

JASON ISLANDS

The outer three islands were originally named the Sebaldines after the Dutch navigator Sebald de Weert who sighted “*three small islets*” 24 January 1600. The whole group were renamed the Jason Islands after HMS *Jason*. They consist of Steeple Jason, Grand Jason, Flat Jason, Elephant Jason, South Jason, North Fur, South Fur, Jason West Cay, Jason East Cay and the Fridays.

HMS *Jason*, a frigate of 32 guns, HMS *Carcass* a sloop, and the storeship HMS *Experiment* left England in September 1765 and, sailing via Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands, arrived in Port Egmont 8 January 1766. The expedition under Captain McBride had all the provisions and necessaries, including a ready framed wooden blockhouse, to establish a permanent settlement on Saunders Island.

The *George Butz* was wrecked on the north east point of Grand Jason on the 26th November 1854 in a wind at 1am. The *George Butz* was an American brig of 266 tons under Captain Rich 76 days out from Philadelphia bound for San Francisco with general cargo and coals. The schooner *Chance* met the Brigs boat in Hope Harbour and took them all on board. Her crew were brought into Stanley 23 December 1854 by the schooner *Chance* along with the brigs cargo and 9 barrels of seal oil. The master and crew were provided with passage to Montevideo by Captain Keane in the US schooner *Tekoa* so that they could obtain assistance from the American Consul there to return to the United States. [E3; pg 82] The wreck was still being worked in 1856.

The 30 ton schooner *Chance* under Captain WHEELER and with eight crew was wrecked on Grand Jason January 1855 and a total loss. The crew were saved by the *Tekoa*.

The *Leopold* was wrecked on Grand Jason 12 April 1858 at 5am. The ship started to break up about 7am. Only one of the 20 man crew survived. The *Leopold* was a Belgian ship of 1200 tons under Captain COUSEZEMAN bound for Callao from Swansea with a cargo of coal. Peter de CLERCK was rescued by the schooner *Nancy* under Captain SMYLEY and brought into Stanley 1 June 1858. [B10; desp 30: D8; pg 44-47]

On 6 February 1865 Daniel McGARREL was granted a licence for £5 to occupy a station on Steeple Jason Island. [BUG/REG/2; 147]

On 11 January 1866 Charles HANSEN was granted a licence for £5 to occupy a station on Steeple Jason Island. [BUG/REG/2; 159]

On 11 June 1866 Manuel PEREIRA was granted a licence for £5 to occupy a station on Grand Jason Island. [BUG/REG/2; 165]

On 8 May 1867 Charles HANSEN was granted a licence for £20 to kill penguins on Steeple Jason between 11 January 1867 and 11 January 1868 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 16,000 gallons of oil. On 13 May 1867 Charles WILLIAMS was granted a licence for £20 to kill penguins on West Point Island and Grand Jason between 13 May 1867 and 13 May 1868 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 16,000 gallons of oil. [E3; 291]

On 5 February 1868 Charles HANSEN was granted a licence for £10 to kill penguins on Steeple Jason between 5 February and 5 July 1868 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 8,000 gallons of oil. [E3; 310]

On 4 July 1868 Charles HANSEN was granted a licence for £10 to kill penguins on Steeple Jason between 4 July 1868 and 4 July 1869 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to

yield 8,000 gallons of oil. This licence was endorsed that as he had been unable to take more than 22,000 gallons of oil from Steeple Jason under the licences dated 8 May 1867 and 5 February 1868 he was authorised to take a further 24,000 gallons up to the 4 July 1869. [E3; 317]

On 17 August 1869 Charles HANSEN was granted a licence for £20 to kill penguins on Steeple Jason between 17 August 1869 and 17 August 1870 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 16,000 gallons of oil. [E3; 340]

On 1 July 1870 Charles WILLIAMS was granted a licence for £3-15-0 to kill penguins on Grand Jason and Macbrides Head between 1 July 1870 and 1 July 1871 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 3,000 gallons of oil. [E3; 348]

The *Alto* was wrecked on Jason West Cay 12 July 1870 when she struck at night “*during and eclipse of the moon*” with “*a heavy sea running*”. The crew made it to the boats and after two nights in an open boat arrived at Keppel Island. They stayed on Keppel Island for three days and were given provisions. They arrived in Stanley 23 July 1870. The *Alto* was a 200 ton American barque with a crew of 26 under Captain E W WHITE. She had previously come into Stanley 2 July 1870, 37 months out, with a cargo of sperm whale oil and had left bound for New Bedford. When wrecked the *Alto* had on board 475 barrels of whale oil and 500 barrels of sperm oil and had already sent home 600 barrels of sperm oil.

On 7 July 1871 Manuel PEREIRA was granted a licence for £3-15-0 to kill penguins on Grand Jason between 1 July 1871 and 1 July 1872 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 3,000 gallons of oil. On 15 August 1871 Nelson O'BRIEN was granted a licence for £2-10-0 to kill penguins on Steeple Jason between 15 August 1871 and 15 August 1872 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 2,000 gallons of oil. [E3; 351]

On 2 July 1872 Manuel PEREIRA was granted a licence for £3-15-0 to kill penguins on Grand Jason between 1 July 1872 and 1 July 1873 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 3,000 gallons of oil. On 23 August 1872 Nelson O'BRIEN was granted a licence for £2-10-0 to kill penguins on Steeple Jason between 23 August 1872 and 23 August 1873 as long as he did not kill a greater number than sufficient to yield 2,000 gallons of oil. [E3; 351, 371]

On 11 September 1872 Charles HANSEN was granted a Special Lease of Carcass Island, the Jason Islands and other adjacent islands for an annual sum of £20 for a term of 7, 14 or 21 years. The area was described as: *all those Islands known as Steeple Jason, Grand Jason, Elephant Jason, South Jason, Flat Jason, North Fur Island and Carcass Island and other small Islets as delineated by a line of demarcation inscribed on the Chart in the Office of the Surveyor General*". During the continuance of the lease Charles was not allowed to kill a greater number of penguins in the course of any one year that would yield 16,000 gallons of oil and at the end of each year from the date of the lease he was to make a declaration to the Government that he had not killed more penguins than this. During the first year of the lease Manuel PEREIRA was allowed to work out his licence to kill penguins on Grand Jason Island to the amount of 6,000 gallons of oil.

During the 18th and 19th century seals and penguins were rendered down for oil. The Jasons were a popular haunt for seal poachers. The HMS *Dwarf* was sent to the Falkland Islands in 1881 to enforce the sealing regulations on unlicensed sealers and visited the Jason Islands in January 1883 arriving on the 12th. In 1921 an armed patrol vessel, the HMCS *Afterglow* was purchased by the Falkland Islands Government to protect the fur seal rookeries.

In a minute dated 6 February 1891 Governor Kerr wrote: “*I am of opinion – looking to the nature of the seal rookeries on the Jason & Carcass group; that it will be expedient in any future lease to include the right of the Seal fishery, and as Carcass Island is the only one in the group which is suitable on account of its safe landing place – as a residence for the lessee, it is not advisable that*

it should be leased separately as a grazing station, as proposed by the present lessee, in his letter of 20th July 1890". [BUG/REG/2; 157]

The British ship *Lady Dufferin* was totally wrecked on Jason West Cay 17 February 1882. The master and crew reached West Falkland in their boats and were brought around to Stanley 23 February 1882 by the *Allen Gardiner*. According to Roddy Napier one of her lifeboats ended up on Carcass Island and one on Westpoint Island and converted into a cutter called the *Alice*.

The *Argyleshire*, a British barque of 737 tons built in 1870, was wrecked 17 June 1893 on Flat Jason. The crew all made land and were brought in by the *lone*. A Court of Enquiry held in Stanley 6 July 1893 found that the vessel was lost through a grave error of judgement on the part of the Captain when on sighting what he supposed to be the Eddystone Rock he did not at once put about the ship and stand off the land as night was coming on and he was not certain of his position. However they also found that he was anxious to reach a port on finding his ship was in a leaky condition and he did everything in his power to save his ship. Captain William CHALMERS, Antonio SYLVIA, Peter SUAREZ and 9 crewmembers departed 19 July 1893 on board the *Denderah* bound for Montevideo. According to Roddy Napier the *Argyleshire*'s boats ended up on Carcass Island.

On 12 September 1893 George Melville, the Administrator, granted an Occupation Licence of Carcass Island, the Jason Islands and Split Islands to (Julia) Sarah HANSEN for one year at the same rental as the expired lease. [BUG/REG/2; 287]

The *Baden Powell*, a 94 ton sealing schooner of Nova Scotia, was anchored in the gulch on the north side of Elephant Jason Island with a cargo of 132 fur seal skins on 22 November 1907. The wind rose from the north and the ship dragged onto a large rock and started to break up. The crew jumped on to the rock and passed the food, guns and boats across and hauled it all up the cliff. The crew stayed on the island for 10 days then rowed for two days to Pebble Island with the intention of reaching Stanley but upon arrival at Pebble Island were informed that the schooner *Richard Williams* would be returning with wool and they decided to avail themselves of the chance so they stayed for a while helping with the farm work. The crew were brought into Stanley 22 December 1907 by the *Richard Williams*. Although they were suspected of seal poaching there was insufficient evidence for prosecution. According to Government files the Baden-Powell had a crew of 19. The Captain was John ANDERSON and the 1st mate Clement B CHRISTIAN. Fifteen of the crew departed 31 December 1907 on board the *Orissa*. One seaman, Walter STRUM did not go with the rest as he had broken his leg in a brawl outside the Globe Public House but was sent out on the mail steamer RMS *Oravia* February 1908. [420/07 & 442/07] Karl LINDENBERG and Robert HIRTLE remained and settled.

On 1 March 1920 Sarah HANSEN gifted her son William Jason HANSEN: "*one half share of my freehold estate Carcass, Grand and Steeple Jason Islands with all cattle sheep horses buildings furniture and every sort and description of working plant thereon with Schooner boats guns etc etc.*

That he must work the estate to the best advantage and send to me from time to time a detailed account of expenditure and proceeds of my remaining share. That he will pay one half share of yearly payment on the 30 years freehold payment and of Taxes that are, and others that may be brought into force from time to time.

That he cannot sell any of the above land without my consent he must give me first refusal."

[BUG/REG/8; 321]

Flat Jason, Elephant Jason and South Jason were declared Crown Reserves in 1912 after their leases lapsed.

Sarah left the Falkland Islands 1 April 1920. She died 31 August 1922 and left the other half of her freehold estate to Jason.



Grand Jason Shanty in 1933; the gang was E Lyse, J Hewitt, Joe Newman, F Short, J Clement – Clement Albums



Grand Jason Shanty

The shanty and woolshed on Grand Jason were built in 1928. The Grand Jason shanty consisted of a porch, living area with range and a bedroom with 4 bunks in it. A shanty was built on Steeple Jason circa 1928. This has since blown down.



Woolshed Grand Jason

In 1929 Jason completed the purchase of Carcass Island, Grand Jason and Steeple Jason and was issued Crown Grants for them 5 April 1929. Jason sold Grand Jason and Steeple Jason to Dean Brothers, the owners of Pebble Island, 5 April 1929 for £2,400. The islands were described as: "**All** that parcel of land known as the Grand and Steeple Jason Islands situated off the West Falkland Islands containing six thousand five hundred and twenty acres more or less, together with all livestock, fences and Buildings or every description thereon". [BUG/REG/10; 129]



1966 Woolshed on Steeple Jason

In 1950 a wool shed was built on Steeple Jason. A new one was built in 1966 after the original blew down.

On 10 March 1970 Dean Brothers sold Grand Jason and Steeple Jason to Leonard W HILL for £5,500. He had all the sheep removed to stop the erosion from grazing. Len died in December 1981.

In December 1993 Michael STEINHARDT bought Grand Jason and Steeple Jason and in September 2001 donated them to the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Foundations for a house on Steeple Jason were laid down in August 2002 and building commenced in January 2003 by Ian Stewart Construction Ltd.

In 2008 there was still a small trypot on the beach near the penguin rookery on the neck of Steeple Jason and the remains of various stone structures in the rookeries; possibly penguin corrals. On the north west of the island there was also wreckage on the beach of an unidentified ship and lines of rocks or stone races placed by the sealers running down from the tussac to drive penguins down to the trypot sites. There were also the remains of a trypot site on the North West point of Grand Jason.



Steeple Jason circa 1933 – Clement Albums