

December 19th

Memory verse

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. Genesis 1:5

Ships and sailors today – and the first story begins with a study of light.



A painting to look at¹

Light is crucial to the paintings of Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775– 1851) who died on 19th December. He studied how to depict stormy seascapes and beautiful sunsets. This famous painting, *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up*, 1838, is one of his best known. Spend some time looking at the colours he has used to create the light and its reflection in the water.

The picture is poignant: it shows a famous gunship the HMS Temeraire. *Téméraire* is a French word meaning “reckless” and the ship had formed a brave part of Nelson's fleet at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In Turner's painting thirty three years have passed since Trafalgar. Now the great ship is decaying and useless. Turner shows her being towed up the Thames by a steam tug to be broken up in a shipyard at Rotherhithe.

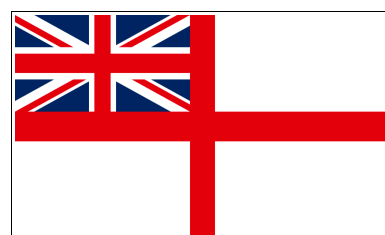
Turner captures a sense of departed glory by his spectacular sunset colours. The ship herself looks

¹ Information from <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/learn-about-art/paintings-in-depth/heroine-of-traffic-the-fighting-temeraire> and other sources.

almost ghostly beside the tug and the contrast between the two different vessels, the graceful sailing ship and the grubby brown steam tug, is almost shocking. Turner was pointing out the clash of two eras: the sailing ship that had once been part of Britain's great defence is now superseded by the steam tug of the industrial revolution.

If you were able to look at this painting as it hangs in the National Gallery you would notice the fine detail Turner has put into painting the ship. You can see the individual windows and gun-ports and details of the rigging. Other areas of the painting, though, are deliberately designed to give just an impression – a style of painting called *impressionist*. This is another powerful contrast that enhances the emotional effect of the painting.

Look closely at the flag the tug is flying. Turner put these lines alongside the painting when it went on display: “The flag which braved the battle and the breeze, No longer owns her.”² At Trafalgar the Temeraire would have flown the white ensign. You can see it on the right. Now she is towed under a flag that is white *all over*. This flag was flown to show that she had been sold to a private company.



To the viewer of the painting it looks like a flag of surrender – an insult to the proud ship that had served her country. The word “owns” here is a play on words too. The Navy no longer owned the ship – she did not belong to the Navy any more. But Turner also implies that the Navy did not own her in the sense that it *disowned* her.

Steam tugs were quite a new invention in 1838. In fact, the word “tug” to describe such a vessel had not been used before. Two tugs were actually used to tow the Temeraire but Turner depicts only one to enhance the contrast he wants to make and to bring out the emotional impact. If you look hard you may be able to find another tug in the background. Turner has taken some other liberties with the facts too, in order to make the point he has in mind. When the Temeraire was towed to be broken up in reality, all her masts and superstructure had already been removed, she would not have looked as Turner shows her.

Something to do

You can make your own impressionist painting using water based or washable felt tipped markers and water colour paper. Draw a simple picture of flowers, or a bridge or a sunset using bold strokes and a variety of colours. Then *gently* spray the picture with some water using a spray bottle. The colours will run and blend to give an impressionist effect!³ You can dry your finished picture by leaving it in a warm place such as an airing cupboard.



Map work⁴

Get out your atlas and we'll set sail on a very cold journey! Find the places highlighted in **green** as we go along. You might need your dictionary too. Do you know the meaning of the words highlighted in **purple**?

Naval hydrographer Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1857) was born on **19th December**. This remarkable man was an enthusiastic Evangelical Christian and

2 This is a line from Thomas Campbell's poem “Ye Mariners of England”. See the lesson for July 27th (yet to come) for a poem by Thomas Campbell.

3 Another method can be found here: <https://weefolkart.com/homeschool/impressionist-painting-tutorial/>

4 Information from <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/william-edward-parry-first-north-west-passage-expedition-1819-20>, Kyrios, A. (2019). How the evangelical convictions of Sir William Edward Parry influenced his running of the Australian Agricultural Company from 1829 to 1834 . *Integrity: A Journal of Australian Church History*, 5. Retrieved from <https://integrity.moore.edu.au/index.php/Integrity/article/view/28> and other sources.

part of a group of Christian naval officers who you might remember from the lesson for 29th August. They were all concerned to bring the Gospel to serving sailors and to also better the conditions of those in the navy.

Parry was the discoverer of the **Barrow Strait**. Can you find it in your atlas? You will need a map that shows the Arctic, Greenland and Canada. Find Greenland first. Now look to the west (left) and find **Baffin Bay**. To the south of the **Queen Elizabeth Islands** there is a sea route west from Baffin Bay through the Canadian Arctic **Archipelago** called the **Parry Channel**. This channel separates the Queen Elizabeth Islands from the rest of the Canadian territory of **Nunavut**. The entrance at the eastern end of Parry Channel is called **Lancaster Sound**.

William Parry had been on an expedition led by Captain John Ross in 1818 which had followed the Coast of Baffin Bay before turning back. William Parry was disappointed. If only Captain Ross had carried on and explored Lancaster Sound! Perhaps there was a sea route – a north-west passage to India!

William Parry was not the only person on the expedition to think it was a pity they had turned back. If you look at a world map in your atlas you will see that it was a long way to India from Britain before the Suez Canal was opened in 1869. Ships had to sail all round Africa to get there! Britain had important trading interests in India and the government was keen to find a better route. In the hope of finding a North-west passage, Parliament had even offered a prize of £5000 (about £275,000 in modern money) for any voyage that crossed a longitude of 110° west. So following Ross's expedition there was another the following year and this time Parry was put in charge. This time they would not turn back; they would try to go beyond Lancaster Sound.

Parry's expedition was specially equipped for its task. The ships, HMS Hecla and HMS Griper, were strengthened to withstand the pressure of the ice. They all had a thick cladding of oak on the outside, and iron plates on the **bows** and on the beams inside the ships. In addition the ships were carrying some very special stores. This was food in tins. Tinned food was a very new invention in 1819 and extremely expensive. The navy provided Parry with tinned beef and tinned pea soup which was very nourishing. They had no tin openers though – these had not yet been invented! Parry also took along seeds of mustard and cress and lime juice.

The expedition reached Lancaster Sound after battling though ice and Parry discovered and named **Prince Regent Inlet**. This was blocked by ice so the Hecla, captained by Parry himself and the Griper under Captain Matthew Liddon sailed on through **Barrow Strait**, reaching **Melville Island**. Now they could claim that £5000 prize offered by Parliament – when they got back.



And now the Arctic winter arrived. The sea froze. The ships were stuck on the edge of Melville Island at a place Parry named, “Winter Island”. Parry was an excellent commander who had the welfare of his men at heart. He had the crews put on plays and the officers started a newspaper. They even played cricket on the ice. They explored Melville Island, on foot and named two bays they found after the ships, Hecla Bay and Griper Bay. The tinned provisions came into their own and as scurvy, caused by lack of vitamin C, began to make the crews unwell, Parry planted his little cress seeds. No one knew anything about vitamins and their effect on health in 1819. However, plants such as scurvy grass (illustrated on the left) in the cress family had long been used to cure scurvy in sailors returning home after a long voyage.

Parry's mustard and cress seemed to **alleviate** the symptoms. Best of all Parry looked after his men's spiritual welfare. Regular church services took place and we can be

sure all of his men heard the Gospel.

When the ice broke up he set off westwards again. But now progress was painfully slow. Parry's expedition had proved that, with the right provisions, a ship and her crew could overwinter right up in the Arctic Circle but should they try to carry on?

Wisely but sadly Parry decided to turn back. The Hecla and the Griper returned to England.

But the government was not ready to give up. Surely there must be a passage through the ice! In 1821 Parry was back in the Arctic. He and his crews made a number of interesting discoveries and learned much from the Inuit people they met about how to survive in the Arctic. Far from despising the Inuit as “primitive”, Parry respected the way they were able to deal with their harsh environment. Again they overwintered in the Arctic before returning due to lack of provisions. Parry wrote that from this second voyage he had learnt a lot about ice, wind – and patience.

One unexamined route through Lancaster Sound remained to be explored. Parry made another attempt in 1824 and met with less success, although he made interesting discoveries about the position of the magnetic pole and about Arctic wildlife.

For all this exploration Parry was knighted in 1829. He had now done the things that were to make him famous – in the eyes of the world. But Parry's next task was the one in which he truly excelled to the glory of God. He and his wife, Isabella, went to off Australia where he served as Commissioner of the Australian Agricultural Company at Port Stephens in New South Wales from 1829 to 1834. Here he found the company affairs in a deplorable state and the company employees, known as “servants”, completely untaught about God and His Word. Some of the servants were free but many were convicts transported to Australia to work as a punishment. Together, Sir William and Isabella Parry tackled the situation. They were tireless in evangelism and education, providing tracts, books and Bibles, setting up schools and ensuring fair treatment for all, resolutely resisting appeals for the freer availability of the alcohol that caused so many problems. Parry's experience in the navy enabled him to deal with the tangled affairs of the company and get them on a sound footing and his proven personal skills were exactly what was needed with the convicts and settlers. He put to good use what he had learned looking after his men in difficult conditions in the Arctic. Above all Parry and his wife brought the gospel to those who desperately needed it. It is no exaggeration to say they transformed the colony.

An Ice Experiment to do

Make some instant ice from super-cooled water.

You will need some plastic water bottles. Gather together about 10-12 to give plenty of spares.

Ice cubes

Small bowl

Towel

Fill the water bottles. Place them in the freezer. Lay them flat on their sides rather than upright to aid quick freezing.

Cool the water for about two to three hours.

Take a bottle out to test it. The water should still be liquid. Bang it hard on your kitchen work top. If the water hardens to ice at once, your bottles are ready to use. If not, wait longer and test another bottle. You are aiming to catch the water at the point where it is still liquid but the crystals have not

formed yet. At this point you have super-cooled water. Once you bang the bottle, this triggers the formation of the crystals.

When one of your bottles has tested “ready” place your bowl upside down on the towel. Put an ice cube on top of the bowl. Now take one of the bottles where the water is still liquid straight out of the freezer and slowly pour the water onto the ice cube. The water will form a column of frozen ice. This will only work for about 20 seconds but you can repeat the process with all the water bottles you have left in the freezer.