



Fig. 1. Watercolour by Robert Hood.

unknown watercolour by Hood depicting a ship on the rocks (Fig. 1). He had acquired it at a Quebec dealer some decades before and its provenance is uncertain although said to be 'from a cabin in a fishing village on James Bay'. The dealer, Michel Bigué in St. Sauveur, informed the author that his gallery had purchased the work from a long closed gallery in Quebec City. There are a number of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) posts along the shores of the bay and it is possible that the painting originated there, perhaps given by Hood to a Bay man as he passed through York Factory.

The painting is labeled in pencil 'Prince of Wales on the Rocks', which appears to be a reference to the near disaster that the HBC ships carrying the expedition members suffered in fog on 7 August 1819 as they passed through the straits leading into Hudson Bay. It is 5.25'' (13.34 cm) by 3.5'' (8.89 cm) in size and has holes and stains, probably made by carpet tacks, at the edges of three sides. In style it resembles a number of known Hood paintings in details such as the depiction of hills and sky.

The small expedition had set out in May 1819 from Gravesend for the long voyage to York Factory at the mouth of the Nelson River on the western shore of Hudson Bay. The three ships transporting the expedition, *Prince of Wales*, *Eddystone* and *Wear*, were conveying men and stores to the HBC's principal post on the bay as they did each year. Ice was particularly early in 1819 and in August the ships encountered icebergs and pack ice near Resolution Island just off the southern tip of Baffin Island.

The painting depicts a sailing ship that is partially dismasted and apparently up against the shore of a forbidding coastline. A boat rows toward it from the left. The damage appears to be extensive, and this image raises a particular difficulty. Although both *Prince of Wales* and *Wear* suffered from the ice, in the accounts by Hood or Franklin neither received such a dramatic battering and both made it safely to York Factory (Houston 1974: 10–12; Franklin 2000: 37–39). A watercolour by Hood dated 18 August shows *Prince of Wales* in excellent condition, for example (Hood 1974: plate 18). In this case the ship lies on one side and seems to have only part of one mast with the lowest yard remaining. It is rather crudely depicted unlike the clear and excellent rendering of the HBC ships on other paintings by Hood. A pencil inscription on the back reads 'Robert Hood . . . murdered'. There are unclear letters or numbers between 'Hood' and 'murdered'.

Because we know little of the provenance of the painting it is difficult to assess it. Hood's draughtsmanship was generally excellent but perhaps he was having an off day. Or it may be that the work was by another unknown member of the expedition. With such issues for the present and pending further study it must remain something of a mystery. The author would welcome correspondence from any reader of *Polar Record* who might be able to throw light on this matter.

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The voyage of HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* to the southern and Antarctic regions 1839–1843: the journal of Sergeant William Keating Cunningham, HMS *Terror*

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Introduction

Rosove (2001: 323) described James Clark Ross's Antarctic voyage as 'one of mankind's greatest expeditions of

geographical and scientific exploration' and Captain Scott (1905 I: 22) wrote that it was 'among the most famous and brilliant ever made.' Ross himself published an account of the voyage (1847), which was followed by that of the surgeon on board *Erebus*, Robert McCormick (1884). J.E. Davis (1901), the second master of *Terror* wrote a long letter to his sister, and Cornelius Savage (Savage 1839–1843), the blacksmith in *Erebus* wrote notes for James Savage, seaman. There was also an article published by John Robertson (1843), the surgeon in *Terror* together with the scientific reports and papers, none of which contain a day by day account of the voyage. Indeed, apart from the first two the other accounts cover relatively short portions of the voyage. There is also a large number of modern volumes dealing with the voyage, among which Ross (1982) quotes quite extensively from the diary that is the present topic (Cunningham 1830–1843). This diary with full critical apparatus has been published *in extenso* by the Hakluyt Society on line and the purpose of this note is to draw this publication to the attention of readers of *Polar Record*.

Cunningham was the sergeant of Royal Marines on board *Terror*. He produced a journal (Cunningham 1839–1843) covering the entire voyage, on a daily basis, up to the ships' arrival in Rio de Janeiro on the way home, with some notes on the final stages. It adds very little to our knowledge of the scientific work of the expedition, but is a very human document which adds considerably to our knowledge of conditions on board, discipline and the difficulties encountered by the crews of the vessels.

Sergeant William Keating Cunningham RM

Cunningham (Fig. 1) was born in Snowhill, Holborn, London on 1 July 1809. He started adult life as a clerk and then joined the Royal Marines, at Chatham on 17 December 1829. He was attested, and took the oath of allegiance before the mayor of Rochester two days later. In 1831 he served, as a private, for a short time on board HMS *Prince Regent* before being transferred to HMS *Revenge*, again for a short period. He subsequently rejoined *Revenge* and served in her until 1834 on the Lisbon station and in the West Indies. On return home he was promoted corporal and in 1836 sergeant. He joined *Terror*, Commander F.R.M. Crozier, on 15 June 1839 and was discharged after the voyage 23 November 1843. He did not go to sea again, but was promoted quartermaster sergeant on 12 August 1846 and was invalided 21 June 1854. He was awarded a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and subsequently the Meritorious Service Medal. His portrait was presumably painted after he was awarded the first, in January 1852, and before the second, in February 1854, since in it he is wearing the former and not the latter. The artist is unknown but the high quality of the painting raises an interesting question. Certainly few mere sergeants were the subject of such a skilled artist in the Victorian era.



Fig. 1. Quartermaster Sergeant William Keating Cunningham. Courtesy J Herwegh Hellwitz.

In 1857 he became a Yeoman of the Queen's Body Guard from which he was exempt duty in 1882, and died in Chatham of cirrhosis of the liver on 28 November 1884. He was survived by his widow, Elizabeth, to whom he had been married in 1845: they had no children. James Clark Ross wrote to the commandant, Royal Marines, at Chatham describing his conduct as 'exemplary' and that, together with Sergeant Baker of HMS *Erebus*, 'better conducted non-commissioned officers' he had not known (Campbell 2009). After the voyage Crozier, by then captain, presented him with his pocket watch, now in the National Maritime Museum.

His journal was deposited in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, in Belfast, in April 1958, by Major J.F. Minniece, a descendant of Sergeant Cunningham. His writing is not always clear and his spelling and punctuation are erratic. In the following extracts his spelling has been retained as far as practicable but the punctuation has been modernised.

Brief synopsis of the voyage with extracts from the journal

The ships sailed from Gillingham at the end of September 1839. After calling at Madeira they proceeded to Saint Helena, on the way: '10th [November] Sunday Fine. . . . Am happy to say Divine Service was performed for the first time; it gave me pleasure to our little Group sitting on Capstan Bars & Buckets on the Quarter Deck listening to our good Captain reading the Word of God.'

And after calling at Saint Paul's Rocks, they crossed the line where the usual festivities took place.

At Saint Helena '31st [January, 1840] . . . By the wild appearance of those apparently barren Rocks I think it is not much to be wondered at that Bounaparte felt a Lowness of Spirits when he first gained Sight of this Iron bound Rock which was ultimately to be his burial place and from which there was not much appearance of being able to maK his Escape.'

'3rd Monday Visited the Tomb of Napoleon; found nothing very interesting about it save that it was the grave of the greatest General the world ever produced without any thing to mark it except a Large flat Stone without name or Epitaph to Say who Slept beneath. I turned and left it & felt a pang for [him].'

After calling at Simon's Town the ships made for Kerguelen '13th [May] Wednesday Fore part of the Day fine. Made the Land in the Morning Watch: commenced beating up Christmas harbour at 9 AM, and Anchored after tacking 22 times in gallant Stile with a Stiff breeze. The passage is difficult & dangerous with the wind dead on end: there is a Stupendous Iron bound Rock on the Larboard hand nearly perpendicular I Should say fifteen hundred feet high and the top appears to be a roost for birds as the Soil from them has besmeared the Sea face of it for a considerable way down. There is a great many runs of water down the rocks. The Erebus was lying in the mouth of the harbour, She having anchored Yesterday. At the entrance of the harbour there is a very Romantic looking Rock partialy detached from the main Land with a very natural looking Arch through it (Fig. 2). It is on the Larboard hand on the Starboard there is a very bold Cape about Six hundred feet high . . . There appears to be a Sort of wild Cabbage [*Pringlea antiscorbutica*] growing which is good they say when Cooked.'

From Kerguelen the ships sailed for Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania]. '14th [August] Friday Sighted Land at daylight Stood along the coast all day: made the entrance of the River Derwent. At dusk wind foul and commenced beating whick lasted all night: fired Several Guns for a Pilot but none came out. Weather very Squally: people up all night: Spliced Main brace. This being



Fig. 2. HMS *Terror* entering Christmas Harbour, by J Dayman, mate in HMS *Erebus*.

Van Diemens Land I could not help Thinking on first Sighting it how many unfortunate beings has seen it for the time with a full heart and a melancholy boding that they were to terminate thier existence in it, outcasts from Society and aliens from thier Fatherland, Separated from Wives, Parents Friends and from every tie that links man to this vain & Sublunary World. I turned from the scene with a thankfull remembrance how much better off I was than Some thousands of my fellow men.'

In Hobart Cunningham was well looked after by the local sergeants' mess '23rd Aug^t Sunday Weather very fine: Divine Service. Went onshore in the Afternoon Spent a very pleasant Evening with my old friend Sergeant Cameron of the 51st Reg^t whom I was happy to find in good health. The Town is very pleasantly Situated: Quite Englifed: every thing is very dear. A Stranger must be particular in Selecting his Company, as you dont Know Convicts from free people.'

The ships sailed in November '12th Thursday At 5 AM got under weigh: Erebus and Government Yacht in Company: a nice leading wind down the river. At one PM the Governor Sir John Franklin came onboard from the Yacht to bid us good bye. He is a nice fatherly old man and is much interested in our welfare: we manned the Rigging and gave him three hearty cheers, and one more for coming up . . . I must say during my sojourn at Hobart Town that I received great Hospitality, and in all must give the Emigrant portion of Hobartionians a good name. The prisoner portion I had nought to do with.'

They called at Auckland and Campbell Islands before proceeding to the Antarctic: '5th [January] Tuesday Fine: fresh breeze. Made the Edge of the Ice at 8 AM entered; passed through Several drifts of Hummocky Ice Some packed very close and miles through: passed through Some fine leads of open water . . . some of the drift Ice gave us very clumsy cracks on the bows, but without injury . . . This is very pretty Sailing requiring great tact and nicety in Conning the Ship through the Ice.'

'11th Monday At 3 AM Sighted very high land ahead [Mount Sabine]capped with Snow. Stood for it and did not get close to it until 8 PM: it must have been at least 60 miles from us at first sight. It appears to be a large tract of land princpally of a towering height: void of all verdure and nearly all covered with Snow. There is a great quantity of Ice adhering to it and some very large 'bergs' cannot say what it will be called [Victoria Land] as its extent is not ascertained yet and no boat been ashore. Standing off & on: at at night Kept away and Stood down to Leeward running along the Land.'

'16th Saturday Blowing fresh: heavy Sea on: very cold: beating off the Land hardly holding our own: wind freshened in the afternoon reefed foresail & Topsails. Freezing very Sharp: every Rope frozen and Icicles hanging from all the Rigging and Gear: Ship labouring a good deal.'

'28th Thursday Very fine. Sighted Land ahead in the Morning of a very lofty appearance and on approaching it discovered in the highest Peak of it a Volcanic eruption

[Mount Erebus]. It would Shew first with a volume of Smoke, as dark as Pitch which would gradually become of a lighter hue and then the Flame would burst forth with great fury for some time, after which it would Subside for a few minutes and then reappear again. The Island is of a great height Peaky and entirely covered with Snow except the Sides of the burning Mountain which [are] black which I suppose is owing to the hot Lava issuing from the mouth of the Cratur and falling down its Sides. There is a valley between the two highest Peaks, in which there is a dense Labyrinth of Smoke [which] presents a very romantic feature in the general view of the Island.'

The ships returned to Hobart, having failed to find a safe anchorage to over winter in the south, for rest and repairs. Cunningham acted as the master at arms on board and records: 'May 1st 1841 Saturday Fine. Went on Shore in the forenoon on duty, in consequence of information being received that that some our people who was absent had deserted and was employed at the whaling Fisheries in the Bays along the coast. I was despatched in compy of a constaple in a whale boat belonging to Mr Lucas of Hobart Town on which duty I was employed until Sunday the 16th. When I returned to the Ship bringing one man back with me and having searched all the Fisheries on on the coast, and traversed nearly 400 Miles sleeping at Night in the 'Bush'.

'It was a most disagreeable duty and I may say Fatiguing but I had the pleasure of Seeing a great deal of the Country and having Some good Sport shooting also a good insight of the way the people employed at the Fisheries lives and works and in my oppinion a most miserable life it is—I may Say beastly.'

The ships sailed again in July and after calling at Sydney and New Zealand returned to the Antarctic. '20th [December 1841] Monday Very fine but cold; ice middling thick: lowered a boat. Captain boarded the 'Erebus' and on his passage got nearly upset by a whale, the stem of of the Cutter taking the whales Spout hole just as he was blowing. Fortunately he made a sudden retreat. Made fast to a Floe of ice & filled four tanks with beautifull fresh water ice: Made Sail in evening.'

'31st Friday New years eve: still fast: ice closed entirely round us: weather beautifull. In the course of the day built a nice appartment on the ice and put up a Sign of the 'Pilgrim of the Ocean' on one Side, with the 'Pioneers of Science' on the other. At 12 PM hoisted the Union and welcomed 1842 with three hearty cheers and 'hands' splice the 'Main brace'. Drank her Majesties health after which the Officers had a jubilee in the Pilgrim of the Ocean and both Ships companies repaired on board the Erebus and commenced dancing which was Kept up until an early hour and every thing went of with the best of good fellowship.

'It was a beautifull yet dreary Sight, to See the two Ships joined on the bosom of the deep with nothing in Sight only ice and snow and the Solitary Peterel or other Sea bird—it reminded me of Scotts 'Diamond of the Desert' in the Talisman.'

'19th Wednesday Gloomy Miserable day. At 3 AM cast off from the floe: the Hawsers snapping like carrots. All day tacking in small spaces of open water. In the afternoon an iceberg stove our stern boat—near escape. Heavy wet falling all the evening and first watch: in the first watch tacked 29 times. Erebus Keeping very close company: ships barely weathering one another; an tremendous large berg just to windward.

'20th Thursday Blowing a gale all day: in the thickest of the ice with no open water: Ships labouring a deal: ice striking them heavily. Shattered our Rudder all to pieces: got spare one up out of after hold and bolted it together. Ship driving as she liked: sails close reefed and clewed up: both ship in a most dangerous predicament having most narrow escapes in indeavouring to get clear of the large bergs.'

'30th Sunday Snowing all day: Divine Service. At one PM turned the hands to Ship rudder and make Sail: cast off: Some open leads to the Southward and westward. In consequence of the Lower deck being damp, lighted Sylvesters Patent heating Apparatus which soon dried it, but in the Afternoon the furnace and parts adjacent got so hot you could not touch them and some Plugs had got under the hot Plate and caught fire which caused Such a Smoke that we thought the hold was on fire. Cleared away and passed an immense quantity water down besides working the Engine. After some time the works cooled and all steam and Smoke ceased. Found there was no damage done. It caused a good deal of Labour. In all an very unpleasant Sabbath but we must take the rough with the Smooth.'

'20th [February] Sunday Blowing a gale. Shipping heavy seas and freezing very Keen. One & half Inch rope at least a foot in circumference with ice. The lower Deck very wet & disagreeable. At 7 PM furled mainsail & close reef^d Topsails which was a most difficult job. The ice about the decks thicker than ever I saw it before. No walking or Standing and the Sea washing over you and forming icicles instantly.

On 13 March the two ships were in collision, graphically described by Cunningham, and proceeded to the Falkland Islands. After a refit and observations in the vicinity of Cape Horn they tried to go south again east of the Antarctic Peninsula, and penetrated what is now Erebus and Terror Gulf.

'16th Monday . . . At 10 PM Heavy pressure of ice from the Southward. The floe to which we were made fast shivered to pieces; the Captain was onboard the 'Erebus' at the time and had to run for his life. We hung on to one piece of the floe. The Erebus to another had great difficulty in holding on, the warps snapping like carrots. A large berg came rapidly down and shaved our stern within a yard. Had it struck us it must have dashed our stern works to pieces—Had a narrow escape. In the morning punished John Barclay Y^g G^{mt} Stewart with 48 lashes for Drunkeness and general irregular conduct [corporal punishment was administered three times on board *Terror* during the entire voyage] . . .'

'5th [March] Sunday . . . At 4 PM Erebus tacked & close hauled to the NNE. Hoisted the 'Ensign' as a signal of departure from the ice for the Cape of Good Hope. Both Ships threw casks overboard containing Latitudes & Longitudes.

'The Pack was very heavy and apparently impenetrable. Spliced Main brace. Nasty head Sea on. Hurra!!'

The ships called at Simon's Town, Saint Helena and Ascension Island as well as Rio de Janeiro and reached England early in September 1843 where they were paid off and Cunningham returned to barracks.

Acknowledgements

Extracts from Sergeant Cunningham's journal are reproduced by permission of The Deputy Keeper of the Records, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and Mrs J Herwegh Hellwitz.

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Monuments to Edward Wilson in Cheltenham

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Edward Adrian Wilson was born in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England on 23 July 1872. He attended Cheltenham College and then proceeded to Cambridge where he read natural sciences and to St George's Hospital, London where he trained in medicine. His name is best known because of his participation in Robert Falcon Scott's Antarctic expeditions of 1901–1904 and 1910–1913. He reached the South Pole with Scott on 17 January 1912 and died with him on the return journey on or after 29 March 1912.

There are two prominent monuments to Wilson in his hometown that are worthy of note. The first of these is the house, 91 Montpellier Terrace, Cheltenham, in which he was born (Fig. 1 and front cover) which bears an inscription to his memory (Fig. 2).

The second is a superb statue of him by Kathleen Scott that was unveiled at The Promenade, Cheltenham, on 9 July 1914 by Sir Clements Markham (Figs 3, 4).

It is encouraging to note that both of these are well maintained and serve to indicate the civic pride with which Cheltenham still regards its most famous son.



Fig. 1. 91 Montpellier Terrace, Cheltenham (watercolour by the author).