



Lieutenant Henry T.D. Le Vesconte, daguerreotype by Richard Beard, London, 1845. The original is in the collections of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge. A second set, made at the same time is now presumed lost. For a long while it was supposed to be in the collections of the National Maritime Museum, or the Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock, but they have only print reproductions. This image, after a photograph by Martin Hartley, has been flipped horizontally in order to be viewed correctly. Courtesy Private Collection.

‘Nelsons of Discovery’: Notes on the Franklin Monument in Greenwich

Huw Lewis-Jones

We are of opinion that the Erebus and Terror should be moored hence-forth on either side of Victory, floating monuments of what the Nelsons of Discovery can dare and do at the call of their country in the service of the world.¹

In 1845, Sir John Franklin and his crews bade their farewells as their ships *Erebus* and *Terror* slipped down the Thames, heading out on their scientific voyage into the Arctic and the unknown. They were last seen late that summer, moored to an iceberg high in Lancaster Bay.² They were never seen again. Over more than a decade of anguish, some thirty expeditions were sent out in search of the party. Traces of the missing expedition’s first winter camp on Beechey Island were found in 1850 but its route in the years following remained unclear. In 1854, Dr John Rae brought back clues to their demise, with relics and Inuit stories that the expedition had perished somewhere to the west of the Back River. In 1859, 150 years ago this year, the Irish explorer Leopold McClintock returned to London bearing terrible news. With recovered artefacts, he finally confirmed that Franklin and all his men had perished. The nation mourned their loss – it was one of the greatest tragedies in the history of naval exploration.

In the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, there is a Monument to Sir John Franklin and those brave men who died alongside him. Designed by Royal Academician Richard Westmacott, the Monument was erected by Order of Parliament in the Painted Hall in 1858. Following building work, it was moved to the Chapel in 1938. A skeleton recovered by American explorer Charles Francis Hall was identified by family members as Lieutenant Henry Le Vesconte of HMS *Erebus*. His bones were returned for entombment in the Monument in 1873, the only remains that ever made it home to England.

After years of neglect, this Monument has been restored and relocated. This research note will detail this work and give additional information about some of the contemporary responses to memorialising Franklin’s achievement. Conservation work began in May this year and has taken over five months to

complete. The Monument now has pride of place in the Chapel vestibule, at the main entrance and fully accessible to public view. The impressive memorial comprises an inscription tablet with a list of the officers of the lost expedition, a pediment with wreaths of oak and olive, flanked by the figures of a naval officer and a desolate sailor. In the background - the upper yards of two departing vessels and, high above the crush of towering icebergs, the Pole Star.

‘The End of an Epic’

One of the first men to see Admiral Nelson’s famous signal at Trafalgar was likely the young signal officer on board the *Bellerophon*, John Franklin. In 1844, he would likewise respond to the Admiralty’s call for another Arctic expedition with the words, ‘... the highest object of my desire is faithfully to perform my duty’. In doing so, he was destined to become the most famous explorer of the nineteenth century, heralded in verse, eulogised in the newspapers, romanticised upon grand canvases, and memorialised in stone. Writing for *The Quarterly Review* in 1847, Francis Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, extolled Franklin’s virtues:

Few greater pleasures, indeed, are ours than when, from our literary signal-post, we can make the number of one of those gallant vessels, returning ‘rough with many a scar’ of bloodless conflict with the floe and iceberg, and with its log one continuous record of danger and difficulty vanquished by courage and intelligence, and of triumphs unpurchased by other human suffering than the voluntary endurance of the wise and brave in pursuit of noble ends. Well pleased have we lingered so long within the confines of that Arctic Circle which had been penetrated by so many expeditions, and with interest which accumulates by the hour do we watch for the return of those two vessels which are, perhaps, even now working their southward course through Behring’s Straits into the Pacific. Should the happiness be yet allowed us of witnessing that return, we are of opinion that the Erebus and Terror should be moored hence-forth on either side of Victory, floating monuments of what the Nelsons of Discovery can dare and do at the call of their country in the service of the world.³

This buoyant optimism was soon replaced by the spectre of tragedy, horror, cannibalism and butchery. The honest truth of the Franklin disaster would not make for pleasant reading. Like his hero Nelson, his reputation would attract a close scrutiny, with elements of his successes picked over, in what



Sir Francis Leopold McClintock, and a view of the his steam-yacht Fox, photographed by Lieutenant John Cheyne in 1859. The dual images were available to the public as ‘stereoscopic slides’ in 1860. Courtesy Private Collection.



seems like an endless historical post-mortem. In an ongoing cycle of books, reviews, commentary and debate, Franklin has been as much maligned as adored ever since he left London that summer of 1845.

Those hopes that sent Franklin’s voyage north, and longed for his safe return, were dashed with Leopold McClintock’s arrival from King William Island, aboard the steam-yacht *Fox*. Anchored off the Isle of Wight on 21 September 1859, he wrote a lengthy report to the Admiralty. He went ashore at Portsmouth and took the train to London carrying with him his papers, the record found at Point Victory, and two cases filled with recovered objects belonging to members of the lost expedition. He wanted to call first upon Franklin’s widow, Lady Jane, but she was in the south of France. The next day, on 22 September, he presented himself at the Admiralty. Within two hours information was sent direct to the Editor of *The Times*, and a leading article broke the news the following morning.⁴ Within a few days the weeklies picked up the story and within the week news had spread across the world. The floodgates of publicity had been opened.

Upon arrival in London, McClintock was photographed by Lieutenant Cheyne, a shipmate from an earlier search expedition, appearing in a bold

pose beside some of the relics, then on display in the museum of the United Service Institution. Many of relics were also later displayed in the Painted Hall, where the large Monument in Franklin's memory had been installed late in 1858, in advance of McClintock's homecoming.⁵ The relics collected by Rae had also been shown in the Painted Hall in 1854.⁶ Cheyne sold guinea-priced sets of these stereoviews direct from his London home to an eager public.⁷ Having left shrouded in uncertainty and scepticism, the McClintock voyage was now afforded a hero's welcome, for finally putting an end to speculation about the fate of the missing explorers.

The Franklin saga found its way into homes on both sides of the Atlantic, and into the hearts of the public who had followed the search expeditions in the newspapers, in illustrated lectures, and in the books they bought. It had assumed such proportions of national disaster, that *Sharpe's London Magazine* tearfully declared the news, 'The End of an Epic'.⁸ Voices from all sorts of periodical journals added to the clamour of commentary, within a vibrant print culture. 'The ephemeral at a penny and the portly quarterly up to six shillings all alike joined in the general exultation', as one hack put it. The reading public for the disaster now swelled to include 'millions of sympathizing souls', according to *The Illustrated London News* and editors scrambled to profit from the sensation. *Once a Week* imagined Franklin's final moments: '... then the shout of victory, which cheered the last hour of Nelson and of Wolfe, rang not the less heartily round the bed of the gallant Franklin, and lit up that kind eye with its last gleam of triumph. Like them, his last thought must have been of his country's glory'.⁹ 'At last the mystery of FRANKLIN'S fate is solved', reported *The Times*:

... we know the very day of his death ... Alas! There can be no longer those sad wailings from an imaginary Tintagel to persuade the credulous that an Arthur still lives ... The dauntless soul dies out amid frost and snow; the spirit is never quenched though the body may perish ... We retire now from the contest with honour, if with grief, and we leave the name of FRANKLIN engraved on the furthest pillars which the energy of mankind has dared to erect as the landmark of its research in the dull and lifeless region that guards the axis of the world.¹⁰

Yet, Arctic heroics insisted on staying in fashion. John Murray released McClintock's narrative of the expedition, *The Voyage of the Fox in the Arctic Seas*, in late December. The first edition – of 10,000 copies, a considerable printing – sold out within a month.¹¹ The volume was published in lavish octavo priced at sixteen shillings. It was expensive, a luxury item, but

demand was high. Mudie's Circulating Library took 3,000 copies. The book was both a best-seller and a 'most-borrowed', even surpassing Dickens's latest novel. Work began on a second edition immediately and it appeared in March 1860. By way of comparison, Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, also published by Murray that winter, had by the same time sold about 5,000 copies. Darwin's fame would soon eclipse all, of course, but for the moment there seemed to be no end to the public interest in the Franklin drama. The evolution of his posthumous reputation, however, was just beginning.

The mystery and tragedy surrounding Franklin's voyage stirred balladeers and novelists to their own expressions of loss and elegy. Many turned to poetry as an outlet for their grief, whilst others responded to public interest in an effort to sell their work. Poems can be found in many of the periodicals and newspapers throughout this period, from Dickens's journal *Household Words* to *The Illustrated London News*.¹² Such was the public interest when McClintock returned, that one finds evidence of local polar poetry contests held in schools and village halls. Newspapers carry these poetic memorials – no real surprise, they are mostly rather bad. 'Sleep! Martyrs of discovery, sleep!', wrote Nicholas Michell in the *New Monthly*:

*Your winding-sheets the Polar snows;
What though the cold winds o'er ye sweep,
And on your graves no flowret blows,
Your memories long shall flourish fair,
Your story to the world proclaim
What dauntless British hearts can dare;
Sleep! Lost ones, sleep! Embalmed in fame.*¹³

Several large institutions also held contests for the best poetic tribute. On 8 February 1860, for example, a national announcement in the *Guardian* declared: 'The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford has received from "a non-resident member of the University much attached to her interests" the sum of £50, for a prize to be awarded to the writer of the best English poem on "The Life, the Character and the Death of the heroic seaman Sir John Franklin, which special reference to the time, place, and discovery of his death'. The poem was to be in rhymed verse to be recited during the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which was having its peripatetic annual gathering in Oxford that year. The contest was won by a Canadian undergraduate, Owen Alexander Vidal, for his *A Poem Upon the Life and Character of Sir John Franklin*. Far better was a poem that did not win, Algernon Swinburne's *The Death of Sir John Franklin* – his first



'Franklin Relics Brought by Dr Rae', from W.W. May's *A Series of Fourteen Sketches Made During the Voyage up Wellington Channel in Search of Sir John Franklin*, plate XIV, chromo-lithograph by Day, London, 1855. Courtesy Huw Lewis-Jones.

original poem and his first directly inspired by the sea, a theme for which he would later become well-known:

*This is the end. There is no nobler word
In the large writing and scored marge of time
Than such endurance is ...*

*So long the record of these men shall stand,
Because they chose not life but rather death,
Each side being weighed with a most equal hand,
Because the gift they had of English breath
They did give back to England for her sake
Like those dead seamen of Elizabeth
And those who wrought with Nelson and with Blake
To do great England service their lives long --
High honour shall they have; their deeds shall make*

*Their spoken names sound sweeter than all song ...
These chose the best; therefore their name shall be
Part of all noble things that shall be done,
Part of the royal record of the sea.¹⁴*

At the same time, Lady Franklin was doing her very best to script this 'record' and preserve her husband's enduring reputation.¹⁵ A key component of McClintock's homecoming, for example, had been his assertion, urged by Lady Franklin, that the Northwest Passage had been 'discovered'. On 14 November 1859, before a huge meeting of RGS members, McClintock read a memoir of his *Fox* voyage that helped to construct this idea of Franklin's lasting achievement. Although McClure 'was worthily rewarded for making a North-West Passage', RGS President Sir Roderick Murchison would agree that 'Franklin was the man who had made *the* North-West Passage'.¹⁶ In her dogged insistence that her husband be immortalized in this way, Lady Franklin turned failure into triumph by creating a legend. She quickly moved to set his legacy in stone.

In 1861 a statue was erected in Hobart, for which the Tasmanian Legislature voted one thousand pounds; later that year another statue, executed under Lady Franklin's supervision, was placed in the market place at Spilsby, the Lincolnshire town in which he was born.¹⁷ Its pedestal bears the inscription that Franklin was 'Discoverer' of the Passage. Lady Franklin, it seems, had been unhappy with the first memorial ordered by the Admiralty in July 1855

at the Royal Naval Hospital in Greenwich. It was intended to honour the fallen, to provide closure: a chance for the Navy to reflect but also to *move on* from the tragedy. Westmacott's Monument to Franklin was duly approved, but Jane was dissatisfied that the official search would not continue. In 1858 in Greenwich, Westmacott carved the memory of Rear Admiral Franklin into stone, only for the returning hero McClintock, the following year, to demote him to captain by discovering his death had occurred before his promotion. The marble slab has forever been inaccurate, just one of many half-truths about the tragedy borne forward by the passage of time.

On 15 November 1866, in the heart of London and just a short walk from Nelson in Trafalgar Square, an eight-foot bronze statue was unveiled in



Sir John Franklin, tinted lithographic portrait, engraved by McFarlane and Erskine, Edinburgh, 1877. Courtesy Huw Lewis-Jones.

Waterloo Place before the First Lord of the Admiralty. Lady Franklin watched on approvingly from the upper windows of her husband's old club, the Athenaeum. The ceremony was widely covered in the papers. *The Spectator*, for example, gave its tribute: 'In the Arctic Seas Sir John Franklin's name is that of the first martyr, at Trafalgar – Nelson's. Franklin will always be remembered for his victory over the elements, and not over men'.¹⁸ Franklin was memorialised in a heroic pose, 'addressing his officers and crew, and telling them that the North-West Passage had at last been discovered'.¹⁹

Yet, however deeply felt the mid-century fascination with Franklin's tale, press

attentions soon moved to other stages, with public interest attracted to new heroes and exciting new types of colonial warfare. After such terrible cost – both human and financial – the Government would take great persuasion to look again to the North. The official search effort had cost over £600,000, and it is estimated the total amount spent by 1860 was nearly £2 million. In 1865, Sherard Osborn attempted to open a new campaign by reading a paper at the RGS calling for a renewal of Arctic endeavour. This time, however, the North Pole would be the prize. Echoing the arguments of that great expedition patron, the late Second Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir John Barrow, Osborn declared: 'The Navy needs some action to wake it up from the sloth of routine, and save it from the canker of prolonged peace. Arctic exploration is more wholesome for it, in a moral as well as a sanitary point of view, than any more Ashantee or Japanese wars'.²⁰ A heroic return to the fray was necessary, not least, to suppress the lingering truths, doubts and fears, about the cannibalistic demise of the Franklin party – those 'hobgoblin tales of the fate of the survivors', he later wrote.²¹ It was time to go back, he declared, time to start anew. That RGS meeting, on 23 January, was one of the most crowded ever assembled. 'We are no more prepared to turn our backs upon the Arctic Regions because Sir John Franklin died off King William Island', he continued, 'than to do so to an enemy's fleet because Nelson fell at Trafalgar'.²² The audience, with RGS Gold Medallist Jane Franklin among them, offered cheers in support. Whilst the promise of a return to the Arctic was met with approval here, the project was soon forestalled. The Arctic was no longer the best place for the formation of an empire's heroes. Exploration in central Africa, naval engagement in southeast Asia, and the suppression of a mutinous Indian sub-continent all provided a new crop of dutiful champions ready to die in the name of empire.

On 31 July 1875, shortly after Lady Franklin's death, a memorial was unveiled in Westminster Abbey, which further enshrined Franklin's claim as discoverer of the Northwest Passage. A bust by Noble in white Carrara marble sits beneath a canopy of 'rich gothic foliage' by Sir George Gilbert Scott. An inscription details Franklin's achievement, accompanied by a bas-relief of a ship beset in mountainous ice. The epitaph is by Tennyson, his nephew by marriage, and it elegantly captures his posthumous apotheosis:

*Not here: the white North has thy bones; and thou,
 Heroic sailor-soul
 Art passing on thine happier voyage now,
 Toward no earthly pole.*²³

Lady Franklin had campaigned vigorously to protect her husband's legacy by developing a series of official fictions that would endure, as if etched in stone. Though many approved of her proprietary zeal, an equal number thought the whole debate an unnecessary one; the Passage itself long revealed to be 'utterly worthless'. The Franklin expedition was a disaster – perhaps the most consummate tragedy of the nineteenth century – and he had neither 'discovered', nor completed, a Northwest Passage. Nevertheless his image as naval hero, an explorer without equal, would be passed swiftly on to the next generation.

The fiftieth anniversary of the departure of the Franklin expedition in 1895 presented an opportunity to celebrate past glories. The Royal Naval Exhibition of 1891 – with its impressive 'Franklin Gallery', stuffed full with portraiture, relics, and polar memories – had already set the stage, investing the tragedy with the qualities of a national epic. Franklin as sailor hero had found his martyrdom in a heady mix of science, piety and naval achievement.²⁴ The Royal Scottish Geographical Society commemorated the anniversary with a symposium and exhibition in Edinburgh.²⁵ The RGS organised a gala meeting and a dinner attended by a host of Arctic veterans. Two steamers were chartered on 19 May to take members of the public, including more than three hundred RGS Fellows, downstream to Greenwich to view the Franklin relics and the Painted Hall, stocked with 'so many portraits of England's naval heroes'.²⁶ Commandant Le Clerc, representing the Paris Geographical Society, placed a wreath on the obelisk erected there to Lieutenant Bellot. Clements Markham, now President of the RGS, justified the occasion:

A commemoration, such as that which we now celebrate, serves more than one useful purpose. It recalls the memory of brave men who did their duty well and nobly in their generation. It revives and freshens our knowledge of their work, and of what we owe to them for the examples they have set us, and for the credit their labours have secured for our country. It enforces on our minds the lessons to be derived from the past, in our efforts to work for the present and for the future. Above all, the renewal of an interest in former achievements has a tendency to incite among our younger associates a feeling of admiration, which is a direct incentive to emulation in the same glorious field of geographical research.²⁷

Markham engineered the commemorations, reconstructing an image of Franklin's achievements, both as a promotional exercise for the RGS and as

way to vivify his polar ambitions. 'We look back then ... at those two brave ships moving down the river just half a century ago, as the starting-point whence to trace a continuous stream of high-souled effort, and of magnificent results, down to this present day, when we strive to make an Antarctic Expedition the chief and the most practical outcome of our Franklin Commemoration tonight'.²⁸ Before directing his audience to adjourn to a side-hall, which had been set up to contain an exhibition of Arctic relics and naval portraiture, the veteran explorer McClintock rose to offer the toast, describing the 'gallantry' of Franklin's 'heroic band of Christian men'. 'In laying down their lives at the call of duty, our countrymen bequeathed to us a rich gift', he declared, 'one more beacon light to guide our sons to deeds of heroism in the future. These examples of unflinching courage, devotion to duty, and endurance of hardship, are as life-blood to naval enterprise'.²⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century, Franklin's very obvious failure had been reconstructed into a satisfying victory: not only he had 'forged the last link' to complete a Northwest Passage, but, more importantly, he had met death in the manner of a Christian hero. As a counterpoint to the worst excesses of the 'new imperialism' of the 1890s, with its aggressive triumphalism, many returned to the understated qualities of the Franklin story. Whilst new national heroes would in the future emerge in the Antarctic rather than in the North, this did not greatly erode the Arctic's appeal, which recent historians suggest to have been on the wane.³⁰ It was precisely because of renewed polar interest and the threat of new nations taking part in the 'race for the South', that the historical achievements of the Navy in the Arctic burned more brightly. Polar exploration and the Navy made ideal partners, Markham would conclude, encouraging 'that spirit of maritime enterprise which has ever distinguished the English people'.³¹

The first major biographical treatment of the 'Heroic Sailor-Soul' came in 1896 with the publication of Henry Traill's *The Life of Sir John Franklin*. It provided the details of Franklin's life that would form the basis for many subsequent accounts.³² This was a late-Victorian Franklin, however; a figure born at the 1891 exhibition, a publicity image for the Navy undergoing a crisis of confidence, a monument shorn of his humanity and tenderness – redoubtable but not real. Richard Cyriax built on Traill's narrative to produce a classic account, first published in 1939, making excellent use of primary sources, Parliamentary papers and other surviving records, and it still stands as an accurate narrative of Franklin's life and career.³³ Whilst there was a

trickle of new information, most notably the publishing of some private correspondence, and new insights into Franklin's career in Tasmania as a colonial administrator, most accounts stuck to the tragedy, and provided increasingly facile adventure narratives.³⁴

A fine narrative by Roderic Owen, published in 1978, revisited Franklin's life in a well-illustrated iconography and added new details to Cyriax's account, yet offered little to explain his imaginative legacy.³⁵ Richard Davis, a Canadian academic, recognised the continuing irony of Franklin's posthumous reputation: 'The man who charted nearly 3,000 km of the coastline of North America is best remembered as the leader of an expedition that cost the British Admiralty two ships and the lives of 129 men and that made no direct contribution to the geographical unfolding of the Canadian Arctic'.³⁶ In 1986, the bicentenary of Franklin's birth, a commemorative service was held in the Chapel of the Royal Naval College. Franklin's biographer Owen gave an Address and Rear Admiral Sir Edmund Irving KBE CB – a former Hydrographer of the Navy, and a descendant of Lieutenant Irving of HMS *Terror* – read a Lesson in tribute to the men who fell alongside Franklin.

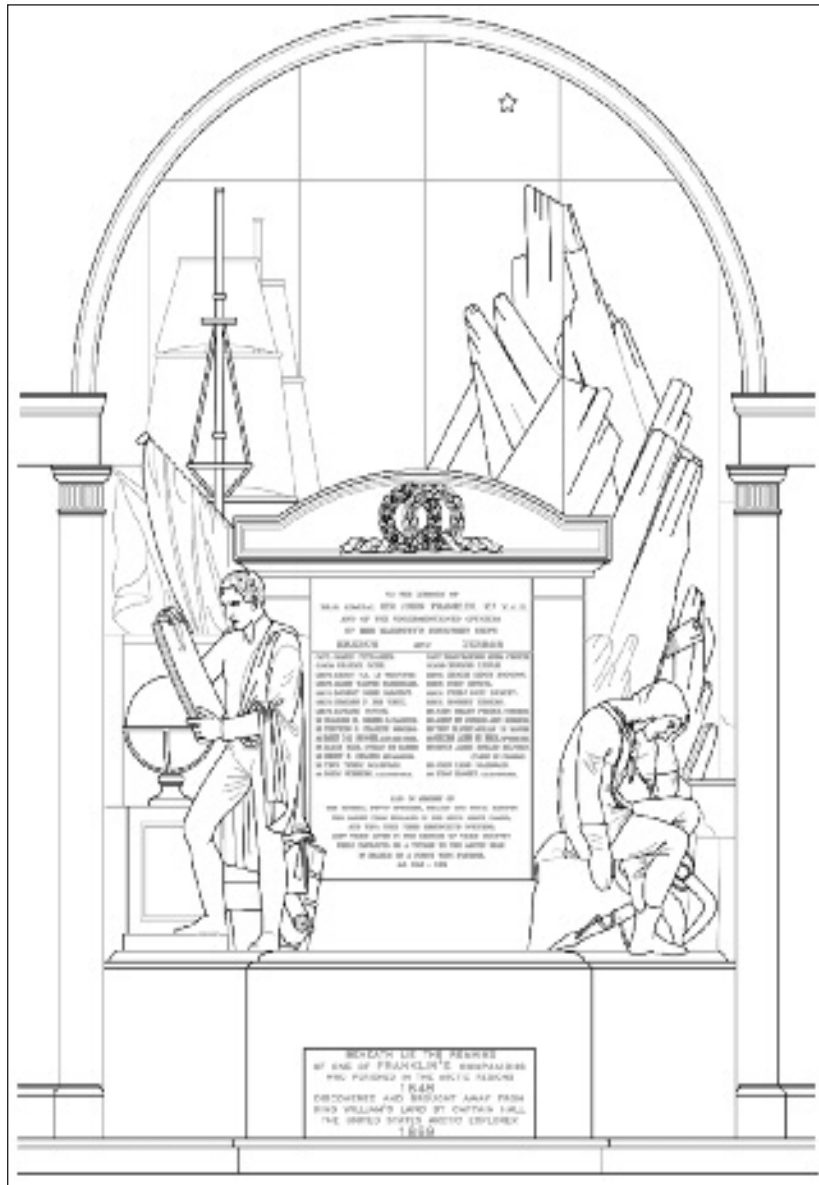
Clearly, explorers mean many things to many people. Attitudes range considerably over time, to be re-made and re-imagined by those who look again at the historical record, moving selectively through its cultural detritus. Even today Franklin is still chiefly remembered for his failure, a man cast into pantomime villainy; transformed into sound-bite in popular histories as a 'bumbling fool', a 'symbol of British doughtiness', a 'gallant loser' bound by naval hubris. He was a ripe target for this uneven modern critique, perhaps, elevated as he was by a host of Victorian admirers, but an endless and reductive anti-hagiography is injurious to the historical record. Nuance and balance is a must when scrutinising the heroes of our past. Not least, most of these polemics forgot some of the main reasons for British Arctic exploration during this period: as an operational training ground for naval men in their ships and motivated often as scientific enterprises, not a mere dash for a Passage, or for the Pole, although often described in this way by enthusiastic lobbyists. Franklin was a man of his time, excellent, limited, ambitious, innocent of our standards.

In 1984, the body of John Torrington, a seaman on the Franklin expedition, was exhumed from his grave on Beechey Island before the world's media, and the startling image of his frozen corpse was beamed across the globe.³⁷ The grizzly details of the Franklin story – a dramatic narrative of botulism,

man-hauling, cannibalism, and hardihood in the harsh northern landscape – continue to capture public imaginations. There have been beautiful poetic tributes; popular songs; a great number of 'disaster' novels and other less-successful fictional re-creations; innumerable Internet sites; and some engaging television documentaries.³⁸ One recent feature, *The Lost Expedition*, revelled in the rumours of cannibalism and suffering to advertise its programme. Andrew Lambert, Laughton Professor of Naval History at King's College London, provided some well-needed rigour to the account.³⁹ More satisfying, of course, was his elegant biography of Franklin, published earlier this year.⁴⁰ He recognised that popular authors, journalists and novelists have done wonders to reinvigorate general interest in Arctic exploration history, but warned that there is real risk in sound-bite and simplification. British explorers have suffered for too long under this re-interpretative gaze. As Lambert noted, '... behind every bronze hero is a human being, an urgent, flawed life in pursuit of some fragment of immortality. We should listen, not judge, because our ancestors were human, and in seeing their humanity we might recall our own before the lights go out for ever'.⁴¹

In 2009, a special memorial service, once again in the Chapel in Greenwich, rightly refocused attention back toward Franklin's scientific and geographical achievements, whilst also celebrating the efforts of the many brave men who went in search of him.⁴² The service of thanksgiving was attended by descendants of the explorers and also saw the re-dedication of the restored and re-sited Monument there.⁴³ Though it may be fairly said that the expedition was the worst disaster in the history of British naval exploration, with the loss of two vessels and their crews, conserving the Monument offered a suitable moment to reflect upon their sacrifice and, more importantly, a chance to acknowledge British contributions to the discovery and exploration of the Canadian Arctic, an area now the focus of considerable geopolitical attention – over trade routes, access to resource riches and other sovereignty issues.

The project to conserve the Monument also neatly coincided with current efforts to find the remains of the ships of Franklin's expedition, a series of surveys that is being led by Robert Grenier, Chief Underwater Archaeologist, Parks Canada. Grenier gave a special speech in the Painted Hall after the memorial service. It was a wonderful evening, and an appropriate location, being the site where the Franklin relics were previously displayed to the public and a place where toasts and tributes to the lost naval explorers were frequently offered, no doubt over a glass or two, in the years after



Architectural elevation of the Franklin Monument, drawn by Kings Land Surveyors Limited in 2008.
 Courtesy Greenwich Foundation.

McClintock's return. Fittingly, at our memorial service in 2009, H.E. James R. Wright, Canadian High Commissioner, read these enigmatic lines:

*... cryptic marks, latitudes,
 signatures, journals,
 diaries of despair;
 official reports*

*Nobody needs to read.
 I've seen the real journals
 You left us, you Franklin, you Crozier.
 I've seen the skulls of your men
 in the snow, their sterile bones
 Arranged around cairns like
 compasses,
 Marking out all the latitudes
 and longitudes
 Of men.*

*Now the great passage is open,
 The one you dreamed of, Franklin,
 And great white ships plough through it
 Over and over again,
 Packed with cargo and carefree men.
 It is as though no one had to prove it
 Because the passage was always there.
 Or ... is it that the way was invented,
 Franklin?*

*that you cracked the passage open
 With the forces of sheer certainty?
 – or is it that you cannot know,
 Can never know,
 Where the passage lies
 Between conjecture and reality ... ?⁴⁴*

Grenier is due to resume his search for the shipwrecks in 2010. One hopes that this latest expedition will reveal some significant new insights into the factors that led to the deaths of the men of *Erebus* and *Terror*, though it is equally possible that nothing new will be discovered. It is clear that the crews faced impenetrable pack ice, dwindling supplies and near-certain starvation. Though it may prove impossible to unravel all the secrets of the demise of the expedition, the Franklin tragedy remains one of the most enigmatic mysteries of polar history.

Conservation Notes

The skilled team at Richard Rogers Conservation undertook the work on the Monument under the direction of Giles Quarme and Associates, and latterly Martin Ashley Architects, during the summer of 2009. The Monument was found to be in good condition and stable, with little evidence of any movement between the different pieces of marble. A number of old cracks, especially on the top panels, were noted as possible areas of risk whilst lifting. The entire marble surface was moderately covered with a layer of dirt and dust. There were also many paint splashes, which had occurred during the re-decoration of the niche in which it had sat since 1938. It was removed from the Painted Hall, just before the conversion of the Hall in 1939 to the Officers' Mess, as a staircase needed to be reconstructed.

All the elements of the Monument required detaching from the wall and adjoining marble sections. The process of cutting away the plaster grouting between the sections was initiated starting from the top of the Monument and working down. The traditional method of securing this sort of statuary would have been to secure to the back wall using metal 'cramps'. These would have been plastered into a drill hole on the top edge of the section and then bonded into a corresponding hole in the supporting wall. It was soon discovered that these methods were not always adhered to. The top three arched sections were loosened and it was revealed that they had no mechanical fixing at all. They were held in place by plaster alone.

The top edges of the next layer of marble elements were then revealed and securing cramps could be seen, but unfortunately these were set in concrete. It soon became evident that although metal cramps had been used to secure the sections, the uneven cavity behind the sections had been back filled using a combination of bricks and a pour of wet cement. This made it incredibly difficult to remove each section as the cement was very hard and had bonded the marble to the wall. A painstaking process of carefully chipping out the cement using hand tools was required until the marble became detached from the wall. When each section was free, it was lifted using nylon slings attached to a block and tackle and then transferred to ground level.

The Monument was composed of forty separate sections: the heaviest being the two figures, weighing roughly 500kgs each; and the largest, the 2.3m long 'Iceberg panel'. Each element required moving to the other end of the building. The route had to avoid going through the Chapel itself, which was to remain open for the duration of the works. Relocation of all the marble elements was completed in a series of phases. Firstly, all sections were

detached from the existing location and transferred to ground level. They were then moved from the lower stairwell and lifted down to the outside courtyard, using a scaffold system. Third phase of movement, saw all sections lifted up to colonnade level and into the Chapel vestibule. Finally, a second scaffold was erected to lift all forty sections into place on the new plenum wall.

The design of the Monument meant that there would be a supporting core. The front inscription panel was inspected and a hairline crack was discovered. Before this could be safely removed it was decided that the panel required strengthening to reduce the risk of crack opening up any further. A sheet of 'Hexlite' - aluminium honeycomb core, between a fibreglass skin - was cut to size and bonded on the back face of the panel. After the inscription panel was carefully removed, a bricked up hidden cavity in the core was revealed. Careful removal of these bricks revealed a wooden casket, which research suggested would contain human remains. This box was removed in accordance with environmental health guidelines and taken away for analysis.

While the Monument was dismantled a process of cleaning was implemented. The build up of surface dirt and dust was removed using a 50:50 mix of white spirit and water with a few drops of non-ionic detergent. There were also a small number of disfiguring stains, which were removed using a steam cleaner. All paint splashes were also carefully removed using a scalpel blade. The south niche in the Chapel vestibule was chosen as the new location for the Monument. Due to the existing window, a freestanding plenum wall was designed and built. A brickwork core was then built to the exact specification of the original. The existing niche also had a carved stone skirting which needed to be replicated around the front of the Monument. A scaffold was erected and the elements were lifted in reverse order, starting with the figures. The figures were raised to the correct height using a layer of 28mm concrete tiles, to also allow for the bevelled slips at the front of the Monument. All sections were correctly levelled and a layer of wet plaster was used as a bedding layer. The central inscription panel required lifting from the core so a platform of concrete blocks was created as a stable mount.

Many of the sections were not self-supporting or required footings to project from the plenum wall. When this was the case, 15mm stainless steel studding was bonded into the wall where required. Where the marble sections required retaining against the wall, the traditional method of cramps was used – stainless steel, instead of brass – plastered into the marble cramp holes. Because the plenum wall was made of lightweight concrete blocks it was decided to bond the cramps into the pre-drilled holes using a polyester resin

‘chem-bolt’. When all sections were in place grouting commenced with a gypsum plaster. The whole was cleaned, in preparation for the Monument’s rededication ceremony on 29 October 2009. The full inscription reads:

TO THE MEMORY OF
REAR ADMIRAL SIR JOHN FRANKLIN KT., K.C.H.
AND OF THE UNDERMENTIONED OFFICERS
OF HER MAJESTY’S DISCOVERY SHIPS

EREBUS AND TERROR

| | |
|---|---|
| CAPT. JAMES FITZJAMES. | CAPT. FRANS. RAWDON MOIRA CROZIER. |
| COMMR. GRAHAM GORE. | COMMR. EDWARD LITTLE. |
| LIEUT. HENRY T.D. LE VESCONTE. | LIEUT. GEORGE HENRY HODGSON. |
| LIEUT. JAMES WALTER FAIRHOLME. | LIEUT. JOHN IRVING. |
| LIEUT. ROBERT ORME SARGENT. | LIEUT. FREDK. JOHN HORNBY. |
| LIEUT. CHARLES F. DES VOEUX. | LIEUT. ROBERT THOMAS. |
| LIEUT. EDWARD COUCH. | MR. JOHN SMART PEDDIE, SURGEON. |
| MR. CHARLES H. OSMER, PAYMASTER. | MR. ALEXR. MCDONALD, ASST. SURGEON. |
| MR. STEPHEN S. STANLEY, SURGEON. | MR. THOS. BLANKY, CIVILIAN, ICE MASTER. |
| MR. HARRY D.S. GOODSIR, ACTG. ASST. SURG. | MR. GILLIES ALEXR. MCBEAN, 2 ND MASTER. |
| MR. JAMES REID, CIVILIAN, ICE MASTER. | MR. EDWIN JAMES HOWARD HELPMAN (CLERK IN CHARGE) |
| MR. HENRY F. COLLINS, 2ND MASTER. | |
| MR. THOS. TERRY, BOATSWAIN. | MR. JOHN LANE, BOATSWAIN. |
| MR. JOHN WEEKES, CARPENTER. | MR. THOS. HONEY, CARPENTER. |

ALSO IN MEMORY OF
THE SEVERAL PETTY OFFICERS, SEAMEN AND ROYAL
MARINES WHO SAILED FROM ENGLAND IN THE SHIPS ABOVE
NAMED; AND WHO, WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE OFFICERS, LOST
THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY WHILE
EMPLOYED ON A VOYAGE TO THE ARCTIC SEAS, IN SEARCH
OF A NORTH WEST PASSAGE.

A.D.1845 – 1854

BENEATH LIE THE REMAINS OF ONE OF FRANKLIN’S
COMPANIONS WHO PERISHED IN THE ARCTIC REGIONS

1848

DISCOVERED AND BROUGHT AWAY FROM
KING WILLIAM’S LAND BY CAPTAIN HALL
THE UNITED STATES ARCTIC EXPLORER

1869

‘These Bones’: Identifying Lieutenant Le Vesconte

Henry Thomas Dundas Le Vesconte was born in 1813 in Netherton, Devon, first son of Commander Henry Le Vesconte, RN and Sarah Wills.⁴⁵ His father Henry had an interesting naval career.⁴⁶ He had joined the Navy on the *Cambridge* as one of Admiral Graves’ retinue in 1790. As Lieutenant on Jamaica he saw action at the Battle of Copenhagen and later received a commendation from Nelson for the capture of six gun vessels on shore at St Valery. He was present at Trafalgar as Lieutenant of the 36-gun frigate *Naiad* under Captain Thomas Dundas; with the small fifth-rate playing an important role in relaying signals before the battle and in towing dismasted British ships to safety afterwards.⁴⁷ Henry Le Vesconte, the son, entered the Navy as a first-class volunteer on board *Herald* on 19 May 1829, joined *Britannia* on 22 November 1831, and was made Midshipman on 15 March 1832. He was transferred to the 40-gun frigate *Endymion* in December 1834 and served on her until 1836 under Captain Sir Samuel Roberts. He won his lieutenancy by ‘repeated acts of conspicuous gallantry’, as Mate on the sixth-rate *Calliope* during the Opium War. He later served on the sloop *Hyacinth* in the East Indies and as Fitzjames’s first-lieutenant on *Clio* off the coast of Africa in cruises to suppress the slave trade.⁴⁸ Le Vesconte was appointed to the Channel Squadron later in 1844, serving aboard *Superb*. On 4 March 1845 he was made Second Lieutenant to the *Erebus*, as she was fitting out for the polar expedition at Woolwich Dockyard.

Little is known of Le Vesconte’s activity on this expedition. We know he sat for his portrait with the photographer Richard Beard, as did a number of other officers, as the ship lay alongside. This was the first, and the last photograph, to be taken of him. It is reproduced at the head of this article.⁴⁹ He sent a number of letters and sketches home, as *Erebus* headed north into Baffin Bay late in 1845. But after that, as with the expedition as a whole, few exact details survive. At the Whalefish Islands, we know he spent some time surveying ashore with his friend Fitzjames, dodging mosquitoes. Franklin, Fitzjames records, was ‘much pleased with him’. It is possible he endured the third winter and was alive into 1848.⁵⁰ The circumstances of his death are not known. He is remembered with two points of land in the Arctic, namely ‘Le Vesconte Point’ on the south-west coast of Baillie-Hamilton Island, and another, of similar name, on the west coast of King William Island.

Le Vesconte’s remains were discovered by Captain Charles Francis Hall, at ‘Point Hall’ near Pfeffer River, during his second Arctic expedition. His search for possible survivors had spent its first winter near the Wager River

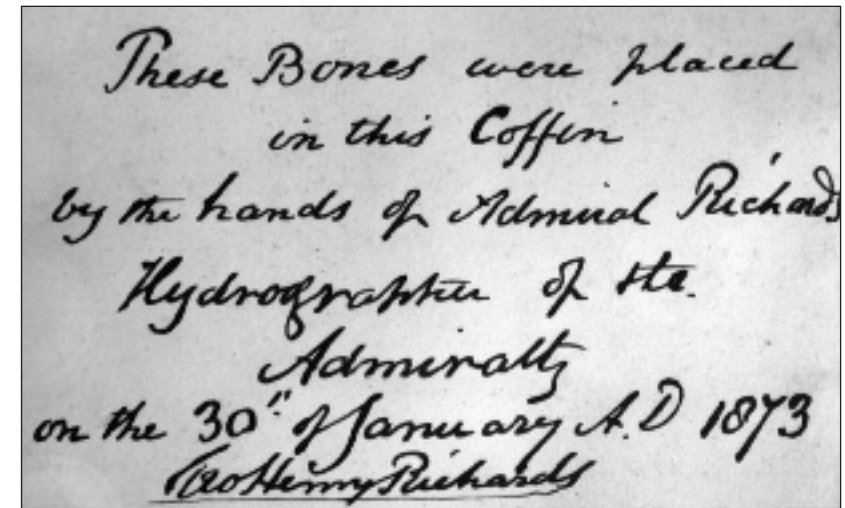
and the following four at Repulse Bay, from where many journeys were made, including one to King William Island in the Spring of 1869, where the major part of the relics brought back by McClintock had been found. Hall returned to the United States in September 1869, and the news of his discoveries was soon relayed to London.⁵¹ The skeleton came into the possession of Mr Brevoort, of Brooklyn, one of Hall's patrons, who eventually consigned it to Rear Admiral Edward Inglefield, the Arctic veteran, then Naval Attaché at Washington. Inglefield wrote to his friend Admiral George Henry Richards, then Hydrographer of the Navy, who in turn wrote to Lady Jane on 29 April 1872:

He has had a complete skeleton presented to him, which was found by Hall on King William's Land, of an officer – the remains of a silk undervest were on it – and one of the teeth stuffed with gold – all the other perfect. Aged between 35 and 40. My advice will be to put it in a box and bury it – for it could not be certainly identified – and would be no use to anyone – probably, if the skeleton was married – his widow has taken another skeleton before this.⁵²

Inglefield brought the remains to England a few months later and left them in Richards' care. Whose bones they were, however, were still in doubt. He wrote again by the end of June:

It is in the box Hall brought it home in and is said to be very perfect. I only looked at the head, which is a very remarkable one, all the teeth perfect but one stuffed with gold ... I should think there would be little difficulty in identifying it – indeed there cannot be more than four or five to choose from, the age cannot be much over 30. As soon as he arrived here the intelligence spread abroad and in one hour my room was taken possession of, so I sealed up the box and sent it straight away to Huxley, who promises to set it up and give an opinion.⁵³

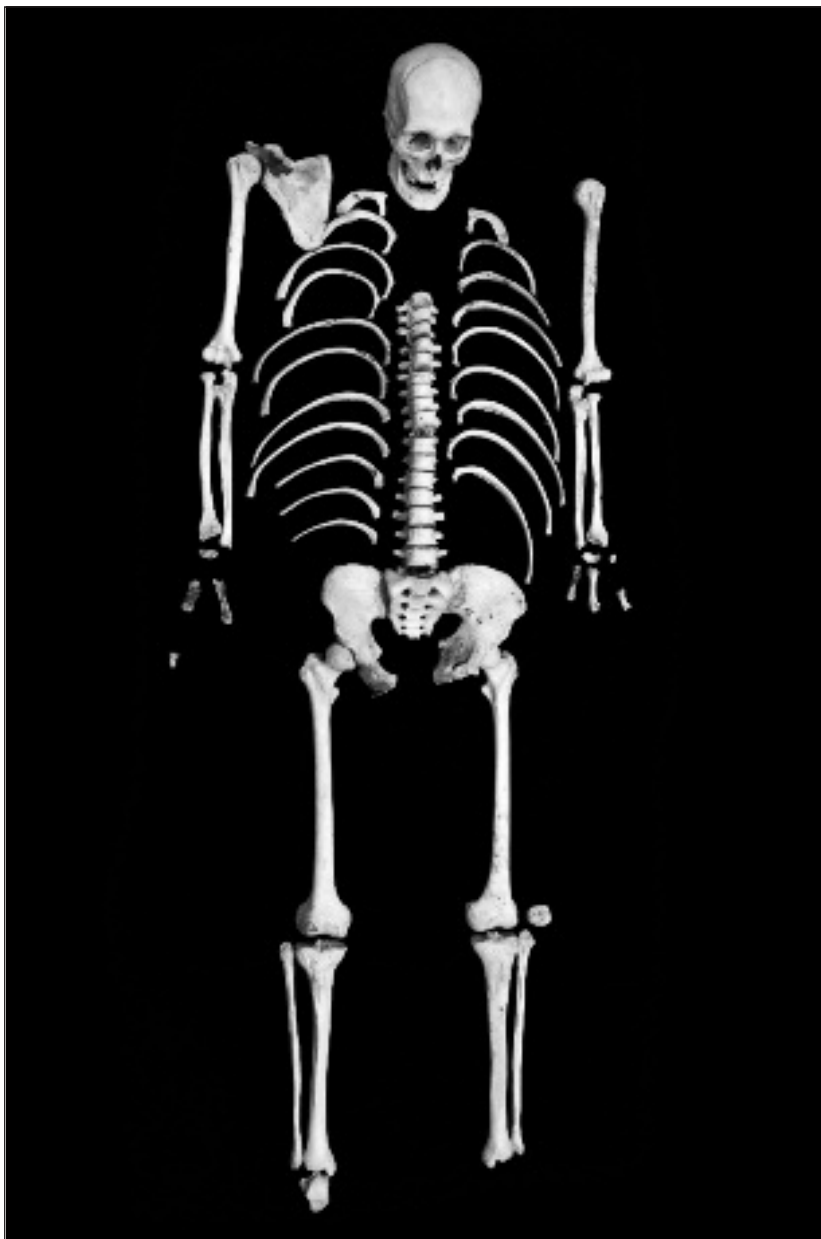
A month later and they were still no closer to identifying the remains. Richards had yet to hear back from the venerable Professor Thomas Huxley - a former naval surgeon, famously 'Darwin's Bulldog', then Secretary to the Royal Society and the world's leading comparative anatomist. Richards wrote to Sophy Cracroft, Lady Jane's niece, in July: '... nor have I heard anything from Professor Huxley about the skellington – I wrote to him yesterday and asked what he had done'. By August, finally some news. Huxley had found time to examine the bones and relatives had been consulted. Richards then wrote to Lady Jane: 'I have little doubt that it is Le



Top of the wooden burial casket, and a small note found within it, photographed during conservation work on the Monument in 2009. Courtesy Greenwich Foundation and English Heritage.

Vesconte'.⁵⁴ Despite the positive identification, the 'skellington' was interred under the floor of the vestibule of the Painted Hall in 1873, by order of the Lord's Commissioners of the Admiralty, described simply as 'One of Franklin's companions'. When the Monument was moved in 1938, the items were 'reverently removed to the Chapel and there reinterred'. A hidden recess was made at the foot of the Monument, fronted by marble, where the bones remained undisturbed until conservation work took place in the summer of 2009.

The Greenwich Foundation – working closely with Richard Rogers Conservation, and assisted by the author – entrusted examination of the skeleton to English Heritage. The casket itself is comprised of three boxes.



The skeleton of Lieutenant Henry T.D. Le Vesconte, photographed during conservation work, and shortly afterwards re-interred within the Monument. Courtesy Greenwich Foundation and English Heritage.

An outer box, made of wood (likely teak) measures 94cm x 23cm x 33cm. Upon its screwed down-lid the following text is inscribed:

THIS BOX CONTAINS HUMAN BONES, CONJECTURED TO HAVE BEEN THE SKELETON OF THE BODY OF LIEUT HENRY TD LE VESCONTE OF HM SHIP EREBUS, WHO PERISHED WITH MANY OTHERS, ABOUT THE YEAR 1848, IN THE EXPEDITION TO THE ARCTIC REGIONS COMMANDED BY SIR JOHN FRANKLIN. THE BONES WERE FOUND BY CAPT HALL, THE AMERICAN EXPLORER, IN KING WILLIAM'S LAND; AND TAKEN BY HIM TO NEW YORK IN 1869, WHENCE THEY WERE BROUGHT TO ENGLAND BY ADMIRAL INGLESFIELD. THEY WERE DEPOSITED HERE BY ORDER OF THE LORDS OF THE ADMIRALTY IN 1873.

Inside this casket was a sealed lead casing, measuring 89cm x 20cm x 29cm. Carefully peeled back, the lead casing was revealed to contain a second wooden box, measuring 88 cm x 19cm (the third dimension is not known as the lead was only partially removed). Within the casket, excluding the skeletal remains, were as follows:

- An offering cross, 23.6cm in length, made of three layers of card onto which flowers had been stitched.
- A large, complete map entitled 'Discoveries in the Arctic Sea up to MDCCCLIX' bearing the legend 'London, Published according to the Act of Parliament at the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty Jan 20th 1855, additions to 1860'. Due to its fragile nature the map was not fully unfolded; it shows the area in which the Erebus and Terror were then presumed lost.
- A section of map, bearing the title 'Lousiade Archipelago' and illustrating the Calvados Chain in Papua New Guinea. This map measures approximately 90cm x 35cm and has clearly been cut from a much larger map.
- A small white envelope measuring 21.5cm x 10.5cm, pre-printed with the words 'On Her Majesties Service' across the top and 'Hydrographic Department Admiralty' across the bottom in the left hand corner. Hand written on the envelope is 'Three teeth-one ... stopped with Gold', with the initials SHR. The envelope contained a folded 30cm x 20.5cm sheet of plain blue writing paper, which had been sealed with red wax, although the seal had pulled apart some time previous. Hand written on the paper was 'Teeth of upper jaw; right side; ... incisor; canine and m bicuspid', and inside were three teeth.
- A white invitation card, 9.7cm x 13.9cm, which has a pre-printed invitation on the front reading; 'The President and Council of the Royal Society

request the honour of the company of Admiral Richards (handwritten name inserted) at Burlington House of Saturday, April 27th at 9 o'clock'. Not transferable: This card to be produced'. A handwritten note on the back of this reads: 'These Bones were placed in this Coffin by the hands of Admiral Richards, Hydrographer of the Admiralty on the 30th of January A.D. 1873' and is signed by Geo. Henry Richards.

- A parcel comprising a large sheet of white paper which has 'remains of blanket' hand-written on the top left, along with an unknown signature, tied with a pink ribbon. The parcel contains a quantity of material that is predominantly green in colour although areas of yellow and purple pigments can be seen. The material was not been unfolded to prevent damage so it is not possible to say whether the colour changes represent discolouration of the material or a pattern. It is possible that more than one type of fabric is included in the package as two distinct weaves can be observed: one very coarse and the other much finer. The coarse woven material is consistent with material found adhering to the skeletal remains. The complete parcel weighed 391g. The skeletal remains were wrapped in white linen.

An image of 'these bones' is presented here for the first time, to satisfy curiosity and in the hope that they need never be disturbed again. Shortly after this photograph was taken, the remains were returned to their lead-lined casket and respectfully reinterred in the Monument, now proudly re-sited at the entrance of the Chapel. With the Monument conserved for future generations, far from the terrible polar snows, may Le Vesconte and his companions rest in peace.

*To thee, brave Franklin, and thy gallant crew,
Are England's praise and England's sorrow due;
Who braved at Duty's call the Arctic wave,
And led by Science, found the untimely grave.*⁵⁵

¹ Francis Egerton, 'Sir James Ross's Voyage to the Antarctic Regions', *The Quarterly Review*, 81 (1847), pp. 166-87 (pp. 166-67).

² The Franklin Expedition left England in 1845 under the command of Sir John Franklin (1786-1847), to discover and chart the remaining sections of a navigable North-West Passage, and to conduct a wide-ranging magnetic survey. Sir John was an experienced explorer who had served on previous Arctic expeditions. He sailed from the Thames in the two ships HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, with a crew of 24 officers and 110 men. 5 were invalided home from Greenland, making the party a total of 129 men. The expedition was last seen on 26 July 1845 by the crew of two whaling ships, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Enterprise*, moored to an iceberg in Lancaster Sound near the western edge of Baffin Bay. After two years, and no word from the explorers, Sir John's wife Lady Jane urged the Admiralty and the Government to mount a search effort to rescue the missing men.

³ Francis Egerton, 'Sir James Ross's Voyage to the Antarctic Regions', *The Quarterly Review*, 81 (1847), pp. 166-67.

⁴ The return of the expedition was celebrated in the press. Among many others, see 'Fate of Sir John Franklin's Expedition', *The Times*, 23 September 1859, p. 7; 'Fate of Sir John Franklin's Expedition: Proceedings of the Yacht Fox', *The Illustrated London News*, 1 October 1859, pp. 327-29, including a facsimile of the paper found in the cairn on Point Victory; 'Captain McClintock and the Franklin Expedition', *The Times*, 15 November 1859, p. 7; 'The Voyage of the Fox', *The Times*, 30 December 1859, p. 8. McClintock's reputation as an explorer, long in abeyance despite his immense popularity in the nineteenth century, has been revived by a recent biography. See David Murphy, *The Arctic Fox: Francis Leopold McClintock, Discoverer of the Fate of Franklin* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2004).

⁵ See 'Monument to Sir John Franklin', *The Illustrated London News*, 8 January 1859, p. 35.

⁶ The majority of Rae's finds were handed over to the Admiralty by the Hudson Bay Company. They were then given to Greenwich Hospital for display in the Painted Hall in 1854. The McClintock material was displayed initially at the Royal United Services Museum in Whitehall. The collection was later moved to the Royal Naval Museum, Greenwich and material from the Hall and Schwatka expeditions was added. The relics were transferred to the National Maritime Museum when this opened in 1937. Other material has been added since this date, mainly from the Royal United Services Museum after it closed in 1963.

⁷ John P. Cheyne, *Descriptive Catalogue of Fourteen Stereoscopic Slides of the Relics of Sir John Franklin's Expedition, Photographed and Published by Lieut. Cheyne, R.N., at the United Service, Whitehall* (London: United Service, [1860]).

⁸ See Joven, 'The End of an Epic', *Sharpe's London Magazine*, 15 (1859), pp. 242-46.

⁹ See Osborn, 'The Last Voyage of Sir John Franklin', *Once a Week*, 20 October 1859, p. 366.

¹⁰ 'Editorial', *The Times*, 23 September 1859, p. 6.

¹¹ Advertisement in the *Saturday Review*, 31 December 1860.

¹² It would be fascinating to trace the passage of the Franklin story in poetry, though there is no space here. The 1850's saw a number of works in verse, including George H. Boker's *A Ballad of Sir John Franklin* (1850), Chandos Hoskyns Abrahall's *Arctic Enterprise, A Poem* (1856), James Parsons' *Reflections on the Mysterious Fate of Sir John Franklin* (1857), and Joseph Addison Turner's *The Discovery of Sir John Franklin* (1858). McClintock's return inspired new enthusiasm, such as Walter White's *Erebus and Terror* (1859). Richard Doddridge Blackmore, who would later gain fame as the author of his novel *Lorna Doone* published his poem *The Fate of Franklin* in 1860.

¹³ Nicholas Michell, 'The Franklin Monument', *New Monthly Magazine*, 177 (1859), p. 317.

¹⁴ See Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Poems*, 6 vols (London: Chatto and Windus, 1904). The 'Death of Sir John Franklin' was written in 1860. The student Swinburne prefaced his poem with lines from Shakespeare's *Pericles*:

'The unfriendly elements
Forgot thee utterly ---
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,
And e'er-remaining lamps, the belching whale
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse ;
Lying with simple shells.' [III.I].

¹⁵ See 'Lady Franklin', *The Times*, 19 July 1875, p. 5; Frances J. Woodward, *Portrait of Jane: A Life of Lady Franklin* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951). For a colourful, though at times misleading, recent account of *Lady Franklin's role in constructing her husband's achievements*, see Ken McGoogan, *Lady Franklin's Revenge: A True Story of Ambition, Obsession and the Remaking of Arctic History* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2005).

- ¹⁶ See 'Captain McClintock and the Franklin Expedition', *The Times*, 15 November 1859, p. 7.
- ¹⁷ On the Spilsby statue – cast in bronze by Mr. Bacon, costing nearly seven hundred pounds, and inaugurated by Sir John Richardson on 26 November 1861 – see 'The Late Sir John Franklin', *The Times*, 30 August 1860, p. 5; 'The Franklin Memorial at Spilsby', *The Times*, 28 November 1861, p. 8.
- ¹⁸ 'Sir John Franklin', *The Spectator*, 17 November 1866, p. 1271.
- ¹⁹ 'Monument of Sir John Franklin', *The Illustrated London News*, 22 September 1866, p. 279; 'Statue to Sir John Franklin', *The Times*, 16 November 1866, p. 10. The 'national monument', executed by Mathew Noble, was erected by order of W.E. Cowper Coles, with funds voted for it by Parliament. It had been supported in the House of Commons by Sir Francis Baring and by a Mr Coningham, the brother-in-law of the late Captain James Fitzjames. A bas-relief on the front of the pedestal represents Franklin's funeral, surrounded 'by the sorrowing officers and crew of the two ships'. In the panel at the back of the pedestal, which can now only be viewed from the garden of the Athenaeum and the Travellers' Club, is an embossed bronze chart of the Arctic showing the position of the ships and their crews at the time of Franklin's death.
- ²⁰ Sherard Osborn, 'On the Exploration of the North Polar Region', *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, 9 (1865), 42-71 (p. 52).
- ²¹ Osborn to Roderick Murchison, 14 October 1867. BM Add. 46,217, f. 314. See also Andrew Lambert, *Franklin: Tragic Hero of Polar Navigation* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 297.
- ²² 'The Franklin Commemoration', *Geographical Journal*, 6:1 (1895), pp. 31-44 (p. 41).
- ²³ See 'Sir John Franklin', *The Times*, 31 July 1875, p. 12; 'Sir John Franklin', *The Times*, 2 August 1875, p. 9; 'The Church', *The Illustrated London News*, 7 August 1875, p. 143. Tennyson's epitaph would long be cherished as a lament to fallen polar-heroes. Many early reports of the Scott disaster of 1912, for example, adapted his verse by changing 'North' to 'South'. See, for example, 'Victory and Death', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 February 1913, p. 7.
- ²⁴ For more on the Royal Naval Exhibition, see Huw Lewis-Jones, 'Displaying Nelson: Navalism and 'The Exhibition' of 1891', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 17:1 (2005), pp. 29-67; Huw Lewis-Jones, 'Heroism Displayed': Revisiting the Franklin Gallery at the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1891', *Polar Record*, 41 (2005), pp. 185-203.
- ²⁵ 'Franklin Commemoration in Edinburgh', *The Times*, 5 June 1895, p. 11.
- ²⁶ 'The Franklin Commemoration', *The Times*, 21 May 1895, p. 10.
- ²⁷ 'The Franklin Commemoration', *Geographical Journal*, 6:1 (1895), p. 33.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42. See also John Murray, 'The Renewal of Antarctic Exploration', *Geographical Journal*, 3 (1894), pp. 1-42; 'Projects for Antarctic Exploration', *Nature*, 54 (1896), pp. 29-31.
- ²⁹ 'The Franklin Commemoration', *Geographical Journal*, 6:1 (1895), 31-44 (p. 43).
- ³⁰ See F. Guillelard, 'Franklin and the Arctic', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 161 (1897), pp. 238-56.
- ³¹ Clements R. Markham, 'The Need for an Antarctic Expedition', *The Nineteenth Century*, 38 (1895), pp. 706-12.
- ³² Henry D. Traill, *The Life of Sir John Franklin* (London: John Murray, 1896). Among many other accounts see Augustus Henry Beesly, *Sir John Franklin* (London: M. Ward & Co, 1894), part of the 'Heroes of History' series; Ernest Charles Buley, *Into the Polar Seas: The Story of Sir John Franklin* (London: Sunday School Union, 1909); and J. Kennedy MacLean, *Heroes of the Farthest North and Farthest South* (London: W. & R. Chambers, 1913).
- ³³ Richard J. Cyriax, *Sir John Franklin's Last Arctic Expedition* (London: Methuen & Co, 1939). Cyriax's original narrative is highly sought after by polar collectors, since the stocks are reputed to have been bombed during the Second World War. A facsimile reprint was republished in 1997, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary year of Franklin's death on 11 June 1847.
- ³⁴ See for example, *Some Private Correspondence of Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin, Tasmania, 1837-1845*, edited by George Mackaness (Sydney: D.S. Ford, 1947); Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Sir John Franklin in Tasmania: 1837-1843* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1949). Historical narratives in the traditional mould include James Elgin Wetherell, *Three Centuries of Canadian Story: From John Cabot to John Franklin* (Toronto: Musson Book Co., 1928); Noel Wright, *Quest for Franklin* (London: Heinemann, 1959); Leslie H. Neatby, *The Search for Franklin* (London: Barker, 1970).
- ³⁵ Roderic Owen, *The Fate of Franklin* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1978).
- ³⁶ Richard C. Davis, 'John Franklin (1786-1847)', *Arctic*, 38:4 (1985), pp. 338-39.
- ³⁷ See John Geiger and Owen Beattie, *Dead Silence: The Greatest Mystery in Arctic Discovery* (London: Bloomsbury, 1993); Owen Beattie and John Geiger, *Frozen in Time: The Fate of the Franklin Expedition* (London: Bloomsbury, 1987).
- ³⁸ For the work of novelists using the Franklin story, see Nancy Cato, *North-west by South* (London: Heinemann, 1965); Sten Nadolny, *The Discovery of Slowness*, trans. by Ralph Freedman (London: Viking, 1987); Rudy Wiebe, *A Discovery of Strangers* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994); Sheila Nickerson, *Disappearance: A Map* (New York: Doubleday, 1996); Andrea Barrett, *Voyage of the Narwhal* (New York: Norton, 1998); John Wilson, *North With Franklin: The Lost Journals of James Fitzjames* (Allston: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2000); Robert Edric, *The Broken Lands: A Novel of Arctic Disaster* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2002), among others.
- ³⁹ *The Lost Expedition* aired in the United Kingdom on Channel Five during November 2005 in the six-part *Revealed* documentary series; a series which attempted 'to shed some light on the biggest mysteries in the past two millennia'. Other subjects included *Hannibal of the Alps*, the archaeology of Roman Britain seen through *Boudica's Treasures*, *The Da Vinci Code Myth*, a history of the 'love business' in *Secrets of the Dating Agency*, and a study of wartime criminality entitled *Bad Boys of the Blitz*. Andrew Lambert - Laughton Professor of Naval History at King's College London and popular Nelson biographer - cast Franklin's heroism in terms of his leadership qualities and his humanity.
- ⁴⁰ Andrew Lambert, *Franklin: Tragic Hero of Polar Navigation* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 351.
- ⁴² The 'Service of Thanksgiving' on 29 October 2009, and the gala reception that followed it in the Painted Hall, was directed by Dr Huw Lewis-Jones and Kari Herbert, of Polarworld with assistance from the Greenwich Foundation and Canada House. It was attended by over 300 invited guests, with members of the polar community – historians, scientists, explorers, and enthusiasts – joining descendants of the men who served in the Arctic in the nineteenth century, to offer a tribute to their achievements. The families of Sir John Franklin, Captain Francis Crozier, Sir Leopold McClintock, Sir John Ross, Sir James Clark Ross and Commander Cheyne were represented, in addition to relatives of Captain Robert Falcon Scott, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Sir Wally Herbert, and Sir Vivian Fuchs, among many others.
- ⁴³ For the Monument's listing on the superb Maritime Memorials database, see: <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials/Memorial.cfm?Search=franklin&MemorialID=M2370>
- ⁴⁴ Such is fashion, after the effusions of the 1860s, Franklin soon faded as a subject of poetry. He re-emerged in 1965, nevertheless, in *Erebus and Terror*, a verse drama originally written for CBC radio by award-winning Canadian poet Gwendolyn MacEwen. Her text finally appeared in print in a magazine in 1974. It was later published in *Afterworlds* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987). MacEwen described beautiful images of the 'cold holiness of snow', through which wandering explorers dropped, one by one, amidst the 'crushed, complex geography of men'. The most notable recent poetic treatment of Franklin has been David Solway's verse cycle *Franklin's Passage* (2003), which was awarded the 36th annual Grand Prix du Livre by the City of Montreal; a first for an Anglophone writer.

- ⁴⁵ Henry was christened on 15 July 1813 in Combeinteignhead, Devon. He would have three sisters, Rose, Charlotte and Anna, and three younger brothers, Philip, Charles and James.
- ⁴⁶ Henry's father, also Henry Le Vesconte, was the son of Philip Le Vesconte, a naval veteran who lost a leg in the action off the Dogger Bank in 1781. He served as a warrant officer and purser on various vessels, the last being the *Royal William*, on the books of which he was borne until his death on 25 May 1807. Henry Le Vesconte had three brothers all of whom served in the Navy. James Le Vesconte, a Lieutenant in the Royal Marines, was wounded at Trafalgar in the *Royal Sovereign*. Philip Le Vesconte saw service as Midshipman of *Saturn* in an action with the French in 1795, and was wounded at Copenhagen when Lieutenant of the *Monarch*. He was later wrecked off Brest in 1804 and was in captivity in France until 1810. George Le Vesconte, the youngest son, was Midshipman of the *Druid* in 1807, but left the service shortly after his father's death.
- ⁴⁷ Too small to take part in the battle itself, *Naiad* lay to windward of the action. She towed the 74-gun *Belleisle* to Gibraltar after the storm. *Naiad* served in other actions and was finally paid off in 1826. She later acted as a depot ship in Chile and Peru. Broken up in 1898, *Naiad* was the longest survivor of any of the ships at Trafalgar save *Victory* herself. Henry Le Vesconte, father, retired from the Navy in 1828 and the family then emigrated to Upper Canada. He received a grant of 1,000 acres of Crown Land in the Trent River Valley, Seymour Township, for his service in the Napoleonic Wars. He died on 7 July 1850 in Belleville, Ontario, unaware of his son's demise in the far north a few years before.
- ⁴⁸ 'The Franklin Commemoration', *Geographical Journal*, 6:1 (1895), p. 37. See also *The Mariner's Mirror*, 18 (1932), pp. 321-22. Among the Franklin relics in the collections of the NMM are silver table forks and spoons bearing his name on the shanks. See AAA3273-5, AAA2474 and AAA2488. The Société Jersiaise has a silver fork bearing his name and an etching of his, showing *Erebus* and *Terror* at Boat Creek, Whale Island, on 12 July 1845.
- ⁴⁹ The unique daguerreotype images were later copied by Beard for reproduction in the newspapers. See, for example, *The Illustrated London News*, 13 September 1851, p. 329.
- ⁵⁰ See Richard J. Cyriax, *Sir John Franklin's Last Arctic Expedition* (London: Methuen & Co, 1939); J. E. Nourse, *Narrative of the Second Arctic Expedition Made by Charles F. Hall* (Washington: G.P.O., 1879), p. 401, p. 409, and p. 418.
- ⁵¹ See 'Letter from Captain Hall to Mr Grinnell', *The New York Herald*, 30 September 1869; 'America', *The Illustrated London News*, 2 October 1869, p. 319. 'Dr Hall, the Arctic explorer, arrived at New Bedford last Sunday, from Repulse Bay, after an absence of five years. He had discovered the skeletons of several of Sir John Franklin's party at King William's Land, and brings numerous relics of the Franklin expedition'.
- ⁵² Quoted in Roderic Owen, *The Fate of Franklin* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1978), p. 421.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 421.
- ⁵⁴ See also *United Service Gazette*, 30 November 1872; Ann Savours, 'Franklin Memorial', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 72 (1986), pp. 480-81. The skeleton of Lieutenant John Irving also made its way to Great Britain. Lieutenant Schwatka of the United States Army built a cairn over his grave at Point Victory, removed the bones and took them to America. He then sent them to Irving's relations in Scotland, carried across the Atlantic on SS *Circassia*, as special cargo at the invitation of the Anchor Line. They were interred with full naval honours at Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh on 7 January 1881. For a record of this memorial, see <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/memorials/Memorial.cfm?Banner=4&MemorialID=M552>
- ⁵⁵ Spencer Smith, 'The Deserted Boat', in *Repton School Prize Poems* (Derby: W. Bemrose, 1860), pp. 11-12.

