



New *Bounty* Artifacts BY TIM YOUNG

There have been hundreds of articles written about the *Bounty* and her surviving relics. Frequently mentioned are her huge anchor (in the Adamstown square), a rudder section (in a Fiji museum), and the *Bounty* Bible.

However, a number of lesser-known items exist as well. Two of these were recovered in 1999 by a team of archaeologists and divers from James Cook University (Queensland). They dove extensively to the *Bounty* wreck site, recovering many items that were then taken to Australia for preservation.

One item the JCU divers recovered was a lead sheet, measuring 17cm long by 9cm wide. It is about 2mm thick. It also has a number of small nail holes. I believe this is a piece of the sheeting that covered the decks.

Also found was one of the scuppers (drain). It is 18cm long, with a hole 7cm wide. From it a pipe carried water to a tub placed on the deck below. Parts of this pipe have also been discovered, and it appears that it got smaller as it descended below decks.

The two pictured items struck me as being among the best surviving relics to date, as they have a direct connection with the original purpose of the voyage (i.e., the transport of breadfruit plants from Tahiti to the West Indies).

A quote from William Bligh's *A Voyage to the South Seas* gives us the origins of the recovered items:

"The great cabin was appropriated for the preservation of the plants and extended so far forward as the after hatchway. It had two large skylights, and on each side three scuttles for air, and was fitted with a false floor cut full of holes to contain the garden-pots in which the plants were to be brought home. The deck was covered with lead, and at the foremost corners of the cabin were fixed pipes to carry off the water which drained from the plants into tubs placed below to save it for future use."

Many pieces of lead have been recovered from the *Bounty* site. They are usually small and melted into

unrecognizable lumps (undoubtedly as a result of Quintal's little experiment with pyrotechnics). According to Bligh, the great cabin's floor was covered with lead. Doubtless this is where the lead items came from. However, exactly where the pictured items were located can't be determined.

The sheet and the scupper returned to Pitcairn in 2007, after undergoing preservation. They are in storage, awaiting display in the island museum.

Another scupper met a strange fate. It was found over 40 years ago by an islander. Seeing no practical use for it, he had it melted down, and used the lead as sinkers for his fishing line.

