

~ Johan Uhr – Mystery Mariner ~

Johan's origin is anything but clear. There are a few theories, including about 158 trees on Ancestry, (not to mention other sites), with 'said' Johan Frederik af Uhr in them – born on 30 Mar 1769, Kungsgarden, Gavelborg, Sweden – death 28 May 1843, Kungsgarden, Gavelborg, Sweden, yet...without proof! Show me the proof!

So, let's first start with the facts we do know.

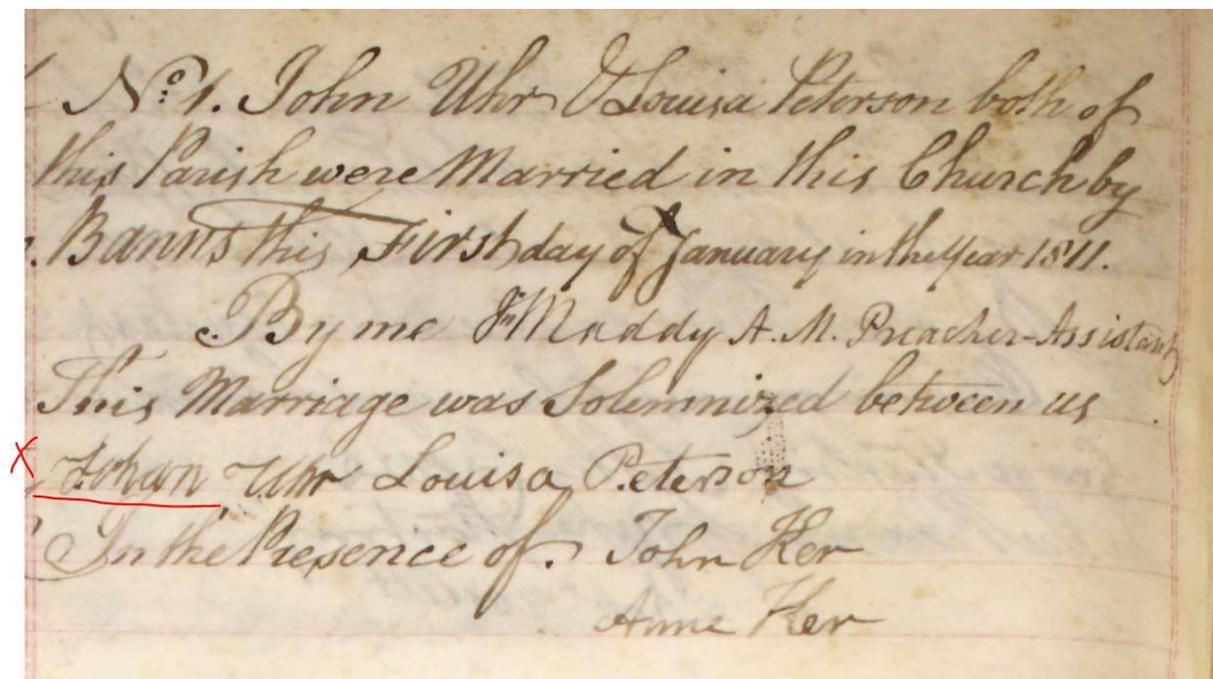
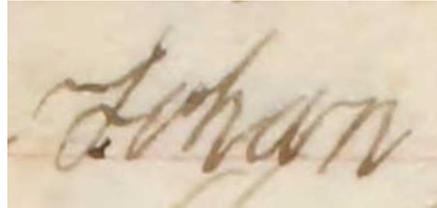
John & Louisa's marriage record

– 1 Jan 1811, St James, Westminster, London. Written by the priest as John Uhr & Louisa Peterson.

Signed by himself, the groom as **Johan**.

Signed by Louisa as Louisa Peterson

Witnesses – John Ker & Anne Ker



I think it's a fair assumption that the witnesses were Louisa's parents John Ker and Anne Phillips. But who was Louisa's real mother? (See article [Meet Louisa](#)).

Johan anglicises his name to John and we find him again on the baptisms of his 5 sons, here's a quick summary –

1. John James Uhr

Birth – 12 Sep 1811

Baptism – 27 Oct 1811 – St George in the East, London

Parents – Louisa & John Uhr (Occupation – Mariner)

Marriage – N/A

Arrival in Australia – Sydney – 17 Dec 1825 – *Sir George Osborne*

[Not *Sir Godfrey Webster*]

Death – 25 Dec 1845, Wivenhoe Station, QLD

2. Edmund Blucher Uhr

Birth – Unknown

Baptism – 18 May 1814, St George in the East, London

Parents – Louisa & John Uhr (Occupation – Mariner)

Arrival in Australia – 1827 - *Saracen*

Marriage – 6 Feb 1840 – Amy Kemp (Widow – Young), St James Church, Sydney, NSW

No mention of parents on marriage certs

Death – 13 July 1874, Brisbane, QLD

Parents - John [Frederick](#) Uhr – Mariner, & Louisa [Agatha](#) Ker

Informant – wife – Amy

3. Joseph Walter Uhr

Birth – 26 Apr 1817

Baptism – 1 Apr 1818, St Paul's, Shadwell, Tower Hamlets, London

Parents – Louisa & John Uhr (Occupation – Mariner)

Marriage – ?

Death – ?

4. William Cornelius Uhr (Born Cornelius William)

Birth – 17 May 1819

Baptism – 9 Sep 1821, St George in the East, London

Parents – John & Louisa (Occupation – Mariner)

Arrival – Possibly indentured apprentice – *Lord Goderich* – 1835

[Probably not 1833 – *Westmoreland* – Which states Mr J Uhr - clerk]

Marriage – 1 Mar 1860, Parramatta, NSW, Augusta Louisa Campbell (Widow - Kinghorne)

Parents – Louisa & John Uhr (Occupation – Mariner)

Death – 6 Mar 1896, Burwood, Sydney, NSW

Parents – John Uhr ([Naval Captain](#)) & [Anne](#) Ker

States birth as [Bremen, Germany](#)

Informant – Son – Arthur Ernest Ulrich Uhr

5. George Richard Uhr

Birth – 6 Jun 1822,

Baptism – 26 Dec 1824, St George in the East, London

Parents – Louisa & John Uhr (Occupation – Mariner)

Arrival – 1837 – *Abel Gower*

Marriage –

- i. 13 Jun 1843, Pyrmont, Sydney, NSW – Sarah Jane McRoberts
No parents listed

- ii. 19 Jan 1849, St Andrews Church, Sydney, NSW – Elizabeth Davies

No Parents listed (George, Widow 1848)

Death – 10 Sep 1864, Sydney, NSW

Parents – John [Cornelius](#) Uhr – [Gentleman](#), & [Mary](#) Louisa [Agatha](#) Kerr

Informant – Thomas Brag (the neighbour)

Three of the Death Certificates probably contain misinformation (Death Certificates are the most notoriously [unreliable](#) documents because they are filed by bereaved kin and sometimes not even family).

Every other document has him as John Uhr - period. Not John Frederik, not John Cornelius...just John. Every other document has Louisa, not Mary, not Agatha (See articles – [Meet Louisa](#) & [Farewell Louisa](#)).

If you're planning on researching this puzzle, I can supply most originals upon request. For more information on the boys – see the article - [Louisa Ker's 8 Children](#).

We also can't be sure he was present for his son's baptisms. The time between a birth and a baptism of their children was up to 2 years. We would like to think this was some indication of the flexibility available for John to be in attendance, but we can't actually prove that.

We believe he was in London around Sep/Oct 1821 for the conception of George, but nothing concrete after that.

Rent books for Cannon St Road – (Aka as Cannon St)

Rent books for Cannon St. under Peter Peterson: 1 x 1810; 1 x 1811; 2 x 1812

Rent books for Cannon St. under John Uhr:

2 x 1813; 2 x 1814; 1 x 1815; 2 x 1816; 1 x 1817; 1 x 1818; 2 x 1819; 2 x 1820; 1 x 1821; 2 x 1822; 2x 1823; 2 x 1824; 2 x 1825; 1 x 1826; 1 x 1827; 2 x 1828; 1 x 1829; 1 x 1830; 1 x 1831; 1 x 1832

No records for the years 1833-1836.

Then another record for 1837 in the name of John Uhr.

We can presume the records for rent stayed in the same name, just as they did after Peter Peterson had passed.

[Every 6 months, the books would be rewritten with all those names – a recipe for transcription error! Anyway...this is where it gets weird]

Cannon St records for

John Uhr in 1842,

John Urhn in 1843

John Usher in 1844,

Danl [Daniel?] Usher 1846 & 1847

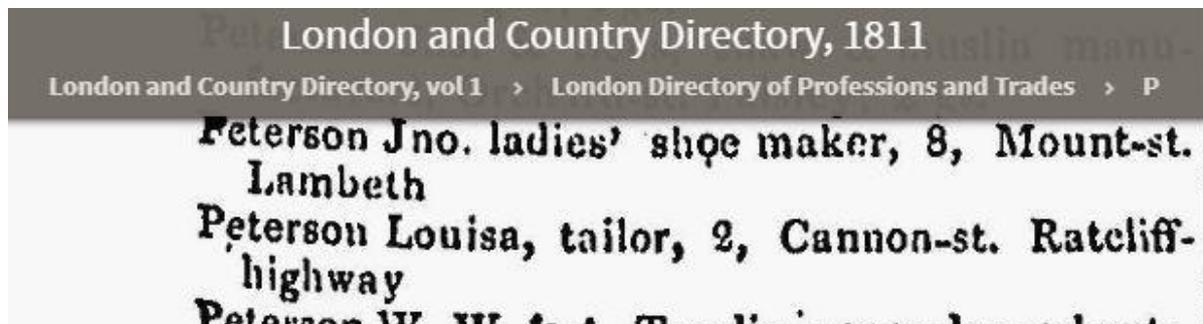
All in exactly the same placement to the neighbours as in the other books. John Kent; Othwaite; Crofft etc.

(We believe Louisa was there until her death in 1837.)

Insurance policies –

Either for Louisa's business or household contents –

(We know Louisa was a tailor just before marrying John) –



John Uhr Insurance – 29 Sep 1819 (For Louisa's straw hat making business)

Catalogue description

Insured: John Uhr 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe straw hat maker

Reference: MS 11936/481/958677

Description: Insured: John Uhr 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe straw hat maker

Date: 29 September 1819

Held by: London Metropolitan Archives: City of London, not available at The National Archives

Language: English

Have you found an error with this catalogue description? [Let us know](#)

This record is held by London Metropolitan Archives: City of London

[See contact details](#)

Help with your research
How to use this catalogue

John Uhr Insurance – 1820 & 1825

Insurance

In 1820 John Uhr of 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe, straw hat maker insured his household goods in his now dwelling house (no bleaching done therein) for seventy-five pounds. Wearing apparel twenty-five pounds
In 1825 John Uhr 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe, feather manufacturer, insured his household goods, wearing apparel, printed books, in his now dwelling house for two hundred pounds

From - Guildhall Library, Records of Sun Fire

John Uhr Insurance – 16 Feb 1825

As above and next page –

Insured: John Uhr 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe feather manufacturer

This record is held by London Metropolitan Archives: City of London

[See contact details](#)

Reference:MS 11936/501/1028349Description:

Insured: John Uhr 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe feather manufacturer

Date:16 February 1825Held by:London Metropolitan Archives: City of London, not available at The National ArchivesLanguage:English

Context of this record

74 - London Metropolitan Archives: City of London

↳ SUN - Records of Sun Fire Office

↳ MS 11936/501 - Policy register

↳ MS 11936/501/1028349 - Insured: John Uhr 1 Cannon Street Ratcliffe feather manufacturer

[It would be good to find any others between these dates]

Louisa Uhr Insurance – 24 Oct 1832 (as a Widow)

Catalogue description

Insured: Louisa Uhr, 10 Gloucester Terrace, Cannon Street Road, widow

Reference: MS 11936/537/1145526

Description: Insured: Louisa Uhr, 10 Gloucester Terrace, Cannon Street Road, widow

Date: 24 October 1832

Held by: London Metropolitan Archives: City of London, not available at The National Archives

Language: English

Have you found an error with this catalogue description? [Let us know](#)

This record is held by London Metropolitan Archives: City of London

[See contact details](#)

[Help with your research](#)

[How to use this catalogue](#)

Louisa Uhr Insurance – 1833 (as a Widow)

In 1833 Louisa, a widow of 10 Gloucester Terrace Cannon Street Road insured her household goods, wedding apparel, printed books, musical instruments, china and glass for the total sum of 100 pounds.

From -Guildhall Library, Records of Sun Fire

As Louisa took over her insurance as a widow in 1832, we can presume John had died, (or at least disappeared for many years and was declared dead), before then.

He may have died earlier than the 1825 insurance, like the rent books - Louisa may have left the insurance in his name for some time.

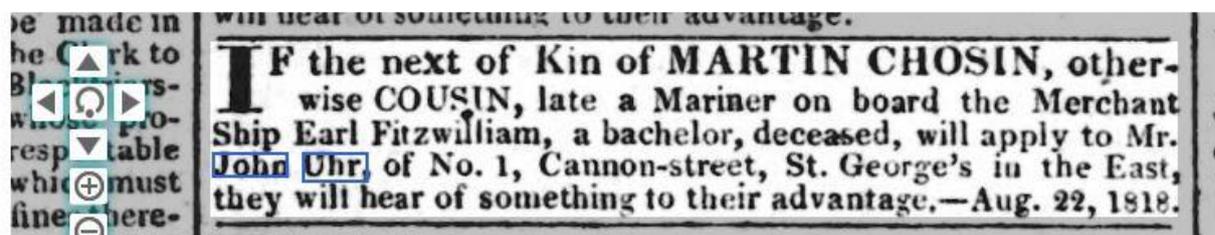
Newspaper clips –

23 Sep 1818 – Ad in Morning Advertiser by John Uhr – Searching for next of kin for Martin Chosin (or Cousin) late mariner of merchant ship Earl Fitzwilliam.

Morning Advertiser - Wednesday 23 September 1818

Page 1 of 4

Image © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

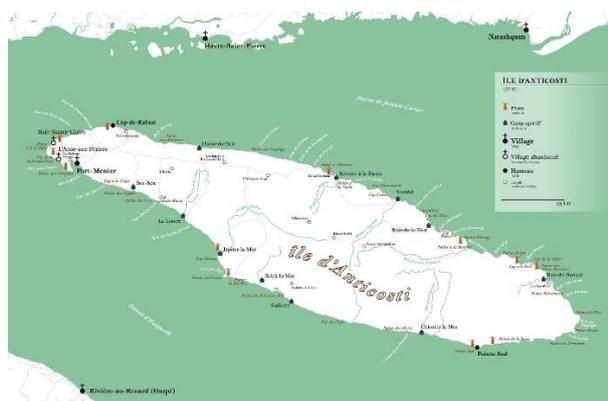


This advertisement and the marriage in 1811, are the only times we know John was in London.

Research into the ship Earl Fitzwilliam (in case John was also a mariner of this vessel) produced a report that it had struck ground on 26 May 1822. Three leagues westward of the SW point of the island of Anticosti, notorious for ship wrecks in its cold waters off Canada.



Some of the many ship wrecks around Anticosti Island.



Date	Vessel	Master	Sailed	From	Passengers	Consigned to/Remarks
June 13	brig John and Mary	Grant	31 May	Dublin	145 settlers	
3,552 settlers arrived this season						
<p><i>Wrecks:</i>—The brig Hesale, Haigh, from Hull to Pictou, was lost on the 6th May, on Cape Frill, near where the Harpooner was wrecked some years ago. She was in ballast. Crew saved. The Earl Fitzwilliam, H.J. Jackson, master, which sailed from Hull on the 6th April, was wrecked on the island of Anticosti on 25th May last, crew and passengers all saved. We are happy to hear that Mr. P. Doucet of this city, and his crew, with the exception of one man, are safe. His schooner was wrecked last fall, on the west end of the Magdalen Islands.—<i>Mercury</i></p> <p>The weather on Saturday last, was extremely warm; the Mercury was at 95. This great heat was followed by some heavy rain and a copious discharge of lightning, which cooled the Atmosphere, and it has since continued temperate.</p>						
Saturday June 22nd 1822						
June 17	brig Nemesis	J. Smith	15 April	London		to G. Pozer / salt and fruit
June 17	brig Alexander	Sewell	07 May	Liverpool		to —? / in ballast
June 18	brig Camden	Haddock	28 April	Newcastle		to R. Hamilton, Brothers & Co. / coals
June 18	brig Prince of Asturias	Dunoon	02 May	Dublin		to W. Pentland / in ballast, and goods
June 18	brig Blenheim	--	20 April	Newcastle		to R. Hamilton, Brothers & Co.
<p>Another schooner from Anticosti has brought up all the settlers from the Earl Fitzwilliam, 6th April from Hull. The ship was wrecked three leagues to the westward of the SW point of the Island on the 25th May —All saved, but the vessel it is feared will be a total wreck.</p> <p>The brig Thompsons Packet, is on shore near the SW point of Anticosti, with 40 passengers, very leaky, and no hopes of getting off—in want of assistance. Spoke on the 9th May, by Capt. Thompson, Brig Thompson.—the Cadmus, of New York, Lat. 45. 18. N. Long. 38. 46. W. out 9 days—all well. [<i>Montreal Herald</i>, June 22, 1822.]</p> <p>The state of Ireland, from famine, seems dreadful; it has been urged that government ought not to encourage emigration by affording aid to emigrants. Like commerce, it should not be provoked by bounties, but left to the natural principle of self interest. We can not admit the truth of this doctrine without some limitation. A certain line of commerce we admit becomes fit to be pursued when the individual is able to pursue it, and sees his interest in the pursuit: but in certain cases emigration may become necessary to the state exactly in proportion as the individual is unable to accomplish it; and the individual is often unable to accomplish it exactly in proportion as it is his interest to do so: for example, if a redundant population be one cause and a principal one of the disorders in Ireland, it would be a great benefit to the state to discharge that surplus; but it is essential to the nature of a redundant population that it is and ever will be unable to discharge itself. Besides, it would be better in every way to expend money in sending out and settling on unoccupied land, a great redundant population, than to expend nearly as much in maintaining a military force, and supporting extraordinary judicial proceedings, to reduce the number by the sword or the gibbet.</p>						
Wednesday June 26th 1822						
June 19	brig Love	Richard Wills	25 April	St. Ubes		to W. Budden / salt
Number of vessels this season, 263 Number of settlers is 3,727 (with the exception of those from the Earl Fitzwilliam , the number of which is not yet ascertained)						
<p>Captain Jackson and crew of the Earl Fitzwilliam, are arrived, with the remainder of the materials of that ship—ship is a total wreck.</p> <p>[extract]</p>						

It states all were saved, but feared the ship will be a total wreck, which became fact.

Was the statement relayed correctly? Was John on this ship and suffered injuries later resulting in his demise? Who was Martin to John?

Australian Marriages in newspapers –

Four marriage notifications dated 60-100 years later make claim to John being a captain in the Royal Navy. A professional researcher was contracted to locate John Uhr in the UK Navy – Nil result. This is more likely just a sign of the times to make one's family sound respectable...as Louisa was also said to be from the Duke of Roxburghe in these clippings as well.

Smith & Uhr – Captain John Uhr, 14 Mar 1887, NSW

Uhr & Troy – Captain John Uhr RN – 19 Feb 1902, NSW

Uhr & Burton-Bradley – Captain John Uhr Royal Navy – 15 Dec 1909, NSW

Trail & Lloyd – John Uhr RN – 27 Apr 1921, NSW

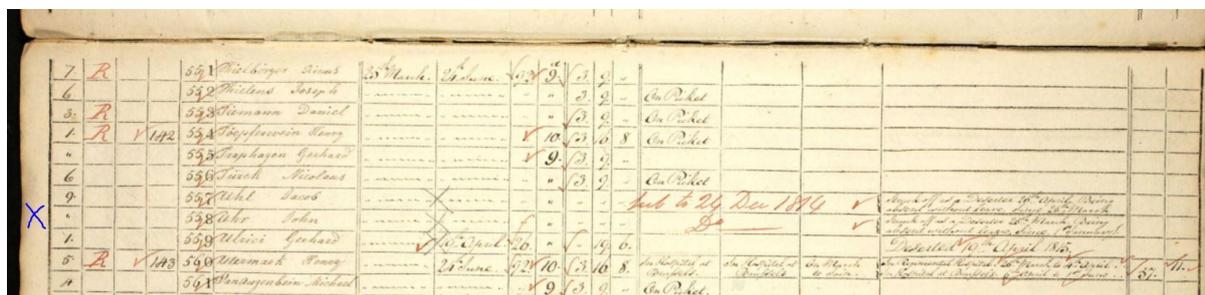
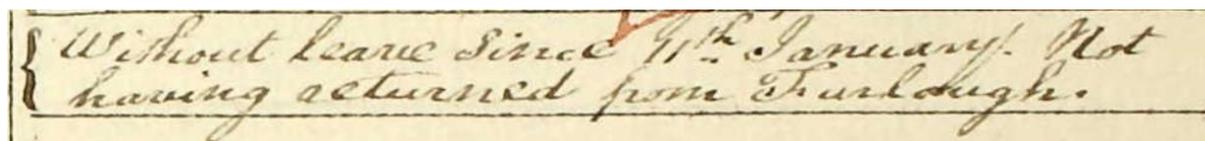
Some other findings -

A John Uhr was listed in the King's German Legion (KGL), 1st Hussars, in 1814/5 documents. The KGL was an English army, with many, but not all, expats from Germany. That John Uhr was marked as deserted, as were many others. Due to the huge losses sustained in the fields during the Napoleonic war, many no longer wanted to continue the fight. Make of this what you will...

Name	Rank	Date	Notes
Richard Willson	Sergeant	June 1 st	
John	Sergeant	May 4 th	
Christean	Sergeant	April 8 th	
Frederick	Sergeant	March 25 th	
Phillips	Sergeant	March 25 th	
John	Sergeant	May 15 th	
John	Sergeant	April 25 th	
John	Sergeant	March 25 th	

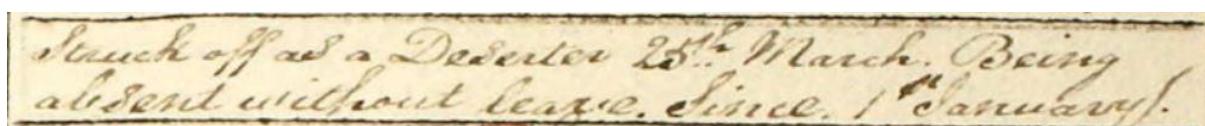
Summary: 1: 1: 4th April, 1: 12: 4 May

Says "Without Leave Since 11th January. Not having returned from Furlough."



No.	Rank	Name	Service	Start	End	Remarks
7	R	531	Pöhlings Simon	25 March	25 June	On Duty
6		532	Pöhlings Joseph			On Duty
3	R	533	Wiemann Daniel			On Duty
1	R	V 1472	534 Steffensson Bengt			On Duty
		535	Staphagen Gerhard			On Duty
6		536	Sjöström Nielsens			On Duty
9		537	Uhr David			On Duty
X		538	Uhr Johan			On Duty
1		539	Uhr Gerhard			On Duty
8	R	V 1473	540 Olsson Bengt			On Duty
4		541	Wanderforsen Anders			On Duty

Says – "Struck off as a Deserter 25th March, Being absent without leave Since 1st January." [1814]



Just something to consider.

So, let's go back to the af Uhrs in Kungsgården, Gavelborg, Sweden.

Apparently, there was a Johan Uhr born 30 March 1769 to David af Uhr and Justina Katarina Reftelius. Justina had peerage in her own right, and the title "af" was bestowed upon his father David when his request to be knighted for his work with iron mongering at Kungsgården was honoured.

It does say "During David's last years, his son Johan Fredrik took over responsibility for Kungsgården." David died in 1818.

There's a lot more to read at this website –

http://www.kungsgarden.info/manor_e.htm

Children born to David and Justina were –

Anna Katarina 1766, Hedvig Justina 1767, Johan Frederik 1769, Carl David 1770, Anders Reinhold 1772, Isak Vilhelm 1773, Elisabet Charlotta 1774, Maria Kristina 1777, and Gustaf 1780.

We know that Anders Reinhold(t) af Uhr moved to London, was naturalised in 1810 by parliament – as was the norm in those days, married Mary Ann Garbutt on 30 Dec 1810, went bankrupt in 1817, had 6 or 7 children and died in 1851. I have a 3-page chronology on him if anyone thinks it will help.

Carl David Uhr visits London as Charles David Uhr in 1826 on the ship Sir Edward Banks.

Carl David af UHR (1770–1849), ironmaster and the author of an important work on charcoal making.

Don't know whether this was for work, or maybe to visit Anders?

England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869
London, England > 1826 > July

No. 26		Port of London.		Certificate of Arrival.			
1. Date.	2. Ship's Name.	3. Alien's Name and Description.	4. From whence.	5. Whither going.	6. Profession, &c.	7. To whom known, and their Residence.	8. Remarks.
3 ^d July 1826	La Céd. Banks	Charles David Wibe Native of Sweden 5 Feet 9 Inch. Brown Hair. Fair Complexion. Blue Eyes. Yellow Nose. Yellow Eyebrows. Aged 56 Years.	Hamburg	London	Yent	Swedish Central	Left Mr. Hansson 1820
Signature of the Bearer.							

So now we have one son – Anders, who's happy to give up his title and homeland, manages to go bankrupt as a merchant, and another son, Carl, who has kept his title, continues to work in the iron trade, and his home country.

Makes sense that Johan could give all that up as well...except...apparently

1. he was looking after the family estate and business in Sweden
2. he married Edla Ulrika Hierta (1771-1818) on 7 Apr 1806 in Ovensjö, Gavelborg, Sweden and she was alive until 1818
3. he married Regina Maria Boman (1767-1836) on 28 May 1826 in Vasteras, Vastmanland, Sweden

Not impossible as a mariner from another country, but it would have made him a bigamist and a very busy man. He apparently had no children with either of these wives.

But...

1. He would have had his brother Anders also living in London
2. A family member went to Sweden about 10 years ago and spoke with the family, who adamantly say that Johan was a Lutheran living in Sweden, and not the same Johan we are looking for.

Yet...

I am still to see the documents relating to the Swedish Johan's birth, marriages or death.

Without any death documents to be found in England either, it's hard to make a case for or against. One thing's for sure though – We've seen no proof so far!

He could have come from Norway, Finland, Germany, or even have been a Polish Jew. DNA may be our only real hope.

Expressive poem on the next page –

The Mystery Mariner

*I have a brick wall in my tree
Made by a man who sailed the sea
He came from nowhere, had 5 boys
All raised amongst the London noise*

*Sent them to Australia fair
Vanished “blip” into thin air
Mystery for every viewer
Name it seems, was Johan Uhr*

*No DNA nor headstone found
Or else we’d dig him from the ground!
My grandfather three times, he be
For some, he’s in the wrong damn tree*

*The evidence is neatly stacked
A thorough check of every fact
Including those we must discount
I lie awake and I recount...*

*Widow passed, eighteen thirty-seven
Gone to meet him up in heaven?
Or did he lead a double life...
Gone back to live with his first wife?*

*Many questions are unanswered
Not a word in any Hansard
Hope all this work was not in vain
To ever find this man again*