

Pitcairn News

Volume 4 No 11

December 2010



Look at the extraordinary low rainbow, observed from the verandah Up Tibi. It disappeared before we got out there to pick up the buckets of gold.

Kari orn Pitcairn tull:

We have had a long dry spell, and according to weather forecasts there is no rain in sight. Gardens are withering, and motorbikes are kicking up regular dust storms in the roads. It is not recommended to follow too close behind a bike, and get completely enveloped in the brown dust cloud. During the last week's strong winds, the dust cloud sometimes caught up with the driver ahead, and appeared in front of the bike. Pictures can't fully capture the dust clouds behind moving bikes



A busy season with Christmas and New Year's celebrations, as well as intense preparations for the cruise ships visiting in February. All workshops have been busy, and people are sanding away on their carvings in every spare moment. This is also the season for the summer fruits, - for melons, pineapples, mango and peaches, and we are enjoying the juicy fruits in the summer heat.

Apart from Julie and Kari, other picture contributors are Terry, Brian, Mike, Leon, Tania & Stein - many thanks to all.

Back issues of Dem Tull
can be found on:
www.demtullpitcairn.co

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS ON PITCAIRN 2010



Hanging up presents in the trees in the Square. Christmas was celebrated on the morning of the 24th, as the 25th was on our Sabbath - traditionally we just move celebrations when we need to, independent of the rest of the world.



The two families with children on Christmas Day:



Randy and Nadine with Bradley, Emily, Ryan, Adrianna and Isabella.



Vaine and Charlene with Ralph, Jayden, Kimiora, Torika and Cushana.

Happy Holidays
from the Dem Tull team

Julie tull orn Christmas Day in Auckland

The Pitcairn children and their cousins who live in New Zealand usually can't wait to get up very early on Christmas Day to open their presents piled high under their colorfully decorated Christmas tree in their lounge. But because we had decided to hang our presents on the tree, Pitcairn style, and give them out in the late afternoon we knew the children would not understand why they would have to wait for their presents.



So again Pitcairn tradition kicked in and on Christmas Eve the homes with little one's hung up a basket for each child with smaller presents for them to open when they woke up on Christmas morning. Big *Blingoe* (old as Darrin (aged 17) decided he was still little and his mummy agreed, so he woke up to presents in his basket too.



Darralyn, who is nurse training in NZ, here with the NZ Christmas tree, the Pohutekawa.

It was a real joy to watch the faces of the children as they watched the adults, as they arrived during the course of the day, hang up the presents on the five fruit trees in Colleen and Ron's back yard.



Jason, Suzanne with grandson Ayden, Ron and Darrin.

After a long, long, long wait when in the late afternoon Ben, Ron, Jason and Darrin started cutting the presents from the trees and calling out their names, the children (and adults too), were running here there and everywhere clutching and then throwing down one present to run and get another.



A new experience for the children and a joy to behold for ucklun. The old saying "it is better to give than receive" was definitely appropriate on this Christmas day.



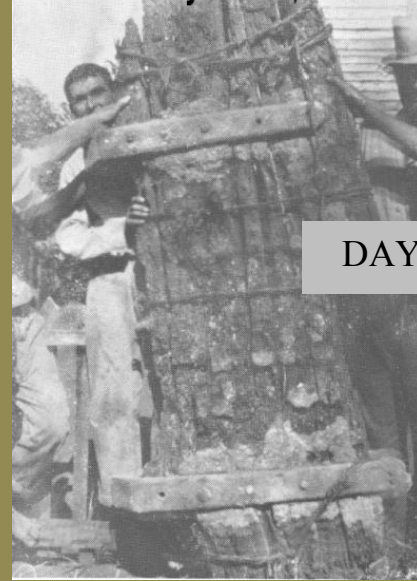
Tania and James with their four children, in their brand new home outside Auckland.



Cody enjoyed his very first meeting with Santa, who appeared down in the paddock (*hope you are able to see the red and white, tricky when we have to make pictures so small in Dem Tull*).



HMS Bounty Rudder, 1933



DAYS GONE BY...



Just a few words on the Miscellany, which is still produced here on island by the school teacher, but printing and the mailing to subscribers has been outsourced to a Wellington, NZ, business. The printing of the paper, which started up in the 1950s, has been too expensive, so now us locals have to pay \$3 for each copy we want. "Our Island Council has decided that as a cost cutting measure the Miscellany will only be produced online from now on", said a message from the current school teacher. Until 2004 Miscellany was an independent newspaper, surviving on subscriptions and donations, but since then it has been under the British Government's umbrella, subject to censoring - the reason why Julie and Kari started Dem Tull four years ago.

SEASONS GREETINGS FROM PAST PITCAIRN RESIDENTS:

From Russell Henry: New Zealand (a teacher here 1969-1971)
“... and say hi to all my good friends there.”

Stein and Diana Hoff, Drammen: Norway (doctors here on two occasions in 1979 and 1984). They once came here on their yacht “Red Admiral” sailing around the world with their three children, but their new one, “White Admiral” is permanently in the Caribbean:

“... we are sailing in the Caribbean 8 weeks twice a year – very privileged we are.....More on www.whiteadmiral.com.we still hope to visit Pitcairn again, but not on our own yacht this time.”



The Hoff's - Stein and Diana, Stein's mother, their three children (two with partners) Elisabeth, Martin and Robert and three grandchildren.

Sue and Mark Ellmoos: Australia (nurse and pastor 1993-1995) also send greetings to all their friends. Mark also had a yacht, which is now sailing with medical personell for Pacific Yacht Ministries

“It's *always* good to get Dem Tull. We were struck from the life subscription for Miscellany some years back, so it's good to be up on a few things.”

CONGRATULATIONS JEFF & RACHEL



The 1920's wedding party

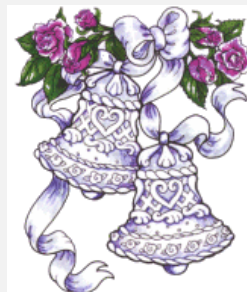


Rachel and her Jeff with Leon and Brenda



Rachel Salt, oldest daughter of former Pitcairn teacher and Commissioner, Leon Salt and wife Brenda, got married earlier this year in a large wedding where the theme was the 1920s' style.

Her sisters Cushla and Natasha were maids of honour.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I have loved the Bounty stories and have had one wish in my life and that is to visit Pitcairn. The way you speak and write is charming, and I wonder if you have ever considered including a glossary of sorts in your newsletter? I have read every newsletter you have published and I think they are wonderful. Keep up the good work, ladies! Robert, Chattanooga, USA.

I have always been intrigued with Pitcairn Island and its history. I was able to purchase one of the island crafted wooden vases and some stamps from Pitcairn and they are some of my most treasured items. I keep up with the news as best I can and follow the monthly newsletter. It is a beautiful island with a wonderful way of life. – Barry, Washington DC, USA.

Thank you for sending the November issue of Dem Tull. I forward it to a dedicated band of followers. Roger, UK

DEM TULL'S HALL OF FAME

John Tay, by Tim Young

To bring a close to the Dem Tull Hall of Fame inductions for the year 2010, I will now concentrate on a non-Pitcairner. Most, if not all Pitcairners have heard of the Seventh-day Adventist missionary Jon I. Tay, and know his impact on the history of Pitcairn, specifically in the religion department. Anyway, without further ado, here goes the final induction for 2010.

John I. Tay was born in 1832 in the United States. He received enough education to read significantly, and he was noted as a hard worker. When he was sixteen years old he went to work at sea. Before he left he was given two gifts from his mother, both of which would influence him in later life and guarantee his mark on history. One book was the Bible, and the other was one that contained the story of the mutiny on the *Bounty*. As he travelled for those early years at sea he became a competent carpenter as well as a sailor. He became devoutly religious with the help of his Bible, and he gained a lifelong fascination with Pitcairn as a result of the book on the *Bounty*. To add to his fascination he heard even more tales from the sailors he worked alongside.

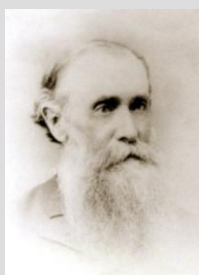


The 'Pitcairn'

Tay eventually left the sea and made his home in Oakland, California. He met and married a woman called Hannah, and built a home for the two of them. In the early 1870's something happened which would change his life forever. He was walking in Oakland one day and heard singing coming from a large tent. He entered the tent to find it was a meeting of Seventh-day Adventists. On hearing about the Adventist faith he studied it and was eventually converted and was baptised in 1873. Ever after he had a zeal to go witnessing for his beliefs and became a model member of the church.

By 1886, his health had deteriorated. His doctor told him that he needed to get away from the pollution in Oakland or he would most probably die. Tay decided to go to sea again and let the sea air do its work. One of his goals was to eventually get to Pitcairn Island and preach the Adventist message to the people there. For this journey, his wife Hannah would remain at home.

Tay found employment as a carpenter aboard the vessel *Tropic Bird* that sailed between Tahiti and San Francisco. Tay requested not to work on Saturday due to religious convictions, and the owner consented on the condition that Tay received no pay. With this matter amicably sorted, the *Tropic Bird* sailed from San Francisco on July 1st, 1886. After a brief stop in the Marquesas the vessel went on to Tahiti where it arrived in Papeete on July 29th.



John I Tay

As soon as he was in Papeete Tay left the *Tropic Bird*. He went to the British Consul in Papeete to get permission to go to Pitcairn, but the consul refused on the grounds that Tay was not a British subject. However, if a captain were willing to take him there, he had no problem with that. However Tay would remain in Papeete for the next couple of months trying to find transport to Pitcairn.

Help finally came in the form of the 13-gun H.M. Screw Sloop *Pelican*, under the command of R.W. Hope. The ship was on its way to Coquimbo via Pitcairn, and Tay saw his opportunity. Commander Hope was less than enthused about taking a relative stranger to Pitcairn. However, he asked a lieutenant who was of a religious frame of mind to speak to Tay. After a discussion with Tay the lieutenant told the captain "I think we ought to take this man to Pitcairn." As a result, Tay joined the *Pelican* on September 16th, 1886.

Now it must be pointed out that John I. Tay was not the first news of Adventism brought to Pitcairn. Some years previously the island had received some publications which the people initially viewed with suspicion. However, according to Rosalind Amelia Young, four-fifths of the population eventually came to accept it, but they still considered themselves Anglican and still kept Sunday as their day of rest. Tay would be the man to change this.



The reenactment in 1986 of Tay's landing from the "Pitcairn"

The *Pelican* did not go straight to Pitcairn but stopped at Rarotonga a few days after leaving Papeete, where it picked up the British Vice-Consul for a trip to the island Aitutaki and back to Rarotonga, dropping off the Vice-Consul there. Eventually the *Pelican* headed for Pitcairn. Before reaching Pitcairn, Commander Hope ordered the engines slowed down so they would not reach the island on Sunday, due to his belief that the Pitcairners were so religious that a visit on a Sunday would displease them.

The *Pelican* reached Pitcairn on October 18th, 1886. As soon as the longboats were alongside, Tay told the people his reason for coming, that of spreading the Adventist doctrine. He requested to stay overnight, and Commander Hope agreed to stay offshore for the night so Tay could speak with the people ashore. Tay was taken ashore and spent basically the whole night telling the people about the Adventist church and its teachings. Intrigued with what Tay told them they informed Commander Hope the next morning that he could continue on but Tay would remain.

DEM TULL'S HALL OF FAME: John Tay... Continued

Tay remained on Pitcairn for five weeks. During this time the Pitcairners learned more about Adventism and Tay learned more about Pitcairn. Eventually Tay was asked to baptize them. Tay informed them that he was not ordained to do this, but promised to return in the future with an ordained minister to see to it that they would be baptised.

On November 20th of that same year the yacht General Evans arrived from Mangareva on its way to Tahiti. They detoured to Pitcairn with the intention of buying some of the island products. Tay asked permission to accompany them to Tahiti and this was granted. They left soon afterward.

Tay eventually made it home to California where he enthusiastically told the church leaders of what had happened on Pitcairn and requested that they get a missionary ship to go all over the Pacific and minister to the people. First on the agenda was the Pitcairners, who were willing to be converted. The church leaders were not too sure, so they planned to send Tay as well as an elder of the church, A.J. Cudney on a preliminary missionary trip to the Pacific. If there was considerable interest, then a ship would be built and sent to aid in this.

The ever-enthusiastic Tay left home once more and arrived at Papeete to wait for Cudney. From there they would head to Pitcairn. Sadly, Cudney and the boat he was on was lost with all hands before it reached Tahiti. On learning of the loss, Tay headed back to California. He was saddened, but not disheartened, and still pushed his cause. Eventually the church leaders formed a three-member committee, one of whom was Tay, and charged them to go to every major ship builder in the U.S. to find the best so they would build the missionary ship. Captain Matthew Turner's shipyard in Benicia, California was chosen and in October 1890 the boat was built. It was appropriately called the *Pitcairn*.

The *Pitcairn* sailed for its namesake in October, 1890. It reached Pitcairn on November 25th of that year. Aboard was Tay, his wife Hannah, as well as elders Gates and Read and their wives. The *Pitcairn* stayed there for around three weeks, and 82 Pitcairners were baptised by the ordained ministers. Tay and his wife stayed at the home of Simon Young and his family, and Tay was happy to finally see his ambitions realized.

When the *Pitcairn* sailed, Elder Gates and his wife remained on Pitcairn, and among other things they founded a literary society, a monthly newsletter "The Daily Pitcairnian," and even a kindergarten. Leaving Pitcairn on the *Pitcairn* were locals James Russell McCoy, his sister Mary Ann McCoy, and Heywood Christian.

They were off to help with missionary work and to visit relatives on Norfolk Island. Tay and his wife also left, and the carpenter had more plans now that the Pitcairners were being taken care of.

After leaving Pitcairn, the Tays arrived in Fiji in 1891. Tay intended to build another missionary boat, but within weeks of arriving he contracted influenza. He died the next year, 1892 in Suva and was buried there. Hannah Tay eventually returned to the house in Oakland, by way of the *Pitcairn*.

John I. Tay was never a paid church worker for the Adventist faith, but was a layman who had a strong desire to preach the Adventist message. In 1986 there was a re-enactment of John I. Tay's landing on Pitcairn, with the people dressed in 1880's period dress, and the pastor dressed as Tay, complete with beard. On Pitcairn there was a well named after him, but it has since fallen into disuse and is basically gone.

I wish to thank Herb Ford for the bulk of the information contained in this induction, both from his informative correspondence as well as his book "Pitcairn Port of Call." I would also like to thank Ollie Stimpson, the Adventist Pastor who first told me as a little child about John I. Tay. He is also the pastor who dressed as Tay during the centenary celebration in 1986.

In closing I wish to quote from the aforementioned Herb Ford: "He is buried in the main cemetery in Suva, and one can easily find the headstone that marks the grave of a valiant missionary for Christ.

*Note: This induction is not a plug for the SDA faith. I am not an SDA but I fully acknowledge the effect that this man had on Pitcairn history.

Death of the Tapau Trees

We have noticed that some of the tapau trees are dying. Starting with just one dead branch, and there is a funny growth on the bark as well as on the leaves. In Tedside we found a lot of dead tapau. When my generous Pitcairner and I built our house Up Tibi 33 years ago, we used lots of local tapau, but these days all housebuilding material comes in wrapped and prepared bundles from Pinepac in New Zealand. If the unidentified tapau disease will extinguish all our precious tapau trees, we will surely miss them.



One dead branch on a huge and otherwise healthy tapau Up Har Beans



Two healthy leaves on a dead branch



One dead tapau in Tedside

TARO GROUND NEWS



Members of the newly resurrected ham club (radio amateur club) which was very active from the early 1990s till 2004, met up at Taro Ground one day in December to carry the old radio station equipment back into the main building. The old storage shed where it had been stored since the ham club took over the radio station in 1997, lost its roof in a storm almost two years ago (Dem Tull May 2009), and the equipment been exposed to the weather since. The intention now is to set it up the way it was in "the old days".



The two big heavy transmitters being lifted from the dilapidated storage shed to the main building at Taro Ground

The huge high frequency transmitters and the receivers that we used to "talk" to approaching ships and the radio stations in Fiji, then Rarotonga and lastly New Zealand for relaying our telegrams – all by morse – will be there to fascinate the tourists, who have showed great interest in the old radio station, our only link with the outside world in the old days (except for the occasional ship to pick up our mail) since 1944 (when four NZ operators came here to build and run the radio station for the rest of the war), until we got additional and not very reliable radio telephone connection (1985), fax (1992) and then Internet (2002) by satellite



Up until the 2004 trial, the Ham Club was very active, with monthly member meetings and catering for public hangis and barbecues. When the radio station ceased its daily morse skeds in 1997, the Government handed the buildings over to the Ham Club, in return for keeping up maintenance. The five tall antennas are still up, but when (and if) the proposed windmills are built at Taro Ground later this year, the antennas will go. The main radio operation building will not be in the way, and will still stand.

Julie tull orn Pitcairn Elections....

There is a huge amount of information about the old radio station, the history of it and the running of it, which we might run in a later issue, if readers are interested. Let us know!



Photographs taken at a BBQ in late 2003 at the radio station, arranged by the ham club.



Randy, doing what he does best!

In Christian countries December is Christmas time and a time for Peace and Goodwill. On Pitcairn it is also election time where for a day or two Peace and Goodwill takes a back seat albeit briefly.

The 2010 election was for a Mayor who is elected for a term of three years. In recent years it seems that in December the Pitcairn law book has become a popular read with different interpretations of who is qualified to be elected and who is eligible to vote. Logical rather than legal interpretations were often given, sometimes followed and sometimes ignored. The Island council agreed and disagreed with some interpretations and the rest of the voting community just decided who or what interpretation they preferred before placing their tick against their best choice.

This year, campaigning continued right up until a couple of minutes before voting, when two people voiced their protests to the voters collected at The Square. The Governor's Rep appeared in the last vital moment reading from the Pitcairn law book in response to last minute issues re anomalies in the law, which nevertheless is the LAW. Last minute negative campaigning can backfire and some believe it did so this time. Our election law (Local Government – Part IV – Election Offences – Interfering with or influencing voters) says that every person "who interferes in any way with any person who is about to vote with the intention of influencing or advising that person as to whether or how he or she should vote" is liable to a fine not exceeding \$2000. Didn't someone break that law here?

The United States of America has a population of many millions with two candidates for President, our equivalent to Mayor. Pitcairn has an average population of 50, yes fifty, with four candidates. The result was 15 votes for the successful candidate, who happened to be the incumbent Mayor, Michael Warren, with the remaining 31 votes shared evenly between the other three. Shortly afterwards, not happy with the results, a person circulated a petition around most, but not all, of the community with a view to changing the law to be applied retrospectively, changing the result handed down as a result of a democratic process. Almost 30 people signed it, but some of them asked for their names to be taken off the list later when they realized the issues. The petition was sent off and shot down by the Governor's office, and the official result of election day was preserved. Pastor Ray, one of the original signatories, allows us to quote him as being happy the petition was unsuccessful.

It was interesting to note that some of the Councillors signed it, though they were all present on the three occasions last year (according to Council minutes) when the anomalies in the law were discussed, and the Councillor in charge of legal matters was asked to look into it. Nothing was done. The constitutional way to change laws are by consulting and working with the Legal Adviser, not by last minute petitions. Peace and Goodwill was soon restored and dem tull this Christmas was the best in a long time (almost back to normal) with the trees in the public square laden with presents despite the gloomy economic situation on Pitcairn and elsewhere. Congratulations, Michael.

Kari tull: The Governor's response to the petition was put on the public notice board, and said among other things: "This is the law as it stands and there is no legal basis, nor allowance within this context, for the Governor to intervene or set aside that Law."... This may not be the answer you or those who signed the petition are seeking, but it is the legal position. As you know, the current law was approved in draft form by the Island Council before it was recommended to and then signed by the Governor in 2009." It seems the Councillors changed their minds about the law that they themselves had approved a year and a half ago.