

MARITIME TIMES

TASMANIA

No 82 – Autumn 2023

\$3.50



Ships' Bells

SV Natal Queen

MV Kermandie

SS Idomeneus

SS Rhexenor

SV Aldebaran

SS Zealandia

SS Boussole

RSV Nuyina

ML Egeria

and more

Museum News

President's message

Recent Acquisitions

TasPorts news

+ our regular features



Maritime Museum Tasmania

CARNEGIE BUILDING
Cnr Davey & Argyle Streets,
Hobart
Postal Address: GPO Box 1118
Hobart, Tasmania 7001

Phone: 03 6234 1427
email: office@maritimetas.org
www.maritimetas.org
Open Daily 9am–5pm
(closed Christmas Day)



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Maritime Museum Tasmania acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the waters and islands of Tasmania that inform our work. We acknowledge and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and those emerging.

Our Patron

The Maritime Museum Tasmania is pleased to acknowledge the support of its Patron: The Governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC.

Our Supporters

The Maritime Museum Tasmania gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Hobart, Murdoch Clarke lawyers, TasPorts, Arts Tasmania and Nanni Diesel Australia.

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Maritime Times Tasmania

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Front Cover: Bell salvaged from *Natal Queen* on display at the Maritime Museum
Photo: Barry Champion Story on page 11

Maritime Times Tasmania welcomes original historical or newsworthy articles for publication

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS, reflecting the Museum's mission to promote research into, and the interpretation of, Tasmania's maritime heritage, can be short notes or original articles with text about 700–1200 words, accompanied by images, if possible. TEXT will be edited to comply with the magazine's style and publication is at the discretion of the editor.

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Please email your contributions, with attachments, to admin@maritimetas.org or post to The Editor, 'Maritime Times Tasmania', Maritime Museum, GPO Box 1118, Hobart, TAS 7001. Alternatively, you can leave your contribution, with contact details, at the front desk of the Museum at the street address above. Please add to your calendar:

DEADLINE for the Winter issue is Wednesday 17 May 2023



from the president's log

by Chris Tassell

MARCH 2023

This year's Australian Wooden Boat Festival has been an outstanding success. The Maritime Museum contributed to the Festival in many ways perhaps most prominently with *Westward* participating in the Parade of Sail and the Boat Builders of Australia display. *Westward's* involvement was made possible through the support of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Nanni Diesel and the many volunteers who have worked to ensure *Westward* continues to be a living Tasmanian maritime icon.

The Festival, the first since 2019, again demonstrated the great community interest in Tasmania's maritime heritage—a heritage that is very much a part of the fabric of contemporary Tasmania. For this reason, the Museum welcomed the commitment by the Tasmanian Government to provide funding of \$1 million to the Steamship Cartela Trust. This is to be used for the installation of a ship lift in the Franklin Maritime Precinct to enable the continued restoration of this historic vessel.

Although this grant is most welcome it highlights the very ad-hoc and fragmented approach taken by government to the management of Tasmania's maritime heritage. Just as with our built heritage Tasmania is fortunate to have a rich maritime heritage, which includes vessels such as *May Queen*, built in 1867 and now one of the oldest sailing ships still afloat in the world. Despite the state and national significance of vessels such as *May Queen* there is no structured or strategic approach by government to ensure their continued survival. Indeed, ironically, State and Commonwealth Governments provide more support for shipwrecks than they do for ships still afloat.

At present the conservation of Tasmania's maritime heritage is largely dependent upon the commitment and enthusiasm of many volunteers whether working in maritime heritage centres and museums or on vessels of all descriptions about the state. While their

achievements are often exceptional there is much they cannot do simply for a want of support. The consequence is that vessels and other maritime heritage material thought safe can suddenly be at risk of being lost. Many will remember the loss of the ketch *Enterprise* because of the lack of any strategic approach to the management of the state's maritime heritage. While more recently the closure late last year of the volunteer-based medical museum, Collection of Medical Artefacts (COMA), serves to remind us that it is not just vessels whether afloat or on land that are at risk of being lost. Museums, heritage centres and specialist collections also face the risk of being lost.

Encouraging the State Government to develop such a considered strategic approach to supporting Tasmania's maritime heritage is in many ways the single largest challenge facing the Tasmanian maritime heritage sector.

Beyond the Wooden Boat Festival, the beginning of 2023 has been a particularly active one. The Museum's very successful exhibition 'Ice In the Rigging' which documents Tasmania's nearly two centuries of involvement with Antarctic exploration is now being presented at the Bass Strait Maritime Centre, Devonport (p. 4). Touring this exhibition forms part of our Tasmanian Maritime Heritage Network program supported by Arts Tasmania.

In the Carnegie building the Museum has been able to present a new program of short-term 12-week exhibitions in the main entrance, drawing on our rich photographic collections. The first exhibition looks at the changing face of regattas on the Derwent over the last century. This new initiative has been made possible by the Local Business for a Better Community Grant from the Hobart City Council.

I would encourage you to visit the Museum regularly as the pace of new exhibitions and new acquisitions being placed on display quickens noticeably. □

The MMT 'Ice in the Rigging' exhibition moves to Devonport



BASS STRAIT MARITIME CENTRE (BSMC) in Devonport is delighted to be the next Tasmanian venue for 'Ice in the Rigging' a touring exhibition from the Maritime Museum Tasmania.

The new Coordinator at BSMC, Joanna Gair, said. 'We've had a tremendous response from our tourism visitors and the local community, after opening a week ago. For us, it's the perfect combination of evocative theme and content, that makes this an ideal value-add for a broad range of visitor cohorts, and the enormous, illuminated model of MV *Nella Dan* is a big crowd pleaser.'

Bass Strait
Maritime
Centre
Devonport

Open 7 days



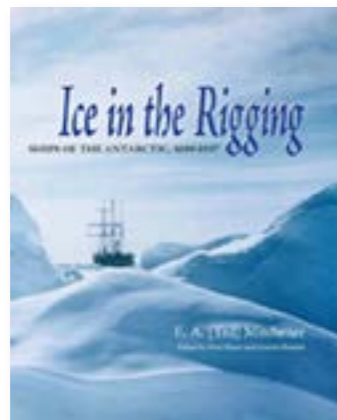
<https://www.bassstraitmaritimecentre.com.au/>

in our shop

ICE IN THE RIGGING
Ships of the Antarctic
1699–1937

by EA (Ted) Mitchener
(2015)

Hardcover: xxi, 353 pages



MMT welcomes new members

Ross James	Robbie Stevenson
Jeff Sanders	Chris Davies
Leonard Lambeth	Alison Peters
Angela Perkins	Simon Bagnall
Keith Tyson	John Wadsley
Attilio Pigneri	Sally O'May

See the benefits of membership and join at:

www.maritimetas.org/support-us/become-

notes from the curator

SO MANY THINGS HAVE HAPPENED since the Summer issue of *Maritime Times*! For me, it started with a great opportunity offered by the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM). In November 2022, I was lucky to participate in an Administrator's Course in Sydney as part of the Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme. It was a busy week; we got to hear from the museum staff through thematic sessions and were able to exchange ideas, discuss common challenges and future projects. We even sailed around Sydney Harbour. You can tell how excited I was in the photo (right).

In the words of Anna Gregory, Lifelong Learning Officer at the ANMM, 'the aim of this week-long training course is to share knowledge, develop museological skills, make connections and build a sense of community among the maritime museums of Australia'. If you are an employee or volunteer from a maritime heritage organisation, you can really benefit from the knowledge and connections that this course provides, and I would wholeheartedly recommend it. It is run annually and can be accessed through a grant application.

For more information: <https://www.sea.museum/about/grants-and-awards/funding-for-maritime-heritage/how-to-apply>

In January, we spent time in our Cambridge warehouse, installing new shelving and making changes to ensure our collection is stored in the best conditions. Storage and logistics are invisible sides of museum life but are among the most crucial and challenging!

I also spent a day at the Spring Bay Maritime & Discovery Centre with Sue Nettlefold, who runs it. We talked about Maritime Heritage in Tasmania and future projects. The maritime museum side of the Centre has been refreshed, and the displays are outstanding and really worth visiting if you find yourself in Triabunna.

February saw the much-anticipated return of the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, which certainly didn't disappoint. As part of this year's festival, some of our beautiful heritage dinghies and models made a rare outing and were displayed across several locations. A big thank-you and congratulations to the AWBF staff and volunteers, who made it possible. It was fantastic!



Sharon Babbage (ANMM) and Camille on board *Duyfken*. Sydney, Nov. 2022

Exhibitions

After a couple of months, our popular temporary exhibition 'Ice in the Rigging' has been dismantled and is now on display at the Bass Strait Maritime Centre in Devonport.

In March, you will be able to see 'Cats and Dogs', an exhibition by the ANMM of endearing photographs of animals on board ships.

After that, our next temporary exhibition will start in April, with works by fabulous artist Barbie Kjar, inspired by her recent residency on King Island.

I will finish by thanking all the amazing volunteers working at the Maritime Museum Tasmania. This season has been extremely busy in terms of events and visitation and, without all of you, it wouldn't have been possible.

—Camille Reynes

One of the Maritime Museum's displays of heritage dinghies at the AWBF February 2023



recent acquisitions

The Maritime Museum receives many noteworthy donations and for this issue of the *Maritime Times* two examples of interesting published works have been selected. The first is an illustrated 1904 atlas and the second is a hand-coloured engraving of whaling issued in 1825.

PHILIPS' MERCANTILE MARINE ATLAS OF THE WORLD

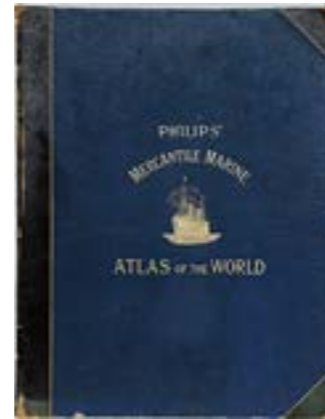
The Tasmanian Ports Corporation donated a large mercantile marine atlas measuring 410mm by 510mm published by George Philip & Son Ltd of the London Geographical Institute in 1904. It was intended to be, the publisher said, 'an invaluable work of Reference to Ship-owners, Ship Brokers, Exporters, Forwarding Agents, and all others who take an interest in the maintenance of our maritime supremacy.'

The best way to describe the atlas content is to quote from the preface:

'... every care has been taken to bring together a large body of Nautical Information not easily to be found elsewhere including copious Statistics on Merchant Shipping, Tables showing the comparative values of foreign currencies, and complete alphabetical Lists of British and American Consulates. In addition a valuable and exhaustive series of tables has been specially compiled, giving no less than 8600 through distances between ports for full-powered steam vessels. The Index contains all the Coast names, including Seaports, Bays, Capes, etc., given on the charts, with their latitude and longitude.'

The national and mercantile flags of the British Empire are illustrated in colour preceding the flags of all other nations. A colourful page illustrates the house flags and funnel colours of many shipping lines together with the international code signals. When viewing the atlas, it is remarkable to reflect on the revolution in national flags and the changed shipping lines since 1904.

Extensive charts of the ports and oceans are included. In addition, special depictions of the ocean currents, winds and sailing tracks of the world make the atlas an interesting resource for maritime historians.



above: cover and opening pages
Philip's Mercantile Marine Atlas
specially designed for Merchant Shippers, Exporters & Ocean Travellers

Flags National and Mercantile
Flags of the British Empire | Flags of all Nations

below: Australasian and Polynesian Ports
Photos: Barry Champion



SOUTH SEA WHALE FISHERY AN ENGRAVING AFTER A PAINTING BY W J HUGGINS

Museum benefactors Bob Warneke and Dale Chatwin combined to donate the engraving South Sea Whale Fishery. The aquatint is from a painting by W J Huggins engraved by Thomas Sutherland and published in London on 1 January 1825.

William John Huggins (1781–1845) was a prolific British marine painter. He served with the East India Company on board *Perseverance*, sailing to Bombay and China in December 1812. On his return, two years later, he established himself as a marine artist, exhibiting regularly at the Royal Academy and in 1836, he became Marine Painter to both George IV and William IV.

The title reveals that the engraving is 'a representation of the ships *Amelia Wilson*

& *Castor* off the Island of Bouro with their boats & crew in the various process of fishing shewing the manner the spermaceti whales are caught, also the mode of cutting them into the ship & boiling the oil upon deck.' Added inscriptions: 'The head of a large whale in the agonies of death. A boat destroyed by a wounded whale.' Huggins dedicates his image to the owners of the ships.

Despite not illustrating whaling in Tasmanian waters, this early tinted engraving is an authentic depiction of south sea whaling in the early nineteenth century. It is an important addition to the Maritime Museum's collection of historic images. □

—Colin Denny

BELLS HAVE BEEN A FUNCTIONAL FEATURE of vessels at sea for centuries. One of the earliest records is of the bell on the British ship *Grace Dieu* ca 1485.¹ Today seagoing vessels 12m or more in length, are required to carry a bell or approved sound equipment to signal their presence, particularly for use at times of low visibility.

Regulations

The requirements can be found in Rule 33 and Rule 35 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (ColRegs). Although seagoing vessels of 12m in length and above are required to comply with requirements for sound signals, these vessels do not need to be fitted with the traditional version of the required sounding equipment. Vessels can instead be fitted with an alternative method of creating the required sounds, as long as the alternative method can be sounded manually when required. Vessels less than 12m are required to be provided with some other means of making an efficient sound signal if they don't carry those required under Rule 33.²

Tasmanian shipbuilder, Incat, provides a traditional bell for its vessels as well as electronic sound signalling equipment, and a gong for vessels over 100m in length, though vessels less than 100m could also have a gong if the owner wanted it.³



Bell and gong.



Images supplied by Incat

Functions and Tradition

One function of the ship's bell is to indicate time. Prior to the introduction of the bell, time was measured by a sand-filled hourglass. When the sand had run out of the top compartment (half-hour), the hourglass was turned vertically, and the bell was struck. A 24-hour day was divided into six watches of four hours and the bell was heard every half hour of the watch. The dog watch could be divided into two two-hour watches to allow for meals. For a detailed account of the watches and timekeeping refer to the Just Bells website.⁴

Another function is to sound the alarm in case of fire on board, with an initial alert—five-seconds or more of rapid ringing—followed by a coded ringing to indicate where on the vessel the fire is located.⁵

Ships' Bells — an overview —

A naval tradition, of baptism under the ship's bell or of using the upturned bell as a baptismal font, originated in the Royal Navy and is maintained by several navies including the Royal Australian Navy, the US Navy, the Royal Canadian Navy, and others. The name of the child (or adult) baptised is often inscribed on the bell.⁶ The practice has also occurred in merchant ships (p. 23).

Bell Casting

The process of bellfounding has changed little since the 12th century. It is still very much a hands-on process. Bells are often cast in a bronze alloy of approximately 77% copper and 23% tin. This combination produces a tough, long-lasting material that resists rusting. Bell founders avoid mixing in more than 25% tin, which can make the bell brittle and susceptible to cracking.⁷

The bell for the Antarctic icebreaker RSV *Nuyina* (88% copper, 10% tin and 2% zinc) was manufactured by William Olds and Sons Engineering in Maryborough, Queensland in 2021. Illustrated descriptions of the process can be seen online.^{8,9}

In his book, *Bells in Australia*, John Keating writes of the Australian foundries that manufactured bells. Most references are to church bells, but these foundries would have been capable of making ships' bells, often as incidental orders.¹⁰

In 1835, W Harris of Macquarie Street, Hobart Town (Iron and Brass Foundry) advertised church bells and ships' bells for sale.¹¹ Later that year he advertised church, house and sheep bells for sale.¹² We can assume his foundry could manufacture any type of bell, including ships' bells and sheep bells.

Other Tasmanian examples include a set of eight church bells cast at Port Arthur in 1847.¹³ Also in 1847 the bell for St. Peter's on Bruny Island was cast in Hobart Town. A 450kg bell was cast for St George's church in Battery Point in 1853 by John Swain at the Barrack Street Foundry in Hobart, and a ¼ ton (254kg) bell was cast for *Star of the Sea* in 1926 by WH Knight and Peter Bros Pty in Launceston.¹⁴

In Museums and Churches

Ships' bells, if not salvaged from shipwrecks or

decommissioned vessels and placed in a museum, often found their way to church towers or clock towers, e.g. the bell from the steamer *Quetta*, wrecked in the Torres Strait in 1890, is used at the cathedral on Thursday Island.¹⁵ In Hadspen, Tasmania, a ship's bell engraved KAINS 1817 was hung in the porch of the Church of the Good Shepherd. *Kains*, a convict ship, trader and whaler (353 tons), was wrecked in the Tamar River in October 1831.¹⁶ The bell from the American whaler *South Carolina* was hung in St Aidan's church, Lindisfarne, from the 1930s before being donated to the Maritime Museum (p. 31).

The Maritime Museum Tasmania has documents relating to the German raider SMS *Emden* and the WWI conflict with HMAS *Sydney*. *Emden* was defeated and its bell was held at the Garden Island Naval Depot in Sydney until 1932 when it disappeared. It was found six months later and placed in a Sydney museum. It disappeared again and after an extensive investigation, a young German migrant was arrested for the theft. The bell was found buried in parklands in Melbourne! *Emden's* bell 'fractured as a result of its unorthodox land-lubbing adventures' (and battle-damage) is now held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.¹⁷

The Maritime Museum has a collection of ships' bells of various sizes; several are on display, and others are in storage. They all have background stories and a few of those stories are featured in this issue of *Maritime Times*. □

Maritime Times thanks the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), staff at Incat, Libraries Tasmania, Ian MacLeod, Richard Offen, Chris Pickford, and the Australian War Memorial for their input. Thanks also to all who contributed—with suggestions, information, fact-checking and proofreading—to this brief overview of Ships' Bells.



Endnotes

¹ The Ship's Bell (*Grace Dieu*). <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/customs-and-traditions0/the-ship-s-bell.html>

² Spokesperson for Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) (pers. comm. email 15 February 2023)

³ Incat (pers. comm. email 10 January 2023)

⁴ Just Bells <https://www.justbells.com.au/pages/ships-bell-history>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ <https://www.bells.org/blog/baptism-ships-bell-open-seas>

⁷ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/places/united-states-and-canada/us-political-geography/bell>

⁸ ANARE Club 'Bell Casting for RSV *Nuyina*. <https://www.anare-club.org/bell-casting-for-rsv-nuyina/>

⁹ Watts, J. 'Olds Engineering Casts Bell for *Nuyina*' <https://jocelynwatts.com/nuyina/>

¹⁰ Keating, JD (1979). *Bells in Australia*. Melbourne University Press, Carlton (Vic.)

¹¹ *Launceston Advertiser* 2 July 1835, p.3

¹² *Colonial Times* 20 October 1835, p. 3

¹³ Our Tasmania <https://www.ourtasmania.com.au/tas-history-church.html>

¹⁴ Pickford, C (2020). 'Australian Clocks and Bells Summary 2020.' Australian and NZ Association of Bell Ringers. <https://anzab.org.au/info/AustralianClocksAndBells.php> A comprehensive database.

¹⁵ Keating (1979) p. 122

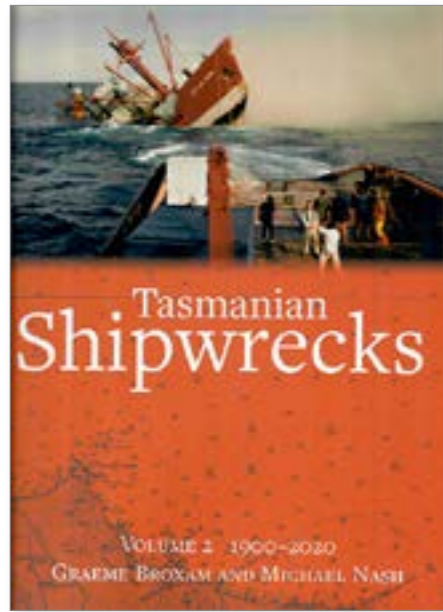
¹⁶ *The Tasmanian* 15 October 1831, p. 8

¹⁷ Keating, Ibid and the Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C158710?image=1>



Painting SMS *Emden*. Oil on canvas, initialled J.L. on reverse MMT Collection P_2019-327 left: The *Emden* bell Australian War Memorial RELAWM12275

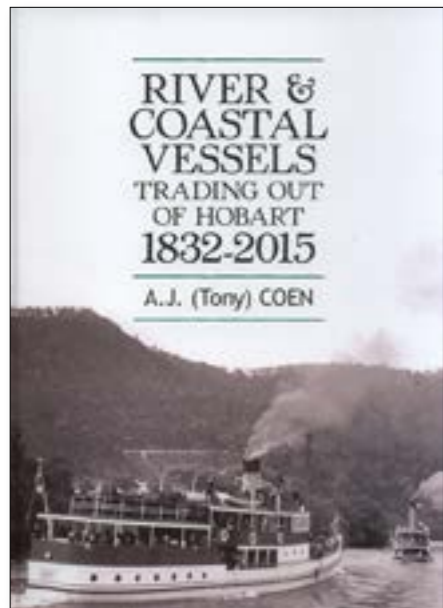
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TASMANIAN SHIPWRECKS
Vol. 2 1900–2020

by Graeme Broxam & Mike Nash

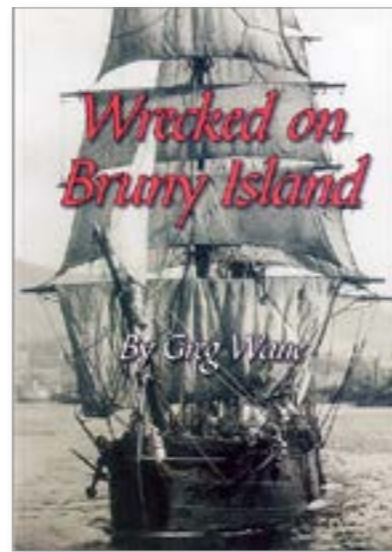
Hardcover (2021)
ix, 326 pages



RIVER & COASTAL VESSELS
Trading out of Hobart
1832–2015

by AJ (Tony) Coen

Hardcover(2017)
xii, 372 pages



WRECKED ON BRUNY ISLAND
by Greg Wane (2010)

During two weeks of fierce storms in 1909, three Tasmanian vessels were wrecked at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island. The barque *Natal Queen* (story facing page), the ketch *Priscilla* and the river steamer *Sea Bird*, which went to assist *Priscilla*, were lost. This book gives the background stories and explains the circumstances in which the three vessels were wrecked.



Priscilla MMT Collection P_OM_L_33a
Wrecked on Bruny Island with *Sea Bird*, which came to assist.

Sea Bird MMT Collection P-GSL_367_1_w
Read about the addition of the Hobart tramcar to its promenade deck in Tony Coen's book, p. 95 (left).



THE COVER PHOTO FOR THIS AUTUMN ISSUE of *Maritime Times* is of the brass bell from the barque *Natal Queen*, which was salvaged from the ship's wreck at Adventure Bay, Bruny Island, in 1909. On loan to the Maritime Museum, it was subsequently donated to the Museum in 2022 by Douglas and Daphne Gray and family, formerly of Bruny Island.¹ It is perhaps all that remains of a ship that might be forgotten, though the figurehead was claimed to be salvaged by a local man (F Wise), who later moved to South Australia.²

The bell's engraving ADAMSON & CO GRANGEMOUTH WOOD & IRON SHIP BUILDERS details the ship's origins identifying the home port from which *SV Natal Queen*, later registered in Melbourne, would sail the world. Built for JT Rennie by Adamson & Co. in Grangemouth—a busy port in the Forth Valley of Scotland—the wooden (oak and teak³) barque *Natal Queen* (1866/230grt) had a length of 34.5m, beam 7.1m and depth 3.8m.⁴ It made fast times to the Cape of Good Hope as a passenger ship and to China as a tea clipper. Later it worked in the Australian interstate and New Zealand trade, transporting timber and other produce.⁵ It also made a voyage from NZ to London.⁶ Registered in Hobart in 1873, it continued to trade for its Tasmanian owner FW Belbin. Belbin & Dowdell owned several trading ships from the 1850s to 1870s.⁷

Later owned by Fisher & Facy (Hobart), it was sold to C Almond, South Australia, just prior to its being wrecked. In June 1909 *Natal Queen* was loading timber at Gray's wharf, Adventure Bay, for Adelaide when a severe storm developed. Though he attempted to manoeuvre the vessel away from the wharf into deeper water, Captain JT Shimmins was obliged to abandon ship with his 12 crew in a lifeboat when the hull struck rocks. A Court of Marine Inquiry exonerated captain and crew from any blame. The cargo was insured and no lives were lost.⁸

- a) Model of 3-masted barque, *Natal Queen* MMT Collection (in storage)
- b) Under tow in the River Derwent (nd) Note the crew member on top yard MMT P_OM_G_17d
- c) *Natal Queen* stranded on rocks before breaking up, June 1909 MMT P_OM_J_3b



The Bell from *Natal Queen*

Endnotes

- ¹ Denny, C (3 June 2022). Letter to R Gray acknowledging, on behalf of MMT, acquisition of the bell
- ² *Advertiser* (Adelaide) 31 August 1945 p. 10
- ³ *Daily Post* (Hobart) 25 June 1909 p.5
- ⁴ Wreck site <https://wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?54817>
- ⁵ *Daily Post* ibid.
- ⁶ *Star* (Christchurch, NZ) 1 February 1872 p. 2
- ⁷ eHive notes MMT 'Belbin'
- ⁸ *Daily Post* ibid. and *Mercury* 21 July 1909, p. 3

Scott Polar Research Institute



postcard from Cambridge, UK

The Terra Nova bell at SPRI

POST CARD

Come and see the ship's bell from SS Terra Nova at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, UK. Terra Nova was the vessel used by RF Scott on his last expedition to Antarctica in 1910. The brass bell was removed when the ship returned to Cardiff in 1913 and gifted to expedition Surgeon Lieutenant Edward Leicester Atkinson. It has a single clapper and hangs from a painted iron frame (not original) with replacement lanyard. We received it from his family in 1952 and it has called members of the Institute to tea at 10.30am every morning since!

—Best Wishes,
Laura.



TO:

The Editor
Maritime Times Tasmania
GPO Box 1118
Hobart, Tasmania
AUSTRALIA 7001

With thanks to staff at SPRI.

<https://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/museum/>

WE DISCOVERED AN 18th-CENTURY FRENCH BELL when visiting the remote Santa Cruz group, part of the Solomon Islands, in March 2006. My wife Annette and I had joined the 70-passenger MV *Oceanic Princess* in Noumea for an exploratory voyage through the Melanesian islands. Launched in Cairns in 2005 and purpose-built for cruising in the tropical regions of the southern oceans, the 63m 1800 grt ship (since renamed *Coral Discoverer*) was investigating potential Pacific itineraries.

The expedition ship planned to sail from Noumea in New Caledonia and island-hop in a north-westerly direction to Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Bougainville, and Rabaul in New Britain. From Rabaul we were to visit New Ireland then cruise south through the islands of the eastern New Guinea archipelago before crossing the Coral Sea to the ship's home port, Cairns.



Bell from *La Boussole*

MMT Collection
Photo: Barry Champion

The expedition of Jean-François Galaup, comte de La Pérouse

In the 18th century French explorers were active in the Pacific region. Jean-François Galaup, comte de La Pérouse, sailed from Brest in France in 1785 in command of a scientific expedition in the ships *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*. After rounding Cape Horn, he explored much of the Pacific before sailing into Botany Bay on 26 January 1788 just in time to see the First Fleet leaving the bay bound for Port Jackson where the British planned to settle.

La Pérouse needed water and supplies for his ships but the British were unable to help with provisions which they had to keep to sustain their new penal colony. Nevertheless, during the French stay the colonists maintained cordial relations. In February, after procuring wood and water, *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe* sailed into the Pacific, never to be seen again. La Pérouse wrote his last-known letter to his Minister for Marine from Botany Bay revealing that he hoped to reach Mauritius by December 1788 and France in mid-1789.

Persistent concerns were aroused in Paris in late 1789 when La Pérouse failed to return to France. He was long overdue on his voyage so, in September 1791, the French Assembly sent two ships, *Recherche* and *Espérance*, commanded by Admiral Bruni d'Entrecasteaux on a mission to find him. They were to continue La Pérouse's work with one of the largest scientific expeditions ever mounted in France.

continued on next page >

A Bell from the French flûte *La Boussole* and the mystery of the La Pérouse Expedition

by Colin Denny

The painting 'Botany Bay—26 January 1788' by Ian Hansen shows La Pérouse's two ships entering Botany Bay as the First Fleet is leaving. (Also see Note at the end of this article.)



Bell from *La Boussole* (cont.)



La Pérouse



Map of Solomon Islands



Oceanic Princess at Ndendo



Dance story on Uréparapara

D'Entrecasteaux made valuable discoveries in Van Diemen's Land and kept detailed records of European contact with the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples. His discoveries in other areas were significant but the expedition failed to find any trace of La Pérouse. Following the death of d'Entrecasteaux from scurvy in July 1793 off the northern coast of New Guinea the expedition came to a grim end in Java where many of the men died of disease. The mystery of the missing ships, *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*, would not be solved for more than 30 years.

In May 1826 Captain Peter Dillon, an Irishman in command of his own small trading ship *St Patrick*, was running short of provisions on a passage from New Zealand to Bengal. He called at the small Solomon Islands outpost of Tikopia seeking yams. Thirteen years earlier, when Dillon was third mate on the *Hunter*, he saw a Prussian, Martin Buchert, his Fijian wife, and a Lascar named Joe voluntarily put ashore on the island after escaping a bloody attack by warlike Fijians. As *St Patrick* approached Tikopia, welcoming canoes appeared. When the first one drew near, Dillon exclaimed, 'There's the Lascar standing up in the bow.' Then he saw Martin Buchert seated in the stern of the third canoe. 'There's Buchert himself' cried the captain. 'I'm glad to find him alive!'

Writing about the encounter, George Bayly an officer on *St Patrick*, recorded that, 'The Lascar had an old silver sword-guard suspended by a string around his neck; several of the natives also had ornaments of European manufacture—strings of glass beads, etc.—about them.' Bayly examined the silver sword-guard and saw inscriptions that could only have been French.

With Buchart acting as interpreter, Dillon questioned the Tikopians. They told them that, 'about two days sail of their canoes to leeward of Tikopia, there was an island called Vanikoro, the natives of which were in an abundance of similar things ... the Vanikoro natives had informed the Tikopians that a long time before, when their old men were boys, two large ships had been wrecked on their island'. The Tikopians recounted details of what could only be the loss of *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*. Many men were murdered but survivors were said to have built a boat and sailed away leaving two remaining who some said had lived on Vanikoro for a few years.

Captain Dillon, who had long contemplated the mystery of La Pérouse, had no doubt he now knew the fate of the expedition. Having obtained the information and purchased the articles of French manufacture that the Tikopians had about them, he sailed for Vanikoro. *St Patrick* was becalmed for days off the island but no canoes came to welcome them so they made no attempt to land. When the breeze sprung up again, with his ship leaking badly and very short of water and provisions, Dillon bore away to the north-west. He was anxious to sail the damaged *St Patrick* back to Bengal to communicate the news of his discovery.

In Calcutta, Dillon persuaded the British Government in India under Lord Amherst to give him command of the British East India Company's survey vessel, *HCS Research* (253 tons), to return in 1827 to look for survivors and relics on Vanikoro. On the first leg of the voyage, Dillon arrested the medical officer and naturalist of *Research*, Dr Tytler, for fomenting mutiny among the crew. On arrival at the first port of call, Hobart, Tytler had Dillon charged with assault. In the

Supreme Court a jury of six military officers found Dillon guilty and Chief Justice Pedder sentenced him to two months imprisonment. Dillon was soon released following a petition to Lieutenant-Governor Arthur signed by prominent colonists Edward Lord, William Angus Bethune, and Anthony Fenn Kemp. Dr Tytler left the expedition and returned to India.

French explorer Commander Jules Dumont d'Urville arrived in Hobart later that year and heard news of Dillon's discoveries from the harbourmaster, Captain James Kelly, who piloted d'Urville's ship up the Derwent estuary. The colonial authorities in Van Diemen's Land regarded Dillon as a worthless adventurer but Captain Kelly knew him well and believed his accounts of the Vanikoro wrecks to be true. Consequently, Commander D'Urville changed his plans and departed Hobart intent on checking the veracity of the story. On arrival at Vanikoro he found Dillon's account of the discovery to be correct. While there, he constructed a memorial to La Pérouse and his lost companions.

Research reached Tikopia in September 1827 then continued to Vanikoro, well ahead of d'Urville's expedition. Captain Dillon and his crew spent 25 days collecting and documenting relics before returning to Calcutta via Sydney. Dillon visited Paris in 1829 where the relics were confirmed as from the expedition by Barthélemy de Lesseps, La Pérouse's Russian interpreter, who left the expedition in Kamchatka. The French king, Charles X, rewarded Dillon with a pension of 4000 francs a year and 10000 francs towards expenses after knighting him as a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

A modern-day Melanesian adventure aboard *MV Oceanic Discoverer*

In late March 2006 *Oceanic Princess* (later renamed *Oceanic Discoverer*) anchored in the centre of the spectacular caldera of Uréparapara. It was to be our final Vanuatuan anchorage before travelling to the Solomon Island archipelago. Once ashore on this remote island the villagers, with elaborate headdresses representing visiting sailing ships, entertained us with ritual dances telling stories of the past.

Our Vanuatuan anchorage lay a little more than 100 nautical miles from the island of Tikopia where Peter Dillon first became aware of the fate of La Pérouse. In the afternoon *Oceanic Princess* weighed anchor and set a course for the Santa Cruz islands. During the night we passed Vanikoro and motored on to Ndendo (also known as Nenda) where we had planned to go ashore at Malo on the small neighbouring island of Tomotu Neo.

Agents advised that a Malo chief had recently died. The inhabitants were in mourning and we were prohibited from going ashore. An alternative landing had been arranged on Ndendo causing great excitement because our small exhibition ship was the first passenger vessel to visit since *RY Britannia* with Queen Elizabeth in 1974. After closing the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand, the Queen had joined the *Britannia* with Prince Philip on a visit to Commonwealth countries in the Pacific.

When *Oceanic Princess* anchored between Ndendo and Tomotu Neo, canoes with curious onlookers surrounded the vessel. On shore, hundreds of

Bell from *La Boussole* (cont.)



Ndendo Island canoes

Greeting dance on Ndendo



Tema

Ndendo farewell



people gathered to welcome our arrival aboard *Xplorer*, the tender from the ship. The island elders in traditional dress with ceremonial temas hanging from their necks met us by performing a mock war dance as a warning of their supremacy.

When the formalities were complete, visitors were welcome to walk amongst the locals. There were no tourist markets but villagers did have a few curios for sale including carved model canoes, relics from the American presence in World War 2, and sundry other small objects. Annette noticed a man bargaining with a passenger over the sale of an old, damaged brass bell. The vendor said that the bell had been recovered from La Pérouse's Vanikoro wreck site by his great-grandfather in 1915. Hearing this, Annette intervened in the sale, saying that I would be very interested in the artefact. (At the time I was president of the Maritime Museum.)

We discussed the provenance of the bell with the local school principal and the pastor, both confirming that the story was correct. The people of Santa Cruz were familiar with the wreck sites and knew quite a lot about La Pérouse, saying they held items that they did not want taken by the marine archaeologists from the Musée Maritime de Nouvelle-Calédonie in Noumea.

I was reluctant to take the bell out of the Solomon Islands but, as it had been in private hands for many years and I was not disturbing a wreck site, I acquired it. When the pastor discovered I was president of a maritime museum he was excited and presented me with a tema or kep kep (left). It consists of a large smooth circular white shell with the stylised image of a frigate bird silhouetted on the face, worn hanging around one's neck. He told me that tema in their language means 'moon' and it is, 'a shield to protect the heart in the days when people fought in Santa Cruz'.

That afternoon a crowd gathered again to farewell us as we left Ndendo bound for Santa Ana Island. Our exciting exploratory voyage continued through the Melanesian islands and New Guinea until we finally arrived in Cairns on Easter Sunday, 16 April 2006.

The Vanikoro bell was kept at my home for years while I tried to independently verify its origins. The marine archaeologists in Noumea were reluctant to engage in discussion with me but I remained convinced of the provenance from our conversations on Ndendo. In 2017, I decided to donate the bell to the Maritime Museum.

One of the leading experts in shipwreck conservation science and metallurgy, Dr Ian McLeod, came to Hobart in 2019 to attend a conference arranged by

the Maritime Heritage Organisations of Tasmania jointly with the Australian Maritime Museums Council. He had been asked to examine the bell and was able to verify the provenance. In a presentation to the conference, he confirmed that the Vanikoro bell was of eighteenth-century French manufacture as would have been carried on their expeditions.

The Vanikoro bell is now safely on display in the Maritime Museum Tasmania where it helps explain the mystery of the lost La Pérouse Expedition. □

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Davidson, JW (1975), *Peter Dillon of Vanikoro*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Horner, Frank (1995). *Looking for La Pérouse: D'Entrecasteaux in Australia and the South Pacific 1792-1793*. The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne.

Note:

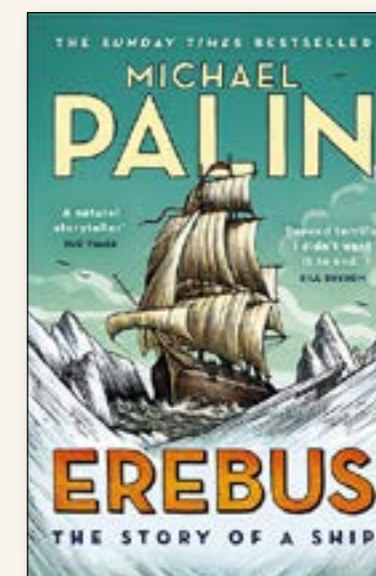
The painting 'Botany Bay – 26 January 1788' by Ian Hansen on p. 13 shows La Pérouse's two ships entering Botany Bay as the First Fleet is leaving.

It was commissioned for the cover of the book, Cameron-Ash, Margaret (2021). *Beating France to Botany Bay: The Race to Found Australia*. Quadrant Books, Sydney.

Colin Denny and Dr Ian MacLeod with the Vanikoro bell in 2019



in our shop



EREBUS: THE STORY OF A SHIP
by Michael Palin (2019)

Sir John Franklin (Governor of Tasmania 1837–1843) set out from England to search for the Northwest Passage—a sea passage to link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans—on 19 May 1845. He sailed from England with two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, and 128 officers and men. British whalers reported seeing the two vessels north of Baffin Island in July 1847, but after that there was no trace of the ships. Search missions failed until, in 1858, skeletons of crew and a journal were found.

The Erebus bell

In 2014, the discovery of *Erebus*, lying in 6 fathoms (11m) off the coast of Nunavut in northern Canada by Parks Canada in collaboration with Inuit communities, led to the salvage of many artefacts—including the ship's bell.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/divers-recover-more-than-350-artifacts-from-hms-erebus-shipwreck-180974251/>

There are lots of videos online about *Erebus* and *Terror*, and you can view the discovery of the *Erebus* bell and its conservation in a 2–3 minute clip on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKzrVZC5EZw>

A 3D replica of the bell was included in a touring exhibition across Canada and the importance of Inuit oral history in discovering the wreck was highlighted. □



The mess bell from MV *Kermandie* (115mm)
MMT Collection A_2004-146 Photo: Barry Champion

The Maritime Museum Tasmania also has the ships wheel, the sail plan, photos and documents re *Kermandie*. 'The Wreck of the *Kermandie*' in *Circular Head History Journal*, Jan 1990 Vol. 3 No 2, is in the Museum's library. Ref: 50.02 KER 1990



Salvaging cargo from *Kermandie* in 1957
Photo: Cyril Smith; MMT Collection P_2015-0587

One of the tractors helping with the salvage operations of the stranded *Kermandie* in 1957 Photo: Hal Wyatt



Kermandie Mess Bell at Maritime Museum

IT WAS AN IMPOSING SCENE at Shipwrights Point, Port Huon, when crowds of people gathered for the launch of *Kermandie* on 27 April 1920. They came by car, trap, buggy, dray, bicycle or on foot to witness the event. They clambered over the vessel to inspect it and cheered as it slipped into the water, officially launched with the traditional bottle of champagne, by Mrs Calvert.

The four-masted schooner, ON 133495, 343grt, was built of Tasmanian hardwood at Geeveston by CH McKay for Huon Timber Co. Ltd. It had two 45hp Skandia engines (and was re-engined in 1936). Its length was 141.9ft (43m) with a beam of 35ft, depth 11ft. It was to be fitted with 'two jibs and staysail, one foresail, mainsail, mizzen and jigger, all of which will be of huge dimensions'. These were supplied and fitted by sailmaker J McMillan of Hobart.¹



Kermandie MMT Collection P_1991-184

Later registered in Melbourne, *Kermandie* traded between Tasmanian and mainland Australian ports with cargoes of timber, grain, etc. Under the command of Captain O'Neill (not the usual skipper Darcy Driscoll) and with a crew of 13, *Kermandie* was leaving Stanley in north-west Tasmania on 6 September 1957, when it struck a reef off North Point and ran aground.



and a Bell on its Billet Head at Stanley Discovery Museum

Since running aground on the property known as 'Western Plains' at Stanley in September 1957, MV *Kermandie* has played a big part in local history. WH Pelling, who had arrived at the property to take up residence in the old VDL Co.'s homestead only two months earlier, recalled the event in his article 'The Wreck of the *Kermandie*'.²

Attempts to refloat *Kermandie* were unsuccessful.³ After cargo and fittings were salvaged, operations were abandoned and the damaged vessel was offered for sale⁴ but the hull was eventually burnt.

My parents lived on the farm adjoining 'Western Plains' and my father, Fred Morton, was instrumental in salvaging the timber from the wreck. He was a carpenter and, along with a couple of others, used it to construct a cooking cabinet and a set of Olympic hurdles for the Circular Head (Stanley) Show. Dad was heavily involved with the Show and went on to become a Life Member. The cooking stand was in use until about five years ago while some of the hurdles are still being utilised.

The Stanley Discovery Museum is fortunate to have numerous items and photos relating to *Kermandie*, including the billet head and flag from the vessel (right) which, in keeping with the theme of this issue, features a bell. We have also had a detailed model donated to the Museum (facing page).

If you live nearby or are visiting the north-west, call in and see our *Kermandie* collection as well as other items reflecting our local history.

—Sue Smedley, President
Stanley Discovery Museum

Endnotes

- ¹ Launching of the "Kermandie". *Huon Times* 30 April 1920, p.5
- ² Pelling, WH 'The Wreck of the Kermandie.' In *Circular Head History Journal* (1990) Vol. 3 No 2, p. 26–28
- ³ *Circular Head Chronicle*, 18 September 1957
- ⁴ *Circular Head Chronicle*, 25 September 1957

Stanley Discovery Museum
37-39 Church Street, Stanley, Tasmania, 7331
ph 0428 581 285
stanleydiscoverymuseum@gmail.com



Deck view during salvage operations
Photo: Wells/Stanley Discovery Museum

Fred Morton constructing Olympic hurdles for the Circular Head Show



below: Billet head and flag from *Kermandie*
Photo: Stanley Discovery Museum

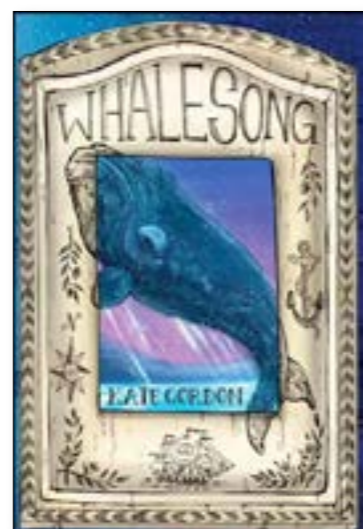


BELLS & BOOKS

IN OUR SHOP



4



WHALESONG

by Kate Gordon (2022)

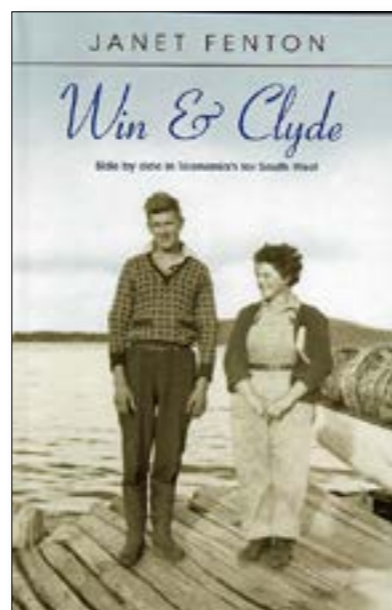
Modern and Colonial
Hobart in a time-slip novel

Paperback: 179 pages

WIN & CLYDE
Side by side in Tasmania's far
South West

by Janet Fenton (2010)

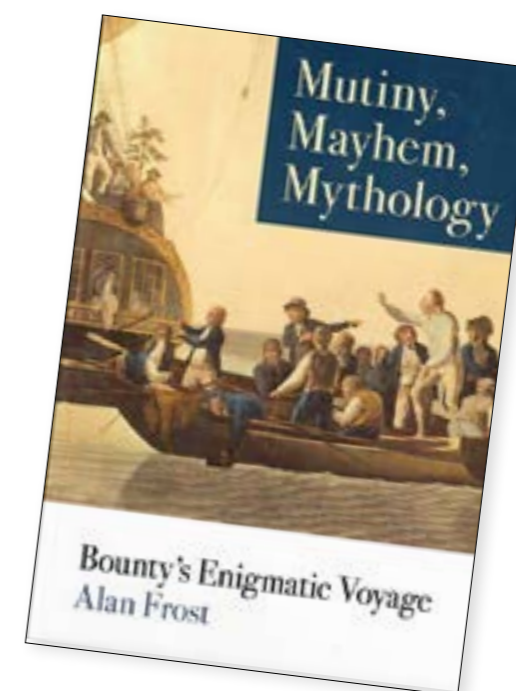
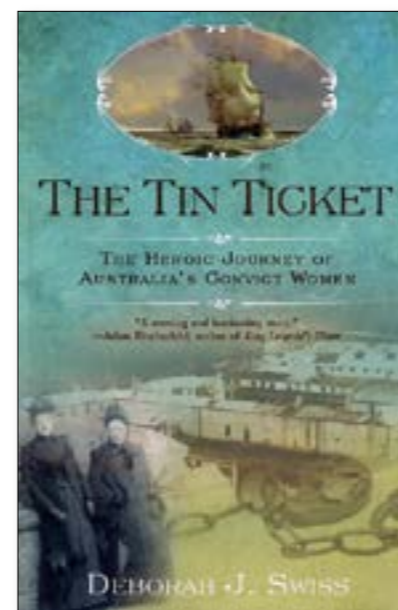
Paperback, xx, 316 pages



THE TIN TICKET
Heroic Journeys of Australia's
Colonial Women

by Deborah Swiss (2011)

Paperback: xviii, 362 pages



MUTINY, MAYHEM,
MYTHOLOGY
Bounty's Enigmatic Voyage

by Alan Frost (2018)

Winner of the Frank Broeze Memorial
Maritime History Book Prize 2019

Paperback: 336 pages



5

A SELECTION OF THE BELLS
for sale in the
Maritime Museum shop

(Images of bells are not to scale.)

Bell 1, 3.5 inches; Bell 2, 3.5in;
Bell 3, 4in; Bell 4, 2in;
and 5, a set of doorbells.



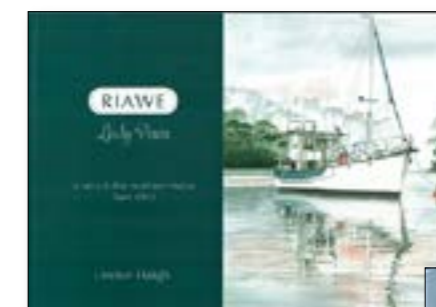
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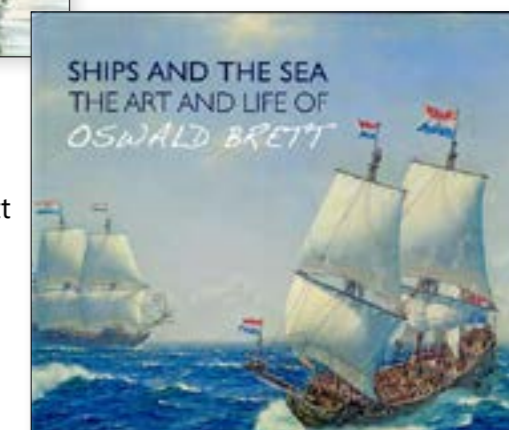
RIawe
Lady Pam

by Lindon Haigh (2017)
—one boat, two stories—
58 pages

SHIPS AND THE SEA
The Art and Life of Oswald Brett
(2014)

Paintings of sailing ships,
warships, freighters, etc.

Hardcover, 192 pages





MANY SHIPS BUILT IN THE FIRST HALF of the 20th century carried a large bell on the foc'sle. Prior to introduction of telephone and radio communication with the bridge this was used to indicate progress with anchor handling, and to alert other vessels when anchored in fog. Smaller bells on or near the bridge were mainly used as time pieces, to mark the daytime watches. The Museum has an example of each, belonging to the Blue Funnel Line ships *Rhexenor* (10 199 grt/1945) and *Idomeneus* (7809/1926), once well known in all Tasmanian ports. Both bells were donated by the line's Hobart agents, C. Piesse & Co., whose office from the late 1950s was on the corner of Elizabeth and Davey Streets—where the Visitors Centre is now, and across the road from the Carnegie Building.

Bells from the Blue Funnel Line

SS Idomeneus and *SS Rhexenor*

by Rex Cox

Ocean Steam Ship Company Ltd, to give the line its official name, was established at Liverpool in 1865 by brothers Alfred and Philip Holt. Recognising that they were setting out on a great adventure, the brothers adopted a naming system based on Homer's *Odyssey* and figures from Greek mythology.¹ As for the funnel, its inspiration was some spare blue paint used to smarten up a small ship that Alfred managed in the early 1850s. Addition of a black top to disguise smoke stains provided a colour scheme that was instantly recognisable around the world for the next 120 years. The ships were also noted for their strong construction, 'Holt's class' insisting on higher standards than those of classification societies like Lloyd's of London.

Initially trading to the Far East, Blue Funnel began a Singapore–Western Australia service in the 1890s. By 1914 it was offering monthly sailings from Glasgow and Liverpool to Australian ports via South Africa. Some ships carried passengers in comfortable one-class accommodation (described as more country club than four-star hotel) and many had refrigerated cargo capacity which brought them to Tasmania for fruit. The company later ran regular services from the east coast of Australia to Singapore and other SE Asian ports, and for many years carried cocoa beans from West Africa for Cadbury's chocolate factory at Claremont.

Rhexenor and sister ship *Stentor* (10 203/1946) were part of the post-WW2 replacement program. Ordered by the British Government for transporting locomotives and heavy equipment to the Far East war zone, they were altered to Blue Funnel requirements while building at the Caledon yard, Dundee. From 1966 to 1972 both ships loaded fruit at Hobart for SE Asia, and were regular callers at Burnie until sold to breakers at Kaohsiung in 1975.

'What's this?
... Ah, a Blue Funnel liner!'



facing page: The distinctive blue funnel on *Idomeneus* in Hobart, May 1961
Photo: John Greenhill

left: *Rhexenor's* foc'sle bell (37cm high and 49cm diameter)
Indentations on the lower portion of the bell are an indication that the clapper might have been removed at one point and the bell struck, not with a rounded substitute but with a sharp-edged hammer

below: Bell from *Idomeneus* (12cm high and 15cm diameter)
Both bells are in the MMT Collection.
Photos: Barry Champion



We learnt from Malcolm Burgess in 2006 that *Rhexenor's* foc'sle bell (37cm high and 49cm diameter) had been used as a font for the christening of John Fielden's son Matthew, while alongside at Port Kembla in February 1975. John was then *Rhexenor's* chief officer and Malcolm, who had previously served aboard, was Matthew's godfather. Malcolm also mentioned that when the ship left Australian ports for the breaker's yard a month later (with its name officially shorn to *Hexeno*), it was flying a paying off pennant 160.6m long (below), made by John's wife, Helen, on her mum's sewing machine!

I have a personal recollection of this particular bell, being stationed alongside it during the official opening of the Museum at Carnegie by Her Majesty the Queen on 28 March 2000 (as one of numerous volunteers placed around the displays to answer any questions the royal party might have).

The Queen walked past but then came a gruff 'What's this?' from—of course—the Duke of Edinburgh. He didn't hang around long waiting for an answer, though I must have managed to provide some information because he muttered 'Ah, a Blue Funnel liner!' as he walked away. >>>



left: *Rhexenor* with pennant, March 1975
Photo: Malcolm Dippy and Nautical Association of Australia
below: At Burnie, early 1970s Photo: David Cooper





MMT member Lindsay Rex (at left) on King's Pier to photograph *Idomeneus* at Elizabeth Street Pier. The counter stern and shadows that he mentions can be clearly seen. 24 May 1961 Photo: John Greenhill

Idomeneus was the last of 13 Machaon class motor vessels built in the 1920s, only a few of which survived WW2.² Having visited Hobart seven times up to 1939, it returned once more in 1961 while on the Australia–SE Asia service. Lindsay Rex was there and says 'I regarded this visit as one of the last opportunities I would have to view an overseas ship with counter stern. In John's photo (left) I am wearing a long dark grey raincoat I had when riding a Vespa motor scooter for a year or two before buying my first car, the NSU Prinz in November 1961! The photo was taken on Wednesday 24 May 1961, early morning (on way to work very likely), and the shadows (on hull of *Idomeneus*) are from *Gladstone Star* at South King's Pier.' The largest shadow is from the latter's funnel. *Idomeneus* was scrapped at Genoa the following year.

The entry for this bell (12cm high / 15cm diameter) on the Museum database notes that *Idomeneus* arrived at Glebe Island, Sydney on 13 January 1943 with a lethal cargo of chemical weapons, including mustard gas. Apparently, some containers were leaking but the authorities allegedly maintained an official silence and allowed waterside workers and RAAF personnel to unload the cargo without protective clothing or safety measures. This resulted in at least one death and many horrific injuries. To make matters worse, the ship's master was blamed and died with this hanging over his head.³

As reported in MTT 81, the Maritime Museum has acquired a model of another Blue Funnel liner, *Hector* (10 125/1950). It also has a variety of company ephemera, including a house flag. □



Idomeneus at Elizabeth Street Pier North, Hobart 22 May 1961 as seen from the foc'sle. Photo: LD Rex

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Anne Ashford, Mike Triplett, Lindsay Rex and Bill Burton for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

Endnotes

¹ *Idomeneus* was King of Crete and an ally of the Greeks at the fall of Troy. Rhexenor could relate to three figures in Greek mythology, one of whom was killed by Apollo. My favourite is another who, returning home from the Trojan War, was transformed into a swan!

² Blue Funnel suffered horrendous losses during WW2. Its fleet of 77 ships in 1939 was reduced by more than half, 43 ships being lost.

³ Plunkett, Geoff & Australian Department of Defence (2014). *Death by mustard gas: how military secrecy and lost weapons can kill*. Big Sky Publishing, Newport, NSW

Idomeneus in Hobart 22–25 May 1961 Photo: John Greenhill



Silver Bell from SS *Zealandia*



Bell from SS *Zealandia* (height 12.5cm) MMT Collection A_2017-084 Photo: Barry Champion

THIS LITTLE SILVER BELL was purchased at auction in 2016 with funds from Commander David Hamilton, a great benefactor of the Museum. Its original purpose is not known but it might have been awarded as a prize, perhaps used as a signal in deck games, to ring for service at an unattended desk, or to call guests to meals.

SS *Zealandia* (6660grt/built 1910) was built in Scotland for Huddart Parker. During the 1920s and 1930s it ran a regular service between Sydney and Hobart, carrying both passengers and cargo. In fruit season *Zealandia* also loaded apples at Port Huon. During the summers of 1933–1935, *Zealandia* offered popular cruises to Port Davey, Port Arthur and Coles Bay.

Zealandia was requisitioned as a troop ship for WWI in 1918 and was sunk in WW2 during the bombing of Darwin harbour in 1942. □

References

Maritime Times Tasmania 'notes from the curator' MTT 57 (Summer 2016) p. 24, and MTT 62 (Autumn 2018) p. 22

Cox, R and GW Cox (2014) *Ships of Hobart Harbour*. R Withington: Hobart, pp. 540–543

SS *Zealandia* in Hobart ca 1939 Photo: Noel Brown



in remembrance

Bill Foster

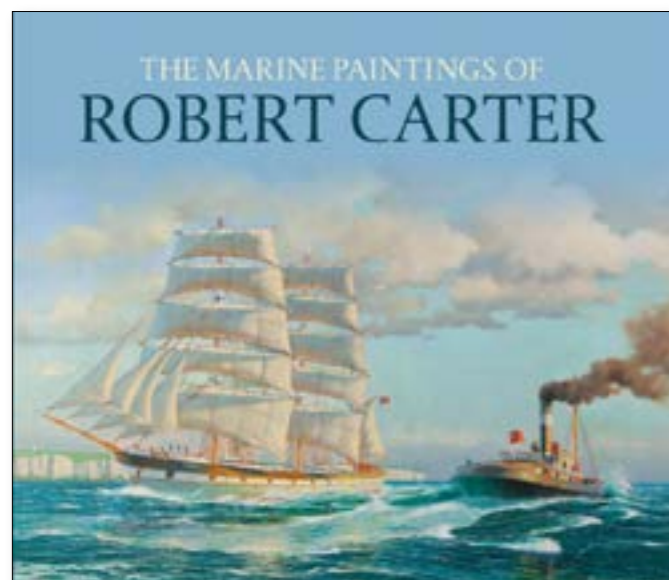


I had the great pleasure of engaging with Bill during my time at the Maritime Museum, and I'm very grateful for those interactions.

Bill working on the restoration of the *Silver Crown* wheelhouse which is now on display at MMT

Bill was extremely generous with his time and always so happy to share his vast knowledge and experience. His stories deepened my understanding and appreciation of boat building and its significance within Tasmania's maritime story. Listening to him relay the origin of his renowned 'Foster 10' dinghy design revealed the intimate connection Bill and his family have to Tasmanian boat building and broader wooden boat design in Australia. Bill's legacy will continue through not only his contribution to Tasmania's maritime heritage through wooden boat building, but also via the many memories and conversations he sparked and was part of. My fondest memory of Bill was having a cup of tea down at the DSS boatshed discussing his pathway into apprenticeship at Battery Point. He told me about his parents finding him a job at a law firm with hopes he might become a barrister. Bill soon however realised an office job was not for him and instead, invested his energy into using his hands and found where he was meant to be—amongst the ribs and sawdust of a wooden boat! And thankfully he did! Bill's influence upon and contribution to Tasmania's maritime heritage and identity will continue well beyond his lifetime for many to enjoy, but it is the small moments over a cuppa with a jolly, humble and unassuming man that I will treasure most. Thank you Bill. You touched my heart and I'm saddened by news of your departure.

—Annalise Rees



THE MARINE PAINTINGS OF ROBERT CARTER

hardcover 250 x 280mm

240 pages on 150gsm silk art paper

book review

ROBERT CARTER OAM is well known for his great interest in the history of commercial sailing ships and in particular the last decades of these awe-inspiring vessels during the twentieth century. This interest, indeed this passion for these ships has seen him travel the globe to interview many hundreds of men and women who had worked or travelled on sailing ships when they were still an active part of the merchant marine world.

In this book *The Marine Paintings of Robert Carter* the age of the sailing ship is celebrated in his own paintings which are informed by his research and the experiences of those who sailed or travelled on these vessels. Each of the more than 100 full-page reproductions of his works in the book are accompanied by informative text that discusses the subject matter of the artwork. Frequently this text and the artwork itself is enriched by the observations of those who sailed on the sailing ship in question. These observations by members of the ship's crew and Robert himself make the image all the more immediate.

The majority of the artworks reproduced in the book are either ships' portraits or romantic reconstructions of ports. Perhaps not surprisingly amongst the romantic reconstructions, Sydney Harbour features prominently but it is pleasing to see other ports such as Newcastle, London and Iquique (Chile) as well as distinctive coastal landscapes such as the Tasman Peninsula and Cape Horn appear. Although described as romantic reconstructions, these works are the product of meticulous research using a variety of historical resources.

Given the number of artworks featured in the book more information about the individual works such as the medium, dimensions and date would have further added to our understanding of Robert's work. The combination of enjoyable original artworks and informative supporting text makes this book the ideal coffee table book — one that can be picked up and satisfyingly browsed at any time.

—Chris Tassell

www.robertcarter.com.au

A SHIP'S BELL CHIMED DURING THE CEREMONIAL launch of Australia's new state-of-the-art icebreaker RSV *Nuyina* in the Macquarie Wharf Cruise Terminal, Hobart on Saturday 18 December 2021. The ship itself was alongside within a few metres of the attending crowd, and the ship's horn replied to the chime of the bell with a single long blast. The bell rope was in the hand of the Australian Prime Minister, The Hon. Scott Morrison, who was visiting Tasmania with the Governor General of Australia, His Excellency General The Hon. David Hurley, four days after the Tasmanian borders opened to all states for the first time in nearly two years owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. This bell rope was made by me.

The ship had arrived in October from its Romanian construction site during a snap three-day lockdown thanks to the 'Covidiot' who ran amuck of the authorities, threatening to bring the virus to our (then) COVID-free state. The flotilla that had been planned, with me included in the throng aboard *Lady Nelson* was cancelled. This ceremony made up for the lack of grandeur at its arrival.

RSV *Nuyina* replaced RSV *Aurora Australis* which served the Australian Antarctic Program for 30 years. The name, pronounced "Noy – yee – na", means 'southern lights' (or aurora australis) in palawa kani, thereby maintaining a historical link with not only its immediate predecessor, but the original ship named *Aurora* that served Sir Douglas Mawson and Sir Ernest Shackleton's crew on their Antarctic voyages in the early 1900s.

The ceremonial bell was presented to the ship by Major George Friend, President of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) Club. This club was formed in 1951 for expeditioners who had been to Antarctica with the Australian program, and having been down south over a dozen times as a Glaciologist and Geotechnical Project Manager, I have been a member for over 20 years.

The 20kg of brass was cast at Olds Foundry in Maryborough, Queensland thanks to Antarctic Trevor Luff and his ANARE Club network. On the very day the bell was being cast (15 July 2021), I happened to make my enquiry to the ANARE Club asking if I could make the bell rope for it. A nice coincidence! My offer was wholeheartedly welcomed, especially once I'd sent photos of some of my knotwork, and explained I was a club member.

The criteria for the bell rope were that it needed to be white, short, and with brass thimble and shackle. For the cord, I was lucky enough to be in possession of a traditional wooden rope-making machine that had been made for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in 2019 out of local Tasmanian timbers (celery top pine, blackwood and Huon pine). It seemed only appropriate to use this magnificent machine to make the cord



Inscribed RSV NUYINA 2021, the bell with its bell rope is ready to be installed on the bridge of the ship

RSV *Nuyina*

Making the bell rope for *Nuyina's* bell

by Barbara Frankel

Australis Knots

Icebreaker *Nuyina*
length 160.3m, beam 25.6m, displacement 25 500 tons





The completed bell rope and Turk's Head clapper sheath on the clapper (pre shellac).

for this bell rope so, with the help of my son, my partner and a friend, we made two 7m lengths of hard laid white cotton cord of 3.5mm diameter. The thread I used was from the Tasmanian Handweavers, Dyers and Spinners Guild rated at 30 epi. (I'm yet to translate this weaving nomenclature into a thread size!)

So I had the cord, but what about the brass accessories? I quickly ascertained that brass thimbles were not available! Perhaps some could be sourced from overseas but not in the timeframe I was given. I had made a prototype bell rope just to play with design and method, using a stainless-steel thimble, and had resigned myself to using this silver-coloured version when I was serendipitously invited to visit my friend David Heard. David is a retired netmaker, and had got in touch with me through the Living Boat Trust in Franklin on the Huon River where I'd been teaching some decorative knotting. I took along my prototype just to show him, knowing he'd be interested to see it. I lamented to him that I had given up looking for a brass thimble because they just weren't available. We were standing in his workshop below his house in Kingston, and to my absolute delight he reached into a bucket behind him and produced an old tarnished brass thimble of exactly the size I was looking for and said 'What, like this?' I nearly fell over backwards! YES! David very kindly donated this small but significant accessory to *Nuyina's* bell rope. It polished up beautifully with my Dremel.

Brass shackles are not difficult to obtain, so having bought some of these online I was almost ready to begin the construction. Just one last thing. How would a white bell rope in the hands of all those who might ring the bell over the next 30 years stay white? I was concerned about it getting grubby, and wanting to keep to traditional methods, I decided shellac was the appropriate protection. I'd experimented and was disappointed to see how much shellac changed the white to its inherent yellow. A little more research and I found I could purchase some bleached dewaxed shellac, so this I did. Now I had everything I needed.

My design was based on those I'd learnt from Des Pawson's book *Knot Craft and Rope Mats* but with some embellishments: the thimble, a stiffening dowel down the centre, and a weighted ball in a globe knot on its end—in this case a glass drawer knob with its mounting removed. This was cheaper than buying a 30mm marble, and easier to buy than any other weighted ball.

I cut the two 7m lengths of cord into four 3.5m lengths to tie a 4-strand braid halfway along, and pulled it tight around the thimble with temporary constrictor knot. I then made my favourite knot—a Matthew

Walker, followed by a 7.5cm eight strand crown sennit, a diamond knot, and a 7.5cm double strand crown sennit, all pulled tightly around the dowel in the centre. I finished with an eight strand, three pass globe knot around the glass ball. Two coats of bleached shellac completed the project. There is still a slight yellow tinge but it's acceptable. I admit there is some glue in strategic places but don't tell anyone!

I had been in discussion with Trevor Luff about a clapper dampener, realising that on a rolling ship (for which round-hulled icebreakers are renowned) the last thing you want is a loose clapper! I had thought about a leather sheath, or perhaps rubber, but it dawned on me that a Turks Head that could be pulled over the clapper or pushed up the stem out of the way stretched out just might work. I used the same type of cord, and to my delight this idea worked a treat! And it's the first Turk's Head I've ever made over hand. (Thanks, Lindsey Philpott – I used your instructions!) It can be eased over the clapper ball to fit snugly, or it can be pushed up, elongated, and rested on the clapper ball (as pictured), clearing the ball the make contact with the bell. An elegant solution! Trevor was ahead of me though. He'd designed the bracket with tie points to allow a cord or wire to hold the clapper against the bell. Between us, I think we have solved the issue and the bell won't toll when at sea unless desired! □

More information can be found at <https://www.antarctica.gov.au/nuyina/> and on Facebook pages 'Australis Knots' and 'ANARE Club'.

This article first appeared in *Knotting Matters*, the quarterly magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers: No 154, March 2022. Photos supplied by Dr Barbara Frankel.

Dr Barbara Frankel, with the traditional rope-making machine made for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival (2019). Note the Turk's Head eased snugly around the clapper ball.



The tribute bell for RSV *Nuyina* at the Maritime Museum. The bell rope was also made by Dr Frankel.

Photo: Barry Champion

Tribute Bell for RSV *Nuyina* at the Maritime Museum

In 2022, the ANARE Club donated this bell to the Maritime Museum Tasmania. It's the first casting of the bell for the Research and Supply Vessel *Nuyina*, engraved with the names of the 15 vessels used by the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) during their Antarctic tenure, and is known as the 'tribute bell'. This bell celebrates the 75th anniversary of their Antarctic work (now undertaken by the Australian Antarctic Division).

Names of the 'Ships of Science' engraved on the tribute bell include HMAS *Labuan*—its bell was also donated to MMT in 2022 by the ANARE Club—*Wyatt Earp*, *Thalia Dan*, *Nella Dan*, *Kista Dan*, *MV Happy Dragon* and *Nuyina's* predecessor, *RSV Aurora Australis*. □

Tools and accessories for the *Nuyina* bell rope. From top left; fid, Swedish fid (both made by Mikko Snellman), bell clapper, dowel, brass thimble, brass shackle, glass knob, homemade 3.5mm hard laid cord, bleached shellac, ruler/gauge.



SV *Aldebaran*



The *Concordia* of Dunkerque (*Aldebaran*) bell at the Maritime Museum
MMT Collection A_2003-022
Photo: Barry Champion

In 1897, the vessel was renamed *Aldebaran* but retained the original bell.



Aldebaran in Hobart (no date)
MMT Collection P_1991-350

Wicker coal basket as used on *Aldebaran* and *Jessie Craig*; 660mm diam., 640mm high
MMT Collection A_2011-075



Aldebaran and *Jessie Craig*, the last two coal hulks in Hobart, *Aldebaran* is stripped down and ready to be towed to Norfolk Bay.
Photo: Bert Johnson
MMT Collection P_1991-348

A THREE-MASTED IRON BARQUE WAS BUILT in 1869 by Oswald & Co., Sunderland, for French owners. It was named *Concordia* and its home port was originally Dunkerque (Dunkirk) in northern France. Length was 150.9ft (46m), beam 27.3ft, depth 15.9ft; tonnage 466 grt.¹

Ownership transferred to JN Rodbertus of Barth, Germany in 1890 and in 1897 it was sold to John M Eklund of Åbø, and renamed *Aldebaran*. In 1899 it was sold again to Captain Douglas of Sydney.² In 1912 the Union Steam Ship Company purchased *Aldebaran* with the intention of converting it to a coal hulk. Prior to that, *Aldebaran* had sailed between Newcastle and New Zealand as a collier.³

The coal hulks *Jessie Craig* and *Aldebaran* 'would tie up on the off-side, not the water-side, and refuel the cargo boats with coal ... And this was done in baskets—an old chap would be shovelling it into a basket and they'd lift it off by a derrick into the boat.'⁴ In 1948, *Aldebaran* was sold to the State Government Tasmania and towed to Norfolk Bay where it was used as a breakwater near Dunalley. □

Endnotes

¹ Wreck site: <https://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?54108>

² Info: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/PRG+1373/31/84>

³ 'Arrival of the *Aldebaran*.' *Mercury*, 15 May 1912, p.4

⁴ Hudspeth, A and L Scripps (2000). *Capital Port*, p. 243



WANDERER

A schooner, built in 1853 at Port Esperance, Tasmania; length 54.8ft (16.7m), beam 14.5ft, depth 6.8ft. It was registered at Hobart (43 grt/1853). Master and part-owner was T Buxton. *Wanderer* was involved in the salvage of the barque *Varna*. Its cables parted in a gale and it was wrecked north of Point Hibbs, on the west coast of Tasmania, on 28 March 1858. The crew was saved.



SOUTH CAROLINA

This cast iron bell is believed to have come from the American whaler *South Carolina*. The bell has slotted tang for suspension but no distinguishing marks. *South Carolina* (from New Bedford) was condemned when it arrived in Hobart in 1851. It was then moored near Richard Cleburne's property at Risdon Cove. After *South Carolina* broke free of its anchors and beached in the 1860s, it was broken up for its copper fastenings. The bell hung in St Aidan's church, Lindisfarne, from the 1930s before being donated to the Maritime Museum.



KURI PEARL

A pearling lugger, *Kuri Pearl* operated at Kuri Bay, north of Broome in the Kimberley region of WA, in the 1970s. The ship's bell is engraved Mears London. *Kuri Pearl* was later converted to a fishing boat.

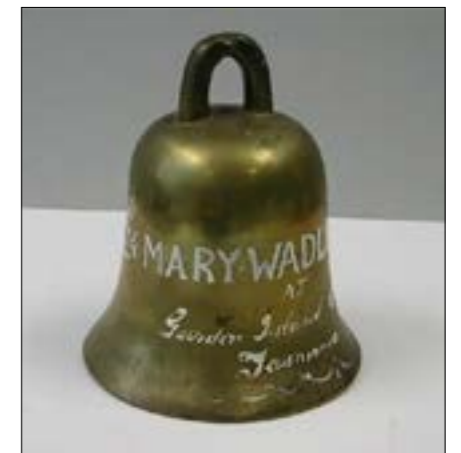
Notes from Broxam G, and M Nash (2021). *Tasmanian Shipwrecks* Vol. 2 (1900–2020). Navarine Publishing; and from Museum records.

A Selection of other bells (in storage) at the Maritime Museum



ENDEAVOUR

Built in NSW in 1887, SS *Endeavour* (length 56.7ft (17.3m), beam 15.5ft, depth 5.1ft), was purchased by O'May Bros in 1891 from the Maria Island Company. It was used on the Lindisfarne ferry service in Hobart and for excursions, but broken up in 1942 at Bellerive.



MARY WADLEY

A barquentine and freighter, *Mary Wadley* (length 112.5ft (34.3m), beam 21.3ft, depth 9.8ft) was built in NSW in 1874, and registered in Hobart. Master JT Shimmins Jnr. Blown ashore in a gale, it was wrecked in Garden Island Creek on 22 April 1901. The crew was saved.

ship spotter

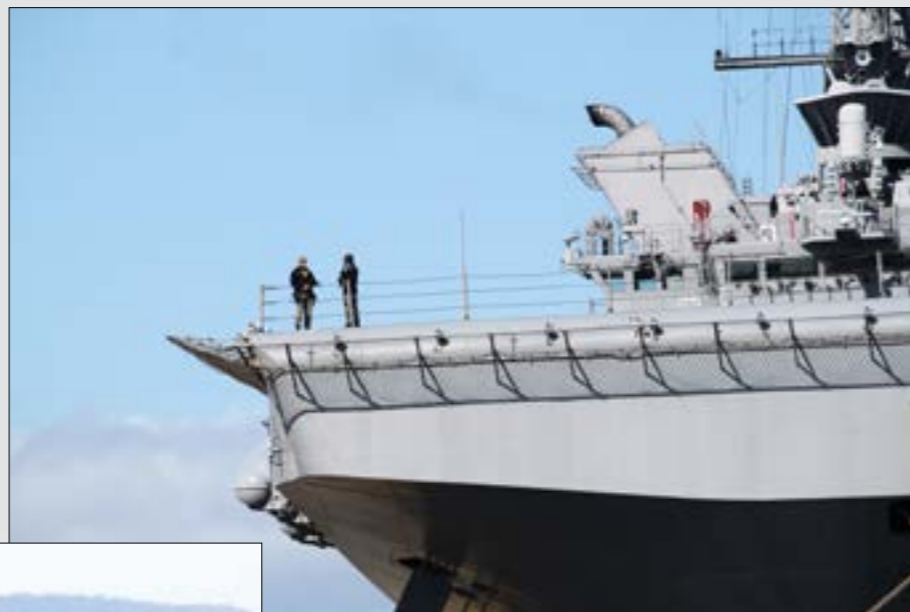
by Rex Cox

A TALE OF TWO TRIPOLIS



2022

AMERICAN WARSHIPS have been noticeably absent from Tasmanian waters in recent years, so it was a surprise to learn in November 2022 that the America class amphibious assault ship USS *Tripoli* (2020/44 971 disp) would be calling at Hobart en route from Sydney to its home base in San Diego, California at the end of its seven-month Indo-Pacific deployment. High security kept local photographers guessing as to the actual berthing time and yours truly had to change plans on the run, through a combination of an earlier than expected arrival and heavy peak-time traffic in the city. Still, diversion to the Regatta Ground yielded good results as the ship approached its berth at Macquarie Wharf cruise terminal.



top: USS *Tripoli* berthing in Hobart 10 November 2022
Photo: Rex Cox, edited by Chris Gee

above: USS *Tripoli* 12 November 2022
Photo: Rex Cox

left: Osprey aircraft on USS *Tripoli* 10 November 2022
Note the foil sun-shields. Photo: Walter Pless



1979

By coincidence (or design?), the 2022 arrival was exactly 43 years to the day since another USS *Tripoli* (1966/18 004 disp) had berthed in Hobart on 10 November 1979 — and both departed on the same day, 13 November. The two Jima class helicopter carrier saw service in Vietnam, the Gulf (where it suffered mine damage) and Somalia. It was decommissioned in 1995 and scrapped during 2018. The Australian aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* (1955/19 966 disp) — seen at left in the photo below — was also in Hobart at the time of the 1979 visit. Note how accessible the wharves were in those days, giving the public a close-up view of ships alongside, which is not possible now. □



top: Helicopters on flight deck of USS *Tripoli* in Hobart 11 November 1979
Photo: Nancy Jacobs

above: USS *Tripoli* in Hobart with HMAS *Melbourne*, 10–11 November 1979
Photo: Bill Burton

right: USS *Tripoli* departing Hobart 13 November 1979
Photo: Nancy Jacobs





AWBF 2023 Tall Ships & small boats ... and all

Parade of Sail
at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival
Friday 10 February
Photo: Francois Fourie



People line the waterfront to watch the AWBF Parade of Sail, Friday 10 February 2023. The Maritime Museum is behind *Van Diemen*; the bascule bridge centre) is open to allow access to Constitution Dock, and food stalls and displays have been set up. *Westward* (C31) is at the extreme right.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL has come to an end. The 2023 event that ran from 10–13 February, after a four-year hiatus, saw thousands of people gather on the Hobart Waterfront to celebrate Australian boats, boat builders and boat designers.

Numbers are still being counted, but early indications are that the Festival attracted over 90 000 people to the event, with many travelling from interstate to attend. Happy boat owners (32.5%) also travelled from interstate to display their wooden boats, with most now travelling around the waters of Tasmania.

The newest addition to the program, The Spirit of Tasmania Classic Dinghy Display at City Hall, proved to be a crowd favourite as visitors marveled at the display of iconic sailing dinghies and the Australian National Maritime Museum Wooden Boat Symposium was packed for every session.

Families were delighted at the array of nautical activities and performances at the Old Woolstore Little Sailors Village, with the My First Boat Project being a highlight; with the #AWBFnextgen boat builders parading their My First Boat to Constitution Dock for launching. Thousands also gathered to watch the famous Clennett's Mitre 10 Quick and Dirty Challenge, the battle between school teams building and racing their purpose-built wooden vessels.

As the Tall Ships departed for their home ports, AWBF General Manager Paul Stephanus said 'It has been a fantastic weekend of celebrations, with our boating community from near and far. We were delighted with the turn out, and look forward to seeing the final numbers. Regardless, we have had many people say it was the best Festival ever. So we're happy with that!

'You will continue to see wooden boats around the waters of Tasmania for the coming weeks, and we know many of our visitors will continue to explore what Tassie has to offer. I want to give a huge thank-you to the AWBF team, volunteers, and boat owners, as without them this wouldn't happen,' said Mr Stephanus.

The next Australian Wooden Boat Festival will be 7–10 February 2025.

For more information visit the AWBF website

awbf.org.au



Fireworks, Sunday 12 February Photo: Lisa Bromfield

Musicians at Sailors Village Photo: Michael White

Build Your Own Wooden Boat with the Franklin Wooden Boat Centre
Photo: Alex Nicholson



below: Sailors Village Sunday 12 February
Photo: Lisa Bromfield



On board the Tall Ship *James Craig* for the Parade of Sail
Friday 10 February

Morning dawns at
Constitution Dock 19
February 2023.
Most of the visiting boats
have left.

Photos this page:
Barry Champion





Tasmanian Missions to Seafarers Call for Volunteers

The Mission to Seafarers (MTS) is an international charity aligned with the Anglican Church that cares for the practical and spiritual welfare of merchant seafarers of all nationalities and faiths. Seafarers face challenges of long hours, difficult work conditions, and limited access to communications and support while at sea.

At the ports of Hobart, Bell Bay and Burnie a range of services are offered (from 'Flying Angel Clubs' in Hobart and Burnie, and an ecumenical centre at Bell Bay). Seafarers are welcomed by a friendly face, can contact families, and receive counselling for injustice or distress. Hobart's Flying Angel Club in Morrison Street offers free Wi-Fi, games tables, a chapel, gift kiosk and library. Services at Devonport are also available on request. Mission work is carried out by a small number of staff, chaplains and volunteers, who freely give their time. If you care about the welfare of others and have skills to share, the local Mission would love to hear from you. Just a few hours a week can make a real difference.

Volunteers can assist by

- Having a chat to a lonely seafarer and lending a listening ear!
- Visiting ships and giving out care packs (e.g. toiletries, pharmaceuticals) for short stay ships.
- Driving seafarers to and from the docks for medical appointments, sporting events or religious meetings. Hobart has a 12-seater bus.
- Giving seafarers tourist information for their visit.
- Helping in the gift shop, selling phone SIM cards and exchanging foreign currency.
- Working in admin., IT or social media roles.

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (a current card issued by the Tasmanian Government) is required. If a volunteer is multi-lingual that is an advantage, but not essential. Free training is offered for new volunteers, including cultural awareness courses of seafarers, in particular those from the Philippines or China.

Contact details

Hobart mission: www.mts.org.au/hobart
 Email: hobart@mts.org.au
 Instagram: @hobartmissiontoseafarers
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/hobartmissiontoseafarers/

National: <https://www.mts.org.au/get-involved>



top: Checking care packs delivered by volunteers Photo:MTS

above: Recreational facilities at Hobart's Flying Angel Club
 Photo: Brendon Bowes

below: Seafarers wearing beanies knitted and donated by volunteers Photo: MTS



The Bell from submarine HMAS J1

Ha! Ha! Ha! He! He! He! I can see you! But you can't see me!

The above inscription was engraved round the base of the bell from the Australian submarine J1 and the Australian National Submarine Museum is seeking photographs of the bell showing its unique inscription.

Following the conclusion of hostilities in World War I, the Admiralty in 1918 presented six submarines of the 'J Class' to the Australian Government. The submarines commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy at Portsmouth on 25 March 1919, and they arrived in Sydney later that year. Due to the poor condition of the submarines, the high cost of maintenance, and the worsening economic conditions, the submarines were placed in reserve and eventually scuttled around 1924.

The bells from the J Class submarines were declared for disposal in 1932 but due to its unique inscription around its rim J1's bell was presented to Launceston Grammar School, Tasmania on 24 September 1932.

Although the current location of the bell is unknown, we are confident that there must be some photographs of the bell in private collections.

If you have any information on the whereabouts of the J1 Bell, or if you have any photographs, it would be appreciated if you would contact the

Australian National Submarine Museum

Peter Horobin on 0448 410 101
 or email: p.horobin@submarinemuseum.org.au



HMAS J1 — details at <https://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-j1>

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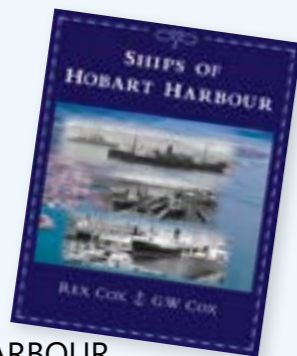
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SHIPS OF HOBART HARBOUR
by Rex Cox & GW Cox

A pageant of ships: ‘... convict transports and whalers, ships of discovery and research, deep sea sailing vessels, cargo vessels, passenger liners and cruise ships, steam yachts, warships, troop transports, royal yachts, oil tankers, ore carriers and container vessels ...’ and others — several associated with bells featured in this issue.



ML *Egeria* 7 February 2019

Photo: R Cox

The Bell from *Egeria*

ML *Egeria* is an iconic feature of southern Tasmania’s maritime landscape. Commissioned by the Marine Board of Hobart in the late 1930s, the wooden motor launch was to become the Harbour Master’s Launch and Vice-Regal vessel for the River Derwent.

Designed by John Thornycroft in England in 1937, *Egeria* was built in the Purdon & Featherston yard at Battery Point and launched on 20 October 1941.

Since then, it has performed various duties: from patrolling the Derwent for the Royal Australian Navy to carrying visiting dignitaries.

TasPorts, as successor to the Marine Board and the Hobart Ports Corporation, inherited ML *Egeria* in 2006 and, recognising that TasPorts were unable to care for it as required, transferred ownership to the Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania, who continue to act as worthy custodians of the vessel today.

In consultation with the Maritime Museum of Tasmania, it was recently verified that a bell in TasPorts’ possession was the original bell from the ML *Egeria*, which had been gifted to the Hobart Ports Authority in 1997.

In 2021, in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the vessel, TasPorts was delighted to see this important piece of maritime history safely reunited with the vessel and its proud owners, the Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania.

TasPorts recognises ML *Egeria*’s essential place within Tasmania’s rich maritime history and is proud to provide ongoing support to the current custodians of this historic vessel.



ML *Egeria* | a brief history

A classic antique vessel, ML *Egeria* is a Huon pine carvel motor launch with teak combings and white beech decking. It measures 18.9m and was named after HMS *Egeria*, flagship for the Hobart Regattas of January 1888 and 1889 and an early survey vessel in Tasmanian waters.

The ML *Egeria* was commandeered by the Royal Australian Navy as a harbour defence vessel during World War 2, after which it resumed its intended role as the executive vessel for the Marine Board of Hobart.

Initially built as the Harbour Master’s Launch, it later became popularly known as the Governor’s Launch, conveying many distinguished guests, including Royalty and Tasmanian Governors, around the Derwent. The late Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of Edinburgh were transported to the Hobart Regatta aboard ML *Egeria*. The then Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana were also among the royal guests on board.



above: Gary McCarthy, TasPorts Senior Commercial Manager returning ML *Egeria*’s original bell in 2021
left: the bell at the presentation
Images supplied by TasPorts

In *Capital Port, A History of the Marine Board of Hobart*, it is noted that it ‘undertook no common tasks, but carried important visitors on tours of the port and appeared on all ceremonial occasions.’

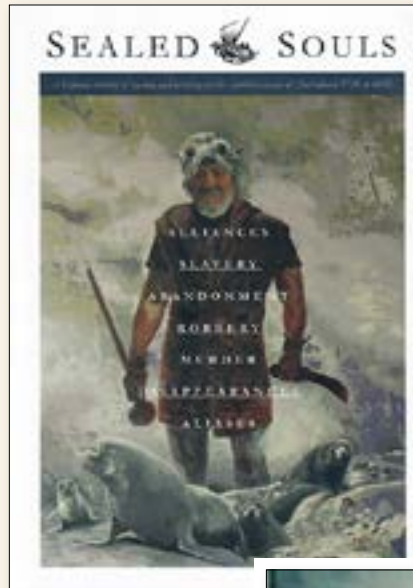
The vessel also has the honour of being the flagship of the renowned biennial Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

More recently, Captain Bernie Smith and Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania volunteers completed significant restoration works on the vessel’s hull, seeing it returned to its former glory. □

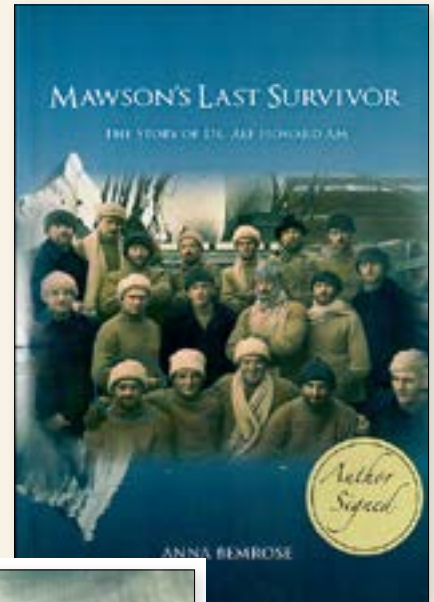


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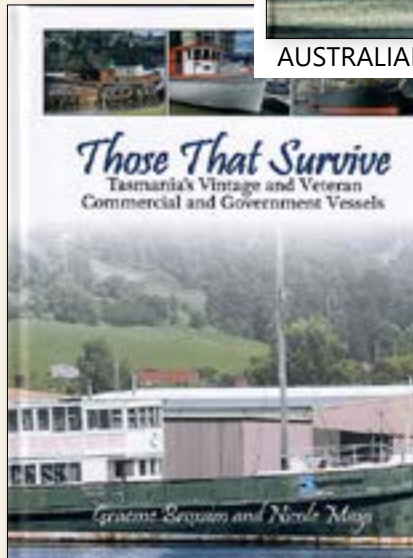
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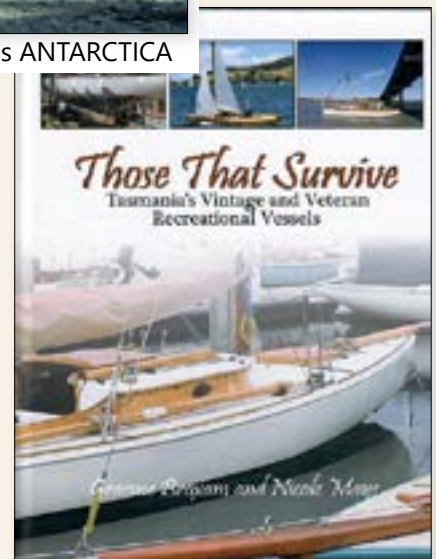


AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC'S ANTARCTICA



THOSE THAT SURVIVE

- (1) Commercial and Government Vessels
- (2) Recreational Vessels



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