



Pitcairn as seen from the north

# Pitcairn News

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Kari Orm Pitcairn Tull:

The short month of February has been eventful and HOT. Cruise ships came and went, mail and supplies and tourists arrived on Claymore and the yacht Discovery. Bounty Day was celebrated with a public dinner and the burning of the Bounty down The Landing.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> the "Pacific Princess" arrived in the morning, and before the princess had even left, the "Albatross" arrived. The Albatross passengers were brought ashore in our longboats to wander along the main road and buy souvenirs at the stalls in The Square. The "Colombus" tried to anchor on the 11<sup>th</sup>, first in Bounty Bay, then in Tedside and then back in Bounty Bay, till at last the captain decided not to let the passengers ashore and instead invited the islanders onboard. On the 14<sup>th</sup> the "Aurora" visited with 3000 people onboard, never been so many people so close to our coast!! And on the 17<sup>th</sup> the Norwegian "Tameris" stopped to pick up the Governor's Representative and her husband on their way to New Zealand, giving us a good opportunity to do more trading.

## CRUISE SHIP SEASON IN FULL



The longboat approaching Pacific Princess



The Pacific Princess leaves and the Albatross anchoring in Bounty Bay



Back issues of Dem Tull can be found on:  
[www.demtullpitcairn.com](http://www.demtullpitcairn.com)



The aft pool deck of the "Aurora" where we were trading.

# BOUNTY DAY



Pictures from the public dinner and the burning of the cardboard replica of the Bounty down The Landing. As the Bounty burst into flames, we all sang the hymn "In the Sweet by and by, a traditional favourite on the island.



ON  
PITCAIRN



## ***MORE FROM BOUNTY DAY CELEBRATIONS IN WELLINGTON***

We ran out of space in January's issue, so we will display more of the pictures from the Pitcairners' celebrations of our national day. Sheree let us use some of her pictures she posted on Facebook.



Getting ready for the traditional tug-of-war

# MORE PICS FROM WELLINGTON



Daphne & her brother Bill



Shirley Coffin & Kean



Elaine, Leona & Zita



Pitcairn weckles for everyone!



Some very patriotic Pitcairners



Leona, Kath, Zita & Dianne in their beautiful hand-made hats

NOTE : Tim's history page will be back in our March issue.



**MELVA:**

## *On Going Home Again*

I have “come home” again for an unspecified period of time, forsaking the trappings of The Big Outside World (BOW) for the simple life of a small island and tiny community; ergo, a reflection on changes that I have observed since my first venture to the BOW – well, second, actually.

My first time away from Pitcairn was when my parents packed up the family and moved to New Zealand for twelve months. This was not the culmination of months or years of planning; but the result of the inflammation of a particular and, apparently, useless bit of my anatomy that required a trip to seek advanced medical attention in the Big Outside World (BOW). New Zealand was the destination of choice for reasons of convenience and expediency; convenient, because of family ties in the country; and, expedient, because the next expected ship going in any direction was, indeed, sailing to New Zealand and – for me – an appointment with a scalpel.

On returning to Pitcairn after that first encounter with the BOW, for the very first time it occurred to me that Pitcairn is small. Also, after living “Outside” in the jungles of concrete, glass and steel, with large objects that moved on four wheels and which were noisier than any four-legged creature I had ever encountered prior to my first venture away from home, Pitcairn also seemed wild. My eyes had grown accustomed to the vistas of flora, confined, as they were, to designated spaces and shapes as controlled by man. My immature mind and relatively brief exposure to the BOW were, then, insufficient to form an appreciation for neither the smallness; nor, the wildness of this speck planted squarely in the middle of No-where. Time has a marvelous way of changing one’s perspective.

Fast forward to now, early in the second decade of a new century. After several decades of living in the BOW, I have come home again; and, inevitably, note some changes.

Oddly enough, Pitcairn now seems neither as small; nor as wild as I once fancied on returning from the initial first venture away. With families having moved away to the BOW, and elders who have passed on, where, once upon a time perhaps three houses stood, a single one now stands; which, consequently, gives the illusion of greater space. I am less bothered by the matter of space than I am by the absence of former residents. I wonder if they ever think about returning for longer than a short visit.

I grieve for loved ones, gone forever, whose company also provided for many treasured moments. I deeply regret the loss of their wisdom, and rue lost opportunities for listening to accounts of their – my – heritage, and vow to learn as much as I can from the Island’s present senior citizenry before they, too, are gone forever.

The absence of former residents has placed a strain on the dwindling number of inhabitants who remain to keep the community alive and well. Despite having machines and appliances of convenience to perform much of the necessary labors of life, the demands placed on available manpower to perform those duties, yet outside the realm of machines, leaves little time for leisure and casual visiting amongst residents. Practically all able-bodies wear more than one hat in assuming multiple roles within the community.

Where, once upon a time, being on the government payroll was defined by a few individuals devoting a few hours to the job per month, now, it is not uncommon for government employees, who constitute a majority of the workforce, to spend five or six days out of the week, for a two week stretch, engaged in the business of maintenance and upkeep of the island, or, in the business of government itself, as the local Council assumes a greater role in matters of governance than was previously granted. I am struck by the irony in comparing this tiny community of fewer than a hundred to those consisting of millions of residents; and, how, while the larger are calling for reduced, streamlined government, Pitcairn has become a community where the majority of the residents are on the government payroll.

Within the first decade of the new millennium, a restructuring has taken place that has expanded local government, creating jobs; but, also, demanding more time of the new employees, necessitating time away from domestic responsibilities and

creating a different way of coping with life.

Families once maintained several garden plots each in various locations around the island. Now, with less time to devote to gardening and - in conjunction with - the exodus of former residents, Pitcairn has seen the disappearance of many garden plots. Once, it was possible to stand at a vantage point and look over the fields, knowing which belonged to whom. Today, most of the old garden plots are over grown by the prolific rose-apple shrub, the pulau or, pandanus palm groves. Still other vacant lots are over run by lantana, alwyn grass and guava bushes, the knowledge of their location and former ownership existing only in the memory of the old generation. The well-ordered garden plot has become the exception, rather than the rule. Some households have even elected not to maintain gardens; relying instead on purchasing produce from others; or, to spend hard earned dollars at the small convenience store. In another time, this practice would have been considered unthinkable. Gardens were the mainstay of each family’s sustenance. Produce was never sold, but given freely and without thought of remuneration. Some of the older generation, in particular, find the idea of taking money for the literal fruits of their labour quite disagreeable.

Change, they say, is inevitable. Life on Pitcairn is no exception to that rule. We still live a comparatively simple life; however, there are few communities in the world that have as high a ratio of “connected” households. Telephones connected to the outside world are in every home. All but two homes are connected to the internet. We watch news on television as it happens in real time practically anywhere in the world.

These changes all occurred during the first decade of the new millennium - major changes that positively impacts the way the community functions and relates to the BOW. If there is a downside to these changes it is that, with the ability to switch on electronic entertainment in each home, there is less communal socializing. And yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same. The inimitable Pitcairn character, infused with humour, remains the same. It feels good to be home.

**The visit of the “Tamesis”, of the Norwegian company Walleniusen, that used to visit here regularly before on their way from Panama to Auckland, but now their route is further north, and we only see them on the odd occasion maybe once a year.**



**We board the ship first by climbing the rope ladder and then the companionway – not for the fainthearted in rough seas, but this time the weather was perfect.**



**The Captain and the Chief Engineer on the bridge**



**The huge decks seem bigger than our island**



**... and off she goes to New Zealand.**

## The Pitcairn Island Study Group

David Ransome of The Pitcairn Islands Study Group in the UK has asked us to give some mention of their group to encourage membership. PISG devotes itself to the study and history of the Pitcairn Islands, its people, and the mutiny. *"Our membership fees are reasonable at US\$25 for people outside the UK. UK membership is £11 and Europe £12.50. These fees are shown on our website <http://www.pitcairnstudygroup.co.uk/> and can be paid by PayPal. Members are invited to our London meetings twice a year (admission fee applies) and receive a copy of the award winning "UK Log", printed in full colour, twice a year."*

Readers might also be interested in the website addresses of a couple of island residents:

Dennis: - [www.pitcairn.pn/~dennisirmaproducts](http://www.pitcairn.pn/~dennisirmaproducts)

Terry: [www.pitcairntoge.com](http://www.pitcairntoge.com)

### TREE TALK

Not much excitement on the tree-lover's front. The mango season is well over, - zillions of ripe and fruit-fly-spoilt mangoes have been lying everywhere, and very few fit for eating, as they have to be picked early before the fruit fly makes its way inside and ruins them. The banana trees are still producing, in spite of the drought, but otherwise even old established trees are looking sad for lack of water. My three poinsettia trees never flowered this season, and the leaves are drooping and sad. The hungry and unidentified bugs in the tapau trees are still at it, chomping away on the branches and killing them off, creating huge mounds of sawdust underneath the trees. But the roots are still alive, and new branches are bravely sprouting in defiance of the bugs' devastating hunger.

I could not resist the beautiful flowering of the tree at Blubber's, the "flame tree", though I have showed it in Dem Tull before, but this season it is even more gorgeous, hanging over the Main Road with its generous red clusters.



### THE DROUGHT

It is over three months since our last proper, lengthy, life-giving shower of rain. What little rain we have had, has settled the dust for a few hours, but afterwards it is just as hot and dusty. We are now calling it "the drought", not just "the hot spell". Vege and flower gardens are a thing of the past, and our lawns are brown and crisp, only the weeds seem to thrive. Some of us are reluctant to even go out on the motorbikes, and some put on raingear with a hood or cover themselves in a shroud to avoid getting dust in hair and on clothes. We seem to be covered in the red dust all the time. Daily we observe rainclouds out there, generously emptying the precious rain in the ocean, and Dennis in jest suggested it might come to the place where we go out in the longboats with our empty water containers, chasing rainclouds.

### THE FIRE

Our waste management man Turi was doing some burning in the pit up in Aute Valley, when some cans exploded and the fire got out of control. We heard the call on VHF channel 16 that help was needed, and in no time at all most of the inhabitants were up there - dust cloud after dust cloud moving up Jim's Ground - with visibility close to zero. But the fire was soon put out, almost disappointing those who expected a spreading fire inferno. People have now been cautioned against starting fires because of the drought.

#### Letters to the Editor:

Yes, Yes, please print news about the radio club, past and present! Don't let ham radio die on Pitcairn Island. Contacts with Tom, Meralda and others remain as highlights in my many years as a ham operator. Thanks and best regards - Roy Fansler, Illinois USA

A correction from last month's *Letters to the Editor*: where it says in Jon Keir-Colwell's letter that he was here in 1997, which was of course meant to be in 2007.



**F**rom Council minutes 9<sup>th</sup> February

**Election ordinance**

*“Discussion was held around the need to confirm eligibility for the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.*

*Council agreed that the previous decision of eligibility for these positions required that a person, other than a native born person, be resident for 8 years after granting of residency should be abided by.*

*Cr Brown D suggested that the requirement be further defined in that in order to be eligible a person must not have left the island for any period greater than 7 months during the course of the 8 years after residency was granted and that these absences be on medical grounds only.*

*Cr Warren J suggested that the role of Mayor should be held only by a native born person”.*

Some members thought eight years was a long time to be isolated on the island without being able to visit with friends or parents, children, grandchildren overseas from fear of being disqualified, and also isolated from normal activities and normal thoughts in the outside world, but it was claimed that if you spend time away, it proves that you are not committed to the island. If the new suggestions will be considered for the new ordinance, there will be different qualification criteria for outsiders and locals regarding the office of mayor and deputy mayor. The mayor wondered if that was not discrimination, but a Council member claimed that *“there is fear on the island already now that outsiders take over Council.”* The deputy mayor said the people decide that by who they vote in, - if they fear them, they would clearly not vote for them. It seems that xenophobia is ruling Pitcairn, which is a stronger deterrent to immigration than are isolation and high travel fares.

Our policeman Geoff has had a busy time since he returned from New Zealand in December. Though he got married in January, there can't have been much time for honeymoon, for a number of cases have been reported to the police station. There has been malicious destruction of plants at the government-run nursery, and after the supply ship, he has been busy investigating the disappearance of three boxes that were in the cargo, personal belongings of three different families. Adding that to the disappearance of boxes of private cargo after being brought ashore from Picton Castle last July, it seems we have turned into a nation of thieves.. A sad development on our island.

Regarding the alleged breach of our election law, Geoff said that there won't be any charges laid as he reckons the people involved had not meant to break the law, it was a genuine wish to get an answer. So who knows what might happen next election day in December? Precedences have been set.

**POSTAL RATES** will be increased in March, with more increases in September. Postage for letters will double – from \$1.50 to \$3.00 - , while small parcels up to 100gr will actually be cheaper than before, parcels up to 1 kilo slightly more costly, and larger parcels up to 5 kilo about double of previous charges. Not as bad overall as we had feared, but the September hikes will hit us bad, as we depend on the post to send our souvenir orders and honey overseas. For a pensioner to send ten letters will cost 12% of the entire monthly pension. Good job we got Internet and email, though that cost almost half of the monthly pension.

***The New Land Ordinance***

is said to become operational this financial year, some parts have already been put in place, but more regulation is needed re the current status of land. The Land Tenure Ordinance of 2000 became operational in 2007, suspending all freehold titles to private land and, starting afresh, made it necessary for us all to apply to Land Court for land allocation and a leasehold title to our houseland, garden and orchard land for our lifetime or as long as we required it. All land claimed for registration after the new law comes into effect, must be kept cleared of bush, weeds and old rubbish Part of the objects and purposes of this ordinance was to ensure *“that all habitable and arable land is used to the best advantage and to discourage undue aggregation of land by imposing an annual tax on land holdings of absentee owners or those in excess of the reasonable needs of the owner and his or her family”* and to introduce land tax for the first time in Pitcairn's history, 30c per square meter for residents and 50c for absentee land owners. Absentee landowners will lose their right to the land after ten years' absence, when the trustee will automatically become the owner. More than half of Adamstown is now more or less jungle, yet “owned”, so the new law will hopefully lead to a tidy-up and a better looking Adamstown.

HART'S ALL. EF YORLY WUNT TO TULL, TULLA JULIE IN NEWZEALAND ORN

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