A selection of books, maps and manuscripts on the Northwest Passage in the British Library

Early approaches

John Cabot (1425-c1500 and Sebastian Cabot (1474-1557)

"A brief somme of Geographia" includes description of a voyage made by Roger Barlow and Henry Latimer for Robert Thorne in company with Sebastian Cabot in 1526-1527. The notes on a Northern passage at the end are practically a repetition of what Thorne had advocated to the King in 1527.
BL: Royal 18 B XXVIII [Manuscripts]

BL: C.21.b.35
Between the title and signature A of this volume there are five leaves containing "The names of certayne late travaylers"etc., "A very late and great probabilite of a passage by the Northwest part of America" and "An epistle dedicatorie ... to Master Phillip Sidney Esquire"
Another copy with maps is at BL: G.6532

A memoir of Sebastian Cabot; with a review of the history of maritime discovery / [by Richard Biddle]; illustrated by documents from the Rolls, now first published. London: Hurst, Chance, 1831.
333p
BL: 1202.k.9
Another copy is at BL: G.1930 and other editions include Philadelphia, 1831 at BL: 10408.f.21 and Philadelphia 1915 (with a portrait of Cabot) at BL: 10408.o.23

BL: 10817.bbb

332p; illus; maps
BL: Ac.6172/160

Martin Frobisher (1539-1594)

Sir Martin Frobisher's voyage for the discovery of a passage towards Cathay, in the year 1574
BL: Cott Otho E VIII [Manuscripts]
Other manuscripts concerning Frobisher will be found in this collection

Instructions to Martin Frobisher "for the viage nowe recommended to him for the Northe Weste parts and Cataia", [1577]
BL: Egerton 2790 also Sloane 2442f23 [Manuscripts]

BL: Add 35831.f. 296 [Manuscripts]


BL: G.6479

A prayse, and reporte of Maister Martyne Forboishers voyage to Meta Incognita, etc. / Thomas Churchyard. London: Andrew Maunsell, 1578.

BL: G.6480

Another copy wanting the final leaf is at BL: C.55.a.12

A true discourse of the late voyages of discouerie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya, by the Northwest, vnder the conduct of Martin Frobisher Generall, etc. / George Beste. 3v. London: Henry Bynnyman, 1578.

52p, 39p, 68p; maps

BL: C.13.a.9 (1)

Another copy is at BL: G.6527

The three voyages of Martin Frobisher in search of a passage to Cathay and India by the North-West, A.D. 1576-8. From the original 1578 text of George Best; together with numerous other versions, additions, etc. Edited, with preface, introduction, notes, appendixes and bibliography, by Vilhjalmur Stefansson ... with the collaboration of Eloise McCaskill ... together with numerous maps and illustrations; general editor: N. M. Penzer. 2 v. London: Argonaut, 1938.

166p, 292p; illus; maps; bibliography

BL: 10026.tt.7


164p; illus; maps; index

BL: X.709/24163


196p; illus; maps; bibliography; index

BL: LB.31.a.9859
John Davis (c1552-1605)

"The first voyage of Master Iohn Dauis, vndertaken in Iune 1585 for the discouerie of the Northwest Passage", written by Iohn Ianes. – "The second voyage attempted by Master Iohn Dauis with others, for the discouerie of the Northwest passage, in anno 1586". [By John Davis.] – "The relation of the course which the Sunshine a barke of fiftie tunnes, and the Northstarre a small pinnesse, being two vessels of the fleet of Master Iohn Dauis held after he had sent them from him to discouer the passage betweene Groenland and Island", written by Henry Morgan. – "The third voyage Northwestward, made by Iohn Dauis ... for the discouerie of a passage to the Isles of the Molucca, or the coast of China, in the yeere, 1587", written by Iohn Ianes. In: The principall nauigations, voiages and discoveries of the English nation, etc / Richard Hakluyt. London, 1589.

A 1600 edition is at BL: 683.h.6. Other editions include 1810 at BL: 208.h.12, 1886 at BL: 12208.bb.15/35, 1889 at BL: 10027.dd.4, 1904 at BL: 10024.k.3, and 1908 at BL: 12206.p.1/217. An abridged edition (1705) is at BL: C.115.l.5 (1). A Danish edition of Davis' three voyages 1585-87 is at BL: Ac.1057/2 [no. 7]

The Worldes Hydrographical Discription. Wherein is proued not onely by authoritie of writers, but also by late experience of travellers and reasons of substantiall probabilitie. That the worlde in all his zones clymats and places, is habitable and inhabited, and the seas likewise vniuersally nauigable without any naturall anoyance to hinder the same. Whereby appeares that from England there is a short and speedie passage into the South Seas, to China, Molucca, Phillipina, and India, by northerly nauigation, etc. / John Davis. London: Thomas Dawson, 1595.

The voyages and works of John Davis the navigator / edited, with an introduction and notes, by Albert Hastings Markham; notes on the "New Map" by C. H. Coote. London: Hakluyt Society, 1880.

xcv, 392p; illus; map; appendices
(Works issued by the Hakluyt Society; 59)
BL: Ac.6172/53
Included is "The map of the world, A. D. 1600, called by Shakspere [in Twelfth Night, iii, 2] 'The new map, with the augmentation of the Indies' to illustrate the voyages of John Davis".
Another copy is at BL: ST 461/59
Henry Hudson (fl. 1607-1611)

*Descriptio ac delineatio Geographica Detectionis Freti, sive transitus ad occasum ... recens investigati ab M. Henrico Hudsono, etc / [edited by Hessel Gerritszoon].* Amsterodami: Hesselij Gerardi, 1612.
BL: C.114.b.6 (1)
Other copies are at BL: G.7165 (2-3) and BL: G.7163. Another edition (1613, with maps) is at BL: C.114.b.6 (4) and other copies of this edition are at BL: 500.b.25 (10) and BL: G.7164. For an 1878 edition with a "new and extremely careful translation into English" see below.

"Divers voyages and Northerne discoveries of ... Henry Hudson ... in 1607. Written partly by John Playse ... and partly by Henry Hudson. - A second voyage ... of Henry Hudson for finding a passage to the East Indies by the North-East [in 1608]: written by himselfe. - The third voyage of Henry Hudson... written by Robert Ivet. An abstract of the Journall of Henry Hudson for the discoverie of the North-west Passage, begun the 17th of April 1610, ended with his end. - A larger discourse of the same voyage and the successe thereof. Written by Abacuck Pricket". In: *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, vol. 3, pp 567-609. London, 1625.
BL: 679.h.13

*Henry Hudson, the navigator: the original documents in which his career is recorded / collected, partly translated, and annotated, with an introduction / George Michael Asher.* London: Hakluyt, 1860.
292p; maps; bibliography; index
BL: Ac.6172/25

William Baffin (c1584-1622)

William Baffin. True relation of his fourth voyage for the discovery of a north-west passage, in the year 1615. Preceded by the log of the voyage, his address to Sir Thomas Smith, knpt., Sir Dudley Digges, knpt., and the rest of the adventurers for promotion of the undertaking, and a colored chart of the ship's course between the latitudes 61 and 66. *Autograph.* Folio.
BL: Add 12206 [Manuscripts]

"A iournall of the voyage made to Greenland with sixe English ships and a pinnasse, in the yeere 1613. - The fourth voyage of James Hall to Groeneland, wherein he was set forth by English adventurers, anno 1612 and slaine by a Greeenlander. - A true relation of such things as happened in the fourth voyage for the discoverie of the North-west Passage, performed in the yeere 1615. - A briefe and true relation or iournall, contayning such accidents as happened in the fifth voyage, for the disouerie of a passage to the North-west ... in the good ship called the Discouerie ... performed in the yeere of our Lord 1616" / William Baffin. In: *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, vol. 14. London, 1625.
BL: 679.h.13

Luke Foxe (1583-1636)


North-west Fox; or, Fox from the North-West Passage. Beginning with King Arthur, Malga, Ochur, etc. Following with briefe abstracts of the voyages of Cabot, Frobisher, Davis, Waymouth, Knight, Hudson, Button, Gibson, Bylot, Baffin, Hawkridge. Together with ... Mr. J. Hall's three voyages to Greynland, with a topographcall description of the countries ... Demonstrated in a polar card. ... With the author his owne voyage / Luke Foxe. London: B. Alsop and Tho. Fawcet, 1635. 270p; map BL: C.32.e.8 Other copies are at BL: G.7167 and BL: 303.d.19


Thomas James (c1593-c1635)

The strange and dangerous voyage of Captaine Thomas James in his intended discovery of the Northwest Passage into the South-Sea ... With an advise concerning the philosophy of these late discoveryes, by W[illiam] W[atts]. [Signed: X. Z.]. London: J. Liggatt for J. Partridge, [1633]. 120p; map BL: 302.c.3 Other copies are at BL: G.7166 and BL: C.32.d.9 (this copy is signed William Watts instead of X. Z.).

Voyages of delusion

A chart of the North Part of America for Hudson's Bay commonly called North West Passage. By J. Thornton. [London], [1704?] BL: Maps.c.27.d.10 (4) [Map Library] A coloured copy is at BL: *Maps.982 (1) [Map Library]
James Knight (c1640-c1719)

*The founding of Churchill: being the journal of Captain James Knight, Governor-in-Chief in Hudson Bay, from the 14th of July to the 13th of September, 1717* / edited, with a historical introduction and notes, by James F. Kenney. Toronto: Dent, 1932. 213p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: 010470.aa.28

Dead silence: the greatest mystery in Arctic discovery / John Geiger and Owen Beattie. London: Bloomsbury, 1993. 219p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: YK.1994.b.5727

Christopher Middleton (d.1770)

"An examination of sea water frozen and melted again ... made in Hudson's Streights by Capt. Christopher Middleton"
BL: Add 4435 [Manuscripts]

*A vindication of the conduct of Captain Christopher Middleton in a late voyage on board the Furnace, for discovering a North-West Passage to the Western American Ocean in answer to certain objections and aspersions of Arthur Dobbs* [laid by him before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty]. With an appendix containing the Captain's instructions ... with as much of the log journal as relates to the discovery... To which is annexed an account of the extraordinary degrees ... of cold in Hudson's Bay, North America / Christopher Middleton. 2pt. London: Printed by the author's appointment, 1743. 206p, 48p
BL: 790.g.8

(Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, second series; 177)
BL: YC.1994.a.2439

Arthur Dobbs (1689-1765)

*An account of the countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, in the north-west part of America* ... With an abstract of Captain Middleton's journal, and observations upon his behaviour during his voyage, and since his return. To which are added I. A letter from Bartholomew de Fonte, Vice-Admiral of Peru and Mexico. II. An abstract of all the discoveries which have been publish'd of the islands and countries, in and adjoining to the Great Western Ocean, between America, India and China, etc. III. The Hudson's Bay Company's charter. IV. The standard of trade in those parts of America V. Vocabularies of the languages of several Indian nations adjoining to Hudson's Bay / Arthur Dobbs. London: J. Robinson, 1744. 211p; map
BL: 454.b.25
Other copies are at BL: 213.c.11 and BL: G.14612

To Arthur Dobbs ... this chart of the seas, straits, &c. th' which his Majesty's Sloop "Furnace" pass'd for discovering a Passage from Hudson's Bay to the South Sea / John Wigate. 1746.
BL: *Maps 70095 (7) [Map Library]

William Moor (d.1765) and Frances Smith (fl.1737-1747)

A voyage to Hudson's-Bay, by the Dobbs Galley and California in the years 1746 and 1747, for discovering a North West Passage; with ... a short natural history of the country. Together with a fair view of the facts and arguments from which the future finding of such a passage is rendered probable ... To which is prefixed, an ... account of the attempts hitherto made / Henry Ellis. London: H. Whitridge, 1748. 336p; illus; map
BL: 978.g.23
Henry Ellis was a hydrographer, surveyor, and mineralogist who sailed with Moor on board the Dobbs Galley. Other copies are at BL: 674.g.20, BL: 302.k.16, and BL: G.16019

An account of a voyage for the discovery of a North-West Passage by Hudson's Straights, to the Western and Southern Ocean of America. Performed in the year 1746 and 1747, in the Ship "California", Captain Francis Smith, Commander / by the Clerk of the "California" [Charles Swaine/Theodorus Swaine Drage]. 2 v. London: Jolliffe, Corbett and Clarke, 1748-49. 237p, 326p; illus; maps
BL: 978.k.26, 27
Swaine (or Drage) was clerk of the California under Smith. Other copies are at G.2758 and 303.e.18, 19

(Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, second series; 181)
BL: Ac.6172/196

Samuel Hearne (1745-1792)

"A journal of observations made on a journey inland from Prince of Wales's Fort in Latitude 58050 North to Lat. 72.00," 7 Dec. 1770-30 June, 1772, " by Samuel Hearne "; differing in many respects from Hearne's published Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort . . . to the Northern Ocean, 1795. f. 67.
BL: Stowe 307 [Manuscripts]

A journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean, undertaken by order of the Hudson's Bay Company for the discovery of copper mines, a North West passage, etc. in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772 / Samuel Hearne. London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1795. 458p; illus; maps
BL: 454.f.20
Other copies are at BL: 146.f.7, BL: G.2864-6 and BL: G.12461-3
Samuel Hearne and the Northwest Passage / Gordon Speck. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton, 1963. 337p; illus; maps; index
BL: X.809/3417

James Cook (1728-1779)

Fragment of the log-book of Captain James Cook, on his third voyage to the Pacific Ocean; 28 Nov. 1778-17 Jan. 1779. Autograph. f. 1.
BL: Egerton 2177 [Manuscripts]

Journal by Captain James Cook, of his third voyage, 10 Feb. 1776-17 Jan. 1779, as re-written for publication by John Douglas,; with an introduction by the latter, and with chart.
BL: Egerton 2178, 2179 [Manuscripts]

Journal of Lieut James Burney of the voyage to the Pacific with Capts James Cook and Charles Clerke, 1776-1780
BL: Add 8955[Manuscripts]

Journal of Captain Cook’s last voyage to the Pacific Ocean, on Discovery; performed in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, illustrated with cuts and a chart shewing the tracks of the ships employed in this expedition / [John Rickman]. London: E. Newberry, 1781
388p; illus; maps
BL: 978.l.26
A revised second edition (1781) is at BL: C.141.bb.1. A new edition (1785) is at BL: 1045.e.6 and another copy of this edition is at BL: 1570/5329

An authentic narrative of a voyage performed by Captain Cook and Captain Clerke, in his Majesty’s ships, Resolution and Discovery, during the years 1776-1780; in search of a North-West Passage between the continents of Asia and America. Including a faithful account of all their discoveries, and the death of Captain Cook / William Ellis; illustrated with a chart and a variety of cuts. 2v. London: G. Robinson, J. Sewell, J. Debrett, 1782.
358p, 347p; illus; maps
BL: 980.h.7, 8
Another copy is at BL: 304.i.4, 5

A journal of Captain Cook’s last voyage to the Pacific Ocean ... and in quest of a north-west passage, ... with a chart / faithfully narrated from the original MS. of John Ledyard. Hartford: Patten, 1783.
208p; map
BL: C.32.c.25
A 1964 Oregon Sate University Press edition, edited by J. K. Munford, is at BL: Ac.2686.e/2

Chart of the N. W. coast of America and the N. E. coast of Asia, explored in, the years 1778 and 1779 / Prepared by Lieut[enan]t Hen[r]y Roberts, under the immediate inspection of Capt. Cook. Engraved by W. Palmer. [London], [1783?]
BL: Maps.185.j.1 [Map Library]
Chart of Cook's River in the N. W. part of America
BL: Maps. 454.h.10 [Map Library]
A chart of Cook Inlet in Alaska, probably drawn by Cook himself

A voyage to the Pacific Ocean undertaken ... for making discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere. To determine the position and extent of the west side of North America; its distance from Asia; and the practicability of a northern passage to Europe. Performed under the direction of Captains Cook, Clerke, and Gore, in his Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Discovery in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, and 1780 / Vols I and II written by Captain James Cook; Vol III by Captain James King; illustrated with maps and charts, from the original drawings made by Lieut. Henry Roberts, under the direction of Captain Cook; and with a great variety of portraits ... views ... and historical representations of remarkable incidents, drawn by Mr. Webber during the voyage, etc. [Edited by John Douglas; with additions from the journal of William Anderson]. London: W. & A. Strahan, 1784.
BL: 454.h.9-11; atlas of plates and maps at BL: 456.h.24
Another copy is at BL: 1786.d.10, with atlas at BL: 1785.c.20. The second edition (Nicol and Cadell, 1785) is at BL: 676.h.9-11, with atlas at BL: 688.l.4. Other copies are at BL: 213.d.10-12, BL: C.180.h.11 (with aquatint views by John Webber), BL: G.7419-21, BL: G.2896, and BL: 454.h.12-14

633p; illus
BL: 10026.b.15
Later editions include Black, 1904 (with illustrations by John Williamson) at BL: 010028.f.4, Everyman's, 1906, at BL: 12206.p.1/93, and Everyman's, 1954 (with a new introduction and index) at BL: 12206.p.1/856

ccxxiv, 1647p; illus; maps
BL: Ac.6172.ba

894p; index
BL: C.S.G.26/21
The second edition of the 1928 bibliography – see above. Another copy presented to the British Museum is at BL: C.127.dd.2

760p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: X.800/9645
Peter Pond (1740-c1807)

A traced map of the lakes and rivers of North America, between 40:o and 65:o N / drawn by J.D. Barbier du Bocage. It is inscribed "Copy of a map presented to the Congress by Peter Pond, a native of Milford in the State of Connecticut. This extraordinary man has resided 17 years in those countries, and from his own discoveries, as well as from the reports of Indians, he assures himself of having at last discovered a passage to the N. O. Sea; he is gone again to ascertain some important observations. New York, 1 March, 1785"
BL: Add 15332.d [Manuscripts]
Other versions are at BL: Add 15332.e and Add 15332.c [Manuscripts]

Alexander Mackenzie (1764-1820)

A traced map of the lakes and rivers of North America, between 40:o and 65:o N / drawn by J.D. Barbier du Bocage. It is inscribed "Copy of a map presented to the Congress by Peter Pond, a native of Milford in the State of Connecticut. This extraordinary man has resided 17 years in those countries, and from his own discoveries, as well as from the reports of Indians, he assures himself of having at last discovered a passage to the N. O. Sea; he is gone again to ascertain some important observations. New York, 1 March, 1785"
BL: Add 15332.d [Manuscripts]
Other versions are at BL: Add 15332.e and Add 15332.c [Manuscripts]

"Journal of a voyage performed by order of the N. W. Company, in a bark canoe, in search of a passage by water through the N. W. Continent of America from Athabasca to the Pacific Ocean, in summer 1789"
BL: Stowe 793 [Manuscripts]
The original journal in Mackenzie's hand

Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in the years 1789 and 1793. With a preliminary account of the rise, progress and present state of the fur trade of that country / by A. M. [assisted by W. Combe]. London: Cadell & Davies, 1801. cxxxii, 412p; maps
BL: 983.e.12
Other copies are at BL: 145.e.5 and BL: G.7371

The journals and letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie / edited by W. Kaye Lamb. Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1970. 551p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
(Hakluyt Society: extra series; 41)
BL: Ac.6172/169

George Vancouver (1757-1798)

Journal of Archibald Menzies, Surgeon, R.N., employed as botanist in the voyage of discovery round the world in the ship Discovery, under Captain George Vancouver; Dec. 1790-16 Feb. 1794.
Belonged to Sir Joseph Banks
A voyage of discovery to the North Pacific Ocean, and round the world ... in the years 1790-1795 / George Vancouver; edited by John Vancouver. 3v. London, 1798.

With atlas
BL: 460.h.3
Copies also at BL: 687.k.15.and 688.l.1. Another copy of the atlas is at BL: 1899.r.42

344p; illus; maps; index
BL: 10460.de.11

The Admiralty takes over

John Barrow (1764-1848)

A chronological history of voyages into the Arctic Regions; undertaken chiefly for the purpose of discovering a North-East, North-West, or Polar Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific; from the earliest periods of Scandinavian navigation to the departure of the recent expeditions under the orders of Captain Ross and Buchan / John Barrow. London: John Murray, 1818.
379p
BL: 978.l.1
Other copies are at BL: 303.i.4, BL: C.60.i.16 (with numerous autograph signatures of Arctic explorers), BL: G.7180, and BL: ORW.1986.a.3076

Voyages of discovery and research within the Arctic Regions, from the year 1818 to the present time: under the command of the several naval officers employed by sea and land in search of a North West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific / Sir John Barrow. Abridged and arranged from the official narratives, with occasional remarks. London: John Murray, 1846.
530p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.c.2
Another copy is at BL: G.16017

An autobiographical memoir of Sir John Barrow ... including reflections, observations and reminiscences at home and abroad, from early life to advanced age. London: Murray, 1847.
515p; port
BL: 1453.h.1

John Ross (1777-1856)

A voyage of discovery, made under the orders of the Admiralty, in his Majesty's ships Isabella and Alexander for the purpose of exploring Baffin's Bay, and enquiring into the possibility of a North-West Passage / John Ross. London: John Murray, 1819.
252p, cxlix; illus; maps
BL: 981.g.23
Narrative of a second voyage in search of a North-West Passage and of a residence in the Arctic Regions during the years 1829, 1830, 1831, 1832, 1833 / Sir John Ross. London: A. W. Webster, 1835. 740p; illus; maps
BL: 569.g.7
Another copy is at BL: G.7244 and other editions include Brussels, 1835 at BL: 1494.aa.29 and Paris, 1835 at BL: 10497.a.66.

Appendix to the Narrative of a second voyage in search of a North-West Passage / Sir John Ross; including the reports of ... Captain James Clark Ross and the discovery of the Northern Magnetic Pole, etc. London: Webster, 1835. 120p, cxliv, cxi; illus
BL: 569.g.8 (1)
Another copy is at G.7245

The last voyage of Capt. Sir John Ross, ... to the Arctic Regions in 1829-33. To which is prefixed an abridgement of the former voyages of Captains Ross, Parry and other ... navigators to the northern latitudes: compiled from ... information and ...documents transmitted by an officer attached to the last expedition / Robert Huish. London: Saunders, 1835. 710p; illus; map
BL: 792.i.19
An 1836 edition is at BL: RB.23.a.16942

The Polar Rosses: John and James Clark Ross and their explorations / Ernest S. Dodge. London: Faber, 1973 260p; illus; maps; bibliography
(Great travellers)
BL: X.809/15754

William Edward Parry (1790-1855)

Original manuscripts of Captain William Edward Parry, R.N. (knt. 1829; Rear-Admiral 1852), the Arctic explorer, comprising the MSS as sent to the press of his accounts of his second and third voyages in HM Ships Fury and Hecla for the discovery of a Northwest Passage; 1821-1825. 4v.
BL: Add 42089-42092 [Manuscripts]

Journal of a voyage for the discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific; performed in the years 1819-20 in His Majesty's Ships Hecla and Griper / William Edward Parry; with an appendix, containing the scientific and other observations. London: John Murray, published by authority of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, 1821. 310p, clxxix; illus; maps
BL: 1489.f.64
The North Georgia Gazette, and Winter Chronicle / [edited by Edward Sabine].
London: John Murray, 1821.
132p
BL: P.P.5280
A weekly newspaper written by members of the first Parry Expedition at their winter quarters at Winter Harbour, Melville Island, and published after their return to London.

The private journal of Captain George Francis Lyon during the recent voyage of discovery under Captain Parry / G. F. Lyon. London: John Murray, 1824.
468p; illus; map
BL: 304.k.23
Another edition (Boston, 1824) is at BL: 10460.aa.10. Lyon was second in command on Parry's 1821-23 expedition in the Fury and Hecla. The plates are after drawings by Lyon.

Journal of a second voyage for the discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific; performed in the years 1821-22-23, in His Majesty's Ships Fury and Hecla, under the orders of Captain William Edward Parry. London: John Murray, 1824-25.
571p; illus; maps; with zoological and botanical appendices by John Richardson and William Hooker.
BL: 569.f.12, 13
Other copies are at BL: 145.e.8, 9, BL: G.7394 (without the appendices), ORW.1986.a.3681 and BL: 1480.c.4.

Journal of a third voyage for the discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific; performed in the years 1824, 25, in His Majesty's ships Hecla and Fury, under the orders of William Edward Parry. London: John Murray, 1826.
186p; illus; maps; with zoological, botanical and geological appendices by James Clark Ross, William Hooker, and Robert Jameson.
BL: 569.f.14
Other copies are at BL: 145.e.10, BL: G.7396

Memoirs of Rear-Admiral Sir William Edward Parry / by his son, Edward Parry.
London: Longmans, 1857.
403p; port; map
BL: 10816.c.12
A second edition is at BL: 10816.c.13, a third edition is at BL: 10816.a.21, a sixth edition (1859) is at BL: 1578/3199 and an eighth edition (1863) is at BL: 1607/2983.

John Franklin (1786-1847)

Franklin papers: correspondence and papers of Sir John Franklin and his second wife Jane together with papers of members of their families
BL: Add 47768-47772 [Manuscripts]

Franklin papers: letters of Sir John Franklin and members of his family; 1824-1856
BL: Add 56233 [Manuscripts]
Included are letters relating to expeditions to discover the fate of Franklin's last Arctic venture

_Narrative of a journey to the shores of the Polar Sea, in the years 1819, 20, 21 and 22... With an appendix on various subjects relating to science and natural history_ / John Franklin. London: John Murray, 1823. 768p; illus; maps
BL: 569.f.16

_Canadian airs: collected by Lieutenant Back during the late Arctic expedition under Captain Franklin: with symphonies and accompaniments by Edward Knight Junr; the words by George Sloane._ London: J. Power, 1823-28
G.416 [Music Library]

_Narrative of a second expedition to the shores of the Polar Sea, in the years 1825, 1826, and 1827 / John Franklin; including an account of the progress of a detachment to the eastward, by John Richardson._ London: John Murray, 1828. 319p; illus; maps; appendices
BL: 569.f.17
Additional copies at BL: G.7398 and BL: ORW.1986.a.3022; another edition (Philadelphia, 1828) at BL: 10460.d.6

_Journey to the shores of the Polar Sea, in 1819-20-21-22: with a brief account of the second journey in 1825-26-27 / Sir John Franklin._ 4v. London: John Murray, 1829. 255p, 268p, 263p, 269p; illus; map
BL: 1578/4256

_Fauna Boreali-Americana; or the zoology of the northern parts of British America / John Richardson, assisted by William Swainson and William Kirby._ 4v. London: John Murray, 1829-37
BL: 446.f.21-24
The scientific data collected on Franklin's overland expeditions of 1819-22 and 1825-27. Richardson was Franklin's surgeon and naturalist.

_Sir John Franklin's last Arctic expedition: a chapter in the history of the Royal Navy / R. J. Cyriax._ London: Methuen, 1939. 222p; illus; maps
BL: 010460.k.15

_Arctic breakthrough: Franklin's expeditions, 1819-1847 / Paul Nanton._ London: Kimber, 1971. 270p; illus; maps; bibliography
BL: X.800/5431

463p; illus; maps; index
(Publications of the Champlain Society; 59)
BL: Ac.8565/2 [59]

421p; illus; maps; index
(Publications of the Champlain Society; 61)
BL: Ac.8565/2 [61]

Frederick William Beechey (1796-1856)

Narrative of a voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait, to co-operate with the polar expeditions: performed in His Majesty's Ship Blossom ... in the years 1825, 26, 27, 28 / Frederick William Beechey. 2v. London: Henry Colburn & Richard Bentley, 1831.
742p; illus; maps
BL: 569.f.19
Another edition (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1832) is at BL: 10492.f.10

A narrative of the voyages ... of Capt. Beechey ... to the Pacific and Behring's Straits, performed in ...1825, 26, 27, and 28 for the purpose of cooperating with the expeditions under Captains Parry and Franklin. And of Capt. Back, to the Thlew-ee-Chola River and the Arctic Sea, in search of the expedition under Capt. J. Ross: being the conclusion of the series of voyages...for the discovery of the North West Passge, etc. / Robert Huish. London: W. Wright, 1836.
704p; illus
BL: 1431.d.22

George Back (1796-1878)

Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the mouth of the Great Fish River, and along the shores of the Arctic Ocean, in the years 1833, 1834, and 1835 / George Back. London: John Murray, 1836.
663p; illus; map
BL: 792.e.4

Narrative of a journey to the shores of the Arctic Ocean, in 1833, 1834, and 1835, under the command of Capt. Back / Richard King. 2v. London: Bentley, 1836.
312p, 321p; illus
BL: 792.e.5
Another copy is at BL: ORW.1986.a.3072
Narrative of an expedition in H.M.S. Terror, undertaken with a view to geographical discovery on the Arctic shores, in the years 1836-7 / George Back. London: Murray, 1838.
456p; illus; map
BL: 792.e.32

Peter William Dease (1788-1863) and Thomas Simpson (1808-1840)

Narrative of the discoveries on the North Coast of America, effected by the officers of the Hudson Bay Company ... 1836-39 / Thomas Simpson; memoir of Thomas Simpson by Alexander Simpson; list of the plants collected during the Arctic Journey of Messrs. Simpson and Dease by Sir W. J. Hooker. London: Bentley, 1843.
419p; maps
BL: 1424.h.2

The life and travels of Thomas Simpson, the Arctic discoverer / Alexander Simpson. London: Bentley, 1845.
424p; port; map
BL: 1453.g.7
A 1963 edition (Toronto: Baxter), edited and with an introduction by John Gellner and with a map, is at BL: YA.1996.b.2422

The search for Franklin and the discovery of the Passage

Five water-colour views in Wolstenholme Sound, and several smaller sketches and maps illustrating the voyage of H.M.S. North Star (James Saunders, Master-commanding) to Baffin's Bay and Barrow Straits; 1849-50. The North Star was intended as a provision-ship for the Franklin search expedition under Sir James Clark Ross in the Enterprise. Printed matter is also included as follows: The Instructions to Saunders, an engraved chart, Captain Saunders' report of the voyage, and an article on the North Star from The Illustrated London News
BL: Add 35304 [Manuscripts]

"Captain [Richard] Collinson, C.B., HM Discovery Ship Enterprise 1850"; 15 Jan. 1850-5 June, 1875: including the printed and written notices left in the Arctic regions by previous explorers and found by Capt. Collinson
BL: Add 35308 [Manuscripts]

Ten coloured views taken during the Arctic expedition of Her Majesty's Ships "Enterprise" and "Investigator" under the command of Captain Sir James C. Ross. With a summary of the various Arctic expeditions in search of Captain Sir John Franklin ... and his companions in H. M. Ships "Erebus" and "Terror" / W. H. Browne. London: Ackermann, 1850.
8p text and tinted lithographs on plates
BL: 1259.d.11
Another copy is at BL: 1899.r.14 (1)

Arctic searching expedition: a journal of a boat-voyage through Rupert's Land and the Arctic Sea, in search of the discovery ships under the command of Sir John Franklin / John Richardson. 2v. London: Longmans, 1851.
413p, 426p; illus
BL: C.45.i.11
Copies of a playbill dated 28 Feb. 1851 are at BL: Cup.651.e (128) and C.58.d.17.
The playbills and the song are printed on pink, blue, and yellow paper respectively.
Affixed is the following memorandum printed on silk: "By Balloon. 1851. H.M.S. Resolute & Steam Tenders, Pioneer & Intrepid, (wintering at Griffith Island) in search of Sir John Franklin's expedition", etc. Erasmus Ommanney commanded the Assistance under Horatio Thomas Austin in the Resolute.

416p; illus
BL: 10460.c.10
Snow was a passenger on the Prince Albert commanded by Charles Codrington Forsyth

Stray leaves from an Arctic journal: or, eighteen months in the Polar regions, in search of Sir John Franklin's Expedition, in the years 1850-51 / Sherard Osborn. London: Longmans, 1852.
320p; illus; map
BL: 10460.c.8

A summer search for Sir John Franklin; with a peep into the Polar Basin / E. A. Inglefield; with short notices, by Professor Dickie, on the botany, and by Dr. Sutherland, on the meteorology and geology; and a new chart of the Arctic Sea. London: Thomas Harrison, 1853.
232p; illus; map
BL: 10460.e.9
The narrative of a Franklin search in 1852 in the Isabel. One of the rarest Franklin search books and an important work in Arctic literature generally.

Chart shewing the Northwest Passage discovered by Capt. Robert le M. M'Clure. Also the coast explored in search of Sir John Franklin, by Sir John Ross, 1848-49; Sir John Richardson, 1848-49; Capt. M'Clure, 1850; Capt. Austin, 1850; Mr. Penny, 1850; Mr. Rae, 1851; Mr. Kennedy & M. Bellot, 1852; Capt. Inglefield, 1852-53; Capt. Sir E. Belcher, 1852-53 / E. A. Inglefield. London, 1853.
BL: Maps.982 (51) [Map Library]
Another 1853 edition is at BL: Maps.982 (52) [Map Library]
Chart shewing the recent search for a Northwest Passage, also the coast explored in search of Sir John Franklin between the years 1848 and 1854 / John Disturnell. [New York], 1854.
BL: Maps.982 (54) [Map Library]

The last of the Arctic voyages: being a narrative of the expedition in H.M.S. Assistance under the command of Captain Sir Edward Belcher in search of Sir John Franklin during the years 1852-53-54. With notes on the natural history by Sir John Richardson, Professor Owen, Thomas Bell, J. W. Slater, and Lovell Reeve. 2v. London: Lovell Reeve, 1855.
383p, 419p; illus; maps
BL: 2370.g.2

A series of fourteen sketches, made during the voyage up Wellington Channel in search of Sir John Franklin, KCH, and the missing crews of H. M. discovery ships Erebus and Terror: together with a short account of each drawing / Walter W. May. London: Day, 1855.
6p; 13 leaves of plates
BL: 1781.a.23
May was a lieutenant on Edward Belcher's Assistance, 1852-54. Another copy (John Barrow's copy presented to the British Museum on his death) is at BL: 1781.a.6

Rear-Admiral Sir John Franklin: a narrative of the circumstances and causes which led to the failure of the searching expeditions sent by government and others for the rescue of Sir John Franklin / John Ross. London: Longmans, 1855.
118p; illus
BL: 10460.c.14

The eventful voyage of H. M. Discovery Ship "Resolute" to the Arctic Regions in search of Sir John Franklin. ... To which is added an account of her being fallen in with by an American whaler after her abandonment ... and of her presentation to Queen Victoria by the Government of the United States / George F. McDougall. London: Longmans, 1857.
530p; illus; map
BL: 10460.e.19
McDougall was master of the Resolute under Henry Kellett, 1852-54

463p; maps; bibliography; index
BL: 10460.d.4
A second edition (1860), "with a sequel, including the voyage of the 'Fox' [under Captain McClintock]" is at BL: 10460.d.5

Journal of H.M.S. Enterprise, on the expedition in search of Sir John Franklin's ships by Behring Strait, 1850-55 / Captain Richard Collinson, with a memoir of his other services; edited by his brother, Major-General T. B. Collinson. London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1889.
531p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: 10460.e.28
The search for Franklin / Leslie H. Neatby. London: Barker, 1970. 270p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
X.809/7995

The fate of Franklin / Roderic Owen. London: Hutchinson, 1978. 471p; illus; maps; index
BL: X.800/26783

Frozen in time: the fate of the Franklin expedition / Owen Beattie and John Geiger. London: Bloomsbury, 1987. 180p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: YC.1988.b.8160

(McGill-Queen's native and northern series; 5) BL: YA.1993.b.5853

William Penny (1809-1892)

An Arctic voyage to Baffin's Bay and Lancaster Sound, in search of friends with Sir John Franklin / Robert Anstruther Goodsir. London: John Van Voorst, 1850. 152p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.c.4
Goodsir was the brother of Harry Goodsir on Franklin's missing Erebus. He joined captain William Penny's whaler Advice in 1849 in an attempt to search for Franklin's ships. In 1847 in the whaler St Andrew Penny had been the first to attempt to make contact with the missing Franklin expedition. One of the classic rarities in the Franklin search literature.

Journal of a voyage in Baffin's Bay and Barrow Straits in the years 1850-51 performed by H. M. Ships "Lady Franklin" and "Sophia" under the command of Mr William Penny, in search of the missing crews of HM ships Erebus and Terror / Peter C. Sutherland. 2v. London: Longmans, 1852. 506p, 363p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.c.11
Another copy is at BL: ORW.1986.a.3070

Robert McClure (1807-1873)

Letters and other items relating to McClure are in the Barrow Bequest
BL: Add 35308, Add 35309 [Manuscripts]

Chart shewing the North West Passage discovered by HM Ship Investigator, also the coast explored in search of Sir John Franklin / E. A. Inglefield; drawn by W. H. Fawckner, 2nd Master. [London]: Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, 1853.
BL: Maps.C.18.b.11 [Map Library]
A series of eight sketches in colour, together with a chart of the route ... of the voyage of H.M.S. Investigator ... during the discovery of the North-West Passage / Samuel Gurney Cresswell. London: Day, 1854.
BL: Tab.819.c.1

Sketch of the life of Jan August Miertsching, interpreter of the Esquimaux language to the Arctic Expedition on board H.M.S. "Investigator" Captain McClure, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853 / Daniel Benham. London: Mallalieu, 1854.
34p; illus
BL: 4889.dd.3
The author's copy bound up in an album with a collection of newspaper cuttings, MSS., engravings and other matter

463p; illus; map
BL: 10460.e.11

A personal narrative of the discovery of the North-West Passage: with numerous incidents of travel and adventure... in the Arctic regions while in search of the expedition under Sir John Franklin / Alexander Armstrong. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1857.
616p; illus; map
BL: 10460.d.3
Armstrong was surgeon on the Investigator

254p; illus; maps; bibliography
BL: X.809/4522
Miertsching was McClure's interpreter on the Investigator

John Rae (1813-1893)

Narrative of the expedition to the shores of the Arctic Sea in 1846 and 1847 / John Rae. London: Boone, 1850.
284p; maps
BL: 2370.c.4

The melancholy fate of Sir John Franklin and his party, as disclosed in Dr. Rae's Report (to the Secretary of the Admiralty); together with the despatches and letters of Captain M'Clure, etc. / John Rae. London: Betts, 1854.
56p; map
BL: 10460.e.17

Discoveries of the Hon. Hudsons Bay Co.'s Arctic Expedition to the north of Repulse Bay; conducted by John Rae, 1846 & 1847. Also his late journey from Repulse Bay, crossing by Franklin Isthmus to Rae Strait, 1853-4, shewing in connection, the
BL: Maps.982 (53) [Map Library]

Francis Leopold McClintock (1819-1907)

Letters from McClintock are included in the Barrow Bequest
BL: Add 35309 [Manuscripts]

Sketch of the recent discoveries on the Northern Coast of America by Captain McClintock in search of Sir John Franklin. London: J. Wyld, [1859].
BL: Maps.982 (57) [Map Library]

The voyage of the "Fox" in the Arctic Seas: a narrative of the discovery of the fate of Sir John Franklin and his companions / Francis Leopold McClintock ; with a preface by Sir Roderick Murchison. London: John Murray, 1859. 403p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.d.2
A revised and enlarged 1869 edition is at BL: 10460.cc.7, an 1881 edition with a chapter on the searching expeditions of Hall and Schwatka is at BL: 2370.e.9, and a 1908 edition is at BL: 10460.bb.32

Elisha Kent Kane (1820-1857)

The U. S. Grinnell Expedition in search of Sir John Franklin: a personal narrative / Elisha Kent Kane. London: Sampson, Low, 1854. 532p; illus
BL: 2370.f.7
Kane's account of the first Grinnell Expedition 1850-51 under Edwin Jesse De Haven. Kane was senior medical officer on this expedition

Arctic explorations: the second Grinnell Expedition in search of Sir John Franklin, 1853, '54, '55 / Elisha Kent Kane; illustrated by ... engravings, from sketches by the author. 2v. Philadelphia: Childs & Peterson, 1856. 464p, 467p; illus; map
BL: 2370.e.8

Charles Francis Hall (1821-1871)

Life with the Esquimaux: the narrative of Captain Charles Francis Hall from the 29th May, 1860, to the 13th Sept., 1862. With ... the discovery of actual relics of Martin Frobisher ... and deductions in favour of yet discovering some of the survivors of Sir John Franklin's Expedition. 2v. London: Sampson, Low and Marston, 1864. 324p, 352p; illus
BL: 10460.e.24
An 1865 New York edition entitled Arctic researches and life among the Esquimaux is at BL: 10460.v.1

Frederick Schwatka (1849-1892)
316p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.v.2
A London edition (Sampson, Low, 1882) is at BL: 10460.c.1

127p; illus; map
BL: 10460.aa.13

Allen William Young (1827-1915)

The land of the white bear: being a short account of the "Pandora's" voyage during the summer of 1875 / F. G. Innis-Lillingston. Portsmouth: Griffin, 1876.
151p; illus; map
BL: 10460.b.4

Under the northern lights: the cruise of the "Pandora" / J. A. MacGahan; with illustrations by G. R. De Wilde. London: Sampson Low, 1876.
339p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.d.21

The two voyages of the "Pandora" in 1875 and 1876 / Allen William Young. London: Stanford, 1879.
197p; illus; maps
BL: 10460.s.1

Roald Amundsen (1872-1928)

"The North West Passage": being the record of a voyage of exploration of the ship "Gjøa" 1903-1907 / Roald Amundsen; with a supplement by First Lieutenant Hansen. 2v. London: Archibald Constable, 1908.
355p, 397p; illus; maps
BL: 2352.f.4

Miscellaneous general works

Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America and the ilands adjacent unto the same, made first of all by our Englishmen and afterwards by the Frenchmen and Britons: with two mappes annexed hereunto / R. H., i.e. Richard Hakluyt. 2pt. London: (T. Dawson) for T. Woodcocke, 1582.
Between the title and sig A there are five leaves containing "The names of certaine late travaylers", "A very late and great probabilite of a passage by the Northwest part of America", and "An epistle dedicatorie ... to Master Phillip Sydney Esquire".
BL: C.21.b.35.
Another copy is at BL: G.6532
The great probability of a North West Passage: deduced from observations on the letter of Admiral de Fonte ... proving the authenticity of the Admiral's letter / [T. S. Drage/Charles Swaine?]. With three explanatory maps, by Thomas Jefferys; with an appendix, containing the account of a discovery of part of the coast and inland country of Labrador made in 1753. London: Thomas Jefferys, 1768.
153p; maps
BL: 569.f.10 - a manuscript note on the flyleaf of this copy reads "Presented by the author, Mr Dragge"
Another copy is at BL: 213.a.2. Variously attributed to Theodorus Swaine Drage and Charles Swaine. Swaine led the American Northwest Passage expedition in the Argo in 1753. Bartholomew de Fonte [Fuentes]'s letter, originally published in Monthly miscellany, or memoirs for the curious in 1708 (BL: PP.5420), is a fictional account of the discovery of the Northwest Passage in 1640. James Petiver, editor of the Monthly miscellany, is now believed to be the author of the letter. Other copies of the letter are at BL: 454.b.25 and BL: 790.g.11 (3)

A concise account of voyages for the discovery of a North West Passage, undertaken for finding a new way to the East Indies with reflections on the practicability of gaining such a passage. To which is prefixed, a summary account of the rise and progress of navigation / by a Sea Officer [i.e. Richard Pickersgill]. London: J. Bew, 1782.
69p
BL: B.645. (2)

Historical view of the progress of discovery on the more northern coasts of America, from the earliest period to the present time / Patrick Fraser Tytler. With descriptive sketches of the natural history of the North American regions, by James Wilson ... To which is added an appendix, containing remarks on a late memoir of Sebastian Cabot, with a vindication of Richard Hakluyt. Edinburgh, 1832.
444p; illus; map
(Edinburgh cabinet library; 9)
BL: 12203.t.1/9
A second edition (London, 1833) is at BL: 12203.t.1/39 and another edition (New York, 1846) is at BL: 12205.b.52

Narratives of voyages towards the North West, in search of a passage to Cathay and India, 1496 to 1631, with selections from the early records of the East India Company, and from MSS in the British Museum / Thomas Rundall. London: Hakluyt Society, 1849.
260p; maps
BL: Ac.6172/5

Arctic explorations and discoveries during the nineteenth century, being detailed accounts of the several expeditions to the North Seas ... conducted by Ross, Parry,
Back, Franklin, M'Clure and others. Including the first Grinnell expedition under Lieutenant De Haven, and the ... effort of Dr. Elisha Kent Kane in search of Sir John Franklin / edited and completed by S. M. Schmucker. New York and Auburn, 1857. 517p; illus
Imperfect; wanting pp. 497-508.
BL: 10460.a.37

The Arctic regions, and polar discoveries during the nineteenth century: with the discoveries made by Captain McClintock as to the fate of the Franklin expedition / P. L. Simmonds. London: Routledge, 1860. 294p; map
BL: 10460.a.15
Another edition (London, 1875) "with an account of the new British exploring expedition fitted out in 1875" is at BL: 10460.aa.1

Arctic expeditions from British and foreign shores from the earliest to the Expedition of 1875 / D. Murray Smith. 3v. Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack, 1875-77. Illus; maps
BL: 10460.g.1

The search for the Northwest Passage / Nellis Crouse. New York: Columbia University Press, 1934. 533p; illus; map
BL: 010460.eee.26

Northwest by sea / Ernest S. Dodge. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961. 348p; map; bibliography; index
BL: 10153.gg.46

(Imperial studies series; 24)
BL: Ac.2270/9

The North-West Passage / George Malcolm Thomson. London: Secker and Warburg, 1975. 288p; illus; map; bibliography; index
BL: X.800/10524

The Arctic grail: the quest for the North West Passage and the North Pole, 1818-1909 / Pierre Berton
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988. 672p; illus; bibliography
BL: YH.1989.b.534
Another edition (Viking, 1988) is at BL: YC.1990.b.1242

The Northwest Passage: the quest for an Arctic route to the East / text by Edward Struzik; photography by Mike Beedell. London: Blandford, 1991. 152p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: LB.31.c.3664
BL: YA.1993.b.1241
Includes as an appendix a chronological listing of journeys to Arctic America.

Barrow's boys / Fergus Fleming. London: Granta, 1998. 489p; illus; maps; bibliography; index
BL: YC.1999.b.6151
Accounts of expeditions sent by Sir John Barrow between 1816-1850

The search for the North West Passage / Ann Savours. London: Chatham, 1999. 342p; illus; maps
BL: YC.2000.a.2361

Voyages of delusion: the Northwest Passage in the Age of Reason / Glyn Williams. London: HarperCollins, 2002. 467p; illus; bibliography; maps
BL: YC.2002.a.7400