

Howard Robinson - The Mutiny on the Bounty

Howard Robinson had previously visited the History Group to speak on his forebear, Oliver Cromwell, and he returned to give a presentation on Captain Bligh (1754 - 1817) and his three mutinies.



Captain William Bligh

Contrary to popular parlance, there were three mutinies during Captain Bligh's command, not just the one known to literature.

Howard began by giving a brief resumé of Captain Bligh's family and his early career in the Royal Navy. Bligh had witnessed the death of Captain Cook while serving as Sailing Master on HMS Endeavour, and had also sailed with Joseph Banks, a famous botanist.

Howard then explained what type of ship 'The Bounty' was and gave its dimensions; it was a little ship - a cutter - with good storage. Its purpose was to pick up breadfruit plants from Tahiti.

Using letters, diagrams, maps, timelines and lists in his PowerPoint presentation, Howard led the group through the events leading up to and beyond the Mutinies and Bligh's subsequent career as Governor of Sydney, NSW, which was then a colony of England.



An illustration of 'The Mutiny on the Bounty'.

Quotes from contemporaries and contemporary sources gave a picture of Bligh, the man and master. He had a volcanic temper and had no idea how to get the best out of his officers, but he was a kinder man than most in that violent and harsh era. Howard summed him up thus: a brilliant navigator but his own worst enemy.

Howard's presentation was done with humour, detail, an engaging style and a few risqué comments. This made him a very enjoyable speaker and, hopefully, one who will return to speak to the group again.

Heidy Hague