

# James Clark Ross

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**Sir James Clark Ross** (15 April 1800 – 3 April 1862), was a British naval officer and explorer. He explored the Arctic with his uncle Sir John Ross and Sir William Parry, and later led his own expedition to Antarctica.

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## Arctic explorer

Ross was born in London. He entered the navy in 1812 under his uncle, whom he accompanied on Sir John's first Arctic voyage in search of a Northwest Passage in 1818. Between 1819 and 1827, Ross took part in four Arctic expeditions under Parry, and in 1829 to 1833, again served under his uncle on Sir John's second Arctic voyage. It was during this trip that they located the position of the North Magnetic Pole on 1 June 1831 on the Boothia Peninsula in the far north of Canada. It was on this trip, too, that Ross charted the Beaufort Islands, later renamed Clarence Islands by his uncle. <sup>[1][2]</sup>

In 1834, Ross was promoted to captain, and from 1835 to 1838, he was employed on the magnetic survey of Great Britain.

## Antarctic explorer

Between 1839 and 1843, Ross commanded an Antarctic expedition comprising the vessels *HMS Erebus* and *HMS Terror* and charted much of the coastline of the Antarctic continent. Also aboard was Joseph Dalton Hooker who had been invited along as assistant surgeon. *Erebus* and *Terror* were bomb vessels - an unusual type of warship named after the mortar bombs they were designed to fire and constructed with extremely strong hulls, to withstand the recoil of the mortars, which were to prove of great value in thick ice.

In 1841, James Ross discovered the Ross Sea, Victoria Land, and the volcanoes Mount Erebus and Mount Terror, which were named for the expedition's vessels. They sailed for 250 miles (400 km) along the edge of the low, flat-topped ice shelf they called the Victoria Barrier, later named "Ross Ice Shelf" in his honour. In the following year, he attempted to penetrate south at about 55°W, and explored the eastern side of what is now known as James Ross Island, discovering and naming Snow Hill Island and Seymour Island. It is noteworthy that Ross reported that Admiralty Sound was blocked by glaciers at its southern end, providing evidence for a much greater extent for the ice-shelves in Prince Gustav Channel and the northern Larsen Ice Shelf.

On his return, Ross was knighted, and was also nominated to the French order of the Legion d'Honneur. In 1847, he published his account of the expedition under the title of *A Voyage of Discovery and Research to Southern and Antarctic Regions*. He was elected to the Royal Society in 1848, and in that year made his last expedition, as captain of *HMS Enterprise*, accompanied by *HMS Investigator*,<sup>[3]</sup> in the first expedition in search of Sir John Franklin.

James was married to Lady Ann Ross. He died at Aylesbury in 1862, five years after his wife. A blue plaque marks Ross's home in Eliot Place, Blackheath, London. His closest friend was Captain Francis Rawdon Moria Crozier with who he sailed many times. Crozier has never been found after he participated in The Franklin Expedition and became leader after the death of Sir John Franklin.

James also lived at Aston Clinton Abbey in Buckinghamshire and is buried with his wife in the local churchyard. In the gardens of the Abbey there is a lake with two islands, named after the ships *Terror* and *Erebus*.

## Tributes

- James Clark Ross is the name of a British Antarctic Survey ship.
- The crater Ross on the Moon is jointly named after him and Frank Elmore Ross.

## References

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  - ↑ Woodman, David C. (1991). *Unravelling the Franklin disaster : Inuit testimony*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. ISBN 0773508333. http://books.google.com/books?id=RbnvSlOc6twC&pg=PA75&lpg=PA75&dq=%22Clarence+Islands%22+-elephant+&source=web&ots=zdDXRbYpc7&sig=SnNsRyMCPfFT3hQijcRURS8wsEw&hl=en#PPA75,M1.
  - ↑ Mowat, Farley (1973) (The Vanished Ships). *Ordeal by ice; the search for the Northwest Passage*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd. p. 250. OCLC 1391959.
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  - The Royal Navy in Polar Exploration From Franklin to Scott* - E C Coleman - 2006

James Clark Ross



Sir James Clark Ross beside him is a dip circle designed by Robert Were Fox, and used by Ross to discover the magnetic south pole.

<b>Born</b>	15 April 1800 <div>London</div>
<b>Died</b>	3 April 1862
<b>Nationality</b>	British
<b>Known<span> </span>for</b>	Antarctica

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