

UCKLUN TULL UN DEM TULL

Pitcairn News



(Picture of birds from Christians cave, courtesy of Tony Probst)

VOLUME 6 No 3

MARCH 2012

Kari un Julie tull: None of us are on Pitcairn now, so a bit hard to present the news as fresh and reliable as we could when at least one of us were there, but we are able to present some news items. The last cruise ship of the season, the “Hanseatic” visited one day in late March in muddy and rainy weather. A diving team from National Geographic together with Heather from PEW visited all the islands in the Pitcairn group, and also spent some days on Pitcairn. After complaining all last year about the drought, which left the ground parched and our wells and tanks close to empty, it seems nature is paying us back, for the months of both February and March have been wet and muddy indeed. There is not even much point in going fishing, for the water around the coast is brown and muddy.

Julie is settling back at home in Auckland after her long holiday on Pitcairn, and after leaving Pitcairn early March, Kari is travelling slowly toward Norway to spend time with family there, stopping in New Zealand and Australia to visit friends and family on the way. Two Pitcairn women, Leona and Clarice, arrived from NZ on the Claymore to spend some weeks on their childhood island.

Corrections from our January issue about the Hares - on page 1 Andrew Hare instead of Arnold Hare, and in the article - the ship they travelled on to Pitcairn was not the “Remuera”, but one of the Rangi-boats.

Pictures in this issue are credited to Luther Hare, Jens Troeger, Tony Probst and the National Geographic diving team.

In Wellington I rounded up (from left) Glenn Clark (who left Pitcairn in the early 1980s), and Pearl, Sheree and Desmond Christian (Pearl and Desmond left in the 1960s, but both they and members of their family have been back on the island several times over the years).



All Pitcairn residents during 1994-95 and 2001 will remember teacher Pippa Foley and her husband Ged, who did Miscellany, among other chores. Their sons have taken over their big farm in Akaroa on South Island, but Ged keeps busy helping them and Pippa is still teaching part time. They send their best to all friends on and off the island.

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Lyle Burgoyne was medical officer on Pitcairn 1994-96 and also in 2003-2004, with wife Jenny, and here they are with Jenny's mother and also their four children who came with them to Pitcairn in the 1990s – Sarah (standing), Joe, Cameron and Hannah. Sarah is also married to Tim, Dem Tull's historian.

VISIT WITH THE HARES IN WELLINGTON: In 1928 Arnold Hare with wife and six children spent several months on Pitcairn. We wrote a bit about their visit in the January issue, with pictures and information supplied by the youngest son Rene, then 6 years old, but now a strapping 90 year old living in Wellington with his wife. Pearl and I went to visit them, to take pictures and talk with Rene, who has a remarkable memory and supplied a lot of information about Pitcairn in 1928. The family at the time stayed in Arthur Young's house by the main road. Rene remembers the horse powered sugar cane mill – they had horses imported from Mangareva in those days. He also remembered a man in his 40s falling between the ship and the longboat, and afterwards always had a certain turn of his posture with hunched up shoulders. Even after the family left the island after their visit, they were in close contact with the islanders, who sent crates of oranges to them on the southbound ships, and their house in Wellington was open to visiting Pitcairners for several decades. Most of the male Pitcairn emigrants worked as builders, and the Hares helped with advise and directions. He mentioned Burnell as "very go-ahead", also Burnett, Chester, Uncle Ben, Maude, Floyd, the Warren boys (of whom there were many) and the outsider families like the Ross sisters and the Coozes, all from New Zealand. In 1953 Rene travelled on the Rangitoto to England, and the ship stopped at the island to visit. He met up with Parkin, whom he gave letters for several people in the community. 20-30 years ago, in the throng at Brisbane Airport, he heard a voice with an accent he immediately recognized as pitkern, and upon investigating, found it was Oliver (Clark), so they had quite a reunion.



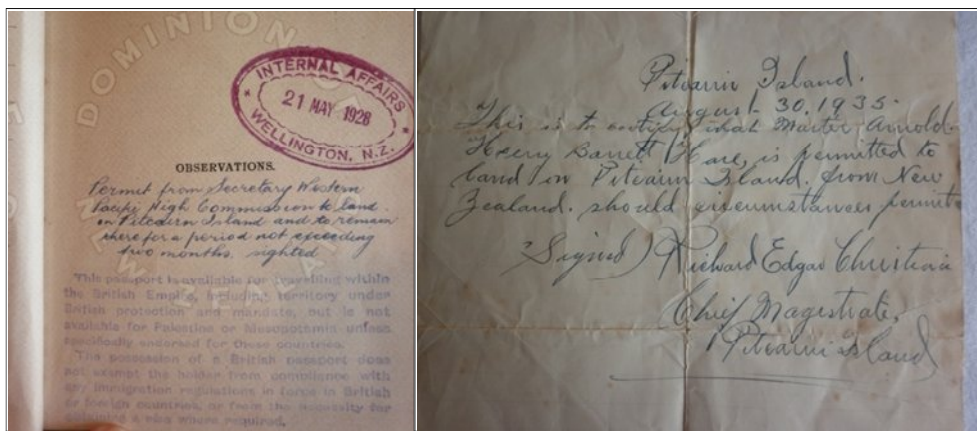
This Pitcairn painted leaf is 90 years old, so that proves it is indeed a lasting souvenir. Pearl could read the greeting on the right hand side, a Christmas greeting, and the painted flowers were still colourful and sharp. To the right we see Rene and his wife hold up Pitcairn strings of shell and 'job's tears', also preserved for 90 years. Islanders still make them to sell on cruise ships.



Pearl identified this box as a traditional box that some call Bible box, others cigar/cigarette box – the white wood from the orange tree, the speckled wood from the coconut tree and the inlaid wood is from the miro tree.



Pearl and Kari with the Hares



Arnold's passport with the written permission stamped 21 May 1928 with the permission to travel to Pitcairn and remain there for a period not exceeding two months. His "British Dominion" passport was signed by the Governor General to New Zealand, Sir Charles Fergusson, the father of the Pitcairn Governor 2006-2010, George Fergusson. To the right the written permission signed by the then magistrate Edgar Christian in 1935 to another Hare relative to land on Pitcairn, but that visit never happened.

PITCAIRN RUBBISH DUMP: Jens, an American visitor to Pitcairn last year sent us these pictures as an illustration to what he described as a poor solution to disposal and recycling of rubbish. In fact, he was quite shocked at what he found close to our popular picnic spot at Tatrimeo.



Our fuel, both diesel and petrol, used to arrive in drums like those in the pictures, but lately diesel is delivered in 1000 ltr plastic tanks, which are sent back for refilling when empty. Thousands of empty and rusty drums "adorn" selected spots in the hills. During the time Taporo used to supply us from Tahiti, there was talk of sending the drums back for recycling, but we heard that freight cost too much. Aluminium soft drink cans are plentiful, too, and there was a discussion in Council years ago about getting a so called can-crusher, which would flatten the can, so they would not be so space-consuming, and we might be able to send them back to New Zealand for recycling. As late as last year, recycling was again on the agenda



for the community, but again nothing happened. In days gone by we didn't have that much rubbish, only the occasional can, but the consumption of soft drinks have escalated, and the big plastic bottles and aluminium cans are plentiful. Jens' pictures definitely show that we have an environmental problem in our lap, and Pitcairn is too small to sustain our increasing demand for waste space. Close to Tatrimeo there is a huge hole that our household rubbish is thrown into, and then burnt. Next to the hole are 12 volt batteries and expired gas cylinders.



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A NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC diving team spent some weeks during March visiting the four Pitcairn Islands – Pitcairn, Henderson, Oeno and Ducie – travelling on the Claymore, which had been chartered for the expedition. Due to heavy rain during most of their time on Pitcairn, the waters close to our coast was brown and muddy, and not at all ideal for diving, but they made some interesting discoveries nevertheless. Dem Tull was given permission to quote from their blog and show the pictures, and we are very grateful to Enric and the diving team for this privilege. Their description of the relentless rain and the mud tells a lot: *”It did not stop raining, and the runoff from Pitcairn created a halo of muck around the island. You could see every drop of rain splash into the ocean until it fell so hard that the individual drops disappeared into a mist of blended splashes hovering over the waves.....It seemed that the island was going to wash out into the Pacific Ocean. That murkiness, combined with the swell that kept us from diving too close to shore, frustrated us and made us believe that we could not survey and film the richest habitats around the island. It was this very situation though that led to a discovery none of us expected.”*



And what they found, was a coral reef, some distance outside Tautama, which our fishermen had been aware of before, because of the good catch in the area, but never explored. *” Because of the low visibility we tried to dive deeper than originally planned– beyond the murky halo, expecting to find clearer water. About half a mile from shore, the water was crystal clear, of an incredible deep blue..... We jumped right in, and 35 meters below the surface there was a reef with live coral covering almost all the seafloor. In other places we would have expected to find a thriving coral reef like this one at 15 meters depth, but the water is so clear here that coral growth extends far below*

“normal” depths. We dived to the bottom and it was clear that corals were not the only things thriving at this depth. Reef fishes were abundant, and came curious to check us out. Not many people have ever dived here, and we might well be the first people these fishes have seen. Large black jacks darted in and out and between us, trying to bite our bubbles. The herbivorous “nanwe” or “rudderfish” (see photo) became very excited and swam around us, grazed on the bottom, and circled us again—during the entire dive..... I felt as though we had visited the moon for the first time and we were leaving, returning to our home planet”.



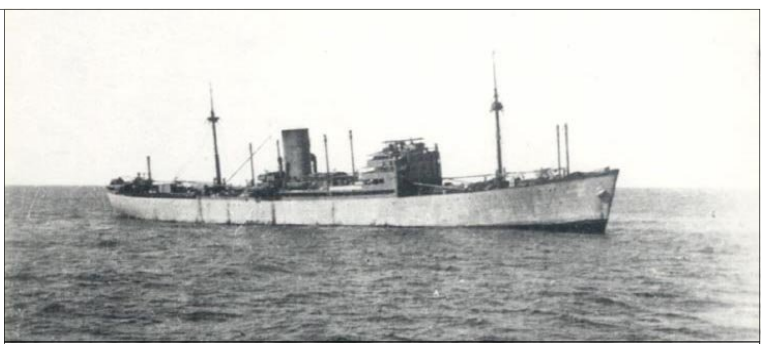
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THE WOLF IN SHEEPS CLOTHING PART 2

I finished the last article with the German raider *Atlantis* making her way from Vanavana towards Henderson Island. You see, despite the hospitality of the people in Vanavana, there were not many places for the Germans to go ashore and stretch their legs, especially with the allies gaining more of a presence in the Pacific. So logically, they decided to stop at a place where there no people (well, not at that time, although there were and still are a number of skeletons in caves around the is-

land).

They found Henderson a safe haven of sorts, and anchored in the lee of the island. Several (probably all, for all I know) of the crew went ashore to stretch their legs and some went exploring the island. The pilot, Bulla, launched the Arado 196 seaplane and went scouting. Now I remember reading somewhere (it is definitely not in Rogge's or Mohr's books, since I have them open before me as I



Atlantis in disguise as a cargo ship

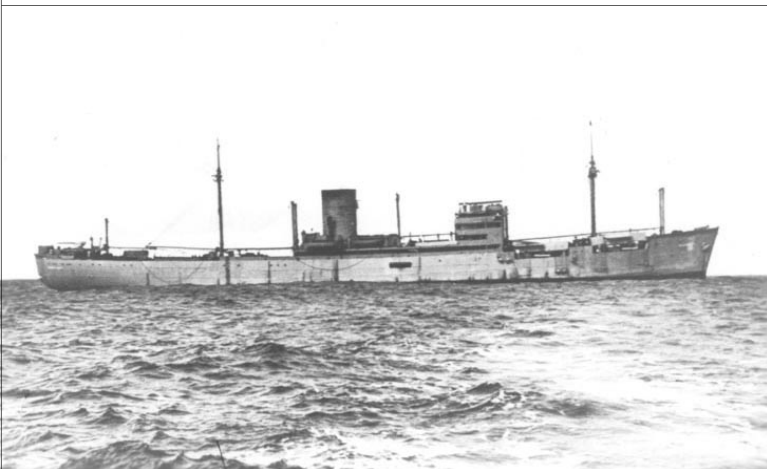
write) that Bulla took the 196 high over Pitcairn itself. It is possible, I suppose, since the 196 had a range of 800 kilometres (497 miles) and could reach an altitude of 7000 metres (22,965 feet). It could easily have taken a swing around Pitcairn and taken some pictures (which I recall reading somewhere. Yes, I am kicking myself in the pants for not paying more attention at the time), though it is possible it did not (blast it! I think I have to go snooping at the Bundesarchiv when I get the opportunity. I am waaaaay to curious now!). But the Arado 196 was not the first aeroplane to fly over Henderson (or Pitcairn, if it actually did that), but I'll get to that later in this article.

Anyway, awesome seaplanes aside, I'll get back to Henderson. Rogge himself did not write much on the visit, but Mohr provided a little more information. He had gone ashore and being a bit of an adventurous sort, he decided to go inland.

Now, there are two challenges I have experienced about exploring the interiors of Henderson Island. First of all, there is the climb up the cliffs. Unless you know where you're going, it can be a little dicey. The cliffs are basically sharp coral, and I still have a couple of faint scars where I tried to clamber up, both from sharp handholds and from slipping. Over four decades before I attempted this, Mohr and his climbing companions experienced the trials and tribulations of the cliffs on Henderson. In his words, "So high and steep were the cliffs that we had to cling to the roots of trees left jutting

outwards where the soil had crumbled." I like to think that at least a couple of them experienced the discomfort I felt.

Now, travelling inland on Henderson is a challenge in itself. The foliage grows thick, and you need a good machete to make your way through there. Then there are the inhabitants of this place. Actually, none of them really bothered me except one. While I was there the first time, I saw a Coconut Crab. It was literally tearing open a green coconut with its bare, er...claws. I'd like to think that I don't have many phobias, but there you go, that is definitely one. Coconut Crabs scare the living hooahaa out of me. But I digress



Atlantis ready for action. Note the hidden compartments along the hull are open.

(seriously, it's me, what did you expect?). On one occasion, I was guiding a bunch of trainee's/crew from the vessel *Pacific Swift* through the interiors (I was made to do the guiding, although I knew sod-all about the interiors) when all of a sudden we all realized something. We were lost, and nobody could find the correct trail back (saying that there was a trail in the first place is a bit of a long-shot). Eventually one of them climbed a pandanus to get our bearings, and confidently stated the direction to go. Well, guess what? We ended up going in circles and did not get back to camp till after dark. For years afterwards my late uncle would bring it up and have a good, evil laugh about it while I would sullenly give him the finger (I loved him to death, but he could be a real pratt. God, I miss him). Anyway, a similar situation happened with Mohrs inland party. They got a fair distance inland, lost the path they had already gone through, and Mohr had to climb one of the trees to see where to go. When I first read it in his book my own memories surfaced in a big way. However, I doubt his group

was as incompetent as myself, since he does not record them wandering in circles (alright, to be fair to Uncle Toge, I will acknowledge....it was freaking hilarious).

A final note on the *Atlantis* visit to Henderson. Some years before in August 1937, the cruiser H.M. *Leander* under Captain J.W. Rivers-Carnac stopped at Henderson (and Ducie and Oeno), and erected markers on each island with its name and the following statement: "This island belongs to King George V." The *Leander* also sent up a seaplane, called a Walrus to take aerial photos of the islands, predating the Arado 196 from the *Atlantis*. To crown it off, they erected a flagpole with a union jack next to the sign.

On his exploration of the island, Mohr found the sign left by *Leander*, which was now yellowing and faded. He recorded the writing, and passed on this information to Rogge, who duly copied it into his book. Rogge himself never apparently saw it, since he only speaks of others viewing it. Shortly after this, the *Atlantis* weighed anchor and left, heading for Cape Horn, and eventually her own destiny.

The end of the *Atlantis* story occurred when they reached the Atlantic. While rendezvousing with the submarine the *U-126* the British cruiser *Devonshire* came across them. *Atlantis* was soon sunk, but the *U-126* managed to dive and evade the enemy. As soon as *Atlantis* was gone, the *Devonshire* hurried away, doubtless concerned about *U-126* decorating their hull with a torpedo or two. The survivors of *Atlantis* and their journey home was an amazing odyssey in its own right, but reach home they did. Both Rogge and Mohr, as I have already shown, released their books on the voyage, and memories of the German visit to Henderson faded.

However, there is one last little thing I should add. Shortly after the visit of the *Atlantis*, a royal navy vessel stopped at Henderson. To their horror, on the flagpole where previously had flown their precious union jack, a Nazi swastika was flying proudly in the wind. On making it ashore the crew found that something was added to the old sign: "with apologies to King George VI, this island is now the property of the Greater German Reich." Now Rogge does not appear to have actually seen the sign himself, and as far as I know, they had not claimed any of the previous islands they had visited. Mohr and several of the officers, however, were known for playing pranks. I wonder if temporarily annexing Henderson Island in the name of Nazi Germany was actually their greatest prank.

Acknowledgements

John Asmussen runs the website www.bismarck-class.dk, which deals with all manner of vessel operating under the Kriegsmarine:

There is a section dedicated to the Hilfskreuzer's: http://www.bismarck-class.dk/hilfskreuzer/hilfskreuzer_menu.html.

The *Atlantis* page is at <http://www.bismarck-class.dk/hilfskreuzer/Atlantis.html>.

Rogge had his account published in the book "The German Raider *Atlantis*" (credited alongside Wolfgang Frank) which was printed in 1956.

Ulrich Mohr, the ADC of the *Atlantis* also had his account (as told to A.V. Sellwood) published, "*Atlantis*," printed in 1955.

Herb Ford's book "Pitcairn: Port of Call" contains a quote from the man who recounted the story of the sign and the swastika.

David Donald's "Warplanes of the Luftwaffe" was used for the information on the Arado 196's capabilities.

Referring again to the untimely passing of Terry Young in May last year, Terry's family finally received an explanation from the Governor's office why they dismissed the request for an inquiry into his death. It was because "there was none in the UK to undertake an official external review". Dire prospects for the future, and for anyone else in the same medical predicament as Terry. Is Pitcairn really a safe place to live?

From Council minutes:

28th February - *The current high cost of power, four times that of New Zealand was noted. With an average income less than one fourth of a NZ income, paying the power bill is hard indeed.*

16th March – Heather Bradner from the PEW Foundation, who was here last year with a colleague, gave a power point presentation to Council on the global ocean legacy project. She arrived with the National Geographic diving team on the Claymore.

"There was discussion on the current and potential benefits for Pitcairn within its 800,000 sq kms of EEZ. Two reports were submitted with feedback and suggested amendments requested by 30 April 2012.

The short term economic benefits from commercial fishing was discussed against the longer term economic advantages of a marine reserve in terms of diving, tourism opportunity and the need to protect the worlds rapidly diminishing pristine seascapes.


The creation of a marine reserve would also increase Pitcairn's "brand" and standing internationally. In general there was agreement from councilors for the PEW concept".

Norfolk Online News

We'd like to take a moment to let you know about Norfolk Online News. Norfolk online News is a high quality, online publication that delivers excellent news and articles weekly including a regular appearance by Dem Tull's own historical guru, Timothy Young. Content includes general Norfolk events, general interest articles such as recipes, classifieds and reports on local and Australian government as it relates to Norfolk.

The cost is \$59.36 and can be paid by credit card or PayPal via the website <http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/norfolk-online-news-newsletters> Great as a gift for someone else or yourself.

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