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Franklin's men and their families: New evidence from the Allotment Books

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Research Article

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Abstract

A rich seam of scientific research has been opened by the recent location of both shipwrecks from the disastrous 1845 Franklin northwest passage expedition. Even more than the forensic study of any human remains, the contents of Her Majesty's Discovery Ships *Erebus* and *Terror* have already begun to illuminate the day-to-day lives of Victorian sailors in the Arctic. Yet many hitherto unexamined but informative documents have survived too, both in the British National Archives and at local levels throughout the United Kingdom, which also enable us to focus upon those men, their work and families, thereby gaining a far better understanding of their meticulously planned but ultimately doomed voyage. This article examines the previously ignored Royal Navy Allotment Books and cross-references them with other contemporary records, such as censuses and parish registers, to give us new insights into the backgrounds of the crews of HMSs *Erebus* and *Terror*.

Note on references

References to Admiralty files held in the National Archives, Kew and London Metropolitan Archives, Clerkenwell, which have no author, are indicated in the text, for example ADM 38/0672. Full details of these are given alphabetically in the list of references at the end.

Background

In September 2014, after an annual sonar search, the wreck of HMS *Erebus* was successfully located by Parks Canada archaeologists at a depth of 11 metres in Queen Maud Gulf off King William Island, Nunavut (Hutchinson, 2017, p. 154). Almost exactly two years later HMS *Terror* was found 48 metres below the surface some miles to the south in Terror Bay (Hutchinson, 2017, p. 161). The undersea archaeological finding of both vessels from the 1845 expedition is unquestionably one of the most important breakthroughs in the 170 years or so since those ships left England. Many years of difficult and patient scientific work lie ahead for marine archaeologists and other scholars, but the astonishingly well-preserved wrecks, which have already yielded dozens of superb artefacts, will continue to unravel secret after secret.

Within two years of the rediscovery of *Erebus* and only weeks after *Terror* had been found a superb exhibition of many items recovered from the former, plus other relevant European, American and Inuit artefacts and documents, was presented first at the National Maritime Museum (NMM) in Greenwich, London (14 July 2017–5 January 2018), and subsequently at the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa (2 March–30 September 2018). To accompany this, a scholarly, well-illustrated and readable book, *Sir John Franklin's Erebus and Terror expedition lost and found* has been written by Gillian Hutchinson, Curator Emerita of the NMM (Hutchinson, 2017). Her book includes the first publication of some information from the Allotment lists of HMS *Terror* (Hutchinson, 2017, pp. 74–75) and HMS *Erebus* (Hutchinson, 2017, pp. 76–77). A page from *Terror*'s Allotment book (actually half of the double spread numbered 320 in ADM27/90) is also illustrated (Hutchinson, 2017, p. 72). These provided a tantalising glimpse of the crews and, in some cases, their families, but deeper investigation was beyond the scope of Gillian Hutchinson's work and has been left until now.

Allotment lists

Detailed analyses of the crews' Muster books from *Erebus* (ADM 38/0672) and *Terror* (ADM 38/1962) and of Attestation forms and Description books relevant to their Royal Marines (in ADM 157 and 158) have already been published (Lloyd-Jones, 2004, 2005, respectively). These showed where men had originally come from and how old and experienced in the ways of the sea (and sometimes polar regions) they were in May 1845. Further research showed that the information contained in these Admiralty documents, which are now stored at The National Archives (TNA) in Kew, can often be corroborated or even corrected by cross-referencing with other contemporary records such as parish registers (Lloyd-Jones, 2011). The Muster or Sailing books are not, of course, the definitive ones taken, but copies, which were brought back from the edge of the

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Arctic Circle by the supply ship *Baretto Junior* when she left the discovery vessels and returned to England in July 1845. Their main purpose was to ensure that pay and promotions were properly recorded while the expedition was absent and incommunicado. Separate Allotment books (actually pre-printed forms that were filled in by hand and bound together) were kept, recording *A list of persons belonging to Her Majesty's Ship . . . allotting part of their monthly pay or wages* (ADM 27/90). This entitled the person named, usually a sailor's wife, to collect a specified amount (generally half) of his month's pay while he was at sea.

Certain demographic statistics about the crews (Petty Officers and Able Seamen) can immediately be ascertained. On both ships 14 men allotted half a month's pay to their wives. Although there may well have been one or two who were now completely out of touch with women whom they had once legally wed, the list of 28 married men now gives us a clear picture of how many left young families behind. Crew totals at departure, adding in the four boys under 20 years of age (none of whom made allotments to any parent), were 46 on *Erebus* and 44 on *Terror*. Thus slightly less than a third of each crew was married, with higher numbers amongst the older, more experienced Petty Officers (10 on *Erebus*, 8 on *Terror*). Only two of the 14 Royal Marines who went allotted pay to wives. It is interesting that both of those Marines, Sergeant Bryant of *Erebus* and Corporal Hedges of *Terror*, married within a year of sailing; in Bryant's case, examined in more detail below, only days before he left. In both Royal Marine cases, and for at least 15 crewmen, the wives' addresses were in Greenwich or Woolwich, very close to the Royal Dockyard at Deptford where the ships were fitted out. This raises the possibility that common law 'marriages' were being legalised at the last minute so that partners could benefit from pay allotments. A striking example is that of Samuel Brown, alias William Hardy, Boatswain's Mate on *Erebus*, who married his wife, Mary, on 7 April 1845 in what was then a Roman Catholic chapel (in use 1793–1848) at St George's Fields, Lambeth, although Pugin's Catholic Cathedral had been under construction nearby since 1840. This is the first definite indication that any of Franklin's men might have been Catholics, although the Irish Marines James Daly (Lloyd-Jones, 2004, p. 321) and William Pilkington (Lloyd-Jones, 2004, p. 323), and Cornelius Hickey (Lloyd-Jones, 2005, p. 314), Caulker's Mate on *Terror*, who came from Limerick, very probably were too. In the case of Brown alias Hardy, a Yorkshireman from Hull, it is most likely that he converted, which would have been obligatory in order to marry a Roman Catholic, so that his wife could collect his allotment of two pounds eight shillings (henceforth expressed £2. 8/-) a month. It is known from earlier research (Lloyd-Jones, 2005, p. 313) that Brown/Hardy had already served on *Erebus* with James Clark Ross in the Antarctic, probably coming from a whaling background, as he had joined that expedition in the Falkland Islands. We should not read too much into his use of an alias, a fairly common practice amongst sailors. As he had told the Navy, and was the highest-ranking Petty Officer, having two names does not denote criminality. Mary, the new Mrs Brown, was almost certainly Irish.

Apart from the married men, 15 from *Erebus* and nine from *Terror* allotted money to parents (usually mothers) or siblings. Only one Royal Marine, Private Joseph Healey, gave any pay to a parent, his mother, in Manchester. He and Sergeant Bryant, plus one officers' servant, Gunroom Steward Richard Aylmore, were added to *Erebus*' list after senior officers, including Franklin himself, had already signed that list completed. This necessitated Captain Franklin, Senior Lieutenant Graham Gore, Acting Master James Reid and Paymaster & Purser Charles Osmer all again countersigning the same page (ADM 27/90/325) below the added names. That must have been a nuisance but is a good case of absolute adherence to correct procedure, and an even more striking bureaucratic example in the case of Samuel Elliott, P.O. Sailmaker on *Terror*, will be examined below.

Most of the Able Seamen and Petty Officers – 30 out of a total of 85 - allocated £1. 16/- a month, then the basic AB's wage, to their families. As that constituted half a month's enhanced/double pay for the Arctic, their normal polar salary would have been a quite generous £3. 12/- per month. The lowest amounts allotted were by Marines, who did not receive extra for going to the Arctic: Corporal William Hedges from *Terror* allocated £1. 8/- to his wife, and Private Joseph Healey of *Erebus* allocated a guinea (i.e. £1. 1/-) each month for his mother, in Manchester. They and Sergeant Bryant were the only three soldiers to make allocations. Twelve men, including Brown alias Hardy, allocated a generous £2. 8/-, but several of these were Petty Officers, who would have received more. We know from other ships' Muster Books that some wages were 'paid' in kind, i.e. with necessaries including clothing; most sailors had 3/- a month deducted for tobacco (Lloyd-Jones, 2005, p. 315), and it is worth noting that the expedition included 7088 lb (3216 kg, or over 3.5 tons) of that addictive plant amongst its official stores (Cyriax, 1939, p. 42). Many crewmen would have chewed rather than smoked this then-popular product.

The Allotment lists also state exactly where a man's wages could be collected by his relative. For those who lived relatively close to the seat of government this was initially written in as *Somerset House*, the 17th century palace in the Strand, which in those days housed the Navy Board. This was crossed out and changed to *Whitehall*, i.e. the Admiralty, headquarters of the Royal Navy, which is still in Whitehall. The navy's move out of Somerset House was not completed until 1873, but this change to the Franklin expedition allotments must have been made before March 1854, when it was officially accepted that the ships would never be coming back, pay and promotion ceased and wives would have had to apply for widows' pensions instead. While allotments were available, most were collected from naval dockyards: Devonport, Portsmouth, Chatham and Deptford. For those who lived near the sea, but without a Royal Navy base nearby, there were Custom Houses in ports, including those of Liverpool, Dundee, Aberdeen, Kirkwall in the Orkneys, South and East Shields, Ramsgate, Falmouth and Llanelli in Wales. Esther Blanky, wife of Thomas, Ice Master on *Terror*, a commissioned officer from a civilian whaling background, collected £9 a month in Liverpool. She has been located in the 1851 census, aged 49, living in a large house, 6 Nile Street, Toxteth L8, with their two teenage daughters, a female servant and a cook, her 'Rank, Profession or Occupation' proudly stated and written in as *Wife of Ice Master R.N.* Their immediate neighbours were described as a *Ship Owner* and a *Civil Engineer*. James Reid, Blanky's equivalent on *Erebus*, also allocated £9 monthly to his wife, Ann, in Aberdeen. This would have been half of their monthly salaries and, considering that the largest amount allocated by anyone of Petty Officer rank was just £2. 16/-, clearly illustrates the enormous discrepancy in pay and lifestyle between officers and men. The six Warrant Officers will be considered in more detail below. In the rare cases in which Arctic expedition members' families lived inland they could collect their wages from government Excise Offices in market towns. Mary Torrington, mother of John, the *Terror* stoker, who is buried on Beechey Island, collected his £2. 16/- from the Manchester Excise Office, as did the mother of Private Joseph Healey, the only marine out of the original 14 apart from

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Sergeant Bryant and Corporal Hedges, to make any allocation. As we shall see in more detail later, William Thompson, father of James the Warrant Officer Engineer on *Terror*, collected the largest sum of all, £13 per month, from the Leeds Excise Office.

Marine allocations

There is an intriguing mystery to unravel surrounding the wedding of Sergeant Daniel Bryant. He married a widow called Mary Ann Prideaux on 27 April 1845 at All Saints Church, Rotherhithe. This was the day before his ship, *Erebus*, left the nearby fitting-out Royal Dockyard for engine trials at Woolwich and less than a month before they finally sailed out of the Thames Estuary into open sea on 19 May (Cyriax, 1939, pp. 54–55). Why did he tell a lie in the parish register by giving his 'Rank or Profession' as Sailmaker, rather than admitting that he was a Royal Marine Senior NCO (London Metropolitan Records ALL/021/71)? Although there were sailmakers on Royal Navy ships, such as the Glaswegian John Murray on *Erebus* and Samuel Elliott on *Terror* (of whom more below), he seems to have been posing as a local civilian, as there is no mention of actually going to sea (the groom in the other marriage on the same page is described as *Mariner*). It appears unlikely that he was lying to his bride's family about his true profession, as her brother, Daniel Oxford, was one of the witnesses. We know that Mary Ann's maiden name was Oxford, because the parish register helpfully includes her father (John) and his profession as *Carpenter*, no doubt a shipwright, as they were now living in Greenwich. It is also unlikely that Bryant was a bigamist, as a false name, rather than job, would be given in that instance. Nor was he deceiving the Admiralty, who had accurate details of the wedding, including the fact that it took place at the very last moment possible, recorded in the Allotment list (something they were no doubt used to). That just leaves the church, in the form of Curate Robert Jones, who performed the ceremony, as victims of a deception. The most likely scenario is that Daniel and Mary Ann feared that their marriage, the Banns of which had been published only 11 days earlier on 16 April, might not be allowed to go ahead if the church knew that they were about to be separated by the Arctic! No sailmaker would marry in the fine uniform of a Sergeant of Marines; it was definitely not a spectacular or showy wedding. Perhaps most interesting of all in this strange case is that the female witness to the ceremony signed herself *M. Aylmer*. This is a relatively rare surname and the nearest person who fits neatly into being that particular witness was 21-year-old Mary, daughter of the First Drill Sergeant, William Aylmer, at the Royal Marine Barracks in Woolwich Dockyard: Bryant's own headquarters (1841 census). So at least one person present, or perhaps at the reception afterwards, may well have been wearing that smart scarlet uniform. Bryant was not himself at the barracks in 1841, but has been located in the census of that 6 June as a patient at the Melville Naval Hospital in Chatham. He may well have been recovering from wounds or sickness received in the Anglo-Austrian attack on the Turks in Acre (modern Israel), which had taken place in November 1840.

The only other Franklin marine of 1845, who has been located at the Woolwich dockyard four years earlier, is the Inverness-born Alexander Paterson, who was then listed as Private 'Alex^{r} Patterson' [sic]. He was the Corporal on *Terror* in 1845, but nothing else about his career has yet been found. In 1841 the Sergeant from *Terror*, Solomon Tozer, was living in Bull Fields, an area near the Woolwich Barracks, where he and several other married Marines are recorded rather inaccurately in the census as being 'Army'. At that time he was married to Caroline, whose death in Plymouth was recorded in 1844 (BMD), but they do not appear to have had any children and he made no allotment.

In the 1845 All Saints marriage register, widow Mary Ann Prideaux is given the rank or profession of *Sempstress* [sic] and described only as being of 'full age', i.e. over 21 and not requiring parental permission to marry. To earn money as a seamstress or dressmaker was one of the very few ways a woman could be self-employed at the time, basically making and adjusting clothes for much wealthier people and receiving only a very small remuneration for it. Whereas the Allotment list gave her address as 47 Lower Park Street, Greenwich, six years later we find Mary Ann Bryant, now shown to have been 44 years old, working as a live-in nurse at the Greenwich Hospital (1851 census). This also reveals that she was born in Blandford in Dorset; her husband too came from the southwest of England, the neighbouring county of Somerset. It has already been discovered that Hannah Wentzell, widow of William, a sailor on *Terror*, was a nurse, looking after navy veterans there in the 1860s and 1870s (Lloyd-Jones, 2011, p. 381); the brave wives of Franklin expedition members would certainly have been given preference in securing such work.

The only other marine who made any provision to a wife (and probably the only other married one) was 30-year-old Corporal William Hedges of *Terror*, who, as mentioned above, had allotted £1. 8/- a month to Eliza, whom he had wed in April 1844. An Eliza Hedges, aged 44, is found living alone in Richmond in the 1851 census, another *Seamstress*. Her status, however, is clearly marked 'U', unmarried, so this is unlikely to be the Corporal's partner, because, as we shall see in other remarkable cases, recipients of allotments proudly made their standing very clear to the census enumerators. Private Joseph Healey left that smallest amount, only a guinea, for his mother to collect from the Manchester Excise Office. Her unusual name from the Bible caused some confusion, appearing in the Allotment book as 'Karan' and in the 1841 census as 'Karon'. She was in fact named after Job's youngest daughter, Kerenhappuck (Job 42:14), and Joseph's two brothers also had Biblical names, Abraham and Levi, which strongly suggests an evangelical family at a time when the less pious were content simply to name their children after kings and queens (William, Henry, Mary, Elizabeth, etc.). Abraham and their father Jasper both worked as dressers, making up balls of thread in a textile mill, and Kerenhappuck and Levi are defined simply as *cotton weavers* in the 1841 census. This fits with the fact, already known from naval Description books, that Joseph had himself been brought up to the trade of weaver but enlisted into the Marines in 1838 (Lloyd-Jones, 2004, p. 322). Sadly, Kerenhappuck, who was already in her 60s by 1841, died only a few months after *Erebus* and *Terror* sailed, towards the end of 1845 (BMD where her correct name is recorded), and there is no evidence that any other member of the family collected Joseph's allotment thereafter.

Married sailors

Leaving aside for the moment the six Warrant Officers, we can now turn to married Petty Officers and Able Seamen who made allocations to wives. As stated above there were 14 from *Terror* and 12 from *Erebus*, roughly a third of both crews (excluding commissioned officers and marines), which, on sailing, totalled 47 and 45 men, respectively. It is no surprise that a larger number of POs allocated pay to families, as, having gained rank, they tended to be older than ABs. Starting with *Terror*, Alexander Wilson, Carpenter's Mate, allocated £2. 12/- to his wife Sarah, whom he

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had married in his native Durham in 1839. In 1845 she had an address in Limehouse and collected the allocation from the Navy Office in Somerset House. If she was the Sarah Wilson *Mariner's Wife* whom we find living at a different address in Limehouse six years later, then her 2-year-old Matilda must have had another father, though there is no evidence that Alexander and Sarah had any children.

In the case of Thomas Darlington, the Caulker, we are on much firmer ground because his wife Sarah's original address, 28 Broomfield Place Deptford, has been updated in the Allotment book to 104 Union Street, (East) Stonehouse in Plymouth. That is the exact address at which she is found, aged 38, in the 1851 census. The large house was home to 13 people (3 families and one retired shipwright, no servants). The street, built some 30 years earlier, which connects the old town of Plymouth (where Thomas Darlington had been born in 1816 and married in 1837) with the Devonport naval dockyard, was still fairly respectable, although it later became run-down and notorious: 'known as one of the West Country's most infamous streets' (Wikipedia). Sarah and her six-year-old son Thomas may have been lucky to have survived there, as it was where cholera broke out in Plymouth in the epidemic of 1849 (Wikipedia). Her 'rank, profession or occupation' is given as *Dressmaker* and she was looking after another six-year-old, her nephew, Henry Thompson. An elderly couple, Nicholas (70) and Mary (66) in the flat next door, who shared Henry's surname, Thompson, may well have been her parents. Thomas Darlington Junior somewhat stands out for his birth in Kent, Deptford, whereas all the Thompsons, including his mother, were born there in East Stonehouse. She collected £2. 12/- a month first from Somerset House, then from Devonport Dockyard after the move home. That move must have taken place in 1850 – between the Plymouth cholera and the census – when hope of her husband and his comrades ever returning to the Port of London would have been fading fast.

Six Able Bodied seamen on *Terror* allocated to wives, the oldest of whom was the Scot David Leys, who was 37 in 1845. He had married Christian McKenzie in 1827, although she was mistakenly recorded as 'Christina' in the list (ADM 27/90, 317). She collected the standard £1. 16/- a month from the Aberdeen Custom House. The name of the wife of another Scottish sailor was slightly garbled: William Shanks' partner in Dundee is written 'Antasker', her actual maiden name being Ann Tasker (1841 census). In the 1851 Scotland census she is located at the Fish Street address in Dundee recorded by the Admiralty, with three daughters, Mary (13), Eliza (10) and Jane (8), and a youngest child William (6), born the year his namesake father left for the Arctic. Fish Street, which dated back to medieval times, was Dundee's equivalent of Plymouth's Union Street; it had been middle class and respectable but, partly due to proximity to the expanding docks, became rough, run down and a place of ill repute as the century progressed. It was in fact demolished in 1883 (*Leisure & Culture Dundee* website). The Old Customs House actually stood at the end of Fish Street, although Ann would have collected her £1. 16/- from the imposing neoclassical one, still there on the waterfront, which had replaced it in 1843.

Although himself a Scot from Ferryport-on-Craig at the mouth of the Tay, Alexander Berry had married a Geordie from northeast England, Eleanor Wilson, whose address was given as Thames Street (more accurately Lower Thames Street), South Shields. Sure enough she is there in the 1851 census, described as *Mariner's Wife* and, like Ann Shanks, with three daughters, Mary Ann (10), Elizabeth (8) and yet another child born in 1845, six-year-old Eleanor. They had originally travelled a few miles to the Newcastle Customs House to collect their £1. 16/-, but after 1848 were able to go to the newly built Shields one, still standing today as the Customs House Theatre. Back in London in 1851 we find Mary Ann Crispe, wife to AB Samuel, who had married her in 1843, living with her parents, 74-year old Royal Navy Boatswain Daniel Brennan, her mother Anna, who was a decade younger, and their granddaughter, also Eleanor Ann, another born in 1845. The four of them illustrate perfectly how naval families travelled around the coastline, as Daniel was born in Guernsey, Anna in Portsea (Hampshire), their daughter in Deptford and her child in Chatham (both in Kent), where they still were at 4 Cross Street. No doubt Daniel, a high-ranking Warrant Officer who must have fought in the Napoleonic Wars, no longer went to sea, but kept up the Royal Navy tradition of maintaining his rank in retirement. His daughter's 'Rank, profession, or occupation' is poignantly recorded as *Wife of Sailor at Sea*. Not far away, at 8 Henry Street, Cecila [sic] Armitage is recorded as *Steward's Wife*, and she was indeed the spouse of Thomas, Gun Room Steward on *Terror*, who had been born at Chatham in 1805. She lived with two grown-up children, unmarried daughter Cecila (24), who earned money as a *Needlewoman*, and a sailor son home that census evening 30 March 1851, Gabriel (21), described as *Seaman*. These streets still exist, but most of the old houses are long gone, either due to Second World War bombing, or slum clearance.

Nearly all of the Petty Officers on *Erebus* left allocations, with the exception of the Glaswegian sailmaker John Murray. By coincidence or design, both ships had two Scottish Quartermasters and one English one, all of whom made arrangements for wives except John Downing, the unmarried Plymouth man from *Erebus* who left £1. 16/- a month to his sister there. Most POs though allocated more than £2; for example, Caroline the wife of James Rigden, Captain's Coxswain on that ship, received £2. 8/- monthly from Portsmouth Dockyard. She was found living in Portsea in 1851, registered as head of a household and *Sailor's Wife*. She was looking after two children (apparently not her own), Harriet and John Smith, and there was a 15-year-old *Errand Boy*, James New, in the same apartment. His sister, a *Stay Maker*, and her four-year old daughter lodged with his mother, a widowed *Charwoman*, Elizabeth Blake and another son William, in a different part of the divided house, which therefore had eight people under its roof. As we have already seen in examples from Dundee and Plymouth, this was typical of the overcrowded streets near docks in mid-19th century Britain, where conditions must have been extremely uncomfortable and the threat of virulent diseases like cholera still existed. Eliza S. Cowie, wife of John the Stoker on *Erebus*, was allocated £2. 8/- at Chatham, living at the delightful-sounding Grove Cottage, Pleasant Row with her 79-year-old father, a retired lawyer Thomas Winkham and her equally aged aunt Ellen Smith, both widowed. Setting aside worries about the absence of her husband, this seems quite idyllic, but near neighbours include a dock labourer, his wife and their seven children, and it is significant that his own elderly sister worked as a servant to Mr Winkham. Again, the street was very close to what was then the working dockyard, today presented as The Historic Dockyard, a film site and tourist attraction (ADM 27/90, 322; 1851 census).

Unmarried allotments

On *Erebus* more men made allotments to parents or siblings rather than to wives. As well as Private Healey allocating money to his mother, Kerenhappuck, in Manchester, five other sailors made

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arrangements for mothers (not necessarily widowed), one for his father, two for sisters, three for brothers and two for apparently unrelated trustees with different surnames from themselves. On *Terror* there were nine non-married allocations, compared to 14 married. Several of the seamen's mothers had husbands, sometimes still living, who had also been to sea or had land-based maritime occupations. We already know from the Admiralty Description Books (Lloyd-Jones, 2005, p. 313) that the vast majority of sailors were, somewhat poetically, considered to have been 'brought up to' the 'trade' of 'Sea', and almost everyone who lived anywhere near the sea in Britain in the mid-19th century did indeed in some way derive their living from that element. Catherine Whittington, mother of Henry Sait, an AB on *Terror*, who allotted her the standard £1. 16/- to collect in Portsmouth, is recorded in 1851 as *Pensioner (Warrant Officer's widow)*. Two teenage daughters, Henry's half-sisters, still lived with her, as did her elder sister, Elizabeth Benfield, also a widow but with her own income as an *Annuitant*, almost certainly another naval widow's payment. The 16-year old Caroline earned money as a *dressmaker*. Their business-like address was 12 Waterworks Lane, Portsea (a street that no longer exists). It should be noted that there was no such thing as an automatic widow's pension in those days; they had to be applied for and the applicant would have been carefully means-tested to make sure that they genuinely qualified.

At least two sailors from *Erebus* had fathers who built ships, as the Welsh Caulker's Mate Francis Dunn's family in Llanelli was headed in 1851 by his parent, also Francis, a shipwright, although it was his mother, Mary, to whom the monthly £2. 6/- allotment was made. They also had three daughters still at school. Sarah Hartnell, mother of ABs John, who is buried on Beechey Island, and Thomas, has already been revealed as a *Shipwright's Widow* (Lloyd-Jones, 2011, pp. 379–380) in the 1851 census, which means that she was collecting her own pension as well as, at least to begin with, £3. 12/- a month from her two sons' allocations. Their 22-year-old brother Charles, another shipwright, was living with her at 4 Britton Street, an address that still exists in Gillingham, although they had moved there from New Brompton, where the Franklin expedition brothers were found at home in the 1841 census. At the other end of England, *Terror* AB John Handford's father, James, was a *Master Mariner*, but it was his mother, Ann, who collected £1. 4/- a month from the Customs House in Sunderland. Perhaps the most pathetic case detected in 1851 is that of Hannah Strong, mother of William, another AB on *Terror*. Although she fetched her allotted £1. 16/- a month from Portsmouth Dockyard, her husband James is recorded as *Receiving Parish relief* when they still had 9-year-old Henry and 4-year-old Harriet to look after at home in Hambledon. As he was only about 50 years old at the time, this must have been due to incapacitating illness or injury and it is likely that their son's allotment was keeping them out of the workhouse, although life would have been a constant struggle for the family.

An unusual example was that of George Thompson, AB on *Erebus*, who allocated his £1. 16/- to his brother William. William's address is given in the Allotment list as Sun Tavern, Mason Street, Lambeth and the 1851 census shows that he was actually *Licensed Victualler* there. He ran the public house with his wife Elizabeth and they had a six-year-old son, William, quite possibly named after his uncle who had departed for the Arctic the year he was born. Elizabeth's 71-year-old mother, Mary Hack, recorded as having *Private means*, was there too. An 18-year-old niece of William, Jane Hack, was living at the Sun and working as a *House Servant*, in those days a common arrangement with less well-off relatives, especially where there were small children to look after. There were also two paying guests, whose occupations seem to reflect the past and the future: a *coachman* and an *engineer*. The Thompsons were very comfortable compared with the families of many sailors, although this public house (dating back to 1788 and which survived as such into the 20th century) was in a working-class district of East London; officers' families lived in the West End. An intriguing allotment is the £1. 16/- that 28-year-old Charles Coombs, another *Erebus* AB, left to Rachel Hannah Mears, Trustee for a child, who lived at 5 Bridge Street, Greenwich. Unfortunately she has not been found in any census, although the parish register of St. Alphege's in Greenwich records that she was baptised in 1813 and therefore an unmarried 32-year-old in 1845. It seems extremely likely that she was the mother of Coombs' illegitimate child, or possibly a non-relative bringing up the child of a deceased partner. For whatever reason they did not go for the last-minute marriage option seen in examples like that of Sergeant Bryant above, but the trusteeship was entirely legal and their circumstances must have been known to the naval authorities.

Emma Elliott versus the Admiralty

Tipped into the bound Allotment lists of HMS *Terror* in the National Archives are three documents that throw a good deal of light on what the allotment of pay involved and how the early Victorian Admiralty operated (ADM27/90: 319). The first is addressed to 'The Secretary of the Admiralty London' (redirected to 'Accountant General') and dated Woolwich 20th June 1845. Its text begins:

> *Sir*
>
> *I beg leave to state that my brother Samuel Elliott, serving as Sailmaker on board H.M. Ship "Terror" having made an Allotment of his wages in my favour, and having received the Allotment papers the same is made to me as Amelia Elliott instead of Emma Elliott, which I beg to submit must be a clerical error on board the ship . . .*

It is signed *Sir/Your most obedient/humble servant/Emma Elliott/ Y[e] Ship and half Moon/Woolwich*. A major mistake had appeared in the list, no doubt caused by Edwin Helpman, the officer who was Clerk in Charge on *Terror*, not paying enough attention to Sailmaker Elliott. We note that it was 'a clerical error on board ship', good confirmation of just how and where the lists were compiled. We also note that Emma's letter dates from almost exactly a month after the ships had sailed, i.e. when she went to Somerset House to collect the first payment and it was refused because her given name did not correspond with that on the Navy Board's document. This is understandable although, as we have seen with Kerenhappuck Healey, some leeway for slight inaccuracy was allowed, and different versions of several women's names did creep in. Samuel himself is recorded as *Ja* [mes] in *Terror's* Allotment list, and indeed in her Muster Book (ADM 38/1962), where that name is clearly written out in full. He also definitely appears as James aged about 15 in the 1841 census, his trade, not surprisingly, *Sail Maker Ap*[prentice]. Emma's own name is immediately below and they were living with their 49-year-old mother and siblings, including John, aged 25, described, with a newlycoined word unfamiliar to the enumerator writing down their details, as *Enginneer* [sic]. Their home was at Ship Stairs, adjacent to the Thames, the Ship and Half Moon Inn right next door. That striking name survives in Ship and Half Moon Passage, with the old wall of the long lost Royal Arsenal (1805–1967) still on one side, although there is now an open park where the Elliott's home, and later Woolwich Power Station (1893–1978),

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once stood. Here we have confirmation that a nearby public house would be used as a mailing address, so unless they actually ran a tavern (like William Thompson), most relatives lived near, rather than actually at, many of the addresses in Allotment lists. Emma's problem was quickly dealt with because her next letter (319A), dated 26th June/45 states:

> *Sir*
>
> *Agreeable to the Directions contained in your letter to me of the [2]4th Instant I herewith submit my baptismal certificate.*

What was actually enclosed, however, is a formal printed document, headed 'Police Court Woolwich' (319B), stating that *I Emma Elliott of Woolwich Spinster* DO SOLEMNLY AND SINCERELY DECLARE THAT *I am the sister of James Elliott who was a Sailmaker living at No 7 Ship Stair's in Woolwich – and that he embarked from Woolwich in the month of May last on board the "Terror" discovery ship and that I have no sister by the name of Amelia Elliott –*

It is peculiar that Samuel has now yet again reverted to James Elliott, but this official legal document, essentially an affidavit, was actually signed before a Magistrate in the Police Court. Eighteen-year-old Emma's signature appears extremely shaky, which suggests that the earlier correspondence must have been carried out with the help of a professional letter-writer, who would have known the correct forms of address and how to sign *your most obedient humble servant*. All this would have been expensive for the Elliott family, although worthwhile and necessary to collect the £2. 12/- allotted to Emma. Not that the whole incident was to have any particularly long-lasting effect, as James Elliott was one of three sailors (the others were Thomas Burt and Francis Clarke) who returned from the edge of the Arctic Circle, for reasons of illness or injury, with the supply ship *Barretto Junior* when she left *Erebus* and *Terror* on 12 July 1845. He would therefore have been back in England by mid-August and his allotment must have ceased, although that fact is not recorded in the list, whereas 'Amelia' has been crossed out and replaced with the correct name, 'Emma'. It is now tempting to speculate that those three (and Daniel Bryant, the one Marine who returned) were suffering from some virulent pathogen, perhaps tuberculosis or typhus, which subsequently proved fatal to all their comrades. Unfortunately, or perhaps very luckily in his own case, we know that the sailmaker was sent back by Captain Crozier due to being 'perfectly useless' at his trade (Crozier letter of 4 July 1845 to John Henderson, NMM), so presumably he was also perfectly healthy. Nor has any record of James Elliott's death soon after getting back been found, so he must have pursued a normal naval career on other ships, probably demoted to AB, as his failure as *Terror's* sailmaker must have been recorded by Crozier on the Certificate he brought back with him! The James Elliott who died, aged 46, in Portsea (BMD) in 1871 could indeed be him, although it is a relatively common name. Emma, too, disappears from all records after 1845. She may well have married and changed her surname, but has not been traced in any of the local parish registers examined.

Warrant Officers

Both *Terror* and *Erebus* included three Warrant Officers, who were specialists responsible for technical aspects of running the ships. These were the Boatswain (in charge of everything that took place on the decks), Carpenter and Engineer. At a time when social class differences were particularly observed, they occupied an ambiguous position between the commanding officers, who had to have come from the Protestant British or Irish landed gentry, and the crews (which include Petty Officers), whose families did not possess any property. They did not hold Commissions signed by the monarch, but only Warrants from the Navy Board. Although, as we shall see, they were paid a great deal more than any of the crew, they could not mix socially with commissioned officers, would have been referred to by everyone on board as 'Mister', and dined in the Gunroom, not the Captain's Cabin. This ambiguity makes them quite difficult to research because whereas those holding commissions automatically appear in such standard reference works as the annual Navy List and biographical dictionaries such as that of William O'Byrne (1849), and many details of crewmen are recorded in Description Books and Muster Lists, none of those sources are necessarily available for WOs. Thus Warrant Officers' ages do not appear in Muster lists, although it will be noted that they were classed, 1st, 2nd and 3rd, which would have reflected seniority (and therefore pay) rather than ability.

If a Warrant Officer began his life at sea as an ordinary sailor, however, he can occasionally be traced with some accuracy from Entry Books of Certificates (ADM 29), where details were copied from the man's personal Certificate, a document which he always carried, showing which ships he had served on, so that the Admiralty had a record of his promotions and pay. For Thomas Terry, Boatswain on *Erebus* from March 1845, we are fortunate that the copy has survived and reveals his entire career. Whereas he had begun as an AB with the 18-gun sloop *Harrier* in 1832, on board which he remained in the Gunner's Crew for three years in home waters, he transferred to the 74-gun HMS *Russell* in 1835. After another three years' service he was promoted to Boatswain's Mate in February 1838. Between June 1839 and July 1842 he served in that high Petty Officer rank on the 60-gun *Winchester* and the 6th Rate (26-gun) *Vestal* in North American and West Indian-based anti-slavery operations. He was Acting Boatswain on *Vestal* from September 1841, then fully attained Warrant Officer 3rd Class rank on HMS *Ocean*, the old Nelsonian 98-gun 2nd Rate, which was then a depot ship in Sheerness. After 13 years' continuous service he joined *Erebus* when she was fitting out on 7 March 1845 (ADM 29/116, p.61). Although they did not have any live-in servants, his wife, Sarah Ann, to whom he allotted £13 three shillings and sixpence a month, is found living in 1851 with their son William (6) in Ellen's Place, Ramsgate. Many of the small but attractive early 19th century neo-classical houses in that area are still standing, now Grade II Listed by Historic England. Her 'rank, profession or occupation' is proudly stated: *Officer's Wife*. John Lane, the Boatswain on *Terror*, had married Eliza Smith from nearby Purbrook at St. Thomas' Portsmouth in 1838 (IGI), and she is recorded as *Wife of Seaman* in the 1841 census. At that time she was lodging in a house with six other occupants, including their first child, a daughter also named Eliza, born in 1839. This was in Portsea, a heavily populated suburb of Portsmouth, which developed rapidly between the old town to the south and the 18th century docks after the latter were built. By 1851, when they had another daughter, Emma, who was born in 1845, she had her own house in King Street where her sister, Ann Russome, was also living with two small sons. No 'rank, profession or occupation' is given for Ann, but her husband was probably at sea too. Eliza Lane is recorded as *Wife of Boatswain*. Similarly maritime neighbours were described as *Wife of Seaman* and *Wife of Gunner RM*; the man next door was a carpenter, his daughter a dressmaker. Eliza's status as the spouse of a Warrant Officer would have been respected by everybody, including the census enumerators. Unfortunately, in

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a rare oversight, the amount that her husband allotted, collected from Portsmouth Dockyard, has not been recorded, but it must have been between five and £14 a month as befitted his pay and rank.

The Ships' Carpenters were John Weeks (or Weekes) on *Erebus* and Thomas Honey on *Terror*. Weeks, baptised at St John's Portsea in 1805, was the son of Rachel and John Weeks, himself a Master Shipwright (Atkinson, 2007, p. 232). In 1845 he came from HMS *Eagle*, an old 3rd Rate 74 that had been reduced to 50 guns in 1830. He allocated £5. 18/- a month to his widowed mother, who was still living in Cumberland Street, Portsea, very near John Lane's family. Like Thomas Terry, Thomas Spargo Honey came from immediate previous service on HMS *Ocean*. He allotted £5 a month to his wife Margaret, who, at the time of the 1851 census, lived in Devonport with their 13-year-old son William and daughter Ellen, who was born in 1846 shortly after her father sailed. Then aged 42, Margaret is recorded as *Wife of Carpenter at Sea*. William also went to sea and is found in the 1861 census described as *Sailor*.

It is well known that both ships were specially fitted with 25-horsepower engines. Although these engines had railway origins, they were obtained and fitted by Maudslay, Sons & Field, a famous marine engine manufacturer (Battersby & Carney, 2011, p. 170). Surviving service records for pre-1847 engineers (ADM 196: 277, 278) reveal that the company also supplied the men who maintained them. In both cases, that of James Thompson on *Terror* and John Gregory on *Erebus*, instead of any record (in the printed columns) of ever having been to sea before, someone from the Admiralty has written: *This Engineer was recommended by Mess^{rs} Maudslay to serve in one of the Vessels employed in the Arctic Expedition having been accustomed to locomotive Engines*. In Gregory's entry it continues: *his pay to be double that allowed to 1st Class Engineers (Woolwich 6th May 1845) Admiralty 13 May/45.* This has a slightly different form of words for Thompson: *his pay to be double 1st Class Pay*, though the dates of endorsement are the same, as is the record that each was appointed on 13 May. The unmarried Thompson made a large (50%) monthly allotment of £13 to his father, William, who ran an inn called Jacob's Well at 87 Meadow Lane, Leeds (Williams, 1845, p. 231). As an unusual inland payment, this was collected from the town Excise Office. William and his wife, Elizabeth, both in their early 60s, are found in the 1851 census living with James's brother, also William, described as *Millwright*. It is interesting that a millwright, i.e. someone who helped build the factories of the industrial revolution, was in those days considered 'an . . . engineer and mechanic' (Fairbairn, 1878, p. ix), showing that the two brothers had followed a similar vocation. The Thompsons employed a live-in servant, 26-year old Caroline Bentley, who no doubt worked in the bar too. A farm labourer from York was staying there on the night of the census, but he was not a relative, nor has the enumerator written in *Lodger*, preferring to leave his 'Relation to Head of Family' description blank. This all indicates some prosperity in a relatively salubrious part of central Leeds.

Erebus's Engineer John Gregory also allotted a monthly £13 to his wife Hannah. He was certainly the eldest member of the entire expedition, with the exception of Franklin himself, who was born in 1786. The Lancastrian Gregory was born in 1790 and married Hannah Wilson at St Michael's Ashton-under-Lyne in April 1823 (IGI), not 1822 as mistakenly recorded in the Allotment list (ADM/27/90: 325). In 1851 Hannah was living in Lambeth with their 15-year-old son William and 6-year-old Frederick. Her 23-year-old married daughter, Frances, was also there with her husband James Hays, recorded as a *journeyman Hat Shaper*. Hannah's own entry in that census is, however, the most striking of all. The enumerator began, correctly, to write her in as 'Head' of the household, but the letter 'H' has been crossed out and replaced with the word 'Wife', although her husband, unseen for six years, was definitely absent and had never even lived at the Lambeth house. Her 'Rank, Profession or Occupation' is *Wife of Engineer/Half Pay – Husband with Sir J. Franklin*. As noted above, the census was taken on 30 March that year, actually the peak moment of Franklin searching, when as many as thirteen ships were in the Arctic trying to find some clue as to what had happened. It is most likely that everyone from *Erebus* and *Terror* had perished by that date, but the fact that the census enumerator could make the change, in that moment maintaining the slim hope that the head of the Gregory household was alive somewhere a long way away is haunting and remarkable.

Conclusions

What can we learn from a detailed examination of documents such as the Admiralty's Allotment lists? It is significant that organisations like the mid-19th century Royal Navy were run as highly efficient bureaucracies in which an enormous amount of seemingly insignificant detail, down to information about the lowliest sailors' families, was carefully recorded. It is a testimony to the Admiralty that they could arrange regular provision of often quite small sums of money to sailors' families in places as far apart as Kirkwall in the Orkneys and Plymouth on the far south coast of England. There is evidence of a humanitarian level of care, both through careful payments while a man was alive and with subsequent widows' pensions, which is impressive and was relatively new at the time. Yet we also become aware of the massive social difference between the way officers and men – and by extension their families – were treated. Warrant Officers were paid more than ten times what Able Bodied sailors received. It was possible for someone with ability from almost any background to reach the exalted heights of Boatswain, Engineer or Carpenter, but they could never join the commissioned officers, whose propertied families were the powers behind (and beneficiaries of) the British Empire. In many ways the lives of those who stayed at home were as difficult as those of any who ventured out to sea. Very few people owned their own home or business and it was particularly difficult for single women at any level of society to earn a living alone. If children, who were the most vulnerable to still endemic diseases, survived, they had somehow to be looked after. Until compulsory primary schooling was introduced in 1870, a quarter of a century after the Franklin expedition sailed, a child's most likely education was simply to acquire a local skill, in these cases always beside or actually on the sea. Only about a third of the entire population were literate, many perfectly respectable people signed the parish register when they married with 'X', his or her mark. It is also a shock to find that in the neighbourhoods where the Franklin families lived, in places as far apart as Dundee and Devonport, cholera was frequently cited as having broken out in exactly those streets. Through the censuses, especially that of 1851, six years after their men had left on a projected two or three-year voyage, we gain some impression of the abandoned families struggling to survive both materially (helped a little by the Admiralty) and mentally on the dwindling hope that they would ever return. Popular media interest and Lady Franklin's unerring efforts to keep searching and to keep the lost expedition in the public eye must have helped sustain even such tragic figures as James Strong, that sailor's father receiving parish relief in Hambledon in 1851. In so many ways, not only Lady Franklin

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herself but all the expedition's women and children were as brave as their men who sailed.

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Primary source material held in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew in London is referenced in detail below. The ADM/38 Muster, or 'Sailing' books were brought back from the Arctic Circle by supply ship *Baretto Junior* in July 1845. Other primary sources cited, including British censuses from 1841 and 1851, can be found online at sites such as Ancestry.com and Findmypast.co.uk. BMD = (British) *Births, Marriages and Deaths*; IGI = International Genealogical Index, both freely available online. All published works referred to in the text are listed below the primary source references.

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