



Julie as we remember her

PITCAIRN NEWS

DEM TULL

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Kari orn Pitcairn tull: Julie has passed away. She started Dem Tull in June 2007 in an effort to spread news from the island, though she herself was living in New Zealand. Together with others here I provided pictures and news from Adamstown, and she wrote the stories. In late 2009 she was diagnosed with cancer. Since we were still working on the April issue when she passed away in Auckland, New Zealand on 3rd May, our history writer Tim and I decided to dedicate the whole April issue in memory of Julie, and the May issue will continue as normal again.

Kari remembers Julie:



Julie with Ben some years ago

Julie was a real Pitcairner, and more proud of it than most. She was born on the island 13th May 1953, and grew up with her two younger siblings. At the age of 15 she went off to further her education in Fiji, attending Fulton Adventist College. Fiji was our administration centre at the time, like New Zealand is today.

I met Julie on the "Mataura" in November 1973, when she was boarding the ship as I was disembarking. She had spent some time at home with family, but now she was on her way to New Zealand to find a job. I had travelled on the "Mataura" from England, and arrived for my very first visit, - it was a very short meeting.

She had a successful career in Auckland, excelling in her job, thanks to her academic and accounting abilities, but she always counted her greatest accomplishment was her son Benjamin (Benji or Ben), born in Pitcairn's Bicentennial year 1990, and she provided the best education for his future.



top: Ben and Irma with their family in the 1950s, Julie in the middle.

right: Irma at 86 with her three children in 2013.



Her home in Auckland was often the first stop for Pitcairners and other visitors arriving from Pitcairn, and she was hospitable and generous to a fault. There was always an extra bed at Julie's place.

She was proud of her Pitcairn heritage, and Ben was raised to be aware of his heritage and be proud of it. Her house was a treasure trove of Pitcairn carvings and momentos she had collected over the years, and I will

never forget how relieved she was after a burglary, that none of her Pitcairn treasures had gone, "only" jewelry and laptops.

All through her years in New Zealand she supported her family on the island, sending food items and things not available here. She returned several times to Pitcairn, with toddler Ben in 1991 and 1992, then in 2006/7, 2011/12 and finally in 2013, only a year ago.

When our family moved to New Zealand in 1995 to provide an education for our children, Julie became a fixture in our lives. Pitcairn gatherings, Christmas and birthday celebrations, departure and arrival of the regular "Star" ships with passengers and cargo to and from 'home' – Julie was always there. Whenever we went on picnics and outings, she had her car full of weckles she had prepared, and she enjoyed our teasing. She was famous for her cooking, mainly pitkern weckle, which always left us all groaning and overfed.

During the time of Operation Unique 2000-2007, her home was a refuge for Pitcairners, and we still met to celebrate Pitcairn, share memories and laugh together. She was an unafraid supporter of the Pitcairn men, and like me, mortgaged her home to finance an independent lawyer to go to Privy Council in London. Though it failed, she never gave up hope of putting things right.



Pretty girls and pretty dresses – Julie to the right with Bella, Olive and Kathy on Pitcairn sometime in the 1950s

Both Julie and I remembered Pitcairn the way it was, and we wanted to make Pitcairn aware of how much they had to be proud of, in spite of the last years of trials, deportations, jail and bad publicity. So Julie created Dem Tull. In June 2007 she sent me the first issue for approval, and she was the driving force ever since, though her mum Irma, myself and others provided the local news and pictures for her.

I admired Julie enormously. She was as opinionated and stubborn as I was, and we could clash, but we overcame our differences, knowing the bigger picture was more important than our egos.



Julie – the island girl, scraping and rolling up pandanus thatch for Irma's basket weaving.



The two editors of Dem Tull at a Pitcairn funeral in New Zealand 2003

In 2009 Julie was diagnosed with cancer, and to lessen her burden she asked me to be co-editor of Dem Tull. She underwent an operation followed by treatment, but was in very good form and not until recently did she succumb to the disease. She worked full time almost to the day she had to go into hospice care, and until the last she had a burning interest in what was going on here on the island.

Julie will be sadly missed by all us who loved and leaned on her.



Julie hanging up Christmas presents. We celebrated Christmas the pitkern way even in New Zealand, tying our presents in the trees. Wonder what our neighbours thought?



Julie on the wharf in Tauranga with Meralda, Suzanne and me before the departure of a ship heading for Pitcairn.