



ARNOLD & SON

SINCE 1764

## Instrument Collection

### Sir John Franklin Set

**A gripping tale and the mystery of the Arnold marine chronometer:  
Arnold & Son unveils the Sir John Franklin Set of three fabulous  
timepieces**

The three watches in the John Franklin Set are the latest additions to the Instrument Collection and take as their subject three famous paintings from London's National Maritime Museum. The timepieces, which feature a true-beat seconds and off-centre hour and minute hands, each depict an episode in the life of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, vessels that eventually perished in the course of Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition to discover the North-West Passage in the mid-19th century.



#### Sir John Franklin Set

Arnold & Son manufacture movement A&S6103, self-winding,  
hand-finished miniature, mother-of-pearl dial, 18-carat rose gold case, diameter 44 mm

© Arnold & Son

To the British government, the North-West Passage had long been an obsession. It represented a shorter route to the Indies that would eliminate the need for rounding Cape Horn and avoid meetings with the hostile fleets of other European nations. And although its mythical status as a faster route to the East had evaporated by the mid-19th century, it was still one of the last uncharted coastlines of the world. In 1845, Sir John Franklin set out on his third expedition to the area in HMS Erebus, accompanied by HMS Terror. After being sighted by whalers in mid-summer, the two ships disappeared. Over forty expeditions set out to locate and rescue them but found only remnants of the expedition.



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The mother-of-pearl dials of the three models in the Sir John Franklin Set each feature an exquisite, hand-finished miniature reproduction of an original oil painting owned by the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London. The first, “Friendly Encounter”, shows HMS Erebus and HMS Terror in New Zealand in about 1840, when the crew had a series of peaceful meetings with the local Maori population. In the second, “Antarctic Adventure”, we see the two vessels navigating storm-tossed seas in the inhospitable environment at the southern tip of the world. The third, “North-West Passage”, depicts HMS Erebus surrounded by icebergs but still in open water. We know now that both ships were subsequently trapped by the ice and abandoned by their crews, who perished. A later expedition established that Sir John Franklin died on 11 June 1847.

For his third and final expedition to the waters north of Canada, Sir John Franklin had with him a marine chronometer made by John Roger Arnold in around 1815 with an eight-day movement, Arnold spring detent escapement and balance. “This,” as Philippe Boven of Arnold & Son, points out, “turned out to be one the most intriguing elements in the entire narrative.” As later became clear, it was one of several items recovered during searches for the Franklin expedition but was not handed over to the authorities. Only more than a century later did it reappear on the market, when it was purchased by the Friends of the National Maritime Museum.



**Arnold marine chronometer  
from Franklin’s North-West  
passage expedition**

John Roger Arnold, marine  
chronometer, 8-day movement,  
spring-detent escapement and  
later balance, London, 1815

© National Maritime Museum,  
Greenwich, UK

It was immediately clear that Arnold’s marine chronometer had been modified while missing and converted into a travelling timepiece. It was still mounted in the original bowl, to which a handle and four feet had been added. The engraved, silver-plated brass dial showed signs of alteration to the signature around the name ‘Arnold’.

The three references in the Sir John Franklin Set are fitted with the A&S6103 automatic movement developed, designed and manufactured in-house at the Arnold & Son workshops in La Chaux-de-Fonds. The A&S6103 movement is rhodium treated with classic *Haute Horlogerie* finishing that includes hand-chamfered bridges and polished edges, fine circular-graining and *Côtes de Genève rayonnantes*, a brushed and skeletonised rotor and blued screws. It is housed in an 18-carat rose gold case measuring 44 millimetres in diameter.

The magnificent Sir John Franklin Set of three timepieces is destined to become a much sought-after collector’s item and is a limited edition of 28 sets.



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## Main technical characteristics:

Calibre:	A&S6103
	Arnold & Son manufacture movement, self-winding, ceramic ball bearing, 30 jewels, diameter 30.4 mm, thickness 7.79 mm, power reserve 50 h, 28'800 vibrations/h, stop seconds
Functions:	hours, minutes, true beat seconds
Movement decoration:	rhodium treated with <i>Haute Horlogerie</i> finishing: hand-chamfered bridges with polished edges, fine circular graining and <i>Côtes de Genève rayonnantes</i> , brushed and skeletonised oscillating weight, blued screws with bevelled and mirror-polished heads
Dial:	hand-finished miniature, mother-of-pearl
Case:	18-carat rose gold, diameter 44 mm, cambered sapphire with anti-reflective coating on both sides, see-through sapphire case back, water-resistant to 30 m
Strap:	hand-stitched brown alligator leather
Limited edition:	28 sets of 3 timepieces

## References:

1ARAP.M08A.C120P

### **Sir John Franklin Set – Friendly Encounter**

1ARAP.M07A.C120P

### **Sir John Franklin Set – Antarctic Adventure**

1ARAP.M06A.C120P

### **Sir John Franklin Set – North-West Passage**

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For more information, please don't hesitate to contact us:

ARNOLD & SON SA

Marketing & Sales

Boulevard des Eplatures 38

CH – 2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds

Switzerland

[info@arnoldandson.com](mailto:info@arnoldandson.com)

[www.arnoldandson.com](http://www.arnoldandson.com)