thousands of plants and animals found in Australia. The descriptions of the dingo, crocodile and kangaroo would have been interesting.
* Captain James Cook went on to discover Antarctica on a different voyage.
* On Cook’s second voyage, he only lost 4 sailors. Cook believed in keeping his crewmen healthy and he had rules to ensure cleanliness.
* All men had to bathe everyday on the Endeavour. They had to air their bedding twice a week and they were provided with fresh fruit to prevent the crewmen getting scurvy.