

SPEEDWELL ISLAND (EAGLE ISLAND), GEORGE ISLAND & BARREN ISLAND

Speedwell Island was originally called Eagle Island, possibly after the frigate *Aigle* one of **Louis Antoine de BOUGAINVILLE**'s ships which travelled to the Falkland Islands in 1764. The island was renamed Speedwell Island by Lieutenant **Thomas EDGAR** who was master of the *Hope* and visited the Falkland Islands in 1786 and 1787. He surveyed West Falkland and his chart of the islands was published by Arrowsmith in 1797. The naming of George Island first appeared after the 1833 survey made by HMS *Beagle* and was likely named after King George V.

The British Merchant brig *Isabella* sailed from Port Jackson, New South Wales, Australia 4 December 1812. After rounding Cape Horn without incident the *Isabella* was wrecked on the west coast of Eagle Island 8 February 1813 with 54 on board. All made it ashore with no loss of life. On Sunday 20 February 1813 **Eliza Providence DURIE** was born on Eagle Island. On 23 February 1813 a crew of six went for help in the *Isabella*'s 17 foot long boat leaving behind 49 people. They arrived off Buenos Aires 31 March 1813. HMS *Nancy* was despatched to rescue those remaining in the Falkland Islands.

On 4 April 1813 **Captain Charles BARNARD** and some of the crew of the American sealer *Nanina* found the shipwrecked crew and passengers and, despite Britain being at war with America, proceeded to help them. On 12 June 1813, during the absence of Captain BARNARD and one of his crew who had gone on a hunting trip with three men from the *Isabella* to secure provisions, five members of the *Isabella*'s crew and Royal Marines seized control of the *Nanina*.

The HMS *Nancy* under Captain William D'ARANDA had arrived at Eagle Island 17 May 1813. The pirated *Nanina* arrived back at Eagle Island 15 June 1813 and met up with her. HMS *Nancy* and the war prize *Nanina* departed 27 July 1813 abandoning Captain BARNARD and four men. The men were finally rescued November 1814. [Marooned edited by Bertha S Dodge]



Speedwell Island – photograph FIC Collection, JCNA

In October 1859 James Lane, colonial manager of the Falkland Islands Co Ltd, instructed the Company's schooner *Victoria* to go to George and Speedwell Islands to report on the pigs there. [FIC/E1; desp 27]

The British ship *Colonsay* of 598 tons under **Captain McALISTER** with a crew of eighteen and one passenger, bound from Callao to Cork with a cargo of guano, was wrecked on Speedwell Island 16 August 1860 when she struck heavily at 2am. *At the time of the wreck the course was NE & by N (with variation NE & by E) With great difficulty the crew & one passenger, the Captains wife was saved.* One of the crew, **William McDAID**, stayed and settled in the Falkland Islands, later managing Pebble Island for the Dean family.

On 15 October 1864 the 70 ton schooner *Fairy*, belonging to the Falkland Islands Co Ltd and with 12 crew under **Micah ROWLANDS**, returned to Stanley from Speedwell Island after 46 days out with 2,600 gallons of penguin oil.

On 31 May 1866 the 266 ton Argentine ship *La Santiago* was wrecked on George Island with no loss of life. The *La Santiago* was laden with saltpetre and bound from Iquique to Marseille with a crew of seventeen and one passenger. The crew were able to save about six weeks provisions, a few articles of clothing and their instruments but the ship and cargo were a total loss. The crew survived on their provisions and wild pigs until rescued at sea by the schooner *Fairy* on 20 August 1866 while trying to reach the settlement in a boat which they constructed on George Island. The crew and passenger were conveyed to the River Plate on board Captain Smyley's schooner the *Kate Sergeant*. [B14; 19]

In 1871 the Port Pleasant house was removed to Speedwell Island. [FIC/D1; 160]

On 24 November 1874 **Alexander BAILLON** entered into an agreement with the Falkland Islands Co Ltd to manage 2,000 sheep on Speedwell Island for three years from July 1874. [BUG/REG/3; 118]



Barren Island – photograph FIC Collection, JCNA

On 13 June 1878 the Falkland Islands Co Ltd leased Speedwell, George and Barren Islands to **Alexander BAILLON** for 21 years from 1 August 1877 at £20 per annum in advance. [BUG/REG/3; 118]

Alexander, age 28, died 7 October 1879 at Fox Bay of chronic cystitis and is buried in Grave A13. In his will he left his entire estate to his father.

In the Executive Council minutes of 10 October 1887 Governor KERR stated that it was necessary to fix the amount of salvage to be awarded to **Richard AITKEN** for some sheathing copper saved from a wreck on Speedwell Island and sold by order of the Receiver of Wrecks. The Council awarded two thirds of the amount realised to the salvor. [P2; 315]

Henrietta BAILLON, who owned a fourth share in Speedwell Islands Company, died on 13 April 1917. The valuation of the business at the time was:

Buildings:		Plant & Utensils:	
Manager's House	£300	Cutter & dinghy	£70
Wool shed	£200	Boat	£7-10
Cookhouse & quarters	£300	2 wool presses	£70
Store	£150	2 weighing machines	£5
House, George Island	£95	4 tanks	£40
Shed, George Island	£100	2 old carts	£5
House, Barren Island	£60	Paints & oils	£2
Shed, Barren Island	£80	Sundry utensils	£10
Dip and yards	£100	Produce:	
Fencing:		100 bales wool (estimated)	£3121-7-11
2 miles (new) @ £40	£80	6 bales sheepskins	£200-6-8
5 ½ miles (old) @ £20	£110	18 casks tallow	£284-5-6
Livestock:		14 hides (estimated)	£42
5339 sheep at 7/-	£1868-13-0	Stores:	
70 rams @ £2	£140	Sundry provisions for sale	£40
12 working horses @ £14	£168		
6 old working horses @ £4	£24		
19 cattle @ £3-10	£66-10-0		

In July 1919 a draft agreement was drawn up on behalf of Williams & Co, The Speedwell Island Co and H & G Cobb appointing **Herbert John SLAUGHTER** manager of Weddell Island, Speedwell Island and Lively Island. [FIC/D13; 475]

The men's quarters, bungalow, dwelling house, cookhouse, store, carpenters shop and woolshed were built in 1922. The bungalow and the cookhouse were demolished in 1956. [FIC/ZD2/84]

The 56 foot auxiliary ketch *Ilen* was commissioned to be built by the Falkland Islands Company Ltd and was constructed in Baltimore. The *Ilen* sailed from Ilfracombe 31 August 1926 and arrived in Stanley 8 January 1927. She was built for service of Speedwell Island.

The manager's house was built in 1932 at a cost of £989-10-10. [FIC/ZD2/84]

On Thursday 24 March 1938 the manager's house burnt down. [Penguin 29 Mar 1938; pg 2]

On 1 April 1945 **Alexander Maurice "Sandy" BONNER** signed a five year contract with the Falkland Islands Co Ltd to be manager of Speedwell Island. [FIC/IC1#3;B23]



Bales of wool being rowed out to AK Ilen – photograph FIC Collection, JCNA

Two new bungalows were built in 1955 at a cost of £1,722 each. A new cookhouse was built 1955/56 at a cost of £2,062. [FIC/ZD2/84]

The new manager's house was built in 1963 at a cost of £4,203-13-9. The old manager's house was demolished in 1964. [FIC/ZD2/84]

Two houses from Speedwell Island were rebuilt at North Arm April-October 1973. The George Island shanty was rebuilt on Speedwell Island. [FIC/EF/]



George Island – photograph FIC Collection, JCNA

On 3 September 1948 **H H SEDGWICK** entered into a contract with the Falkland Islands Co Ltd to erect the George Island house and all carpentry work for £178. Victualling was provided by the Company and he and his mate, **R F HANNAFORD**, would be on ordinary wages from the time of leaving Stanley to arrival on site and from completion of job to return to Stanley.

In March 1973 a house from George Island was rebuilt at North Arm. [FIC/EF]



George Island 1986 – photograph FIC Collection, JCNA

JANE CAMERON M

SOME BIRTHS AND DEATHS ON SPEEDWELL ISLAND

- 1813 Feb 20: **Eliza Providence DURIE** was born on Eagle Island to Robert DURIE, captain of the 73rd regiment, and Joanna-Ann DURIE formerly ROSS formerly TAYLOR.
- 1875 May 24: **William AITKEN** born on Speedwell Island to Richard AITKEN, shepherd, and Christina AITKEN formerly McKINNON.
- 1877 Oct 24: **Mary AITKEN** born on Speedwell Island to Richard AITKEN, shepherd, and Christina AITKEN formerly McKINNON.
- 1878 Oct 11: **Norman McKinnon AITKEN** born on Speedwell Island to Richard AITKEN, shepherd, and Christina AITKEN formerly McKINNON.
- 1879 Oct 25: **Elizabeth Inglis AITKEN** born on Speedwell Island to Richard AITKEN, shepherd, and Christina AITKEN formerly McKINNON.
- 1881 Aug 05: **John "Jack" AITKEN** born on Speedwell Island to Richard AITKEN, shepherd, and Christina AITKEN formerly McKINNON.
- 1883 May 12: **Richard Alexander AITKEN** born on Speedwell Island to Richard AITKEN, shepherd, and Christina AITKEN formerly McKINNON.
- 1893 May 13: **Emily Ellen RUMMELL** born on Speedwell Island to Henry RUMMEL, overseer of shepherds, and Emily Elizabeth RUMMEL formerly DELLER.
- 1894 Nov 27: **Catherine Fraser PATTERSON** born on Speedwell Island to William Stewart PATTERSON, shepherd, and Albertina PATTERSON née HARDY.
- 1897 Dec 15: **Ernest Arthur RUMMELL** born on Speedwell Island to Henry RUMMEL, manager of Speedwell Island, and Emily Elizabeth RUMMEL formerly DELLER.
- 1896 Aug 17: **William Stewart PATTERSON** born on Speedwell Island to William Stewart PATTERSON, shepherd, and Albertina PATTERSON née HARDY.
- 1909 Dec 05: **Phyllis Helen BONNER** born on Speedwell Island to Alexander McIntosh BONNER, manager of Speedwell Island, and Jessie BONNER née CLARK.
- 1911 Apr 01: **William BONNER** born on Speedwell Island to Alexander McIntosh BONNER, manager of Speedwell Island, and Jessie BONNER née CLARK.
- 1911 Nov 17: **Ann Bruce CLARK** born on Speedwell Island to James CLARK, manager of Speedwell Island, and Mabel CLARK née CLIFTON.
- 1915 Mar 25: **Gladys Elizabeth HALLIDAY** born on Speedwell Island to John Jordon George HALLIDAY, shepherd, and Ellen HALLIDAY née LARSEN.
- 1917 Nov 24: **Donald George McKAY** born on Speedwell Island to James Robert McKAY, shepherd, and Isabella Jane McKAY née PECK.
- 1921 Feb 11: **Austin Fisher THOMPSON** born on Speedwell Island to Charles Fisher THOMPSON, carpenter, and Lily THOMPSON née CLIFTON.
- 1936 April 09: **Malcolm GRAHAM**, a shepherd on Speedwell Island, died from heart failure on or about the 9th April on Speedwell Island.