

ADLARD COLES MARITIME CLASSICS

MUTINY ON BOARD HMS BOUNTY



WILLIAM BLIGH

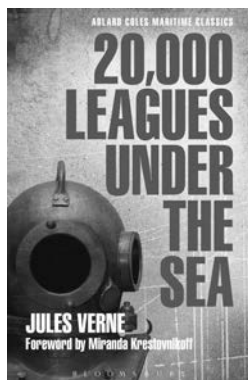
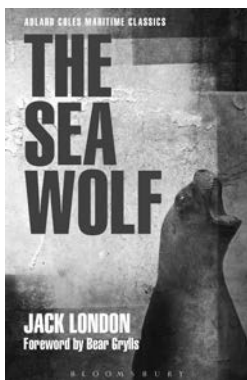
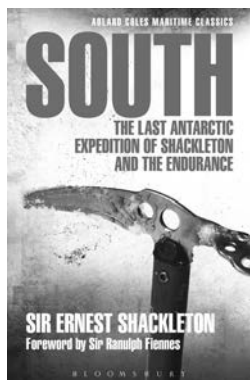
Foreword by Pete Goss

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ADLARD COLES MARITIME CLASSICS

MUTINY ON BOARD HMS BOUNTY

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MUTINY ON BOARD HMS BOUNTY

**Comprising an account by Lieutenant William Bligh,
the vessel's master, with responses by Edward Christian,
lawyer, and brother of mutineer Fletcher Christian**

Foreword by Pete Goss



ADLARD COLES NAUTICAL
B L O O M S B U R Y
LONDON • NEW DELHI • NEW YORK • SYDNEY

Published by Adlard Coles Nautical
an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP
www.adlardcoles.com

Bloomsbury is a trademark of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published 1790
First Adlard Coles edition published 2014

Foreword © Pete Goss 2014

ISBN 978-1-4729-0721-9
ePub 978-1-4729-0722-6
ePDF 978-1-4729-0723-3

Adlard Coles Maritime Classics (print) ISSN 2053-261X
Adlard Coles Maritime Classics (electronic) ISSN 2053-2628

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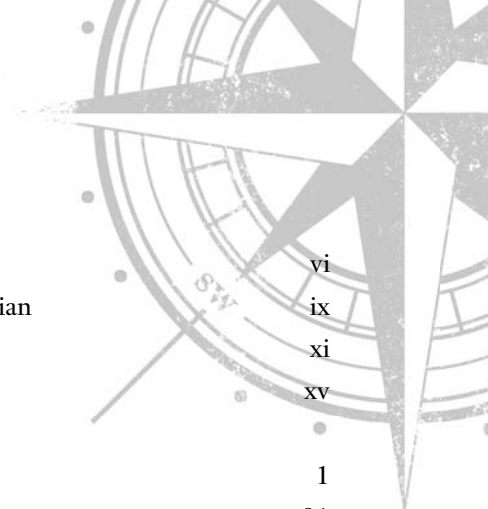
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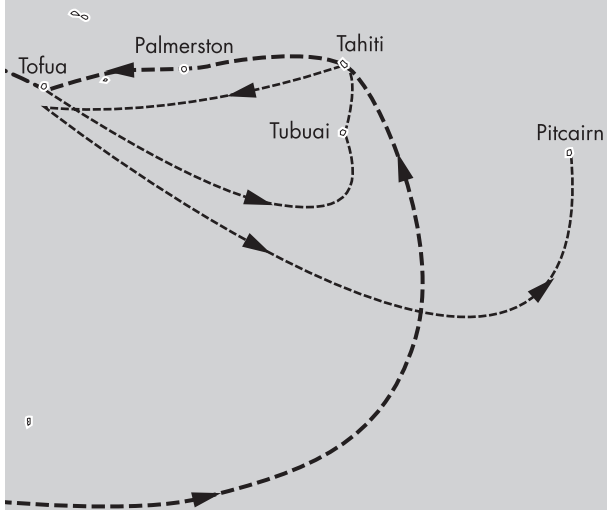
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- Voyage of Bounty to Tahiti and to location of the mutiny, 28 April 1789
- Movements of Bounty after the mutiny, under Christian's command
- Course of Bligh's open-boat journey to Coupang

1000km



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WILLIAM BLIGH

BORN 9 SEPTEMBER 1754, William Bligh joined the Royal Navy aged 7, serving as ship's boy aboard HMS *Monmouth* for two years between 1761 and 1763. He rose up through the ranks, and was chosen by Captain James Cook to be Sailing Master on HMS *Resolution* for Cook's third (and final) voyage to the Pacific in 1776.

During the American War of Independence, Bligh fought in several major sea battles, including the Battle of Dogger Bank (1781) and the Great Siege of Gibraltar (1782). Bligh left the Royal Navy following the end of the war and became a captain in the merchant navy. He returned to the Royal Navy in 1787 to command HMS *Bounty*.

After the mutiny Bligh continued his naval career and captained numerous vessels. He faced another mutiny in 1797, though this time as part of a widespread revolt by seamen that involved the crews of numerous ships.

During the Battle of Camperdown (1797), Bligh engaged three Dutch vessels, captured one and took a Vice-Admiral prisoner. He was also personally praised by Admiral Nelson for his actions during the Battle of Copenhagen (1801).

Bligh's authoritarian reputation secured him the role of Governor of New South Wales between 1806 and 1808, but he was later deposed in a rebellion.

He continued to advance in rank, becoming a Commodore, then Rear Admiral and ended his career as Vice Admiral of the Blue. He died in London on 7 December 1817.



EDWARD CHRISTIAN

Born on 3 March 1758, Edward Christian spent his childhood on the family estate in Cumberland (now Cumbria). His younger brother Fletcher was born when Edward was 6. Their father was descended from Isle of Man gentry, but after he died in 1768 their mother fell into severe debt and at one point faced the prospect of being sent to debtors' prison. Edward went to Cambridge, where he became friends with slavery abolitionist William Wilberforce, and later became both a judge and a professor of law.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

26th May 1787

The Royal Navy buys the collier *Bethia*, refitting her and renaming the ship HMS *Bounty*.

16th August 1787

32-year-old William Bligh is appointed the Commanding Lieutenant of the *Bounty*.

23rd December 1787

The *Bounty* leaves England, bound for Otaheite (now Tahiti), with the instruction to pick up a crop of breadfruit plants and transport them to the West Indies, where it is hoped they can be grown to provide a cheap food source for slaves.

25th April 1788

After a month of trying, in terrible weather conditions, Bligh abandons his attempt to round Cape Horn and plots a new course. He also demotes the *Bounty*'s Sailing Master, John Fryer, and replaces him with 24-year-old Fletcher Christian.

26th October 1788

The *Bounty* reaches Otaheite and spends five unplanned months there whilst Bligh waits for his breadfruit plant cargo to reach a sufficient level of maturity for transport. He allows the crew to live ashore and many become involved with local women.



Tensions rise, floggings become commonplace and several men try to desert.

4th April 1789

The *Bounty* leaves Otaheite with a cargo of over 1,000 breadfruit plants.

28th April 1789

Christian leads a mutiny against Bligh near Tofua, setting him adrift with 18 loyal crew in the ship's launch. Christian then returns in the *Bounty* to Otaheite, letting several Bligh loyalists leave the ship, and allowing locals to take their place aboard, including several women.

14th June 1789

Bligh reaches Coupang, Timor, some 3,618 nautical miles from the spot where he was abandoned by Christian.

15th January 1790

Christian and the *Bounty* rediscover Pitcairn, which appears in the wrong place on the Royal Navy's charts, and thus offers a good place to evade capture.

23rd January 1790

The mutineers burn the *Bounty*, which sinks off the coast of Pitcairn.

13th March 1790

Bligh arrives back at Portsmouth and reports the mutiny to the Admiralty.



7th November 1790

The Royal Navy dispatches HMS *Pandora* to search for the *Bounty* and capture the mutineers.

23rd March 1791

The *Pandora* reaches Otaheite and the loyalist crew Christian let off there come aboard, arrested as suspected mutineers. The *Pandora*'s crew capture ten more men from the list Bligh provided over the next few weeks.

8th May 1791

The *Pandora* leaves Otaheite.

29th August 1791

The *Pandora* runs aground on the Great Barrier Reef, sinking the next day. Most of the mutineers are released at the last moment, but four (Henry Hillbrandt, Richard Skinner, George Stewart and John Sumner) are killed.

16th September 1791

The survivors from the *Pandora* (including the mutineers) reach Timor in four small launches and then continue their return journey to England.

12th August 1792

The Royal Navy's court martial proceedings begin against ten *Bounty* crewmembers.



18th September 1792

The trial reaches its conclusion. Four men are acquitted (Michael Byrne, Joseph Coleman, Thomas McIntosh and Charles Norman). Two are found guilty but are pardoned (Peter Haywood and James Morrison). Another is reprieved due to a legal technicality and later also pardoned (William Musprat). Three are found guilty (Thomas Burkitt, Thomas Ellison and John Millward). They are sentenced to death.

29th October 1792

Burkitt, Ellison and Millward are hanged (by slow strangulation) aboard HMS *Brunswick* at Spithead.

20th September 1793

Christian and four other mutineers are killed by men who had joined the *Bounty* at Otaheite and settled on Pitcairn with them.

15th May 1794

Christian's brother, the lawyer Edward Christian, publishes his Appendix, which calls into doubt Bligh's account.

3rd December 1794

Bligh publishes his response to Edward Christian.

1808

The first ship to visit Pitcairn since the *Bounty* was sunk finds John Adams is the sole surviving mutineer. The public learns the fates of the other mutineers. Adams receives a pardon in 1825.

FOREWORD

BY PETE GOSS

MY FASCINATION FOR THE MUTINY on the *Bounty* began as a child when my father spun the yarn, featuring wild seamen wielding pistols and cutlasses amongst the Pacific Islands. It drilled its way deep into my imagination. I had never heard of the mutiny before, or the small-boat adventure that followed it. I was hooked.

The sea was always going to be in my blood and as my knowledge and experience of the sea and ships developed so my perception of the mutiny changed. Life is never black and white and the more experience and wisdom one picks up the more shades of grey become apparent. One is better able to relate to the past – the blanks can be filled with empathy.

I did a single-handed transatlantic voyage on a 26ft Firebird catamaran, shivering my way across the North Atlantic as I slept on deck exposed to the elements. On another transatlantic voyage the boat took on a lot of water and all my food was spoiled so that all I had was tea with sugar for the last ten days. I learnt what it was to be hungry, not starving of course but hungry enough to get a sense of what Bligh and his crew must have endured.

As training manager for the British Steel Challenge I was responsible for training everyone in the fleet and played a key role in skipper selection. As such I had an intimate understanding of all the characters across the fleet. The first leg was a disaster for Commercial Union and the crew ‘mutinied’, in the sense that they had had enough and called for a new skipper, which was

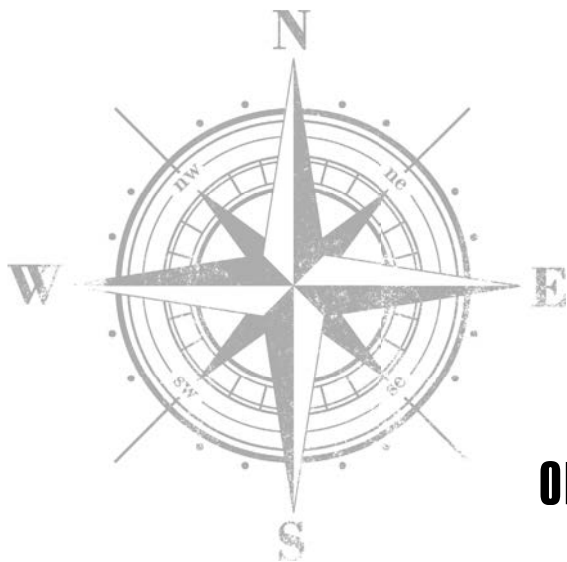


duly arranged. What struck me at the time was that the reality was far from the black and white scenario as the press would have had it. It was a complex combination of subtle characters and circumstances that led to the split and I am sure that if the odd individual hadn't been in place the outcome would have been different. The crew went on to a successful circumnavigation and the skipper went to many successful miles.

I have always been fascinated by leadership and spend a lot of my time teaching it in business schools around the world. I myself have had to wrestle with testing decisions from abandoning ship, replacing crew, rescuing a life and being rescued myself.

So it was with a lot more wisdom that I revisited the Bligh story in the edition you have in your hand. I just couldn't put it down. There is a rawness to it that you don't get with many historical books where you are spoon-fed someone else's take on what happened. This one gives you the story from the mouths of those who were actually there.

I found myself alongside the crew of the *Bounty* who remained loyal to Bligh as they undertook what was an incredible voyage of seamanship, navigation and survival – a voyage that was born of a human tragedy which erupted between two strong characters. These characters come to life as their emotions and conflicts ghost between the lines, giving you glimpses of an extraordinary event and the tensions that culminated in mutiny. This book draws you into that drama and allows you to make your own conclusions and observations. It is both compelling and thought provoking.



A NARRATIVE OF THE MUTINY

**A Narrative of the Mutiny on Board His Majesty's Ship
Bounty and the Subsequent Voyage of Part of the Crew
in the Ship's Boat from Tofoa, one of the Friendly Islands,
to Timor, a Dutch Settlement in the East Indies**

by Lieutenant William Bligh

THE FOLLOWING NARRATIVE IS ONLY a part of a voyage undertaken for the purpose of conveying the breadfruit tree from the South Sea Islands to the West Indies. The manner in which this expedition miscarried, with the subsequent transactions and events, are here related. This part of the voyage is not first in the order of time, yet the circumstances are so distinct from that by which it was preceded, that it appears unnecessary to delay giving as much early information as possible concerning so extraordinary an event. The rest will be laid before the public as soon as it can be got ready; and it is intended to publish it in such



a manner, as, with the present Narrative, will make the account of the voyage complete.

At present, for the better understanding the following pages, it is sufficient to inform the reader that in August, 1787, I was appointed to command the *Bounty*, a ship of 215 tons burthen, carrying 4 six-pounders, 4 swivels, and 46 men, including myself and every person on board. We sailed from England in December, 1787, and arrived at Otaheite the 26th of October, 1788. On the 4th of April, 1789, we left Otaheite, with every favourable appearance of completing the object of the voyage, in a manner equal to my most sanguine expectations. At this period the ensuing Narrative commences.

April 1789

I sailed from Otaheite on the 4th of April 1789, having on board 1,015 fine breadfruit plants, besides many other valuable fruits of that country, which, with unremitting attention, we had been collecting for three and twenty weeks, and which were now in the highest state of perfection.

On the 11th of April, I discovered an island in latitude $18^{\circ} 52' S$ and longitude $200^{\circ} 19' E$ by the natives called Whytootackee. On the 24th we anchored at Annamooka, one of the Friendly Islands; from which, after completing our wood and water, I sailed on the 27th, having every reason to expect, from the fine condition of the plants, that they would continue healthy.

On the evening of the 28th, owing to light winds, we were not clear of the islands, and at night I directed my course towards Tofoa. The master had the first watch; the gunner the middle watch; and Mr Christian, one of the mates, the morning watch. This was the turn of duty for the night.



Just before sun-rising, Mr Christian, with the master at arms, gunner's mate, and Thomas Burket, seaman, came into my cabin while I was asleep, and seizing me, tied my hands with a cord behind my back, and threatened me with instant death if I spoke or made the least noise: I, however, called so loud as to alarm everyone; but they had already secured the officers who were not of their party, by placing sentinels at their doors. There were three men at my cabin door, besides the four within; Christian had only a cutlass in his hand, the others had muskets and bayonets. I was hauled out of bed, and forced on deck in my shirt, suffering great pain from the tightness with which they had tied my hands. I demanded the reason of such violence, but received no other answer than threats of instant death if I did not hold my tongue. Mr Elphinston, the master's mate, was kept in his berth; Mr Nelson, botanist, Mr Peckover, gunner, Mr Ledward, surgeon, and the master, were confined to their cabins; and also the clerk, Mr Samuel, but he soon obtained leave to come on deck. The fore hatchway was guarded by sentinels; the boatswain and carpenter were, however, allowed to come on deck, where they saw me standing abaft the mizen-mast, with my hands tied behind my back, under a guard, with Christian at their head.

The boatswain was now ordered to hoist the launch out, with a threat, if he did not do it instantly, to take care of himself.

The boat being out, Mr Hayward and Mr Hallet, midshipmen, and Mr Samuel, were ordered into it; upon which I demanded the cause of such an order, and endeavoured to persuade someone to a sense of duty; but it was to no effect: 'Hold your tongue, Sir, or you are dead this instant,' was constantly repeated to me.



The master, by this time, had sent to be allowed to come on deck, which was permitted; but he was soon ordered back again to his cabin.

I continued my endeavours to turn the tide of affairs, when Christian changed the cutlass he had in his hand for a bayonet that was brought to him, and, holding me with a strong grip by the cord that tied my hands, he with many oaths threatened to kill me immediately if I would not be quiet: the villains round me had their pieces cocked and bayonets fixed. Particular people were now called on to go into the boat, and were hurried over the side: whence I concluded that with these people I was to be set adrift.

I therefore made another effort to bring about a change, but with no other effect than to be threatened with having my brains blown out.

The boatswain and seamen, who were to go in the boat, were allowed to collect twine, canvas, lines, sails, cordage, an eight and twenty gallon cask of water, and the carpenter to take his tool chest. Mr Samuel got 150lbs of bread, with a small quantity of rum and wine. He also got a quadrant and compass into the boat; but was forbidden, on pain of death, to touch either map, ephemeris, book of astronomical observations, sextant, time-keeper, or any of my surveys or drawings.

The mutineers now hurried those they meant to get rid of into the boat. When most of them were in, Christian directed a dram to be served to each of his own crew. I now unhappily saw that nothing could be done to effect the recovery of the ship: there was no one to assist me, and every endeavour on my part was answered with threats of death.

The officers were called, and forced over the side into the boat, while I was kept apart from everyone, abaft the mizen-