



Title	Journal of James Lawson, Royal Navy
Date	1869 - 1878
Primary Maker	James Lawson

Ink on paper, leather

Overall: 210 x 160 x 18 mm, 0.34 kg

Journal

This handwritten journal of 143 pages is contained within a hardcover book with marbled paper front and back and a leather spine. It was written by James Lawson and records details of life from the five ships in which he served: HMS COSSACK (1869-1873), HMS VOLAGE (1874-1875), HMS PYGMY (1875-1876), HMS MARTIN (1876-1878) and HMS EURYALUS (1878); and also the two shore establishments HMS EXCELLENT (1873) and Sheerness Barracks (1878). In succinct terms and a neat hand, Lawson records the daily routine aboard a Royal Navy ship including cleaning the ship, washing clothes, make and mend days, coaling duties in port, caulking, painting and holystoning, Divisions and Church services every Sunday, incoming and outgoing mail drops in port and with other ships, general quarter drills and exercises, scraping guns, target and under steam practice, visitors, and gun salutes. Out of the ordinary events are also mentioned such as the following, W.13th. Court Martial on the gunner for drunkenness, dismissed the service. T. 14th. Came aboard. Fleeted to privilege leave 2 days pay working watch F. 15th. Do. Do. S. 16th. Corporal discharged for thieving, and got another gunner Mr Wallace. F. 19th. Sighted a raft at daylight & picked it up 2 chests found on it and provisions but no lives 10th Our Paymaster Mr. Metford drownd[sic] the same night in trying to swim off to the ship. S. 5th. Tom Peters crewman died. Buried him same evening. F. 15th. Good Friday. Mr Hood midshipman jumpd[sic] overboard that night. drunk. tried by court martial. dismissed the ship S. 31st. under steam and sail. French mail boat passed us bound for Mauritius. Made signal that France and Prussia had declared war. S. 25th. Christmas Day, not up to much. got drunk that night. 3. P.M. Matuka Bay fine looking people the natives T. 9th. at anchor natives traded with yams and pigs for brass buttons and coppers. 9 of the natives brought from Sydney jumped overboard in the middle watch and swam ashore they belonged to Solomon Island. Upside down at the

back of the book Lawson has written the words to a number of sailor songs and poems: Affection, The Sailors Farewell, The Queens Letter, Song of the Haymakers, The Soldiers Dream, The Flying Dutchman, The Village Born Beauty, Homeward Bound, A Gift from o'er the Sea, Will Watch, The Sea Boys Farewell, A Baby was Sleeping, The Picture on the Wall, Ring the Bell Watchman, The Stolen Child, The Sailor Boys Dream, Take Me Home, Rolling Home across the Sea.