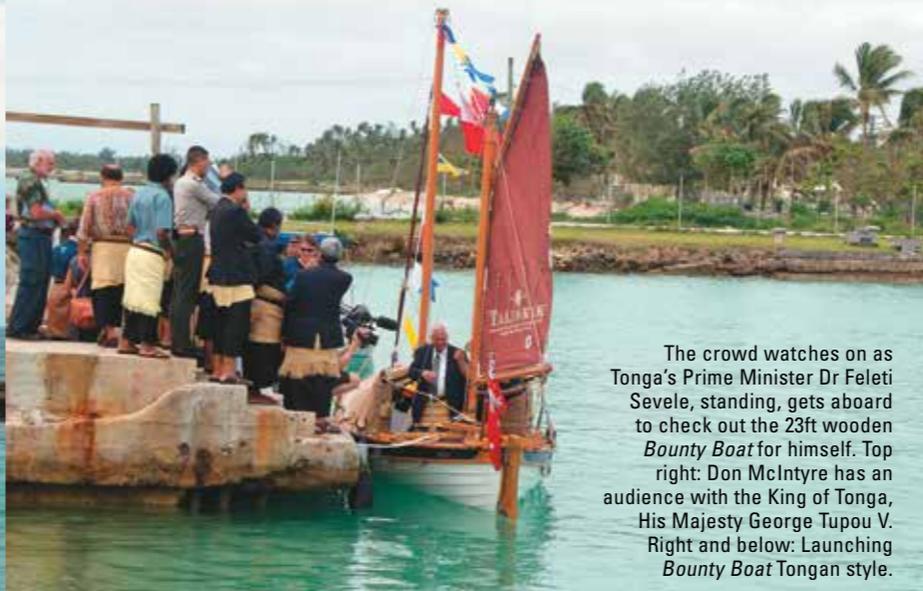


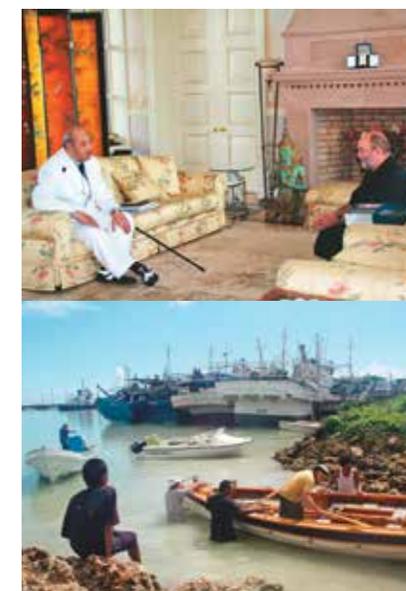


PHOTOS: Sibylla MacDonald & Tonga Visitors Bureau (Ministry of Tourism)

The crew of *Bounty Boat* row out of Tonga's Touluki Navy Base, Nuku'alofa, for Tofua Island and the start of the epic journey.



The crowd watches on as Tonga's Prime Minister Dr Feleti Sevele, standing, gets aboard to check out the 23ft wooden *Bounty Boat* for himself. Top right: Don McIntyre has an audience with the King of Tonga, His Majesty George Tupou V. Right and below: Launching *Bounty Boat* Tongan style.



# MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY BOAT

Don loses half his *Talisker Bounty Boat* crew, but quickly finds replacements and is a hit in Tonga

Two weeks before I was due to set out on the [www.taliskerbountyboat.com](http://www.taliskerbountyboat.com) expedition to repeat Captain William Bligh's journey across the Pacific in a 23ft wooden open boat, I lost half my crew! Eighteen-year-old Mike Perham from the UK, currently the youngest solo circumnavigator and my second in command, had an appendicitis attack in Sydney during training in February and never fully recovered. He failed the expedition medical.

Pete Stier from the USA went hypoglycaemic, seasick and was hyperventilating after a weekend of starvation rations during the same training. The day after Perham pulled out, Stier did the same, declaring it was all a bit too scary, which is fine by me because it is! I'm the first one to concede that this is better to happen before the event than during it.

I put the word out for crew, had some great applicants, but in the end decided to pick 18-year-old Chris Wilde from the UK. He has no sailing experience at all; in fact, he has not even been on a boat!

But he can swim, works as a lifeguard and is in his gap year and free to go. Importantly, he was passionate about doing it. Three days later he was on a plane!

Stier was horrified. How could we do that? Simple really. Just as Jessica Watson has shown, if you really want something and believe in yourself, you can do anything. Wilde looked at what and who was involved, the planning and preparation and decided if Bligh could do it, why not him! I like the lad... watch this space.

My second-in-command is now my best mate of 17 years, 39-year-old Dave Pryce from Hobart. He once was inspired by me, but now he has more experience than I do. We are always scheming new adventures, so I'm very happy to have him onboard. I know what we can achieve together. Check out [www.blizzardexpeditions.com](http://www.blizzardexpeditions.com), he is not your average sailor.

## TONGAN RED CARPET

On April 19, we had the most amazing official send-off that you could



The revised crew of the Talisker Bounty Boat 2010 Expedition: (L-R) David Pryce, Don McIntyre, David Wilkinson and Christopher Wilde.

"That night we received word that the King of Tonga, His Majesty George Tupou V would like to meet us the next day"



ever want for any expedition. The Tongan Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers, Australian, New Zealand and Japanese Ambassadors, a host of other dignitaries and the heads of the Defence forces, along with the Tongan traditional dance troupe, all made for a very special day that I will not forget for some time.

Tonga is special part of the world, like nothing else I have seen or experienced, so do think about spending time here, and not just for a holiday. For all the photographs and *Talisker Bounty Boat* action click on [www.tongaholidays.com](http://www.tongaholidays.com) website and you'll see what I mean. There are many posts on all the things we have been doing and plenty of great photos.

*Bounty Boat* was shipped in a 40ft container to Nukualofa. The day before we hit the ground running with a press conference straight off the plane on Monday, April 12, then sorted some paper work to clear the container for

opening the next day.

On Tuesday, we found the travel-lift was not working and the crane we organised broke down the next day so we accepted the offer of a "Tongan Launch" (15 big guys dragging the boat out by hand and taking it to the water) for Thursday and met with the Prime Minister Dr Feleti Sevele that afternoon, which was quite exciting. He too has been very helpful with direct involvement for so many things associated with the expedition for which we are very grateful.

## ROYAL SENDOFF

We slipped the boat into the water in pouring rain and towed it out to the Royal Sunset Resort 4nm offshore — that was a great moment, I tell you. That night we received word that the King of Tonga, His Majesty George Tupou V would like to meet us the next day. And YES we were a little excited and nervous.

His Majesty is truly a great man and he is a Bligh fan also. We discussed many things and to my great surprise he told me of his meeting with an American who attempted the Bligh voyage in 1975 in a replica, singlehanded, but also with an outboard motor, charts, etc onboard.

I had been given a photo of this boat at Thursday Island about nine months ago. The American had stopped there and could go no farther because of the Timor conflict, but no one knew anymore about it... except the King of Tonga, who suggested the American may be in his '80s now if still alive.

## KIDS SAILING

We stayed on Atata Island. There is a small village here, so we asked if the school children would like to see the boat. They arrived at 11am in traditional dress, about 18 children from the ages of six to 10, and we all went sailing in the *Bounty Boat* on a beautiful day with them all singing at the top of their voices.

Back at the beach, the school children sang while four boys did a traditional dance in front of the boat and then, when I thought it was all finished, the most gracious little girl stood beside the boat and did such a beautiful soft traditional dance to the singing of the other children it made me cry. I don't know why, but I could have picked her up and just taken her to another world she was so cute! That moment is now burnt in my mind. I will never forget it.

Tonga — it's paradise at dawn and at dusk the mozzies are hungry, the humidity is high and late cyclones are discussed often. We do not want one but I love this place. On April 28, we set off. Hope you will come along for the ride at [www.taliskerbountyboat.com](http://www.taliskerbountyboat.com). Can we make it? I reckon we can!