



Replica of Ark Royal's ships silver bell presented to the City of Leeds

HMS ARK ROYAL

Much of the advice given to us today includes the saving and investing of our monies for our personal future. During World War II saving was encouraged to secure the future of our country. This was achieved by Government Sponsored Campaigns, one of which was a series of 'Warship Weeks'. By setting and achieving a savings target, a town or city could adopt a warship. On November 4, 1941, the City of Leeds, through its National Savings Committee, decided on a target of £3 million for the first week in February 1942. Their adopted ship was to be HMS *Ark Royal*. 10 days later, however, *Ark Royal* was sunk. This tragedy inspired the City to raise its target to £5 million; so enthusiastic were the City's savers the final total for the campaign was £9,301,293 (30 million at today's values). Other cities were anxious to adopt the next (present) *Ark Royal*, but after their mammoth efforts the honour remained with Leeds.

Since being launched in 1950 by HM the Queen (now Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) HMS *Ark Royal* has had a very close liaison with the City of Leeds. Now the time has come for the City to bestow the highest honour possible to the ship — Freedom of the City.

The main party, totalling 400 members of the ship's company arrived in the Leeds area on October 15 in preparation for the ceremony. There have been many social invites for our representatives including a Ship's Dance, visits to Tetleys Brewery and to a German Beer Cellar in the City. The 'Stars on Sunday' Television programme have invited the ship's com-

pany in Leeds to appear on one of their programmes and this was broadcast on November 11, Remembrance Sunday.

The Freedom of the City Ceremony commenced at 1105 on Thursday October 25, when the Queen Mother arrived. As the Ships Company marched through the city, aircraft representing all the *Ark Royal* Squadrons flew past overhead, being controlled via RS Lethbridge using a 634. On completion of the Ceremony a buffet lunch was provided at the Civic Centre, then it was back onboard to chipping and painting for the lucky lads who at least have had a two week break from the refit routine.

Any reader who wishes to know more about the *Ark Royal* should see the film 'THE IRON VILLAGE' which was filmed onboard last March and is now currently on circuit with the film of Nelson 'BEQUEST TO THE NATION'.