

TEMPLER & PARLBY
(and others)

SUMMARY OF ADMIRALTY BASED REFERENCES

ADM 354/150/140

May 12 1755

John Cleveland. Receipt of letter from **Mr Templar**, under contract for repairing the stern of the double dock at **Deptford** Yard. He informs that 32 vessels are at Portland laden with stone for the work but needs hands to navigate them. Asks for 8 or 10 men from the Ordinary at Portsmouth to bring the vessels from Portland to Deptford to be victualled and paid by himself. (PROCAT)

ADM 354/150/141

May 12 1755

Copy letter from **James Templar** to the Board. Is contracted to repair the stern of the double dock at Deptford but cannot proceed without the Portland stone now laden on 3 vessels at Weymouth. Asks for men from the Ordinary to navigate them to Deptford. (PROCAT)

ADM 140/201

1756

Jetty head at **Plymouth**. Built by **M. Templar**. (PROCAT)

ADM 354/153/103

July 2 1756

Copy letter from Commissioner Cooper at Chatham to the Board. All the shipwrights listed amongst the absent men in your letter have attended their call particularly Richard Fryer, Thomas Skey, John Crook and John Harris but the two last men were mentioned by mistake are only servants and do not have servants themselves. John Crook is apprentice to John North, Carpenter of the Royal Sovereign and John Harris to **John Parlby**, Carpenter of the Strafford. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1120/50

17 Sept. 1758

Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Receipt of warrants to supply **James Templar** with fir timber for the work on the Royal Hospital. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1120/67

15 October 1758

Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Receipt of letters and warrants to survey the Royal Hospital Works and to reprimand **Mr Templar's** foreman for bad behaviour. (PROCAT)

ADM/174/16,2/4/14761; 5/4/1762

1762

"At Plymouth in 1762 James Templer, contracting to build a jetty-head, described himself as a House Carpenter of Rotherhithe, but he was evidently a builder of some substance for he had a small fleet of his own vessels for carrying Portland Stone....." (The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36)

POR/A/22,2/4/1764

1763

*".... A year later he joined forces with 'George Collard of Crutched Friars, London, House Carpenter, to build No 11 Storehouse at **Portsmouth**....." (The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36)*

ADM/106/1129/122

17 April 1763

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Receipts of warrants to build the fronts of the piers of the new slips and parts of the sides with Portland block and give **Mr Templar** certificates to entitle him to bills for the same as the contract directs..... The Officers have requested an extension to the length of the temporary storehouse; has agreed with **James Palby** on behalf of **James Templar** for building it. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1129/132

26 April 1763

Digon Tonkin for Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth. Receipt of letter. Encloses a copy contract (not now attached) with **Thomas Parlby** for building an extension to the Temporary Storehouse. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1129/138

3 May 1763

Digon Tonkin for Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth. Receipt of letter ... to make out a bill to **Thomas Parlby** for the addition to the temporary shed. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1129/165

31 May 1763

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth. Receipt of letter and warrants to inform on whether **Mr. Templar** was supplied with stores to help with the contract for the New Dock. (PROCAT)

ADM 106/1129/180

17 June 1763

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth. Receipt of letter and warrants to employ **Mr. Templar** on the Wharf to be built on the south side of Froward Point on terms of his existing contract. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1126/132

12 July 1763

Plymouth Officers; Receipt of copy contract with **James Templar** to build new storehouses; are concerned that cement ordered for the foundations will not be sufficient to keep out water. Propose that the walls are set in terras. (PROCAT)

ADM/1061128/287

27 Dec. 1763

Today the son of William Couch the signalman on Maker Tower informed me that his father was found murdered and robbed in the Bellfry at Maker. Suspects one of **Mr. Templar**, the contractor's men has been involved and has issued hue and cry for him. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1135/25

10 Feb. 1764

Plymouth Officers; **Mr Templar and Mr Palby**, his leading man, propose to raise the area wall with brick instead of stone for the reasons given. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1136/111

15 March 1764

James Templar, Navy Office; Has ordered a cargo of tarras from Holland for slips, graving place and storehouses at Plymouth but the vessel has not arrived. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1136/113

22 March 1764

James Templar & George Collard: Stone lime is preferable to chalk and the works at Portsmouth usually use marble lime; propose to use lime chalk as there is no other to be had except what is made in the Kings Yard; has a contract for the new storehouses at Plymouth and observes that there where moor stone is introduced for ornament it does not enhance the building. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1134/4

4 April 1764

Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; Receipt of letters and warrants.... To survey the works of the new Storehouse and see that **Templar and Collard** perform them according to contract. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1134/6

6 April 1764

Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth. Receipt of letter and warrants to act as foremen to **Mr. Collard** in building the New Storehouse. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1134/12

13 April 1764

Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; Receipt of warrants.... to supply **Collard and Templar** with lime and to keep the kiln fully employed. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1137/123

4 June 1764

Woolwich Officers; Proposal and estimate to raise the fore part of the No. 3 Slip to allow the launch of ships on all tides and to employ **Mr Collard** to lay the groundways and planking the No. 1 Slip. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1137/127

8 June 1764

Woolwich Officers; Mr. Harris, the Master Shipwright received an anonymous letter, yesterday reporting that some of **Mr. Collard's** men took iron from the yard. They were searched but nothing was found and will make further searches. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1137/133

12 June 1764

Woolwich Officers; Mr. Collard needs to have his materials drawn to the pits to be sawn and delivered to the sides of the works. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1137/152

18 June 1764

James Butler Morn, Clerk of the Cheque, Woolwich. Account of expenses and request for an imprest to pay for beer for the smiths, rent due to Mr. Bowater for supplying the yard with water and to **Mr. Collard** for chalk rubbish used to fill in the slips No.1 and 3 and for board wages to the workmen. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1137/249

7 Nov 1764

James Butler Morn, Clerk of the Cheque, Woolwich; Account of expenses and request for an imprest to pay **George Collard** for chalk rubbish and discharge any future contingent expenses. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1142/10

20 Jan. 1765

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Receipts of letters to advertise for a new contract for pavours work and to contract with **Mr Templer** for making the drains and reservoirs..... (PROCAT)

POR/A/22,17/4/1765

1765

"... This liaison [with George Collard] was apparently short-lived for in 1765 'Mr Templer' obtained the contract for the South Basin there[Portsmouth]....." (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36*)

POR/A/23,25/3/1767

1765

"...In that year [1765] he linked up with Mr Parlby and together they built No 5 Dock at Portsmouth. The Firm of Templer and Parlby then seems to have gone from strength to strength, monopolising work at both Portsmouth and Plymouth. ... " (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36*)

ADM/140/555 pts 2 & 5

1765

"By the early 1760s the Portsmouth Dry and Wet Dock complex was proving inadequate for the Navy's needs and there was a requirement for more, larger docks and for better methods of emptying them... A 1764 Plan, which formed the basis of the work, envisaged the addition of four slips and one dock and the enlargement of existing docks. Its most revolutionary proposal, and one which is in use to this day, concerned the North Basin. To overcome the deficiencies of the dock pumps, it was proposed to deepen this, fit it with pumps and turn it into a giant sump or reservoir. With the exception of the double dock, all the other dry docks were connected to this by culverts, enabling their water to drain by gravity into the reservoir, whence it could be pumped out at leisure." (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.101*)

POR/A22. (A copy of the contract dated 17.4.1765 is also in POR/A22)

1765

In March 1765 the Navy Board let a contract with Mr Templer for the repair and deepening of the South of Great Basin. The work involved altering the entrance lock and lowering the sill." (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.101*)

ADM/106/1140/77

17 March 1765

Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; **Mr Templer** to lay and work the stone to repair the Great Basin. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1142/52

24 March. 1765

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Receipts of Warrants... to see **Mr Templer** complies with his contract to make drains and a reservoir.... (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1140/118

20 April 1765

Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; Receipt of warrant to inspect, survey and measure the works to agree with the plans and contract made by **James Templer** for repairing and deepening the Great Basin. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1142/70

30 April 1765

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Receipts of Warrants... Today the Firm was paid and has made enquiry about a contractor for Portland Stone but found none. Asks if he should tender with Mr. Tucker at Weymouth who supplies **Mr. Templer** the contractor. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1142/98

18 June 1765

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth; has spoken to **Mr Palby** and the Officers about the quantity of fresh sand required. Thomas Grindle and Richard Williams, labourers, are suspected of embezzlement. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1148/167

27 May 1766

Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth Yard. Receipt of letter and a copy contract with Messrs. **Templar and Palby** for making a grand drain, building hemp laying, spinning, yarn and tarring houses in the Yard. (PROCAT)

- ADM/106/1148/171 6 June 1766
Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth: Warrants... To send an account of the timber supplied to **Mr Templer** for building Stonehouse Hospital. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1144/32 24 June 1766
Mr. Benjamin, Deal. Request for a laundry room to be built on to his house, the need for one was demonstrated to **Mr. Collard** the surveyor. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1150/255 11 July 1766
Woolwich Officers. James Abercrombe, Master, to go to Harwich to complete the wharf, consigned to Mr. **Collard**. They have not been returned and **Mr. Collard** says that the Foreman of the House Carpenters of Deptford put them on the Hoy that brought Mr. Barnard's timber here. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1147/84 11 Nov. 1766
Plymouth Officers; Account of works performed at the Yard by contract with Messrs **Templar and Parlby**. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1160/308 23 Jan. 1767
James Templer; Request to be paid for the marble coins outside the buildings, as well as inside. (*PROCAT*)
- POR/A/23 (now No 5 Dock) 1767
“...the 1767 estimates allowed £24,000 for ‘repairing, deepening and enlarging the [South or Great] Basin dock for receiving large ships of war...’ (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.101*)
- POR/A/23,6/3/1767 (a copy of the contract dated 25.3.1767 is also in POR/A23. This is now No 4 dock. See also ADM/140/560) 1767
“... the same year [1767] in conformity with the 1764 plan, a contract was let with Messrs Templer & Parlby for a completely new dry dock ‘in the said bason to the southwards of the bason dock’. The annual estimate allowed £9,900 towards this job. The new dock was to be known for a short time as the South Basin Dock, while the original dock, then being enlarged, was renamed the North Basin Dock. Both were of similar dimensions.” (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.101, 102*)
- ADM/106/1155/66 8 March 1767
Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; Warrants.... To prepare for Messrs **Templar and Parlby** to repair, enlarge and deepen the Basin Dock and build a new dock. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1155/77 18 March 1767
Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; Warrants.... To employ Mr **Templar** to carry on the stonework on the north side of the basin... (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1160/322 11 April 1767
James Templer; Request for the loan of some stone masons to speed up the building of the new docks at Portsmouth and rope houses at Plymouth.. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1155/103 15 April 1767
Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth; Warrants.... To lend Mr **Templar** some stone masons from the yard. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1159/137 17 April 1767
Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth; Receipt of letter and warrants to lend **Mr Templar** some stone masons. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1158/85 26 May 1767
Plymouth Officers. Account of materials and workmanship to repair a punt belonging to **James Templar and Thomas Parlby**, the contractors. (*PROCAT*)
- ADM/106/1158/217 22 July 1767

James Templar; have estimated the expense of coals and labour to burn the lime kiln for the Portsmouth works. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1155/204 26 July 1767
Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth. Receipt of letters to expect limestone from Plymouth on the Lion Transport which has arrived and to order the purveyor to survey John Withers' timber at Romsey for Plymouth. Receipt of warrants to receive elm and beech timber from George Hounsom and to give an opinion on an abatement for lime from **Mr Templer**. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1158/216 2 August 1767
Portsmouth Officers; Opinions on **Mr Templer**'s proposal for burning lime and the amount of abatement. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1158/218 4 August 1767
Portsmouth Officers; List of works by Messrs Templer and Collard on the new storehouse, surplus to contract and their cost. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1155/221 12 August 1767
Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth. Receipt of warrants to make out a bill to Messrs **Templer and Collard** for works on the new storehouse. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1155/251 13 Sept. 1767
Commissioner Richard Hughes, Portsmouth. Receipt of warrants to receive timber from Thomas Monday, to allow the people the Extra for carrying on the works of the drain at the North Dock, to receive limestone from Plymouth and issue it to **Mr Templer** and allow his use of the limekiln for burning it. Explain the methods used. (PROCAT)

ADM/106/1159/224 15 Sept. 1767
Commissioner Frederick Rogers, Plymouth. Receipt of letter and warrants to allow **Mr Templar** to remove the limestone from the quarry in the Yard and load it on the naval transports bound eastward for Portsmouth. (PROCAT)

POR/A/24/1771 (Estimates) 1771
"The first mention of work on the conversion of the old North basin into the proposed reservoir occurs in 1771 when £3,000 was allowed for building the wall on the south side. In the same year £20,000 was set aside for completing the South Basin Dock...." (The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.103).

POR/A/26/ 27 Oct – 18 Nov..1774 (Repair of the Basin) 1774
Navy Board to Yard Officers:

- 27 Oct. We conferred with Messrs James Templar, Thomas & Wil. Parlby about your proposal of 5 October. They agree. Therefore proceed, take down that part of the wharf, send us a correct drawing and in your daily progress state how many courses of masonry have been taken down.
- 18 Nov Mr Smeaton is to accompany Mr Henslowe, the Surveyor's assistant, to view the damage to the north side of the basin.

ADM/B/189,29/9//1774 1774

Ibid., 24/1/1775 1775

Ibid., 25/11/1774

"... Over the next couple of years progress was maintained on the various works, with brief references in the annual estimates, but in September 1774 part of the wall 'on the north side of the basin' settled and began to admit water.... As the basin was deemed complete in January 1775, this must have been the South basin, now No 1 basin. As at Plymouth in similar circumstances, John Smeaton 'who is esteemed the most eminent for knowledge of works of that kind' was called in to prepare a report. In it, Smeaton blamed sand under the foundations and recommended extensive piling followed by rubble and clay, before any more foundations were put in. His remedy seems to have been adopted and it must be assumed, if the progress of the late 1760s was maintained, the first phase of the docks and basins was completed in about 1776. For the next nine years the contractors were busy on other works, notably the South camber and a new Nortyh Basin for small craft..." (The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.103).

POR/D/19-20 18 July – 4 August 1775 (1778 Portsmouth Minor Works) 1775

Navy Board to Yard Officers:

- 4 Aug. We enclose copies of contracts with Messrs Templer and Parlby to build and complete the southernmost slip on the new ground and to make new bottoms and sides of the old North Dock. See that the works are well made, and that every article of the said work be carried on according to the true sense and meaning of the contract and Plans as you will be answerable not only for your own failure herein but theirs also.

POR/D/19-20 1 Sept – 10 October 1775 (1778 Portsmouth Minor Works) 1775

Yard Officers to Navy Board:

- 10 Oct. We have consulted with Mr Templer on the piling and shores at the foot of the north wall of the reservoir. We wish to take in hand the dam on the channel leading to the boathouse. (Navy Board subsequently approves 17 October)

POR/A/27,28/2/1777 1777

“...A Portsmouth Contract of 1777 refers to James Templer of Acton, Thomas Parlby of Plymouth Dock and William Templer of Gosport, builders..” (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36*)

POR/A27-28, 28 Feb – 2 June 1777 (1778 Portsmouth Minor Works) 1777

Navy Board to Yard Officers:

- 28 Feb. We enclose a contract with James Templer of Acton (Mdx) and Thos Parlby of Plymouth for erecting the middle storehouse fronting the Camber on the east side thereof, with a clock cupola.

POR/A28, 20 March – 30 June 1778 (1778 Portsmouth Minor Works) 1778

Navy Board to Yard Officers:

- 20 March We enclose a contract with Templer & Parlby for building a rigging house and a storehouse for fitted rigging.

DEATH OF JAMES TEMPLER I 1782

ADM/PB/6,14/6/1786 1786

“... The Plymouth Officers refer to contracts with ‘Messrs Templer and Parlby’ and ‘Parlby and Templer’...” (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36*)

ADM/BP/13,12/4/1793 1793

POR/A37,5/2/1794 1794

POR/A38,4/2/1795

POR/A37,8/2/1794

POR/A38,2/4/1795 1795

“...In April 1793 a report drawn up by Samuel Wyatt, Colonel Mulcaster and Captain Twiss advised converting the double dock into a very large single one. This was approved by the navy Board in February 1794, but a year later it let a contract with ‘Thomas and John Parlby and Co’ for building a new double dock. The 1795 estimates allowed £24,000 for the start of this work. At the same time money was set aside for a short-lived scheme to build a dry dock next to the building slips in the north part of the yard...”

POR/A/38,4/2/1795 1795

“... By 1795, however, the firm is referred to as ‘Thomas and John Parlby and Company’ and vanishes from the records when the expansion schemes were completed.” (*The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; Jonathan Coad, pp.36*)

TEMPLER & PARLBY
(and others)

SUMMARY OF ADMIRALTY BASED REFERENCES

James Templer (1722-1782) and Thomas Parlby (c.1730 – 1802) were men of humble origin who, together, were to become the most significant dockland contractors in Georgian England in the second half of the 18th Century and the early years of the 19th Century. Without their contribution, the Navy Board's expansion of the Royal Dockyards during successive maritime campaigns would have been frustrated and Britain's supremacy at sea, arguably, could have been hindered.

Boat builders need wharfs, slipways, wet docks, dry docks and supporting facilities. Seamen and their vessels require victualling. On land Georgian dockyards comprised storehouses, roperies, sail lofts, rigging stores, hemp laying, spinning, yarn and tarring houses and so on. Officers' needed housing, Marines their barracks. Naval Hospitals and Victualling Yards, too, were vital support buildings. All these, and more, were constructed by Templer and Parlby for the Navy Board in the Royal Dockyards along the south coast of England over a 50 year period. James Templer was the driving force in the business, Thomas Parlby 'his leading man'.

To understand their contribution to the of Templer and Parlby it is necessary to understand the process of evolution which took place in the Royal Dockyards from the run-up to the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763) to the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1815). As naval warfare became more sophisticated, the need for more and larger vessels brought about a need for dockyard expansion. This expansion could not be brought about by the internal labour force of the dockyards themselves. Some projects were therefore awarded to external contractors.

Templer, a house carpenter, and Parlby, a mason, emerged from the ranks of dockyard workers to answer the call. Together they created a large and effective firm of dockland contractors, capable of working in any of the Royal Dockyards of the day, drawing labour from far afield. Their business interests were passed down to later generations of both families and seem to vanish only after the dockyard expansion years faded in 1815 with the bringing of peace. Even then, the Templer family interests in granite and clay workings extended in one form or another until the 1840s.

The family history of the Templers and Parllys are as interesting as their commercial activities, which brought them wealth. James Templer, born in Exeter, married Mary Parlby at Greenwich in 1747 and settled in Rotherhithe, where most of his 11 children were born. By 1755 he was 'under contract for repairing the stern of the double dock at Deptford Yard', transporting Portland stone in vessels from Weymouth. It is not clear when James went into partnership with his brother-in-law Thomas Parlby. The first mention in Admiralty records appears in 1763. In any event their partnership brought wealth to both families, more so to that of James Templer.

The personal and commercial voyages of both the Templer and the Parlby families are being researched from their humble origins in the 1720s to the mid 1850, by when both families were well established in society and their roots in dockyard contracting more or less forgotten.

The following sheets detail Admiralty and other records, including those previously researched and referenced by Jonathan Coad in one or another of his publications on such matters:

1. Historic Architecture of HM Naval Base, Portsmouth 1700-1850; by Jonathan Coad; The Mariner's Mirror, Vol 67, No 1. Feb 1981.
2. Historic Architecture of Chatham Dockyard 1700 – 1850; by Jonathan Coad; The Mariner's Mirror, Vol 68, No 2. May 1982.
3. Historic Architecture of HM Naval base, Devonport 1689-1850; by Jonathan Coad; The Mariner's Mirror, Vol 69, No 4. Nov 1983
4. Historic Architecture of the Royal Navy, An Introduction; by Jonathan Coad; 1983 ISBN 0575 03277 4
5. The Royal Dockyards 1690-1850; by Jonathan Coad, Scholar Press 1989 ISBN 0 85967 803 2: