

Bligh's Bounty logbooks recognised by UNESCO

26/2/2021

The logbooks of William Bligh, which document the most notorious mutiny in history, will be officially inscribed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World register **TODAY [Friday 26 February 2021]**.

When Master's Mate of the HMS *Bounty* Fletcher Christian famously forced the captain and his 18 crewmen off the ship on 28 April 1789, Bligh continued to write in his logbook during the gruelling 47-day longboat voyage to Timor, making sure the books were kept secure and dry.

According to State Librarian John Vallance: "Bligh's logbooks provide the only record written at the time of the infamous mutiny on the *Bounty*. We at the Library are delighted that these important pieces have been recognised in this way."

"This is the ninth of the Library's collections of international significance to have been recognised by UNESCO," said Dr Vallance.

Today, a total of 10 collections of cultural significance will be added to UNESCO's Australian register, including the diaries, photographs and records of C.E.W. Bean held by the Australian War Memorial and the State Library of NSW, and the Papers of Jessie Street held by the National Library of Australia.

Bligh's priceless maritime logbooks were presented to the State Library in 1902 by Bligh's grandson, and have been kept safe in the Library's collection ever since.

"The logbooks document events leading up to the mutiny and give some insight into possible causes," said State Library curator Sarah Morley.

For 47 days – through treacherous weather conditions – Bligh and his men survived the 6710-kilometre journey to Timor on a seven-metre open longboat with a make-shift sail.

"They were given very limited food supplies and only a quadrant and a compass for navigation. Their survival is a testament to Bligh's leadership and navigational skills," said Ms Morley

"Interestingly the days recording the mutiny show signs of water damage, despite the hardship, Bligh was obviously determined to record this dramatic event."

Media Release



Digitised versions of the logbooks are available on the Library's website.

Sarah Morley is available for interviews.

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