

“WHAT RANK IS THAT DOG?”

A TRIBUTE TO  
*EREBUS*’ FOUR-  
LEGGED FRIENDS



BY ANNA CARSON  
MMXXV



## PURPOSE

Whether livestock, entertainers, stowaways, or rat-catchers, the significance of shore-animals has often been neglected in the narratives of polar voyages. From finding joy in their individual quirks to acknowledging the cultural injustices animals often embody, each life and story holds value.

# THE FRANKLIN PETS (1845)

Neptune the dog, and Jacko, Lady Franklin's 'gifted' monkey, are the expedition's relatively most-recorded animals; though an unnamed cat, supposedly another "Newfoundland", and invisible masses of "fowls", pigs, and oxen that "died from the weather and [vessel's] pitching" were equally brought aboard.



## JAMES<sup>2</sup>

When writing letters home, there's little need for formalities. And so we find Fairholme's emotionally-intimate descriptions of Neptune ("the most lovable dog"), and Fitzjames' account of Jacko's initiation into crew life: with "the sailors" making her "a blanket frock & trowsers".



# NEPTUNE

A familiar companion pet, Fairholme notes “Old Nep has lost much of his unwieldiness since we left & now runs up & down our [ladders] with ease.” Whether this nickname reflected elder-age, hierarchical-humour, or simple affection, it’s clear Neptune’s adjustment to this strange environment was an unnerving change.



Engraved by T. Landon from a drawing by Sir David Lauder.

*Neptune, the property of W. G. Gosling Esq.*

# NEPTUNE

Amidst the expedition's noisy and bustling departure from Britain, Neptune appeared to have received affection from varying crewmen ranks; for he was "a general favourite. I [Fairholme] often give him an extra kiss on Williams' account, & he seems to know that it comes from a friend."





## JACKO

conversely was “the annoyance & Pest of the whole ship, & yet not a person in her would hurt [her] [...] [She] is a dreadful [but amusing] thief [...]!” — Like Neptune, Jacko seemingly free-roamed *Erebus*. With many ship-animals historically being harmed by irate crew, hopefully Fairholme’s judgement remained true!

“The Doctor”, Fairholme unknowingly foreshadowed, “declares that JACKO is in rapid consumption, [...] but the only other symptom I see [...], is the rapid consumption of everything eatable [she] can lay [her] paws on.” — Beyond an impish personality, could Jacko’s ‘excessive eating’ have been influenced by illness, distress, or natural species behaviour?

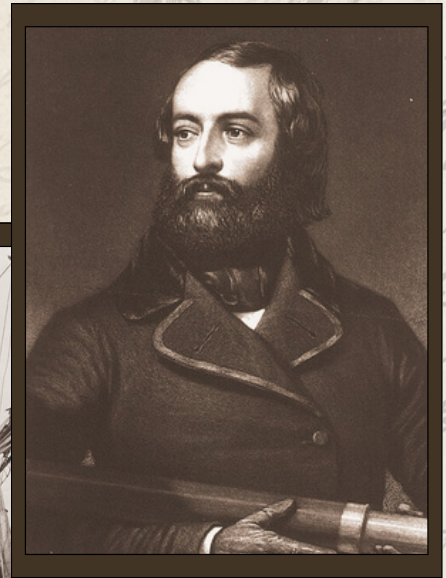


**EFFECT** Shore-animals like Neptune and Jacko are important in understanding naval expeditions simply because they were lives aboard too. How humans treat and categorise nonhuman-animals reflects the cultures they come from; and since their perspectives are restrictively unaccounted for, it's important to approach human lenses critically.



# ELISHA KENT KANE (1820-1857)

E.g., journaling his second expedition in search of Franklin's crew, provides abundant examples of how the dogs bought along on his Arctic mission suffered; from depressive symptoms caused by lack of daylight, aggressive behaviour, diseases like rabies, and madness linked to starvation.



# 19TH-CENTURY VIEWPOINT

Kane was aware his treatment of sled-dogs would've been poorly received from the Society of the Prevention of Cruelty towards Animals, recognising aspects of ship-pets which could be contended. Influenced by harsh polar and seafaring conditions, ship-animals' roles and agencies were ultimately determined by their crew.





## ON-SCREEN

*The Terror* is masterful at portraying elitist 19th-century naval culture, and the animals involved are no exception. The hostility

Hickey holds towards Neptune epitomises class-tensions and survivalist morality, as with Goodsir's sacrifice of Jacko, made tragic through the animals' lack of power and innocence amongst human hierarchy.

“WHAT RANK IS THAT DOG?”

As lost as the  
traces of the humans who brought  
them along, we do not know how  
the stories of the real Neptune and  
Jacko ended — but we do know,  
and ought to remember, their fates.



FIND ME ON TUMBLR AT @aristosakielon &  
@lieut-john-irving

OR E-MAIL: [anna.laurent@outlook.de](mailto:anna.laurent@outlook.de)



## Further Reading/References



- 1) Potter, R. A. et al (2022) *May We Be Spared To Meet On Earth*
  - 2) Kane, E. K. (1892) *Arctic Explorations in Search of Sir John Franklin*
  - 3) Neptune: <https://www.commandergrahamgore.com/blog/neptune>
  - 4) Nagai, K. et al (2023). *Maritime Animals: Ships, Species, Stories*
  - 5) Mäenpää, S. (2016) 'Sailors and their pets' (Academia.edu)
  - 6) Singer, P. (1973-2015) *Animal Liberation* ISBN: 978-1-847-92384-4
  - 7) Provisions Account: The National Archives, London ADM 7/187
  - 8) Paredes, A. (2017) *Kabloonas; Blogspot* 'Jacko Killed Them All'
- 