



**Ship's bell harbours a mystery  
13 March 2007**

How did the bell from a British aircraft carrier on Lend Lease from the United States in World War 2 end up on a farm at Tumby Bay?

For years it hung on the door of Harry and Marj Penfold's home, then when the family farm Sea Acres was sold recently Harry's son, Geoff, brought the bell to Port Lincoln to donate to the museum being built up by Port Lincoln RSL members and Vietnam veterans.

The solid brass bell is inscribed with the initials "PYBUS".

Being of a curious nature, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold started searching the net, using Pybus as a clue.

She discovered that an auxiliary aircraft carrier began her career as the USS *Pybus* which was commissioned into the US Navy on 31 May 1943. She completed a single ferry voyage to Pearl Harbour, then was decommissioned on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1943 and transferred to the Royal Navy. The ship was recommissioned as the HMS *Emperor*. Her first commander was Captain Thomas John Norman Hilken RN from September 1943 to January 1945, then Captain Sir Charles E. Madden Bt RN from January 1945 to February 1946.

HMS *Emperor* saw active service in the Atlantic, Norway, Normandy and South France, the Aegean Sea, Malaya and Burma.

The actions included the strike against the German battleship *Tirpitz* in Kaa Fjord, Norway on April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1944, the reoccupation of Rangoon from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 6<sup>th</sup> 1945, and then locating the Japanese cruiser *Haguro*, one of the last major Japanese warships.

HMS *Emperor* was one of four aircraft carriers to enter Singapore harbour on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

On her return to the United Kingdom, the ship was decommissioned, returned to US Navy custody on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1946, and was struck from the US Naval Register on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1946. She was sold to the Patapsco Scrap Corp, Baltimore on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1946 for breaking as scrap.

In a further twist, Liz has been working with Mr Charlie Madden, Urrbrae, on wind power and desalination projects for small communities.

It turns out that Liz's Charlie Madden is a nephew to the late Captain Sir Charles Madden.

So how did the ship's bell end up at Tumby Bay?

Geoff's brother Chris (Puff) said he thought their father bought it at a clearing sale in Port Lincoln.

It would be appreciated if anyone who can supply information, however slight it may seem, will contact Port Lincoln RSL Club.

Memorabilia of all kinds can be donated or loaned to the Port Lincoln RSL to add to their collection. A sack truck made by Harry Penfold using tail wheels from a 'spitfire' fighter plane and several cordite boxes were also donated by the Penfold family.