

Pitcairn News

Volume 2 No 6

June 2008



THE NOXIOUS ROSEAPPLE TREES

JULIE IN NEW ZEALAND TULL: It is winter time on Pitcairn and there have been only a few community events this month – but still lots of news. Winter time is also a busy time for gardeners and it is wild beans season too. The chainsaws have been working overtime cutting firewood in readiness for Sugar Cane processing which is imminent and the arrowroot is ready for harvesting. These are annual winter events on Pitcairn's calendar. PDT and Council continue their discussions on restructuring and thankfully Pitcairn hasn't been in the news recently.

PITCAIRNS LATEST STAMP ISSUES

- Flowers and Bees** was released on 25 June 2008 but the stamps have not yet arrived on Pitcairn.
- Pitcairn from Space** was released on 27 February 2008 but the stamps only arrived on Pitcairn on the Tabora on Sunday 22 June 2008
- Pitcairn's Longboat History** was released on 24 April 2008 but the stamps only arrived on Pitcairn on 22 June 2008.

Sale of stamps on Pitcairn has reduced and usually only 150 sets each are sent to Pitcairn which amount usually exceeds the number required.

Flowers and Bees

Pitcairn's honey is attributed to the nectar from the many flowers found on Pitcairn. Four have been chosen for this issue:

- \$1.00 Yellow Guava
- \$1.20 Portulaca
- \$1.50 Sunflowers
- \$3.00 Mountain Chesnut Tree



First day of issue – 25 June 2008 – awaiting shipment to Pitcairn but can be purchased from the Pitcairn Islands Philatelic Bureau in Wellington, New Zealand



- \$0.60 Oeno Island
- \$1.00 Pitcairn Island
- \$2.00 Henderson Island
- \$2.50 Ducie Island



First day of issue = 27 February 2008 – arrived on Pitcairn 22 June 2008

Denominations:

- \$0.50
- \$1.00
- \$1.50
- \$3.50

PITCAIRN'S LONGBOAT HISTORY



First Day of Issue 24 April 2008 – arrived on Pitcairn 22 June 2008

If you are interested in buying stamps contact Pitcairns Postmaster on email: postmaster@pitcairn.pn

UCKLUN IN NEW ZEALAND

JASON WARREN TULL

He arrived back in Auckland a couple of weeks ago after crewing the Southern Salvor to Bangladesh.



“Seven crew including one Australian left Auckland on the Southern Salvor, towing a barge, for Nelson in the South Island where we picked up a fishing boat. Towing the two vessels we left Nelson for Freemantle, Western Australia then to Cocos Island and finally arriving in Chittagong, Bangladesh 91 days later. Doing only 5 knots (6 when the wind was behind us) was slow going with a few mishaps along the way. We got caught up in the bad storm which hit Melbourne Australia, one of the tow ropes broke four times and the engine died when we had problems with water in the fuel. The times the Salvor served as a supply ship to Pitcairn was a piece of cake in comparison. At least I was able to visit foreign places most of ucklun would not visit. We returned via Duccas, then to Singapore then onto Auckland. “

Walma Warren (the late Vulas brother) is 85 years old and still going strong. Last weekend Pearl, husband Desmond (Walmas brother), Shelly and Bobby flew to Auckland from Wellington to celebrate Shelly's birthday and to visit Walma whom they had not seen for some time. Visiting at the same time was Walmas sister Oris and partner Adam who recently moved to Auckland from Taupo to get away from the too cold winters. We spent an enjoyable afternoon catching up and ended up having a typical Pitcairn humorous argumentative discussion on the pros and cons of Pitcairn and ways to solve its current woes. Need I say more? It has been a couple of years since I caught up with them and I was surprised to learn they receive

Pitcairn News.

Photo: L-R Desmond, Oris and Dawn (Walmas wife)



and Walma seated.



Shelly (Pearls daughter) and husband Bobby were in Auckland from Wellington for the weekend of 28th June her 37th birthday. They left their 4 year old daughter Nicola and 1 year old son

Christian with sister Sheree. Nicola discovered it was easy to use Nanas home phone to call mummy on her mobile phone many times that weekend.



Daryl (Marona and the late Purvis son) and Iris (Pony) Jasons nana looking at the 997 photos I took while on Pitcairn. I especially took some photos of

Jasons house to prove to them it is still standing and livable just in case they may wish to consider helping to increase Pitcairns population by going back there to live. I still havent figured out if their answer was yes it is worth considering or no it is not.



Misco and Conrad Killian and their daughter Vaeanna from Papaeete, Tahiti kindly opens their home to Pitcairners enroute to and from Pitcairn via Tahiti. Misco has Pitcairn blood hailing from har pile for Idas. Ida is Royals

grandmother and Miscos great grandmother. I am still too confused trying to link up the relations between all ucklun so for now I won't even try. Misco and Conrad visited Pitcairn in 2004 on one of the French Navy ships and stayed with Carol and Jay. We stayed with them enroute to Pitcairn and again when I returned. I was invited to a Tahitian wedding at one of the most amazing homes I have ever seen. It is fortunate Vaeanna speaks reasonable English as my Tahitian and French is non existent. Vaeanna, Misco and her sister have been visiting their holiday home here in Auckland and Pearl and I had the privilege of returning a small bit of their hospitality by taking them to dinner at the Lonestar restaurant in Newmarket, Auckland on Saturday night.



PHOTOS: Top L-R Miscos sister, Misco, Julie, Pearl, Vaeanna. Bottom: Vaeanna & Misco

Pussy (Marona) who last year sold her house, packed up a container and moved to Melbourne, Australia has repacked her container and returned to New Zealand.

**TIMOTHY YOUNG TULL about
CHARLES CHRISTIAN, the "middle child" of FLETCHER CHRISTIAN and MAUATUA**

PHOTO: Charles Aute, where Charles had a large 'Aute' Plantation." (The Aute tree on Pitcairn is now protected)



Quite often I hear the name Fletcher Christian, "Maimitti," Mary Christian, Thursday October Christian, or Thursday October II (Duddie). However, there is one member of the family

whom I have always been interested in, and also admired. That is Charles Christian, the "middle child" of Fletcher Christian and Mauatua. Charles Christian was born on Pitcairn sometime in early 1792, one of the first of his generation. Sadly, he was born with a clubfoot, which would earn him the nickname of Charles "Huppa" Christian. There were some who called him "Charley," but for the most part he was known as "Huppa."

Charles married Sarah "Sully" McCoy, the daughter of William McCoys wife Teio sometime around 1808. Together they had eight children. Sadly, less than a year after the birth of their last son Isaac, Sarah died, leaving Charles with the children, who ranged from less than a year old to 16. More tragedy struck his family when his son Edward died on Marutea, following the disastrous exodus to Tahiti in 1831.

Following the return to Tahiti, Charles was not involved in most of the events which marked Pitcairn's history, but lived a quiet, hard-working life. However, it must be

mentioned about his actions during the time of Joshua Hills regime on Pitcairn, after he was well-established on the island. I quote from Rosalind Amelia Young, "Charles Christian.....whose many noble qualities endeared him to all, ever remained the staunch, unchanging friend of the persecuted Nobbs (Charles's son-in-law), Buffett and Evans; and when, by Hills order, Buffett was publicly flogged, this true friend, hearing of the unjust and cruel treatment, hastened to the rescue, and, by his unflinching bravery and manly courage, succeeded in delivering the unhappy man from his hard-hearted and wicked tormentors." Another version adds that when one Hills adherents were whipping Buffett, Charles Christian arrived, and stood between the ship and Buffett, and received the stroke. He then grabbed the whip from the man, effectively ending the punishment. As a result, he was persecuted for his loyalty, but survived and eventual received high acclaim for his selfless actions.

Charles died on January 14th, 1842, survived by 7 children and well over 20 grandchildren. On Pitcairn today, there are places named after him. One ridge which comes off the well-known Ship-Landing Point is called "Charles Huppa Ridge." Another place attributed to him is the prominent name "Charles Aute." It should always be remembered that Charles, despite his infirmity, was regarded as a kind-hearted, noble, trustworthy and brave man.

BITS AND PIECES

The **SUPPLY SHIP TAPORA** arrived on Sunday 22 June 2008 with much anticipated supplies. The store had run out of most basic items like long life milk, flour and instant noodles. Normally the Tapora would only call on Mondays to Fridays as the weekends are time out for her crew. But with bad weather forecasted for Monday onwards they decided to make an exception. It was a good call because the weather was fine, as with the last time they called in March, they were able to anchor right outside Bounty Bay again.

Then the **WEATHER TURNED WITH HARD WIND AND RAIN** for days on end. It was wet and muddy and walking took a rest during the wet weather as it was easier to drive the four wheel bikes rather than walk on the slippery and muddy dirt roads. Bradley and Emily (right) thought the muddy pool of water was great fun. Brings back fond memories. Lucky the store sells Napisan to soak the clothes in because the red volcanic Pitcairn dirt is almost impossible to remove from clothes. We no longer boil the living daylight out of our clothes in the coppers.

Nadine tull: "See if you can tell where the dirt ends and the kids start! All three kids - Em, Brad and Ryan spent an afternoon in the mud one rainy day and this was the result!"



The latest **QUEENS MEDAL, AN MBE** has been awarded. The latest recipient is Betty Christian, the author of the court affidavit for the prosecution. As the Island Council was not consulted this was unexpected news. But given our speculation on who was going to be next, I guess it shouldn't have been a surprise. The news wasn't received with too much acclaim or congratulations amongst most of us but with Pitcairn still in a fragile state, mentally, the reaction to the news was to be expected. According to the latest Miscellany Betty is still undecided if she will go to England to receive her medal from the Queen. The Sir and Dame titles are still up for grabs. Will be alert for the next round of honours usually in the New Year

BITS & PIECES CONTINUED:

VISITING DAY AT BOBS VALLEY HAS CHANGED. With the reduction in numbers to five, the Corrections Officers have changed their work shifts. Visiting on Saturdays used to be from 1pm to 4pm for families and from 2pm to 3pm for others. Seventh Day Adventist is the only church on Pitcairn and in recent times the numbers who attend church has fallen. But one thing most Pitcairners still practice - they regard the seventh day as a day of rest. It would be unusual to find anyone going for firewood or tending to gardens on Saturdays. It is the day they take time out to find Mrs Turpin to feed her, to go for walks, watch DVD's in the daytime, and go on family picnics or just rest. Then when Bobs Valley became occupied, spending an hour on a Saturday afternoon visiting the men became a community event for the ones who visited. There is very seldom an empty chair amongst those placed along the whole length of the verandah. It is a day when problems are put aside and where jokes, gossip and debate unite us. Changing the visiting day from Saturday to Sunday some were worried the number of visitors would drop as Sunday is a work day on Pitcairn where everyone is busy following a day of doing nothing. (One day of rest each week is probably why Pitcairners live to a ripe old age). But the numbers didn't drop. The Tapora arrived on a Sunday and visiting was deferred to Monday. Monday was extremely busy following supply ship visit but when visiting time came, it was really heartening to see the usual ones who visited, down tools and took an hour out of their busy day to visit with the men at Bobs Valley. The men are still very much supported by the majority of the community.



Winter time is sugar cane harvesting, arrowroot processing and **WILD BEANS** season. There has been a hive of activity with firewood cutting for the furnaces at the Sugar Cane Mill and clearing the bush from around sugar cane patches in readiness for that day which is imminent. But wild beans harvesting is in full swing. The beans grow up and over the thickest of bush and into the tallest trees. They don't grow in gardens and do not need tending. At the end of the season they die down and reappear again the next year. Hence the name Wild Beans. It is yummy cooked as a soup in coconut cream with a chopped onion and tomato. Baskets and baskets of beans have already been harvested and the beans cooked then frozen for use when the season finishes. Very rarely we are lucky enough to get a ship to bring some

out to ucklun in New Zealand. While MAF no longer allow breadfruit into New Zealand they have not stopped wild beans and we are crossing our fingers this will not change.

THE QUEENS BIRTHDAY was celebrated on Monday 9 June with a community day playing games out at Hullianda (Aute Valley). The wind was really strong and blowing hard across the plains where they were celebrating which made the day uncomfortable for the elderly who were there to watch. Not everyone joined in, the usual group preferring to stay away until Bobs Valley is empty, chose to carry on with their normal day. Therefore I have no photos to show you. The day ended with a public dinner at the square which was also a celebration of Charlene's birthday.

FOUR YACHTS called during June, three British and one other. Last port before Pitcairn was Easter Island.

THE NEW EMPLOYEES FOR THE STORE has been hired. Simon Young as Manager, his wife Shirley as Administrator, Sarah and Olive as checkout operators and Andrew in the warehouse.

RENOVATIONS AT THE STORE. While there is a question mark over the viability and construction of the proposed new store, renovations to the existing store was carried out. As the supply ship was imminent and the renovations were unfinished, the Bobs Valley men were called in to help. Unfortunately the renovations were not finished in time so the stores goods were taken to the Public Hall for a couple of days. All hands on deck helped sort the private orders from the store. This caused delay in opening the store with the new goodies and the eager shoppers were champing at the bit to get their hands on the new stock. I understand there was a record turnout on the first day the store opened with the new supplies. Spend, spend, spend may be the only way to get the fabulously new store.

THE PRICE OF PETROL. After commenting last month on the walking taking place because of the price of petrol, I was asked how much do we pay for petrol on Pitcairn? With freight and the cost of the 44 gallon (200 litre) drum the petrol that arrived on the 22 June 2008 was \$565.00 per drum up from \$495.00 in March 2008. That is \$NZ12.84 per gallon or \$NZ2.83 per litre. Some food prices from the private orders invoices, including freight from the last supply ship: 2 kg bag of frozen chips = \$29.10, 1 dozen eggs = \$7.52, 1.5 ltr bottle coke/sprite = \$4.95, 500 gram tub margarine = \$5.43, 20 kg bag white flour = \$37.10. (Prices in New Zealand currency – our official currency)

A NEW POSITION OF PURCHASING OFFICER has been created to coordinate all purchases for the store, warehouse, engineering spares, works, etc. The new purchasing officer is Commissioner Jaques.

PITCAIRN DEVELOPMENT TEAM (PDT) I understand is hard at work doing what they are supposed to be doing, writing job descriptions, designing new structures for council and job positions, etc. Apparently the details are unavailable to the public until they have been ratified by council. I was surprised as "Open and Transparent" was much touted last year in connection with the proposals for changes to government and works. I understand council has met many times with PDT to discuss and consider the proposals and it looks like we need to be patient and wait for the results.

BITS & PIECES CONTINUED:

MAIL STATISTICS FOR JUNE – IN: 120 **OUT:** 140 The inmates in Bobs Valley are down to three but the letter writing is still going strong.

COMPLAINANTS COMPENSATION CLAIMS. Nothing new to report except, I was told, the police have been contacting various folks seeking addresses for some of the complainants. I wonder why? Has the Governor relented and agreed to pay? Will we ever know?

SIMBA the very large Alaskan Malamute dog injured his shoulder when he was unable to jump over the same wall as the cat he was chasing and instead ran into the wall. He was virtually crippled for a few weeks and initially euthanasia was considered. But given his large size Pitcairn didn't have enough drugs to do the job and shooting him was too terrible to consider. Mummy Michele nursed him night and day and with help having to literally lift him up with blankets to carry him outside to do toilet duties. On Friday night Michele was able to resume her duties in the café because Simba is on the mend and can stand again. Great news for Michele and Shawn. But for the cat? At least they have nine lives against Simbas one.

For seven months in 2007, Pitcairn had as resident a **CLINICAL FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST**, to provide treatment and emotional support to the then five men in Bob's Valley, but also to their immediate family, as well as to the three men serving their sentence in home detention or in community service. Jon was a true professional and provided help and survival tools to those who needed it, and most of us did. He departed in December 2007 as his contract with the British authorities expired, and the islanders were left without anyone to help them psychologically to cope with depression, trauma and anger. The convicts' families appealed to the Governor in March to have Jon return, overseas sponsors were willing to pay his fees, but we were told by the Governor's office that a psychologist was not needed, as the convicts were assessed as "not suicidal", and that if the islanders themselves arranged to have him come to the island, he would not have access to Bob's Valley and the guys there. The convicts' families, finding it hard to cope at times, counsel each other and with on-island friends and also Jon by email. They are still without any professional help.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE. Following policy writing by Pitcairn Development Team, one group of community- involved women have volunteered to write a new policy for social development and welfare on the island, focusing on the vulnerable - the elderly and the children. Another group is currently involved in bringing Pitcairn in line with requirements for adoption of the **EUROPEAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR)**, which Pitcairn was left out of in 2006 when United Kingdom ratified the ECHR for all its other overseas territories.

Nadine threw a party Up Flatland the other night - drinks and nibbles - to celebrate her and Randy's **6TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**. Happy Anniversary, guys!!!!

THE BACK PAGE

Over the last few years much publicity have been generated about the large sums of money Britain has set aside to spend on Pitcairn improving infrastructure and services. That book said Britain has spent \$NZ50 million since 2000 which also said is only a conservative estimate and could be twice that. It also said *'there is almost an unlimited fund of goodwill, **money** and ideas.'* She also quotes ...*"Leslie Jaques says, 'If we don't get it right this time, if mindsets don't change, Pitcairn will die with these people. No one will come home, and if no one comes home, this will be the last generation. The old people will die and the young people will leave. This is the last throw of the dice for Pitcairn.'*"

Leslie Jaques, our Commissioner is presently on Pitcairn. As that book says, there definitely appears to be an unlimited fund of **ideas**. The Breakwater project was much championed but it is dead in the water. There will be no breakwater on Pitcairn, not in the foreseeable future anyway. The unlimited fund of money was not unlimited after all. The much talked about 24 hour power generated by windmills has come up against many obstacles one of them is money. The cost of the project appears to be spiraling out of the projected budget and is at serious risk of going down the same path as the breakwater. The new store is on hold while everyone goes back to the drawing board as it appears not to be a viable project. The shipping service that book claimed would ply bi monthly between Pitcairn and Tahiti has a very big question mark hanging over it. My understanding is for that project to work, Mangareva needs to change from a domestic port to an international port!!! From recent press reports it appears the Governor is in discussions with France.

That book claims the breakwater will revolutionize Pitcairn as we currently only get a dozen of the 40 ships that ply between Easter Island and Tahiti because the ships could lower their own tenders safely. I travelled to Pitcairn earlier this year via Easter Island. We boarded the cruise ship early in the morning on one of the ships tenders. The sea in the morning was calm and most of the passengers were able to come ashore. But by midday the wind had increased and the seas became choppy and the passengers had difficulty reboarding the ship from their tenders. If we had boarded the ship later in the day, it would most likely have been by a local Easter Island fishing boat because the ships do not lower their tenders in Easter Island in rough seas. So just like Easter Island, even if Pitcairn had a breakwater, the passengers would still be unable to come ashore in bad weather. One of the advantages Easter

Island has over Pitcairn is onshore infrastructure and facilities like buses or coaches and their main road and most arterial roads are sealed. They are able to transport tourists to all of the places of interest. Pitcairn do not have the 'onshore' infrastructure like proper roads and buses to cope with an influx of tourists. The difficulty in the passengers embarking and disembarking alongside the ship in bad weather is the same for Easter Island as it is for Pitcairn, breakwater or no breakwater. In my opinion it is the onshore facilities that attract the higher number of cruise ships to Easter Island and not their breakwater. Our cruise ship was anchored outside their breakwater. In between cruise ships Easter Island has daily flights from Santiago, Chile and bi weekly flights from Papeete, Tahiti bringing tourists to make use of their extensive tourism infrastructure. We do not have an airstrip. Pitcairners hopes for a breaker was to make the entrance to the harbor safer when discharging cargo entering with heavily laden boats full of supplies, heavy machinery, drums of fuel and building material. And tourists too of course. Currently in large seas, waves can cover the whole of the jetty and wash goods into the harbor.

Are some of the above ideas too grandiose and expensive for Pitcairn's tiny population and was doomed to fail anyway? While I was unable to obtain an official report of PDT's current recommendation to council on changes to council and Pitcairn's employment structure, the committee had been formed when I was there and some of uclun who were interested talked casually about some of the ideas with them in informal situations. At the time they were open about their ideas. Currently we work with committees and the Internal Committee was restructured last year as the first step of the dice. Restructuring Council was supposed to be the second step. In group discussions while I was on island, we heard plans are afoot to replace the committee structure set up last year with various secretaries who will head various departments and report to various councilors of council. Sounds like a structure suitable for large populations. Tristan da Cunha with five times the population work with committees. They have also moved to Budgetary Aid. If these are the changes required to move Pitcairn out of the medieval age it appears there will be an awful lot of paperwork shuffling between councilors, secretaries, heads of departments and their assistants not to mention the commissioners and governors offices and at the end of the chain DFID.

That book says *"Pitcairn was an oligarchy, says Leslie Jaques..... XXXXX ruled, and everyone else did what they were told. The way the community was run was medieval"*.

It also says *"Britain had no intention of subsidizing the community indefinitely, and Leslie Jaques set about investigating ways to reinvigorate the economy"* How long have we got to reinvigorate the economy? Will the secret policies reinvigorate the community? How long before Britain pull the plug and abandon us? It appears there is much disquiet with PDT. A major problem on Pitcairn is the lack of population. Will the new policies bring more expatriates or strangers to Pitcairn to settle? Currently no matter how you look at it or what you do you can't get away from certain families dominating certain areas of government. There are just not enough of us. Yet that book castigates us for that and implies, so does Britain. Is PDT setting up another oligarchy but this time with a new dominant person chosen from a position of privilege? That is what many are afraid of. Open and transparent appears to be another broken promise.

Pitcairn need expert help, someone with no baggage, an experienced independent constitutional lawyer/s to help the elected members of council and PDT move forward with the changes otherwise "this is the last generation" says that book. We will only get it right if we have someone everyone on Pitcairn trusts. And we do not have that right now. So far many of the unlimited ideas have failed because they are either too expensive or unworkable. All of this brings back memories of the British television satire "Yes Minister". Are the failures and lack of progress a result of inexperience or design? Brain surgeons do not do heart transplants despite both surgeons being experts in their own field. Britain, please give us the expert we need, it may save you money and Pitcairn may be saved.

FINALLY: That book said *"The public benches remained deserted, but not for lack of curiosity.....they had to stay away, signaling contempt for the process. Wives showed their loyalty not by being there, but by NOT being there. There was another reason for the islanders' absence: if they pretended nothing was happening, maybe the judges and everyone else would pack up and leave."* **AS IF? Goodness gracious me!!!!**

On the very first day, at the start of the trials this was what the public **and the media** was told:

"CHIEF JUSTICE:I'm going to make an order that the Court be cleared of all persons except those who are entitled to be here, and that is the lawyers, the officers involved in the presentation of the case and accredited members of the media.....the court here has been cleared of all public other than those persons who are entitled by law to be present."

Funny, the media chose not to remember those words. The complainants were on the stand the majority of the time. The defence called few other witnesses the evidence being "she said, he said". In fact, the she said's answers were mainly, I can't remember, I'm not sure, long silences, no answer, you wouldn't would you, I'm not 100% sure, I **was** raped, he **did** rape me. One complainant was certain of her age because she said she was told she was that young but when questioned further on dates she said she wasn't good at maths. Another complainant couldn't remember what happened but remembered quite clearly when the constable **suggested** to her what happened. Then there are those with fickle memories as described in last month's newsletter. My first review of that book was that it is biased. My view hasn't changed.