

NEW ISLAND

New Island is in the west of the Falkland Islands at 51°43'S 61°18'W and the main island is approximately 5,840 acres and was named by the American sealers and whalers from the New Bedford/Newport/New London area of the United States. Nearby islands included in the group are North, Saddle, Coffin, Burnt, Beef, Ship and Cliff Knob Islands and the Seal Rocks. A favourite haunt of whalers and sealers from the 18th Century onwards this is reflected in place names such as Coffin's Harbour (now known as Ship Harbour) and Coffin Island after one or more of the whaling captains of this name; Hooker's Harbour (now Settlement Harbour) likely after a Captain as the name pre-dates Joseph HOOKER, Barnard Passage after Captain Barnard who was marooned with four other men in the winter of 1813 for nearly eighteen months or after his father who had visited previously; Sabina Point after the Norwegian barque *Sabino* and Smith Harbour possible after Lieutenant SMITH.

October 1813 Captain Charles H BARNARD started to build a stone shelter: *I now determined to work steadily at building a stone house, with a fire place, and endeavour to get a sufficient number of sealskins to cover the roof...On the 8th December...I was now employed at the walls of the house, which were about nine feet by seven, and more than three feet thick.* [Marooned edited by Bertha S Dodge; pg 95]



Undressed stone with clay mortar in Barnard's House

February 1814 Captain BARNARD, James LOUDER, Joseph ALBROOK, Jacob GREEN and Samuel ANSEL completed building a house on New Island: *in three days we completed the walls; which were from three to four feet thick, and five in height. But we had the most difficult part yet to accomplish, which was to make the roof, as we had not been able to procure drift wood enough for the rafters; but we luckily substituted the ribs of a whale, which we found on the beach. After the top was prepared in the best manner which our scanty means permitted for thatching, we pulled the longest tushook straw we could find, and secured it with old rope yarns...raise a bank of earth around the house, against the walls, of the same height, and let it slope off from the top to the thickness of six or eight feet at the bottom, and then with grass sods cover the whole bank...the roof proved to be perfectly tight, and the chimney carried off the smoke well...On the 20th October we began to take down one end of our house, extended the walls eighteen or twenty feet further, and then erected the gable end as before, intending to enclose it all under one roof...The new wall was much better than the old, as we had laid the stones in a sticky blue clay, which we procured from under the sand, at the depth of about eighteen inches.* The men were finally rescued November 1814. [Marooned edited by Bertha S Dodge; pg 129, 130, 143]



Barnard's House in the 1990s – different uses over the years have resulted in additions and modifications

Captain William Horton SMYLEY reported placing pigs and rabbits on New Island circa 1820.

In June 1821 Benjamin Morrell accepted the position of first mate on the sealing schooner *Wasp* of New York. When they arrived at New Island they found the brig *Aurora* on shore at Shallop Cove, New Island. [A Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean...By Benjamin Morrell] The *Aurora* had been condemned there during the return voyage to New York from a sealing voyage to the South Shetland Islands. Charles H BARNARD returned to New Island in the ship *Charity* in 1921 and met there with James WEDDELL.

The American whaling brig *Francis*, under Captain William HOLLAND and of New London, Connecticut, was wrecked on the North West coast of New Island 15 February 1842. At 2am the first mate informed the Captain that the brig was ashore. Apart from one man who drowned all of the crew made it to safety. The master stayed on board the vessel *White Oak* at New Island and 6 men were left with the wreck of the *Francis*. After a few days the remainder of the crew rowed to Port San Carlos in their whaleboat where they attempted to walk to the settlement at Port Louis. They were unsuccessful so returned to their whale boat and rowed to Pebble Island, arriving Sunday 13 March 1842, where they fell in with HM surveying ketch *Arrow* which took them to Port Salvador from where they walked to Port Louis. According to a copy of the ship's log, by 18th February there were only small pieces left of the wreck so they abandoned her. [H3; 29-33: H2; 38: B1; 38]

On 11 December 1850 the 600 ton American ship *Waldron* under Captain MOORE took fire at sea and was abandoned by the crew between Carcass Island and New Island. The *Waldron* was on a voyage from Boston to California with a cargo of coals.

On 8 January 1852 the *Levenside* returned to New Island to collect more guano. Governor George RENNIE took the opportunity to visit the island. On her return to Stanley to land the Governor she was totally wrecked on the Billy Rock on the night of 26 January and foundered in Port William.

On 16 August 1852 Captain David STOCKDALE of the brig *Nautilus*, 135 tons, was granted a licence for £33-15-0 to load his ship with one load of guano from New Island.

On 17 November 1852 William H RENNIE (son of the Governor) was appointed Superintendent and Collector of Duty on guano on New Island and adjacent Islands to West Falkland. In his

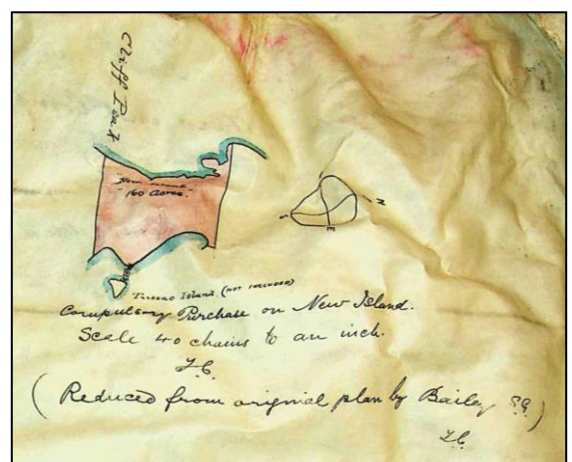
instructions he was also to endeavour to find the two horses previously left on New Island. [E3; 20; 30-37]

The 150 ton American brigantine *Topaz* under Captain ANTONY was brought in to Stanley 21 April 1853 for repairs after going ashore on New Island while on a sealing cruise. She was later condemned.

Governor RENNIE had asked for naval support to arrest American whalers who had been illegally shooting cattle for provisions and on 20 February 1854 the British 6 gun brig HMS *Express* under Commander BOYS, RN went to New Island after Hiram CLIFT of the *Hudson*. On 3 March 1854 HMS *Express* brought in the 400 ton American barque *Hudson* and her tender the 146 ton schooner *Washington* who were on a whaling cruise. The *Washington* was brought in for unlawfully killing pigs etc. The 1060 ton 22 gun ship USS *Germantown* under Captain LYNCH had arrived the day before to protest against the arrest of the US whalers. An exchange of correspondence was exchanged. Captain LYNCH threatened the courthouse with his guns; the whalers were found guilty but their fines were relatively light.

On 28 November 1859 John Elsen, the agent of Smith Bros & Co of Montevideo, was given a licence to fill up the English brig *Tigre* with guano at New Island for 5/- a ton. [E3; pg 159] As New Island was a usual resort of whalers Smith Brothers wished to combine a whaling station with a guano business on New Island. [FIC/E1 pg 118 28 Nov 1859] The Shipping Register records the *Tigre* as being 228 tons under CHALMERS with 10 crew and 4 passengers and that they founded a settlement at New Island. On 10 July 1860 Dick PENNY was brought in from New Island by the *Victor*. 11 July 1860: *Statement of Richard Penny. I went to New Island in the brig Tigre last December. They loaded the brig with guano and sent her away and when the brig returned they brought back 200 sheep and about 40 cattle – none died on the island – the brig has gone again for more. We have settled in Levenside Cove – we have built a wooden house and just beginning to build a stone house. 10 more men are coming down and going to prepare a cargo of Penguin oil. The cattle go all over the island. We have only seen two ships – the Sea Nymph about 1600 tons and the Ohio about 200. Mr Elsen told me to ask if any letters came for him to send them up to him.* [E3; pg 164]

On 3 May 1860 Smith Brothers & Company of Montevideo were granted Crown Grant 140 being the compulsory purchase through their agent, John M Dean, of 160 acres on New Island for the sum of £64. The tussac island was not included. Smith Brothers & Company applied for a licence to depasture stock on the surrounding Crown Lands under the terms of the Proclamation of 31st July 1849. Lease Thirteen was issued 7 August 1860 for 20 years for an annual rental of £10, the land described as: *the whole of New Island, save & except the block of one hundred & sixty acres (to be hereafter chosen) is sold to Messrs Smith & Company and save also a block of 160 acres on the shore of Ship Harbour (to be hereafter chosen) and to be appropriated in any manner which the Governor for the time being may direct. Also the islets adjacent to New Island namely North Island Saddle Island and Coffin Island are leased to Messrs Smith Brothers & Company. Provided always that the lands hereby leased shall be subject to all Crown rights, resumptions * privileges applicable thereto as are contained in the Crown Grant No 140 conveying the said 160 acres beforenamed to Messrs Smith Brothers & Company. And on the expiry of this lease Messrs Smith Brothers and Company shall have the right of purchasing without public auction at the then upset price of rural land (subject to the approval of the Governor for the time being) any block of the lands hereby leased provided that the said block be selected as near as may be of a*



square figure and contain not less than 500 or more than 1,000 acres to be purchased within three months after the termination of this lease. [BUG/REG/2; pg 100]

The HSMS *Beuamanoir*, a 460 ton French brig of war under Captain SAINT ANDRE, called into Stanley 25 January 1861 from Montevideo to enquire regarding Mr Smith's losses at New Island. Arriving the same day was the 200 ton French brig *Victor* which left Stanley 7 February 1861 to take away try pots etc from New Island.

The 300 ton British Barque *Regatta*, under Captain BOULTON with 15 crew and 3 passengers and a cargo of 800 sheep; 300 died en route, went to land sheep at New Island May 1861. On board was the new superintendent and Mr REID.

31 May 1861: *W Clayton, master of Malvina reports that he visited West Point Island – found there a boats crew what had come from New Island to look at the country but had lost their boat – took them back to New Island. Mr Elsen late chief at New Island had gone away & was in charge – 1100 sheep had been landed on the island in addition to the 500 there before. Mr Reid was also at New Island. Another thousand sheep were expected. [E3; pg 183]*

The *River Derwent* was wrecked on New Island August 1867. The captain, crew and part of the cargo were brought in to Stanley 27 August 1867 by the schooner *Enterprise*. For many years the bell was at Chartres before being donated to the Museum in Stanley where it is still on display to date.



On 15 May 1868 Robert Littlejohn, merchant of Montevideo, sold “*all benefit to be derived out of a pending lease of New Island, West Falklands dated 3rd May 1860 under the Seal of the Colony of the Falkland Islands as likewise the contingencies therein referred including 160 acres land purchased also all stock, say sheep, Horses, Mules, goats Houses outbuildings Machinery and Materials of all and every kind, provisions, wool &c existing on said Island in the sum of £2500*” to William Wickham Bertrand and John Switzer of the Falkland Islands. [BUG/REG/1; pg 306]

On 8 September 1868 Bertrand & Switzer were granted a licence to kill penguins on New Island for a year. [E3; 322]

In 1869 it is made public that John SWITZER left Otago, New Zealand in disgrace due to being involved in an insurance scam in 1867. On 5 June 1869 John SWITZER transfers all of his interest in the lease to William Wickham BERTRAND.

On 2 March 1872 the partnership between William W Bertrand and Ernest Augustus Holmsted of Shallow Bay West Falklands sheep farmers was dissolved upon the following terms.

1. *The sheep male and female to be equally divided.*
2. *The horses, mares, foals, tame cattle to be equally divided.*
3. *The houses, corrals, fixtures, boats, plant of every kind at Shallow Bay and New Island, and the freehold a New Island to become the property of the said Ernest A Holmsted upon payment to the said William W Bertrand of the sum of Two hundred pounds Sterling.*
4. *The leasehold property known as the Shallow Bay Estate to be divided as follows – 60,000 acres or thereabouts commencing from West Point and running Eastward to belong and be transferred to the said William W Bertrand and 110,000 to 120,000 acres taking the Shallow Bay house and improvements, and New Island to belong and to be transferred to the said Ernest A Holmsted.*

The debt due to the Falkland Islands Company to be equally shared, Mr William W Bertrand to find satisfactory security for the payment of his share, and to pay wages to Arthur Felton and Herbert Felton amounting to about £100. Mr Ernest A Holmsted agrees to pay wages to Robert McLean to about £30 sterling, and liquidate fully the debt due to John Switzer amounting to £100 Sterling.

It being fully understood that Mr Bertrand has the privilege to run his stock free of charge at Shallow Bay with the exception of paying his share for a shepherd, wool bales, and Mr Bertrand to assist in the shearing and land cutting. [BUG/REG/1; pg 333]

On 2 March 1872 Ernest Augustus Holmsted of Shallow Bay in the Falkland Islands sheep farmer entered into partnership with George Stanley Rees of 9 John Street Adelphi in the County of Middlesex, Architect for a term of 10 years. [BUG/REG/1; pg 334]

On 6 July 1874 the partnership was dissolved between Ernest Holmsted and George Rees. G Stanley Rees sold his half share in New Island and Adelaide Station to Robert Blake for £3,000, the new partnership to be known as Holmsted & Blake. [BUG/REG/1; pg 381-386]

On 29 June 1875 Holmsted & Blake transferred their interest in the lease of New Island to J M Dean & Son. On 1 July 1875 Holmsted & Blake, sheep farmers of Shallow Bay, sold Crown Grant 140 to J M Dean & Son for £500 being: *All that parcel of Land in the Falkland Islands situate in Tigre Bay, New Island, West Falkland Islands containing 160 acres. Is bounded on the east by Tigre Bay and a line running north 370 links, on the north by a line running west to the sea 75 links on the west by the sea 4600 links, and on the south by a line running East to the starting point 4120 links, also all houses, outbuildings & machinery erected thereon.* [BUG/REG/3; pg 5]

On 13 July 1883 J M Dean and Sons transferred “*all our rights and titles together with “Freehold” and “Leasehold” and all deeds and documents belonging to New Island Estate to Edward Nilsson, also all stock of every description and Buildings now upon that Island with the Wool Shed and all material to erect such now lying at Port Stephens, to be landed at New Island free of all charges*” for £2,300. [BUG/REG/3; pg 180]

In 1894 Special Grant 355 was issued to the Admiralty being 100 acres on the west side of Ship Harbour. [CG 355] NB: *further correspondence on this grant not found to date.*

The lease of New Island was transferred to Robert Bertram CULL 17 December 1897.



Scott's House on New Island – photo taken by George Scott

The 1225 ton Norwegian ship *Sabino* came in to Stanley 22 May 1891 leaky for repairs. She was condemned and later sold to the New Island Whaling Company in 1910. She was towed from Stanley 16 August 1910. She broke loose and smashed up November 1911.



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tion on New Island and fishing began 16 January 1909 and ran until 1915. In 1916 the station was dismantled and most of the equipment taken to South Georgia. A Post Office was constructed on the North West corner of the whaling station in 1909 for the use of the whalers. It was closed 1 June 1917.

Mrs Fanny Maria SCOTT, widow of Robert B Cull, applied to purchase New Island in November 1909. This was sanctioned by Executive Council and the Government Reserve of 160 acres at Tigre Harbour were leased to her on an annual tenancy basis.



Glengowan – photo taken by George Scott

In 1910 the hulk *Glengowan* was brought to New Island by the New Whaling Company to be used as a storage hulk. She broke her stays in 1925 and beached.

On 29 October 1919 Crown Grant 378 was issued to Fanny Maria SCOTT being *“The lot or parcel of land hereby granted comprises all that land known as New Island, Saddle Island and Coffin Island situate in West Falkland and containing 5,680 acres more or less save and except the block of land being a Government Reserve containing 160 acres at Tigre Harbour (Ship Harbour) New Island”* for £852. [CG 378]

During World War II a stone shelter was built on the hill as an outpost by Bob and Fin FERGUSON.

In 1949 John James “Jack” “Cracker” DAVIS purchased New Island from George SCOTT, the widower of Fanny.

During the 1950s Jack DAVIS extended the shearing (wool) shed.

Jack DAVIS purchased the *Protector III* 29 September 1958 and later had her towed to New Island from Stanley. She was originally moored to the shore but later was opened to the sea and beached on the sand at the head of Settlement Harbour.



Protector III beached at New Island

There is a cemetery above the old whaling station. The headstones have been disturbed due to penguins burrowing around them. There is also a grave near the settlement enclosed with a drystone wall.

