

# Pitcairn Islands

*This article is an example of how we are bringing together in Stamp News Online material from our various publications. The lead article here is from our May 5, 2023 issue of Mekeel's & STAMPS in which we marked the 50th Anniversary of the Pitcairn Islands Study Group. From there we will go back in time with other articles from M&S. JFD.*

## *Society Sampler:*

# The Four Philatelic Eras of Pitcairn Island

## Part I & II: The Stampless Period to 1926

By Steve Pendleton

*The Pitcairn Islands Study Group (PISG) is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2023. As part of the celebration, Study Group President, Steve Pendleton wrote a four-part article that we are publishing here with permission of Steve Pendleton as well as Study Group Vice-President, Everett Parker, out Literature columnist.*

*Dues for the PISG are as little as \$15 if you option for the quarterly "Pitcairn Log", \$22 for print editions. For additional information, go to [www.pisg.net](http://www.pisg.net), or write to the Secretary, Vernon Kisling, Jr., PO Box 1511, High Springs, FL 32655-1511. JFD.)*

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Ever since I was a kid, I've been fascinated by faraway islands. Where's one of the most isolated inhabited places on Earth? It's that two square mile rock in the Pacific Ocean, the refuge of the mutineers of the HMAV Bounty, the (hardly) romantic Pitcairn Island.

As an adult I began collecting the postal history of Pitcairn. This led to the development of a correspondence with islanders Reynold and Nola Warren. Later, I got to meet them in person, as well as other islanders. I got to visit the island twice, just briefly enough to get an idea of how tough the life must be.

The philatelic history of Pitcairn involves far more than just stamp issues. For many years, some of the more esoteric areas of that philately were so rare as to be beyond the pocketbooks of most of us. That's still true in some areas. However, some recent finds have made early material relatively more accessible.

For me, there are four eras to Pitcairn philately. The first would be the stampless era from the earliest known letters to, from or about Pitcairn. This may be 1819. That lasted until 1921. From 1921 to 1926 there was a concession on the island which allowed islanders to send mail by paying a fee, but stamps were not available. This resulted in the use of a number of "No Stamps Available" markings. That could arguably be the second era.

In 1927 Pitcairn finally got a post office and official postmark. It did not, however, get its own

stamps as New Zealand stamps were provided. This was the third era. The final era began in 1940, with the issuing of definitive stamps for the island. This set was very popular with collectors, and many thousands of covers were prepared. Island stamps were printed under authority of The Crown Agents and later by a philatelic bureau in New Zealand.

In 2020 the proprietors of the philatelic bureau retired. The business was sold to Tower Mint in England.

### I. STAMPLESS MAIL

Pitcairn was discovered in 1767, but no one set foot on the island. At that time it was uninhabited, but once there were Polynesian natives. Someone made a mistake in plotting its location, as it was placed on maps miles from its true position. This was, of course, a boon to Fletcher Christian, the leader of the famous "Mutiny on the Bounty." After seizing the ship, he needed to find a place the British navy could not find he and his followers.

The mutiny happened in the Tongan Islands. There were attempts at settling on inhabited isles. Eventually Christian and some of the mutineers took a number of Tahitian men and women, and vanished into the Eastern Pacific.

Nothing more was heard of them until 1808. An American sailor chanced upon the island, and to his surprise found his vessel being hailed by an English-speaking native. He found a colony of women and children ... and one surviving mutineer, John Adams.

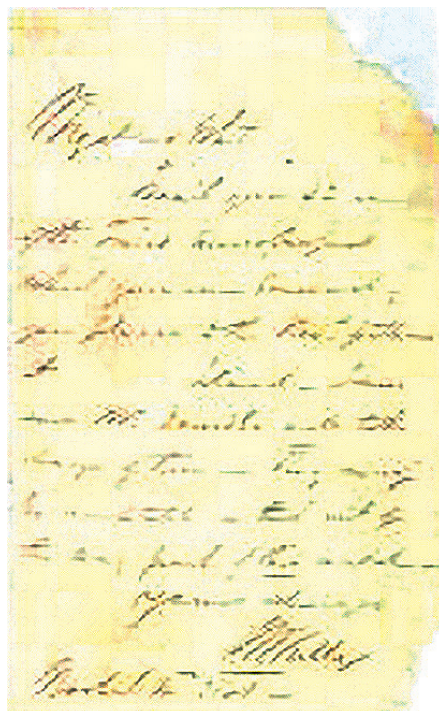
The first reported letter is believed to have come from Adams. It was reported by a Calcutta newspaper in 1819, but appears to have been lost. Surviving letters come in three categories: those from islanders, those to Pitcairn, or those about the island. They are certainly rare, especially items in private hands from Pitcairn. Some may well have been faked.

The islanders (other than Adams) for many years had no one to write to. In the 1850s they emigrated en masse to Norfolk Island. A few eventually returned to Pitcairn, creating a split community. However, very few, if any, letters have survived.

I know of four early letters from islanders in private hands. Two are mentioned in the Bill Hornadge catalogue.<sup>1</sup> The first was written by Jemima Young to a British naval officer who had visited the island. Another was written by Benjamin Young to a former shipmate in 1875. There is an 1870 letter by Chief Magistrate Robert Buffet, which tersely describes life for the 70 or so inhabitants, and the fourth is a letter from Pitcairn to Norfolk Island in about 1867. There are possibly a letter or two hidden away in family papers on Norfolk.

With that tiny amount of collectible material, it's no wonder that at one time you'd need a large bankroll to own one. However, the same cannot be said about obtaining letters TO Pitcairn.

Once discovered, Pitcairn became a stop for visiting whaling ships. Occasionally, a sailor or wanderer would join the community. In 1828, George Hunn Nobbs landed. He soon married and became a respected member of the community. When islanders moved to Norfolk, he settled there. He died in 1884, but his property remained.



*This letter, from 1821, is earliest in the Hobbs correspondence.*



More of the Hobbs correspondence shows evidence of insect damage.



Another of the letters from the Hobbs correspondence showing insect damage.

In the early 2000s a tin was discovered in the building. The contents were a trove of letters, a few with envelopes. Unfortunately, many of these were severely damaged, being eaten around the edges by insects. In 2005, Stanley Gibbons Australia auctioned the material.

The material comprised 69 lots. Some had several items. They were about evenly divided between Pitcairn and Norfolk-related letters and envelopes. There were a number of letters from the U.S.—remembrances of whaler visits, letters to Mrs. Hobbs, mail from England, and from people curious about life on the island. The bidding was quite reasonable, ranging from A\$2,700 to several items at less than \$100.

I managed to snare a few of these. One is just a fragment. It was sent by a New England whaler in the 1850s and involves the gift of a pair of spectacles. Another was sent to Norfolk in the 1870s, but the author has many questions about Pitcairn. Even then, the story of the mutiny had become well known around the world.

In 1890, the missionary vessel *Pitcairn* began sailing to and from the island. Letters are known carrying a two-line cachet with the island name. There are also a number of items dating from that period with a similar-worded marking. These are questionable as to authenticity.

I do not believe the islanders used stamps or had any sort of formal post office facility before 1927. Prior to 1921 letters were carried free or with the writing “No Stamps Available” on the envelope. There are two markings, each believed to be unique. One was applied on the *Australplain* vessel, while the other came from the Panama Canal Zone postmaster.

## II. NO STAMPS AVAILABLE

Pitcairn did not have a post office even after World War I. In June 1921, the United Kingdom and New Zealand governments agreed to handle island mail. Senders would pay, and the mail was sent with a cachet noting that no stamps were available on the island. This concession was available until March of 1926.



An example of early mail from Pitcairn, this one with the handstamp “POSTED IN PITCAIRN ISLAND / 1924 NO STAMPS AVAILABLE” (Kitching’s Type 1.8 handstamp). The cover likely traveled to New Zealand on the passenger liner *Remuera*, which was bound for Auckland from Southampton, England. The *Remuera* stopped at Pitcairn on June 17, then arrived at Auckland on June 28, 1924, which is reflected in the Auckland circular datestamp.

This period is perhaps one of the most interesting in Pitcairn’s philatelic history. That’s because of the rarity of material (and resultant high prices), and the number and variety of cachets. Some varieties may have two or three or even less examples.

How many cachets are there? Several lists have been consulted. The Stanley Gibbons Eastern Pacific catalogue (Third Edition) lists 16 varieties. The last one is valued at £3000, and the rest at slightly less. David Hume of South Africa listed no less than 21, including one from 1920. Unfortunately that list is not illustrated. Cy Kitching published a monograph also showing 21. Bill Hornadge only shows 13.

A possible reason for the disparity is the mentioned scarcity—when some of these lists were compiled, perhaps less than 30 covers were known. More have been discovered since the 1980s.

When the islanders converted to the Adventist Church, a number of correspondences were begun. The islanders also found a good friend in Gerald Bliss and his wife. He was the postmaster in the Canal Zone.

Many letters were addressed to either or both of them. Bliss would fill merchandise orders and otherwise be of help. The correspondence has been preserved.

Most of the markings were in two lines, usually with the “No Stamps Available” wording and the island name. Sometimes a year was added. One also may have been created by Bliss. It is doubtful that any of the markers survived very long in Pitcairn’s tropical climate.

Considering the scarcity of material, a truly remarkable collection came up for auction at Phillips in 1999. This was the Humphrey Norvill collection. No less than eight such covers were illustrated.

For many years it was believed that none of these handstamps had survived, but one has been found.

In the early 1990s I began a correspondence with islanders Reynold and Nola Warren, buying the occasional curio and enduring up to a year in receiving mail. I learned, to my surprise, that their son lived about an hour’s drive from me, and they were going to visit. We arranged a time, and I eagerly drove to the address. Reynold handed me a bag and asked me about the object inside. I found a wooden hand-stamp. Inking it up, I found, to my great surprise, that it was one of the early handstamps. Reynold explained that some years before, he had helped demolish one of the old abandoned houses which are often left when the owners die or emigrate.

In the wall he found the handstamp, which must have slipped into a crevice. This handstamp was manufactured in one piece; it was not of



the type where words could be made separately.

In 2006 I took the handstamp to the Washington International, where it was sold to a fellow collector for a nice sum in the low four figures. The funds helped finance the Warrens' travels.

### III. THE NEW ZEALAND POSTAL AGENCY, 1927-40

Until 1927, there was no official post office on Pitcairn. There was, however, a postmaster, Richard Edward Christian. He was also the island magistrate, and together with Rev. David Nield, was responsible for obtaining the special handstamps used on mail.

On June 7, 1927 a postal agency under the direction of Mr. Christian was opened on the island. New Zealand stamps were available for purchase, and a single ring datestamp reading "PITCAIRN ISLAND N.Z. POSTAL AGENCY" was provided (Figure 1). Some experts have stated that two devices were used, one with a double ring design. I'll leave that argument for the flyspeckers.

During the agency period, New Zealand stamps were available. Stanley Gibbons lists no less than 73 varieties, and there are probably more. However, covers are known with cancelled stamps of a number of other countries including Cook Islands and Great Britain. These were probably created by passengers on visiting ships or by philatelists.

Figure 1. From the New Zealand Postal Agency era, this cover is dated November 23, 1932, and is addressed to Oregon in the U.S. It bears two low values of the New Zealand King George V definitive stamps and there is a strike of the Kitching Type 2.1 circular handstamp.



Compared to the first two periods, this era of philately has a variety of mails that is relatively reasonable in price. Commercial covers continue to be scarce, but there are several interesting special covers that can usually be obtained without breaking the bank.

Ship passengers often sent souvenir letters with the cancellation. An early ship cover was sent from the passenger liner *Rangitoto*, which made a regular stop on the England-New Zealand line. Islanders could also sell letters they autographed.

In the 1930s, it had become apparent that the island needed more advanced communication than shipping provided. In early 1938 an expedition was sent to the island to introduce a powerful ham radio. That included training an islander in its use. The expedition created some very collectible items. One is known as the "radio cover." A Providence, Rhode Island stamp dealer had a nice color cachet printed and added a circular cachet commemorating the event. Unfortunately, many of these are stained with water. A story was circulated that this was due to immersion in salt water, but more likely they were damaged in a flood in Rhode Island. There are a number of varieties from this event, including covers from expedition members and QSL cards from the island operator, Andrew Young.

In December 1939, the *North Star*, Admiral Richard Byrd's Antarctic expedition ship, stopped at the island to replenish supplies on the way to New Zealand. While there, members of the crew fashioned a rather crude cachet to note the visit. It is believed that as many as 794 may have been prepared. There were so many requests that the stamp supply ran out. The cover shown in Figure 2 was prepared after stamps ran out. Many covers to the U.S. were simply cancelled and initialed by Roy Clark or Mr. Christian without stamps.



Figure 2. This souvenir cover was part of the Byrd Expedition to Antarctica. The *USS North Star*, with the expedition crew, arrived at Pitcairn on December 13, 1939. The cover was autographed by Dr. Thomas C. Poulter, associate director of the Research Foundation of Armour Institute of Technology. There is a December 14, 1939 Pitcairn New Zealand Postal Agency circular datestamp.

As early as 1904, a proposal was made that Pitcairn issue its own stamps. During the 1930s islanders began to appreciate what this could mean to their economy, and the idea began to seem more reasonable to the British and New Zealand governments. This idea was soon accepted and a definitive set was designed.

The last day of the New Zealand Agency was October 14, 1940. Some covers were prepared with a famous "HANDS ACROSS THE SEA" cachet. October 15, 1940 was the day Pitcairn stamps first went on sale.

### IV. 1940 TO PRESENT

October 15, 1940 was truly a red-letter day for Pitcairn philately. On sale for the first time was a definitive stamp set for the island, eight colorful stamps including some controversial ones showing portraits of mutineers with that of the king. Two more stamps were added in 1951.

During the first 17 years of stamps, Pitcairn issued only 31 stamps. There were two definitive issues, while the rest were omnibus releases. Including these issues, the total stamps issued from 1940 to 2020 was around 869, according to the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*. Considering that's a period of almost 80 years, the number released each year is a very reasonable less than nine stamps. The subjects also have been (with a few exceptions) aligned with the island. A number of stamp issues deal with the Mutiny on the *Bounty* and with the ship. A 2007 12-stamp definitive issue shows details of the *Bounty* replica.

Considering how tiny the island is, there has been a large amount of stamps with island views. There's even a set showing the glorious night sky. (That's believable considering how far away from large light sources the island is). In recent years there have been a number of stamps for famous islanders, as well as plentiful issues for flora and fauna. (Pitcairn is a very fertile place, which means there are lots of flowers: the honey produced from their pollen is world-famous). The waters around the island teem with fish, including whales and dolphins, and they are all shown on stamps.

Island life is important. The inhabitants do much basket weaving and curio carving, many of which are on the stamps. I have an example of the premier carving, a model of the *HMAV Bounty*. When a tourist



Figure 3. This souvenir cover is dated April 28, 1944. It bears a splinter of wood from the *HMAV Bounty* rudder, which lay at the time with the ship underwater in *Bounty* Bay.

ship visits, the able-bodied population comes out to the ship, laden with bags of items for sale.

There is more to philately than just stamps. Pitcairn has issued several booklets. The first was released in 1940 but few collectors knew about it. Be prepared to pay a lot for one today. A more recent one is very colorful, as well as reasonably priced.

Collecting FDCs and commercial mail is popular. You should know that until recently, FDCs were produced in New Zealand, due to the difficulty of a reasonable turnaround time from Pitcairn. Commercial covers are more of a challenge due to the small population. However, such mail can be found as many islanders maintained correspondences with friends and customers.

During World War II, mail was censored, making yet another collecting specialty. Back in the 1940s and 1950s, Postmaster Roy Clark created all sorts of collectible mementos. Pieces of the *Bounty* would be glued on cards and covers and sold to ship passengers (Figure 3). Lots of things, even leaves and coconuts, could get a cancel. Postcards were often mailed by passengers as well.

Obviously most of us can't travel to the island. However, islanders can sell items via the Internet. If you buy souvenirs the packages can come with high value postage stamps attached. My model came with over \$42 in postage and I have seen parcels with over \$70 in stamps. You can buy bottles of the locally produced honey.

If you buy, you need to be aware that there is only one ship every three months, and Pitcairn has never had air service. Patience!

Another interesting sidelight is local mail. For many years it didn't really exist, as there was no need. However, in the early 2000s, several men were placed on trial, and sentenced to up to several years in jail on the island. The men wrote and received many letters from the other inhabitants. These letters only traveled a few hundred feet from the jail

to the post office.

In early 2010, I received a parcel with over 160 of these envelopes. I sold most of these in England, with the result that the islander was able to afford a new roof.

In 2020 the proprietors of the Pitcairn Island Philatelic Bureau retired. They had been responsible for the production of island stamp issues in New Zealand.

The business was sold to Tower Mint of England. Their primary concern is with the production of commemorative coins. Some months ago they resumed issuing stamps for the island. Pitcairn collectors can look forward to continuing new issues, hopefully with island themes.

The island still has a post office, and a new post office building has been opened. The sending of mail is continuing, albeit with the usual delays.

Whatever that policy is, Pitcairn collectors can be assured of fascinating and varied collecting interest, and with the stamps at least, one well within a modest budget.

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From Dave Kent's *World in Mekeel's* & *STAMPS* November 10, 2017 Issue

## Robert Pitcairn

It was a Thursday afternoon, July 2, 1767. The British navy brig *HMS Swallow* was cruising the endless South Pacific, searching for an island where they might find fresh food and water. Suddenly a 15-year-old boy, perched in the crow's nest as a lookout, called out the words all wanted to hear—"Land Ahoy." Unfortunately the island proved a disappointment. The ship's captain described it as a "small high uninhabited island not above 4 or 5 miles round...scarce better than a large rock in the Ocean." High volcanic cliffs prevented the voyagers from landing on the island.

The boy's name? Robert Pitcairn. He was born in Fife in 1752 and became a midshipman in the Royal Navy at the age of 14. His father, John, was a major in the Royal Marines and commanded forces in the bat-



tles of Lexington and Bunker Hill during the American Revolution. Although he was just a teenager, his name became permanently associated with the island. Interestingly, the captain inaccurately calculated the island's position, and years later the mutineers on the *Bounty* took advantage of this error to find a hiding place where they would not be found for another 30 years.

Robert Pitcairn returned to England and eventually joined the *HMS Aurora*, a 32-gun frigate. They sailed from England in September of 1769 and called at the Cape of Good Hope in December. The ship then sailed for the Comoros Islands, but then disappeared without trace. But the 17-year-old boy left behind a legacy that is still remembered.



# Island Communities: Pitcairn Islands

by Geir Sør-Reime



1940 1st stamp issue (Sc. 5)

The Pitcairn Islands, which consists of Pitcairn Island itself and the outlying islands of Ducie, Oeno and Henderson, has an area of 18.1 square miles and a current population of 67. Only Pitcairn Island itself is populated.

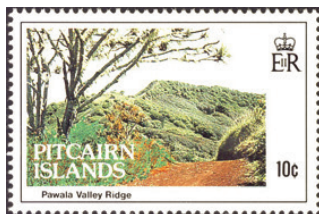
Scenery of the island has appeared on many stamp issues, including a 1981 set featuring landscapes, a 1993 showing island views, an 1996 set showing landing of supplies on the island, a 1997



1981 scenery (Sc. 199)



1981 scenery (Sc. 200)



1993 scenery (Sc. 384)



1993 scenery (Sc. 385)



1996 supply ship (Sc. 441)



1996 supply ship (Sc. 444)



1997 Christian's Cave (Sc. 479)

set featuring Christian's Cave, an early hiding place on the island, the important apiculture on a 1999 set, woodcarving on a 2001 set, weaving on a 2002 set, and a 2004 scenery set.



1999 Apiculture (Sc. 509)

Archaeological evidence shows that Polynesians lived on Pitcairn and Henderson for several centuries. Polynesian cave dwellers on Henderson were featured on a 2006 souvenir sheet, and Polynesian rock carvers on a 2007 sheet.

Polynesian artifacts appeared on a 1971 set of four stamps.



1997 Christian's Cave (Sc. 480)



1971 Polynesian artifacts, including rock carvings (Sc. 119, 121, 122)



The islands were uninhabited when they were discovered by Europeans, Henderson and Ducie in 1606, Pitcairn in 1767 and Oeno in 1819. Aerial views of all islands of the group appeared on a 1989 set of stamps.



1989 aerial views of the islands of the Pitcairn group (Sc. 327-30)

The bicentenary of the discovery of Pitcairn was celebrated on a 1967 set of five stamps. The annual visit to Oeno was the theme of a 1995 set. Views from Ducie and Oeno appeared on a 2005 set, and views from Henderson on a similar, 2006 set. Satellite views of all islands appeared on a 2008 set of circular stamps (p. 23).

Pitcairn was settled 1790 by muti-



1967 for bicentenary of discovery of Pitcairn (here Sc. 71)



1995 Holiday on Oeno Island (Sc. 427, 430)



Left, 2005 view of Ducie Island (Sc. 610) and Oeno Island (Sc. 614)





2008 satellite image of Pitcairn Island (Sc. 686)

neers from HMAV *Bounty*. Their settlement remained undiscovered by others until 1808. The bicentenary of the settlement was celebrated with 12 stamps in 1989, 6 stamps in 1990 and 6 stamps in 1991. A 1983 set of four commemorated the 175th anniversary and a 2008 souvenir sheet the bicentenary of the discovery of the mutineer community.

The entire population was moved to



1989 Bicentenary issue (I) (Sc. 320)



1989 Bicentenary issue (II) (Sc. 321)



1989 Bicentenary issue (III) (Sc. 331)



1991 Bicentenary celebrations (Sc. 347)



2008 Bicentenary of discovery of settlement (Sc. 680)



2008 150th anniversary of Pitcairn Constitution (Sc. 315, 317)

Tahiti in 1831, but many soon returned to Pitcairn. In 1838, Pitcairn was made a British colony and received its own Constitution, the 150th anniversary of which was commemorated with four 1988 stamps.

Due to the increasing number of inhabitants, the whole community in 1856 again was moved, this time to Norfolk Island.



2006 150th anniversary of migration to Norfolk Island (Norfolk Sc. 643a-d)



2009 150th anniversary of return from Norfolk Island

Many of them returned to Pitcairn in 1859 and 1864. The 125th anniversary of this was commemorated by three stamps each from Pitcairn and Norfolk in 1981, and in 2006, the 150th anniversary of the resettling on Norfolk Island was commemorated with similar stamps issued both by Pitcairn and Norfolk Island. Similarly, the 150th anniversary of the return back to Pitcairn by many families was commemorated on a 2009 set.

To Be Continued





2009 150th anniversary of return from Norfolk Island



2006 150th anniversary of migration to Norfolk Island (Norfolk Sc. 643a-d)

Due to the increasing number of inhabitants, the whole community in 1856 again was moved, this time to Norfolk Island. Many of them returned to Pitcairn in 1859 and 1864. The 125th anniversary of this was commemorated by three stamps each from Pitcairn and Norfolk in 1981, and in 2006, the 150th anniversary of the resettling on Norfolk Island was commemorated with similar stamps issued both by Pitcairn and Norfolk Island. Similarly, the 150th anniversary of the return back to Pitcairn by many families was commemorated on a 2009 set. This had already been commemorated on a 1961 set

of three stamps.

Early Pitcairners were portrayed on a 1994 set of four stamps.

In 1902, the three other islands were annexed by Britain, and in 1938, they were merged with Pitcairn into one colony.

In 1937, the population was 233, but after WWII, the population has gradually declined.

A regular mail service was first introduced in 1921, but at that time, no stamps were available, and letters were handstamped "Posted in Pitcairn – No stamps available" or similarly. Such a pre-stamp letter was depicted on one of the 1974 stamps issued for the centenary of the Universal Postal Union.



1994 Early Pitcairners (Sc. 399)

Ships that have delivered mail to Pitcairn were first featured on a 1975 set of four stamps.

Ships passing Pitcairn on their way between east and west were first depicted on a 1985 set of four stamps, with four more following in 1987.



1974 set for centenary of UPU (Sc. 142) including stamp showing unstamped letter with "POSTED AT PITCAIRN ISLAND/NO STAMPS AVAILABLE" cachet



1985 passing ships (Sc.261)



1991 visiting cruise ships (Sc.350)



2013 visiting cruise ships

Cruise liners occasionally calling at the island were depicted on four 1991 stamps, and on four 2001 and four 2013 stamps. In 2003, a souvenir sheet marked 21 years of Blue Star Line visits

to Pitcairn. Modern supply vessels were honored on a set of four 2011 stamps.



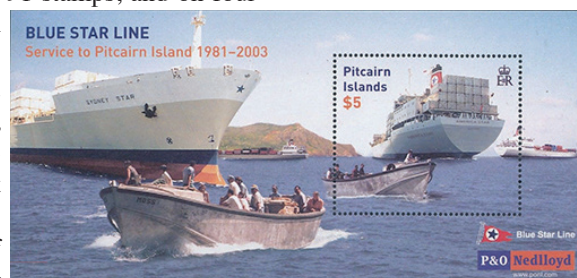
1940 1st stamp issue (Sc. 5)



2001 visiting cruise ships (Sc.531)



2011 supply ships



2003 Blue Star Line ships serving the island (Sc.571)



1990 50th anniversary of Pitcairn stamps (Sc. 338)

The free postage was withdrawn 1926, but a New Zealand postal agency using New Zealand stamps was then opened 1927 and closed October 14, 1940, the day before the distinct Pitcairn Islands stamps were introduced.

On October 15, 1940, a set of 8 pictorial stamps were released.



Two further values were added 1951. In 1990, the 50th anniversary of Pitcairn stamps was commemorated with five stamps (page 7).

In 1946, 1948, 1949 and 1953, Pitcairn was included in the British colonial omnibus issues, for Victory, Royal Silver Wedding, 75th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, respectively.

A new pictorial definitive series, now including a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, was released 1957, with a corrected inscription on the 4d. value ('School teacher's house' instead of 'School') issued 1958, and a new watermark on the ½ d value released 1963.



1946 Peace issue (Sc.9)



1948 Royal Silver Wedding (Sc.12)



1957-58 Definitives (including corrected inscription on 4d.) (Sc.26, 27.)

Pitcairn's first distinct commemorative stamps were issued 1961, on the centenary of the return of Pitcairn Islanders from Norfolk Island.



1964 definitives (Sc. 39, 42)



1965 Churchill (Sc. 58)



1966 World Cup Soccer (Sc. 60)

A completely new pictorial definitive series was issued 1964-65. Between 1963 and 1966, Pitcairn again participated in several omnibus issues.

In 1967, a series of five stamps celebrated the bicentenary of the discovery of Pitcairn Island.



1967 Bicentenary of discovery of Pitcairn (Sc. 67, 71)

In 1967, Pitcairn changed to New Zealand decimal currency, and the 1964-65 definitives were re-issued with new currency surcharges.



61: 1967 decimal surcharges on 1964 definitives (Sc. 74, 84)



1969 definitives (Sc. 98, 105)

It was replaced by a new definitive series in 1969-75.

This series was designed by famous stamp designer Jennifer Toombs. She also designed 1968 and 1980 series depicting traditional Pitcairn handicrafts, and a number of other Pitcairn stamps until 1997.



1980 handicrafts by J.Toombs (Sc. 194, 197)



In the meantime, stamps were issued 1967 for the 150th death anniversary of Admiral Bligh, the commander of HMAV Bounty before the mutiny. Also in 1992, on the 175th anniversary, four stamps were issued.



1967 150th death anniversary of Captain Bligh (Sc.85)



1992 175th death anniversary of Captain Bligh (Sc.378)



1977-81 definitives (Sc. 165, 167, 171A)



Polynesian Pitcairn was featured on a 1971 set, and in 2006, a set featuring Polynesian dwellers on Henderson Island appeared. A similar set, featuring Polynesians on Pitcairn appeared 2007.

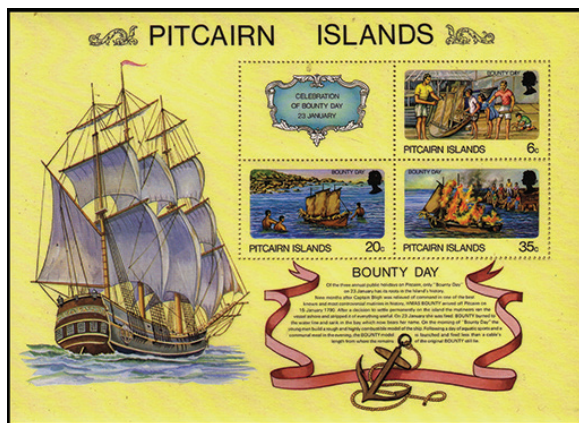
Jennifer Toomb's second Pitcairn definitive set was released 1977-81. One of the stamps features the burning of obsolete stamps (page 9).

The first 'Bounty Day' celebration stamps were issued 1978. The

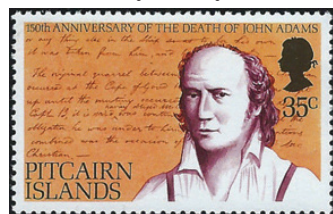


same year, stamps were issued highlighting harbor development on the island.

The 150th death anniversary of John Adams, the leader of the Bounty mutiny, was commemorated on a pair of 1979 stamps.



1978 Bounty Day S/S and set (Sc. 176a), 35c (Sc. 176) shows burning of obsolete stamps



1979 150th death anniversary of John Adams (Sc. 182)



1981 125th anniversary of migration to Norfolk (Sc. 204)

The 125th anniversary of the Pitcairn migration to Norfolk Island was commemorated by stamps both from Pitcairn and Norfolk Island in 1981, and 1983, stamps were issued to mark the 175th anniversary of the discovery of the settlers on the island.



Left, 1984 fish definitives (Sc. 237); right, additional 1988 values (Sc. 296)



A new definitive set featuring fish was released 1984 (with two additional values added 1988), and the 1988 set featured ships. The



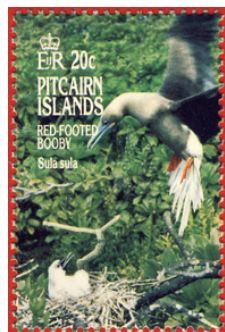
1988 ships definitives (Sc. 298, 308)



1995 definitives showed birds, the 2000 series flowers; and in 2007, a set featuring details of the HMS Bounty replica was issued.



1995 birds definitives (Sc. 420, 418)



74a-3: 1995 birds definitives (Sc. 415-26)

The centenary of the Seventh-day Adventist church on Pitcairn was commemorated with four



2000 flowers definitives (Sc. 515, 523)



orated with four 1986 stamps.

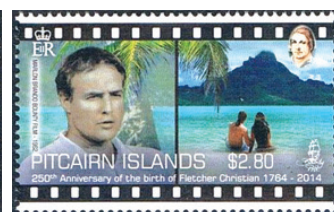
In 2014, a set of five stamps, issued to commemorate the 250th birth anniversary of Fletcher Christian, the leader of the mutiny, featured actors that have played him in different film versions



Left, 2007 Bounty replica definitive (Sc. 663); right, 1986 for centenary of 7th Day Adventist Church on Pitcairn (Sc. 278)



2014 250th birth anniversary of Fletcher Christian (Sc. 781, 783)



2014 225th anniversary of the mutiny (Sc. 770-773)



of the mutiny. Four stamps were also issued to commemorate the 225th anniversary of the mutiny.

A few stamp booklets have been issued, the first already in 1940 and containing a mixture of the first stamp issue.

In 1986, a computer vending machine dispensing Pitcairn Island stamps was set up at a stamp exhibition in Australia, but the machine was never sent to Pitcairn, although the dispensed stamps were valid for postage from the island. Also for this exhibition, a pre-stamped envelope featuring the HMS Bounty was issued.



1986 computer stamp



# Pitcairn From the Air, and On Land

by John F. Dunn



Last December the Pitcairn Islands issued a set of four stamps on the theme, “Pitcairn from the Air.” Most collectors think of Pitcairn Island as the haven the Bounty Mutineers sought, and many Pitcairn postage stamp issues remind us of that history.

However the “Pitcairn from the Air” stamps (two shown) inspired me to find out more about the Pitcairn today, rather than in 1790 and the ensuing years. So I went to the official Pitcairn Islands website, <http://www.immigration.gov.pn/index.html> and what follows is some of the text, followed by images from that site.

“Pitcairn Island is probably best known as the remote island in the South Pacific where, in 1790, the mutineers of HMAV *The Bounty* finally found refuge with their Tahitian companions...

“Fewer people know that Pitcairn Island is a British Overseas Territory, one of four small, diverse and unique islands which encompass a large exclusive economic zone, its pristine waters home to many endemic species, and protected since September 2016 by the world’s second-largest Marine Protected Area. Today, the culture on the island blends British, Polynesian and wider Pacific roots, a legacy of its historic and contemporary links.

“Pitcairn is the only inhabited island of the Pitcairn Islands Group. It is situated 2170 km east-south-east of Tahiti, 1570 km west of Easter Island and 5310 km north-east of New Zealand. The other islands of the group, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno, support fragile ecologies and unique habitats. Henderson Island has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988. All four islands have sub-tropical climates. Pitcairn, in particular, has rich volcanic soil and lush vegetation.

“The islands are accessible only by sea. A quarterly passenger/supply ship currently provides three voyages each quarter to Pitcairn Island, with up to 12 visitor berths per voyage. There are no regular services to Henderson, Ducie or Oeno. This means the Pitcairn Islands group is among the most remote in the world.

“Pitcairn Island is committed to maintaining a vibrant community and attracting new migrants who wish to make a contribution to the community’s sustainable future. Pitcairn’s environment favours those who enjoy the outdoors, are at home in the natural, unspoilt environment, and would welcome the opportunity to be part of a small but lively community. The island enjoys good phone connections and internet service via satellite. **However, not everyone will find that the isolated location and lack of frequent transport off the island is for them. Please read more in our FAQs, and Contact us if you wish to find out more about moving to Pitcairn.**”

I emphasized those last two sentences because, as you will see in the following photos, Pitcairn truly is about as remote as you can get.



*A view of Pitcairn from the air, similar to the stamp images*



*A view from above, showing the white rooftops*



*And one of those homes*



*A small ship approaching Pitcairn...*



*...and the small boat that can actually take you to land.*

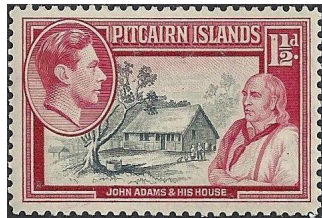




*Tennis, anyone?*



*Local tourist site: the grave of John Adams, the last surviving mutineer, who died there in 1829.*



*John Adams & His House, on Pitcairn Islands Scott 3*



*According to the Pitcairn website, in 2016 the population on the island was 49 people, and it looks like just about every one of them is in this photo, taken in front of the boat house with its "Welcome to Pitcairn Island" message.*



*Even Ducie Island, part of the Pitcairns, is almost 300 miles away.*



*The two other "Pitcairn from the Air" stamps*

Don't just get on a boat and go there. For good reason the Pitcairn islanders want to make sure you are up to the Pitcairn lifestyle. Here are some excerpts from the Immigration section of the website:

"How to apply to Settle on Pitcairn. Read this website carefully, including the FAQs, where you will find answers to a wide range of questions.

"Download and complete the Settlement Application form.

"Send a scanned copy of the completed form and a scanned copy of the passport photo pages of all applicants to the Immigration Officer on Pitcairn Island...and the Pitcairn Island Office...

"Pitcairn Island Office Admin will acknowledge your application and carry out initial checks. If your application appears to be non-credible at this point it will be deleted. [As you can see, they take this process seriously.]

"Once you have submitted your application, Pitcairn Island Office (PIO) will contact you. PIO will inform you how to pay the fee, ask for any further documentation needed, and ask you to complete any sections of the form you have missed. You must pay the fee before your application can be considered.

"Your application will then be considered by the island Immigration Officer and Pitcairn Island Council. The Council will make a recommendation to the Governor's Office. Following these deliberations you will be advised one of the following:

- Your application has progressed to the next step.

- Your application has been deferred – you will be told the reason and any requirements you need to meet in order to progress.

- Your application has been refused – you will be told the reason.

"If your application proceeds to the next step you may be asked for further information, including evidence of funding and (if applicable) your sponsor's income. You should send this to Pitcairn Island Office... You will be invited for an interview with the Deputy Governor, based in Auckland. This can take place in person, by Skype or by phone.

"Following your interview, the Governor will make the final decision on your application. You will be informed in writing of the outcome of your application. This will be either:

- Your application is successful.

- Your application has been deferred. You will be told of any requirements you need to meet.

- Your application has been refused. You will be told the reason. The Governor's decision is final.

"If your application is successful you will receive a letter from the Governor formally offering you entry clearance for settlement on Pitcairn....

"Pitcairn Island welcomes applicants who wish to move to Pitcairn Island with dependent children under the age of 18...."