

PASSAGE ISLANDS

The Passage Islands are in the west of the Falkland Islands at 51°35'S 60°43'W in King George Bay, West Falkland and consist of First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Round Islands; Split Island was also included in the group when leased. NB: There is also a Passage Island in Rock Harbour which belongs to the Keppel Group.

Circa 1880 George M DEAN applied to lease the Passage Islands but his application was not attended to. [P2; 183]

In February 1882 Charles HANSEN applied to lease the Passage Islands for 21 years at an annual rental of £10. In May 1882 it was agreed to put the lease up for public competition. In August 1882 it was decided that as applications had been received from J M Dean & Sons and from Captain Hansen, both tenants of the Crown, that the lease should be put up for competition at an upset rental of not less than £20 per annum for 21 years and sealed tenders should be received not later than the 25 September 1882. Only one tender for £10 per annum was received from Captain Hansen and was rejected. [P2; 182, 183, 198, 205]

The Passage Islands are leased to Charles HANSEN for 21 years from 8 July 1883 for £20 a year, there being no higher offer. [P2; 226]

Circa 1885 a fire burns continuously on First Island for approximately two years and burns the tussac bogs out entirely in places exposing the rock. [227/24]

In a public notice dated 8 December 1891 Robert BLAKE of Hill Cove offered up: *The goodwill, including all stock and improvements of the Passage Islands, leased for 21 years from July 8th, 1883, to the late Charles Hansen, of Carcass Island. Immediate possession with this year's clip, can be taken by the purchaser.* FI Gazette 1891; 50]

Circa 1896 Charles WESELL took on the Islands in partnership with Peter LLAMOSA Peter LLAMOSA later sold his share to Charles WESELL and Charles took on Charles SCOTT as a partner. [227/24]

In an agreement dated 1 January 1899 Charles WESELL agrees to purchase Charles SCOTT's half share in the stock, goodwill and improvements on the Passage Islands and Split Island for four hundred pounds, payable by £100 down, £100 on 1 January 1902, 1903 and 1904 respectively with 5% interest payable per annum. [BUG/REG/5; PG 258]

1900 Sep 14 Charles C WESELL borrows £100 from George GOODWIN of Hill Cove under mortgage over the sheep grazing on the Passage Islands, and all rights to the Islands, to the George Goodwin or his heirs, in lieu of not being able to pay back the amount borrowed plus the interest in two years. [BUG/REG/5; pg 258]

On 27 May 1904 Charles WESELL is granted a 21 year lease of West Passage and Split Islands, being 6,480 acres more or less, for an annual rental of £27 commencing 7 August 1904 and ending 6 August 1925. The five islands being wholly bounded by the sea in King George Bay; First, Second, Third and Fourth Passage Islands being 6,000 acres and Split Island being 480 acres. Rental being £25 for the Passage Islands and £2 for Split Island. [17/04: P4; 1]

On 16 September 1916 Karl Christian "Charles" WESELL was recorded as owning a shepherds hut and 629 sheep on Passage Island and adjacent small islands, which he leased from the Government.

On 5 March 1924 the Falkland Islands Company Ltd enquired on behalf of C C WESELL whether there was any likelihood of his lease not being renewed as he wished to purchase more sheep to improve his stock. On 20 March 1924 there is a dwelling house, a woolshed and a dip on First Island and a small house, a woolshed and a dip on Second Island. In the last four years he had clipped from two to three tons of wool annually. In January 1925 there were about 450 mixed sheep on First Island, about 200 sheep on Second Island which had not been shorn for two years. Second Island is considered the best of the islands and capable of carrying the most sheep. In order for his lease to be renewed he had to repair and paint the woolshed and house, fence of and re-plant as much as possible of the old bare tussac ground, fence of suitable portions of First and Second Islands for ram paddocks, a paddock for young and cast ewes not required for breeding purposes and maintain a boat suitable for carrying stock between the islands and between the islands and the mainland. According to Charles WESELL the bare patches in the tussac grounds were due to burning before he took over the lease and that over 40 years ago a fire had burnt on First Island continuously for over two years. He stated that early lambing was more profitable as towards the end of winter and in early spring they got a fair supply of fine grass. Also, due to there being no harbours it was impossible to maintain a craft therefore he travelled from one island to another by dingy. He states that he has been resident in the Falkland Islands for 41 years. Charles WESELL is granted a further term of 21 years on the lease to Passage and Split Islands from 7 August 1925. [227/24]

On 19 February 1928 Dr Craddock sees Charles WESELL at Spring Point and advises him not to return to Passage Islands as he is mentally but not physically fit to remain there without communication. [227/24]

Charles C "Eddie" WESELL a German sheep farmer, age 71, is found dead in camp near Spring Point, West Falkland 1 April 1928. He died from senile decay and general debility with accompanying cardiac failure. He is buried at Spring Point.

Passage Islands and Split Island are put up for sale by public auction with an upset price of £1,000 on Monday 1 October 1928. Passage and Split Islands are purchased for £1,000 on behalf of John HAMILTON by the Falkland Islands Company Ltd. [227/24]

Crown Grant 411 dated 19 December 1928 is issued to John HAMILTON for the land on the West Falkland known as Passage Islands, comprising First, Second, Third, Fourth and Split Islands containing 6,480 acres for £1,000 from the Crown. [Crown Grant 411]

On 29 July 1931 the mv *Morven* came in to Stanley to be registered. She belonged to John HAMILTON and was for Passage Island.



Passage Island Settlement circa 1935

In 1935 John HAMILTON builds the Passage Island Settlement. He has also recently completed a house and shed on Second Passage Island. A pitch pine dip and yards were under construction. [AGR/SHE/5#1] Mahogany and teak were used and the internal walls were all panelled. A huge front gate was built and hand carved gateposts. [PN 27 July 1990]

On 17 December 1940 John HAMILTON granted to John Hamilton Limited for one peppercorn *All that parcel of Land situated in the West Falkland known as Passage Islands comprising First, Second, Third, Fourth and Split Islands containing Six thousand four hundred and eighty (6480) acres.* . [BUG/REG/11; pg 240]



Gateway at entrance to Passage Island Settlement & inset the wood panelling 1990



Top and bottom, Passage Island Settlement 1990

Under the ownership of John Hamilton Ltd the Passage Islands became part of the Weddell Group which consisted of Weddell Island, Beaver Island, Passage Islands and small surrounding islands. By the mid-1980s when the Hamilton Estates were to be subdivided into a series of viable units the Passage Islands were unused and run-down and it was considered that due to access difficulties and operating costs they did not justify the expense of running from Weddell Island. They later became part of Shallow Harbour Farm.