

Pitcairn From the Air, and On Land

by John F. Dunn



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

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 from above, showing the white rooftops



And one of those homes



A small ship approaching Pitcairn...



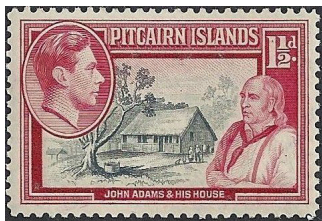
...and the small boat that can actually take you to land.



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.

Still Interested?



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...."