

# Pitcairn News

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**JULIE IN NEW ZEALAND TULL:** What a month. The media has had a field day bashing Pitcairn again. It appears all in the name of money making. A book has been written about the Pitcairn trials and to publicise the book, extracts, which sporned other articles have been published all over the place. However what was new to us was the publicity released concurrently with the advertising of the book about the victims pending claim against the Governor. See article on the back page. I have briefly reviewed the book – see also the back page. The front page article is about our coppers.

**Dennis and Eric in USA ask: What is burning the copper?**

“Copper” is our hot water heater. When I was growing up on Pitcairn we heated our water in copper basins slotted into the top of 44 gallon drums which stood on end enabling us to stack firewood under the drum to heat the water in the copper. It was very primitive but it worked. We filled the copper basin manually with buckets of water from nearby wells and manually carted the boiling water in metal buckets to the bathroom. The copper was usually situated some way from the house because of the smoke and fire danger. Suffice it to say we usually bathed in the equivalent of one bucket of water each because of the limited quantity of water the copper held. In those days we didn’t have washing machines and Mum used to boil our clothes in the copper to clean the red volcanic dirt from them. We learnt later that heat perishes elastic. We used to wonder why our knicker elastic stretched a lot.



The name copper has stuck. We still heat our water using firewood but instead of the open topped copper basins, we now use cleaned recycled 44 gallon drums encased in cement and built over a furnace – see top right picture. Now water is automatically piped into the ‘copper’ direct from the water tank and out via pipes to kitchens, bathrooms, laundry in the same way electric or gas hot water cylinders work. The only difference is that we heat the water with firewood. So we only get hot water when we ‘burn the copper’ usually in the late afternoon. The water gets so hot it is usually warm enough for your morning shower. At the end of a busy working day most folks would just love to have a hot shower or bath before doing anything else but you have to ‘burn the copper’ first and wait for the water to heat.

The copper is ugly. It is smokey. It is dangerous and sets of smoke alarms so few homes use the alarms. Pitcairn has an abundance of free firewood in the noxious ‘rose apple’ tree. At one stage DFID provided funding to try and control the trees but the funding ran out and the trees continue to grow and multiply at a faster rate than we can keep up. For most people it is a chore, but it is a novelty for Ben who just loves using the chainsaw to cut down the trees, then cut up the wood when dried and uses an axe to split the logs into kindling.



I applaud Pitcairners innovation in adapting the waste (drums) to modern use. Stainless steel drums would be better as we need to replace the petrol and diesel drums often when they get rusty but stainless steel drums are very expensive. Someone has bought an electric instant heat hot water cylinder but the Island Council declined the application for installation because Pitcairns electricity generators cannot cope with water heating.

*Ben with chainsaw and Nana resting.  
Rose Apple trees growing in the background.*



**THE BABIES HAVE ARRIVED to the two expectant Pitcairn mothers in New Zealand. Congratulations to both.**

Miss Kaylen Olivia McNabney (left) arrived as scheduled on 24 April, sister to brothers Raa and Christian. It was the day of the doctors strike in New Zealand and it was touch and go as to whether or not the delivery would proceed. After arriving at hospital for the prearranged appointment they were sent home then recalled. Such is the wonders of modern times. Kaylen is gorgeous and dad James is gloating about his dominant genes. Sorry James we believe it is Tania's Pitcairn genes that bring out the beauty. Her nose does look like a Pitcairn nose.



Caleb (top right) arrived on 27 January to Darlene and partner, their first child. At three months old he woke up hungry but still knew how to pose when the camera came out.

Pssst – we hear there is another Pitcairn baby on the way a sibling to three brothers and a sister who live on Pitcairn. Will keep you posted. The Commissioner wants to increase Pitcairns population by 150. It's a start.



**ANZAC DAY** – Anzac Day is not usually celebrated on Pitcairn. But we did this year out of respect for the number of visitors on Pitcairn. While Pitcairners served in both World Wars only one of our soldiers died in wartime but not while in combat. There is no cenotaph but we still decorated the village square and during the formal dawn ceremony wreaths were laid against the Bounty anchor. The program was as follows: 5.45 am Generator switched on. 6.45 am Bells toll: Ralph and Jayden. 6.50 am Community assembles in Town Square. 7.00 am Welcome and introduction by Mayor, Mike Warren followed by the singing of the hymn, Abide with Me, led by Pastor Ray Codling. Prayer: Irma Christian followed by an address by Jay Warren. Flanders Field: Mark Waller. The laying of Wreaths: for Pitcairn, Tom Christian, Australia, Dr Madeline Wilcox, New Zealand, Ben Christian-Webb, United Kingdom, Leslie Jaques, followed by Department of Corrections, Police, School Students and any others. Ode: Meralda Warren. Last Post: Lyn McNair (Social Worker) followed by one minutes silence. Raising of the flags: David Brown/Ian Walker. Slow air: (Kirkwall Pipe Band). Blessing and final Hymn "Sweet Bye and Bye" Pastor Ray Codling. *Grateful thanks from all the community to those who provided wreaths, decorated the square, to the children of Pitcairn's school for distributing poppies and programs, to those who brought family medals for display, and to the kind co-ordinators of the breakfast which everyone was cordially invited to attend.* The flags from the representative countries were all flown in the square. Trust Ben to hold his wreath the wrong way round.



A community breakfast was held in the public hall following the ANZAC ceremony. ANZAC day was a Friday so it was decided to also have a public dinner in the public hall followed by community singing in the Church to welcome in the Sabbath. The Gaiter gospel singers are very popular on Pitcairn and many families have their DVD's. The sing song to Gaiter songs was so enjoyable they have decided to repeat this once a month. For those who may be interested, on Mike Warren's website [www.onlinepitcairn.com](http://www.onlinepitcairn.com) he has posted a video recording of the ANZAC ceremony under the section News.



## OOPS: Gray Cameron, a Pitcairn Magistrate has been convicted in the New Zealand courts.

In the National newspaper Sunday Star Times 6 April 2008 –

*“..... The Auckland barrister who served as Pitcairn magistrate in the early stages of the Island’s long-running sex cases has been convicted of drink driving..... He was picked up at a police checkpoint in Newmarket in November and found to have 107mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood. The legal limit is 80mg. He told the police he had had a gin and tonic at work and was on his way home.....”*

Only one gin and tonic? Accompanying the article was this photo with the caption “Pitcairn prank: Gray Cameron”. The things one will do to keep Pitcairn in the news. Naturally this news created much mirth and Ha! Ha! Ha’s! on Pitcairn as he was the one who committed the men to trial following the deposition hearings where the defence were not allowed to call witnesses but the prosecution were. Much mirth and debate as many of us speculated on whether or not, if his time comes, his potential Queens medal might be upgraded to Dame. It appears that each New Year and Queens Birthday for the last few years, someone or two or three who were involved with the Pitcairn sex case are being awarded Queens medals. New Zealand celebrates the Queens birthday on the first Monday in June. Who is next?



### CAROL WARREN TULL:

Our Entertainment Committee 2008 has done a wonderful thing. They sought the help of Shirl at PIO (Pitcairn Island Office) and got a pile (lots) of table games and karaoke sent up. Every other Saturday night they invite everyone to come along and enjoy some challenging games. The biggest hit of all is the Karaoke. It’s no wonder for the people of Pitcairn love to sing. There are still a few who are reluctant to join in but hopefully this will all change in time. It’s hard to resist joining in when there’s so much fun going on. If there’s anyone out there who thinks they are good at checkers, do come along Pauline is dying for some challenge. Most of us have tried but she still stands unbeaten. She’s too good for us. Congratulations team - well done and keep up the good work.

### TIMOTHY YOUNG TULL:

**“Floyd Hastings McCoy** is one of the prominent Pitcairners who stands out in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whether he is fondly remembered or otherwise, the point remains that he is remembered nonetheless. Floyd was born on January 7th, 1897 on Pitcairn, and came to be known as either "Podo" or "Floydo." Through a relationship with Alta Christian when he was around 20, he was said to have fathered Laura Christian. However, he would eventually marry Violet Ann Ferris, an Australian woman. Floyd spent a lot of his time "off-island" where he was trained as a navigator, as well as becoming a ham radio enthusiast. He became police inspector on Pitcairn, a job which was highlighted by many humorous episodes. Floyd was often the target of pranks by many islanders such as Morris Warren, and as such he always wrote letters of complaint to the consul in Fiji. It was fortunate that this happened, because his correspondence survives today in numerous archives. He was considered "worldly" by many Pitcairners, and also being accused as "full of himself." He lacked the usual Pitcairn humour and on one occasion Floyd took Sam and Maynard to court for mocking him after they called “Sail oh”\*\*\* when there was no ship in sight. On one occasion an island man\*\*\* rescued him from drowning after his canoe overturned. As a ham radio enthusiast, Floyd was an active caller, and made many contacts in his years as a "Ham." He is photographed in a 1957 National Geographic Article manning his radio. Floyd died on September 15th, 1963, and his grave marker still features prominently down at the cemetery. He was survived by his wife Violet (Vi), by almost ten years.”



**\*\* Sail oh** – In the days when we didn’t have VHF Radios or regular radio contact with ships, whenever someone spotted a ship on the Pitcairn horizon they would yell at the top of their voice “Sail Oh”. On hearing that someone would rush to the two public bells and ring the five rings to alert everyone there is a ship. We would run to the landing (no motor bikes or other transport in those days) and the long boats would go out to meet the ship in the hope it would stop. Today very few ships stop at Pitcairn but in Floyds era, many did.

**\*\*\* It was Dad (Ben Christian) who rescued him. But it was me (Julie) who spotted him clinging to the overturned canoe. I went fishing with dad that day and was standing in the bow of the canoe when I spotted him clinging to the canoe at Ginser Valley, the back of the island where it would have been unlikely anyone would have spotted him from land. I don’t think he was a good swimmer. It was his lucky day we came by when we did.**

## BITS AND PIECES:

**CRUISE SHIP BREMAN** called on 2 April 2008 and most passengers and crew were able to come ashore. The islanders had set up souvineer stalls along the main road and in the village square with only a small number going on board to trade. We derive a major source of our income from trading souvineers to passengers and crews of Cruise ships. We work hard during the winter months making new stock to sell during the height of the season when we can have cruise ships visiting back to back. It is an accepted fact, that with any business, some passengers can't get enough of our souvineers and others just want to visit Pitcairn. One local had invested in a portable gazebo to protect her souvineers from sun and rain and christened it during Bremans visit. When asked how she did, she commented wryly, I made \$30.00 and the gazebo cost me \$250.00



**Burning of stamps** - This was the first burning for years of stamps officially gone off sale. With the Queen's Birthday issue and some postcards gone off sale the previous week, Dennis the postmaster and his crew of volunteers set to the task of burning them in the yard behind the Square. Thousands of dollars going up in smoke. For the last several years, gone-off stamps, had been sent to NZ for safekeeping and late sale (at double price), but we are now trusted to burn them ourselves again.



**PUBLIC STORE MEETING:** The annual store board held their AGM on 13 April 2008. Usually this would have been the time to elect new board members. However one of the changes being discussed by the Pitcairn Development Team (PDT) is to recommend bringing the responsibility of the store and the job positions under the umbrella of Government instead of a co-operative. If the recommendations are adopted then the positions will be advertised and applicants interviewed. In the meantime the current store members will continue until a decision has been made by the Island Council. Funding has been approved to build a much bigger store. There has been much discussion on where the new site will be but hopefully agreement has been reached to site the new store on the vacant land where Christies house used to be beside the main road just down from the Square and before Bobs Valley.

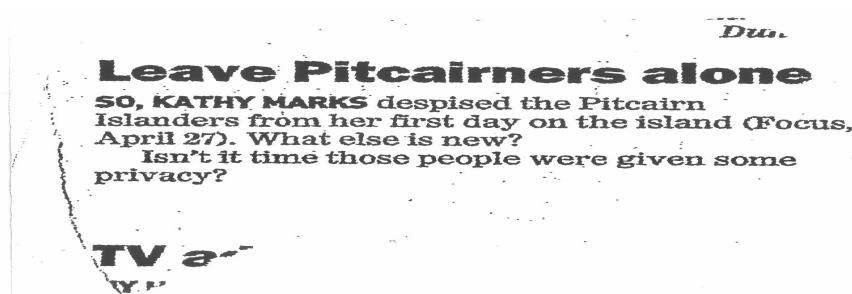
Before I left Pitcairn there were plans to imminently recommence **CONCRETING THE REMAINDER OF THE MAIN ROAD** from just past the village square right out to Pulau where the school house is. This has been put on hold pending the building of the new store as the road adjacent to where the store is to be built has not yet been concreted and with the use of heavy machinery, etc it was decided to delay the road project until after the store has been built.

A **NORWEIGAN YACHT "UNDERVEIS"** visited and stayed for a week. Two Norwegian sailors on 'Underveis' arrived salted down and very hungry after having having sailed/drifted from Easter Island after an engine breakdown. they were eager for solid ground under their feet, and in appreciation of Jay fixing their engine and other people helping with transport and accomodation ashore, they had a performance down the landing for most of the population one evening, juggling fire sticks and blowing fire, and the kids were told 'Do not try this at home!!!' A collapsible pushbike was donated to the school kids, as the sailors did not really have room for it onboard. They left reluctantly after almost ten days anchoring off Bounty Bay in quite rough seas.



The **PAROLE BOARD** has sat again and is considering an application for parole from the guy still on home detention.

**VARIOUS COUNCIL MEETINGS** have been held in the last month and there have been lengthy discussions about the proposals from the Pitcairn Development Team which included the makeup of council, heads of departments, etc. The proposals included removing voting rights from the Island Secretary. Betty Christian was Island Secretary from 1997 until her retirement last year when Heather Menzies became her successor. The Island Secretary was always an *ex officio* member of council with no voting rights until the height of the massive number of new ordinances passed during the investigations when an unexpected ordinance arrived, giving Betty as Island Secretary voting rights. The Governor then went on to pass another ordinance to reduce the qualifying period for applications for Mayor and suggested Brenda be appointed as Mayor following her brothers sacking. No one quite knew why those ordinances were necessary because the Governor has the power to overrule Council and he does. Voting rights were usually reserved to elected members only until the spate of new ordinances.



## MAIL STATISTICS FOR APRIL 2008

IN: 131  
OUT: 141

Left, letter to the Editor of a national newspaper following the printing of an extract from that book.



## COMPENSATION or PRIZE?

In a number of recent articles, headlines screamed "Pitcairn rape victims to sue Britain". According to reports, nine women are considering a class action against the British Government to seek compensation. The report said: ".....*We've been through a hell of a lot, and **the British have won their case thanks to us, but now it's over they've just brushed us aside...***" We didn't realise it was a contest where there would be winners and losers and the winners would receive a prize. They won on a "he said, she said" basis and who the judges thought were credible. There have been no winners in all of this except for the legal fraternity. The article went on to say, "*If they'd had proper laws on Pitcairn, people overseeing the island properly, none of this would have happened.....*" I agree. That is what the men have been saying too. They wanted British rights also. They were selective in what the men were entitled to but it will be interesting to see if the Governor will buckle under the victims demands. If he does it will serve the British right. If they had conducted the trials according to all the rights of British citizens they might have found less charges proved therefore less compensation or is that prize?

**THAT BOOK** which we have been anticipating has arrived. Here is my review of that book.

I have only briefly skimmed through that book but from what I can see it is not very interesting and contains nothing much that is new that you can't read for free on the internet. I believe: it is biased, it is one sided and some of the things written is nasty and has no balance whatsoever. Before flicking through the pages I was worried about what I was going to find but at the end I just burst out laughing. It was as if I was going back to 2004 and re-reading the newspapers all over again. It seems so negative everyone in it including the author appears to be bad. It is almost like the "me thinks she protest too much" syndrome that makes what she has written appear not believable. I will be interested to read the reviews from the experts. To me it wasn't a "gripping" read just more of the same old stuff.

Nevertheless it is good for me to have a copy of that book because many of its contents allow us to comment more on what happened and some bits confirmed some of my suspicions. Why is it that 'outsiders' appear fascinated with the way we dress? The various court people dressed in suits, ties and wigs during the time Marks was on the island but we didn't. She appeared obsessed with what one of our women wore and commented, not so nicely, about her throughout the book. She commented on our alcohol drinking but let herself down when she complained that her case of red wine and bottle of whisky didn't last the four weeks she was there as she had only anticipated staying two weeks and would have ordered more if she had known. I believe she has broken name suppression orders of men who still think they have name suppression in the New Zealand and Pitcairn jurisdictions. Her special victim 'Belinda' can be readily identified by anyone who has had any interest in Pitcairn. She appears in awe of the cast of characters and in particular the Officials and diplomats and police and legal personnel. She appeared disappointed at some of the not guilty verdicts (I assume this was her viewpoint and not that of the nameless backstage people). She wrote about how we weren't friendly towards them. With the nasty headlines screaming around the world from Khazikasthan to Bahrain what did she expect us to say, well done Kathy, love what you wrote about me? She wrote about the Quinn case, the sacking of the mayor and Brendas appointment and of course the trials and the men and their families. Sounds familiar?

She appears not to elaborate on anything that would have given a teeny weeny bit of balance to the story. She wrote about how not many locals were interested in attending the court hearings but didn't write about how they attended in the first few days but were kicked out of court by the judge at the start of each hearing. In the prosecution not being able to proceed with a charge, for example, she just referred to a ruling in another court on the other side of the world. She could have said the court was in Britian. Also missing was the reason why the charge didn't proceed. Throughout she quoted the victims not being able to tell anyone about the abuse. But the reason why a particular charge didn't succeed was because everyone knew about the event. The girl pursued a married man with a vengeance, her parents refused to do anything about it, she ignored the pleas of the school teacher so the Commissioner at the time had her removed from Pitcairn to school towards the end of the school year in New Zealand. Goodness knows why the man was charged in the first place as the evidence was there for all to find. It was the talk of the island at the time. She appeared disappointed that all charges against another man was dropped but didn't say why they were dropped.

She said I cried in court during the verdicts/sentencing of the men tried in New Zealand. She wasn't present in court during those hearings. But she did give credit to the people who helped backstage and who will remain nameless. We knew who was in court those days so it is easy to guess who her nameless people are. She did in fact acknowledge our Commissioner, Leslie Jaques's help with factual queries. This is disappointing to read as he is currently on Pitcairn telling Pitcairn to forget about the trials and to move forward, yet he assisted with information for that book, the contents of which will send any moving forward backwards, back to the back of beyond, when some of the locals who have been trying their hardest to move forward, read what has been written about them in that book.

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Harts et. Thanks fer all yorley who tull. Ef anybody wunta tull tulla me on [Julie@customcredit.co.nz](mailto:Julie@customcredit.co.nz). Hooray.