

## MOODY VALLEY FARM

Moody Brook Farm was included in the Suburban Lands of Stanley.

Bridge and Weir at West End of Stanley harbour. *“This is a bridge strongly framed of wood for Horses and cattle to cross the Moody Brook; it has a hand rail on each side. The stone sides of the bridge are brought nearly together at the outer end and a gate being placed between them forms the weir... 16 September 1848.”* [E1; 153]

*“This is still standing and in Good repair. May 1855.”* [E1; 153]

On 25 June 1875 **William COULSON** was granted a 21 year special lease of *“all that portion of Suburban land known as Moody Valley and in continuation thereof running up to the eastern boundary of Section No 58 in the occupation of R C Packe Esquire; also the suburban land, starting from the head of the Bay by a line running North one mile to the head of Hearndon Water, which line shall form the Eastern boundary. Bounded on the North by the River Murrell, and on the West by the River Murrell and the aforesaid Station No 58 and on the South by Moody Valley aforesaid”* at an annual rent of £20 payable in advance and with the proviso that the lease could be cancelled by either party giving not less than one year’s notice. [BUG/REG/2; 352]

On 28 June 1875 **William COULSON** went into partnership with **Charles BENDER** as sheep farmers under the name of **Coulson and Bender**, each having contributed an equal share towards the business.” [BUG/REG/3; 71]

On 24 January 1880 **William COULSON**, whose former lease of the Moody Valley Farm was duly determined by notice on 24 December 1879, paid £20-1-0 for the Rent reserved by special agreement for the said farm, between the Falkland Islands Government and William Coulson from the 25 day of December 1879 to the 24 December 1880, when his tenancy of the farm would be at an end. [BUG/REG/2; 425]



Farm boundaries 1883 – part of Hudson Chart, JCNA

On 7 October 1890 the dispute between **William COULSON** and **Charles BENDER** concerning their partnership were finally settled by a decree of the Supreme Court and the partnership was dissolved. **Charles BENDER** continued to renew the lease over the years.

In 1900 **Charles BENDER** applied for a part refund of rent due to the very low price of wool. A refund of £20 was approved by the Secretary of State. Similar refunds were made for the years 1901, 1902 and 1903.

On 4 May 1904 Mr Bender wrote requesting a long-term lease at a reduced rental. On 8 May 1904 Governor Grey-Wilson wrote *'Bender is a poor farmer but it would be cruel to turn him out of retain the present rental of £45 which he is quite unable to pay although a better man might possibly make ends meet, under any circumstances it is probably a rack-rent.'* A new lease was granted for three years from 24 December 1904 at an annual rent of £25, subject to the conditions of the Land Ordinance 1903.

In 1907 renewal of the lease was approved subject to four Government horses being allowed to graze on the land, the carrying capacity of the Station (6,975 acres) to be restricted to the number of sheep approved by the Chief Inspector of Stock, discretion to be used when burning off the land, the introduction of new stock and improvement of the breed to be commenced. **Charles BENDER** was also offered a three-year lease of the 800 acres in the Fairy Cove/Hearnden Water area, which he had occupied free of rent for some years, at an annual rent of £6-13-4.

In 1915 a new Naval Wireless Station was erected at Moody Brook and 92.4 acres of Moody Brook Farm was reserved for the purpose. The rent for Moody Brook farm was reduced proportionally for the area taken over by the Admiralty.

On 10 August 1920 the leases were renewed for three years from 24 December 1919 at an annual rent of £57-7-2 for 6,975 acres (less 92.4 acres reserved for public purposes) and £6-13-4 for 800 acres. On the advice of the Chief Inspector of Stock by January 1920 **Charles BENDER** had obtained some very good rams and purchased a quantity of material from the Admiralty to erect new pens and effect general repairs. [BUG/EAM/1#2]

On March 1921 **Charles BENDER** stated that he had been on Moody Valley Farm for 45 years during which time he had expended all his capital and worked the best years of his life to improve the conditions of both the farm and the stock. He described Moody Valley Farm as *"a very wet camp and full of stone rivers, or runs. It is also the main thoroughfare for the North Camp having tracks through it leading to five different Stations. This is detrimental to successful Sheep-Farming especially during Lambing Season, when dead lambs, which have been abandoned by their Mothers being disturbed by passing traffic, can be seen lying along the track, also of late years, the presence of a number of men at the Naval Wireless Station who, by the way of recreation, walk and shoot over my lease, greatly interferes with stock during breeding season."* [BUG/EAM/1#2]

On 4 June 1924 **Hugh MUNRO**, the Commissioner of Stock, reported that he considered the land unsuitable for an experimental farm on account of its rocky formation.

In 1925 an area of 61.536 acres was reserved from the lands of Moody Valley Farm on the slope of Mount William in order to protect the water supply and a reduction in rent of 10s 4d was made reducing the annual rental to £56-16-10. [BUG/EAM/1#8]

**Christopher Peter William BENDER**, age 84 and a farmer and naturalised British subject, died 6 December 1924. In his will dated 9 June 1914 **Christoph Peter William BENDER** had left all of his estate to his wife **Hannah BENDER** with the stipulation that on her death the farm would not be sold and the profits accruing from the same were to be equally shared by his children Cristoph Peter William Bender, Alice Mary Teresa Bender, Caroline Connisbee Bender, Edith Winifred Bender, Jessie Hannah Bender, Beatrice Orrisa Bender and Dorothy Doris Bender.

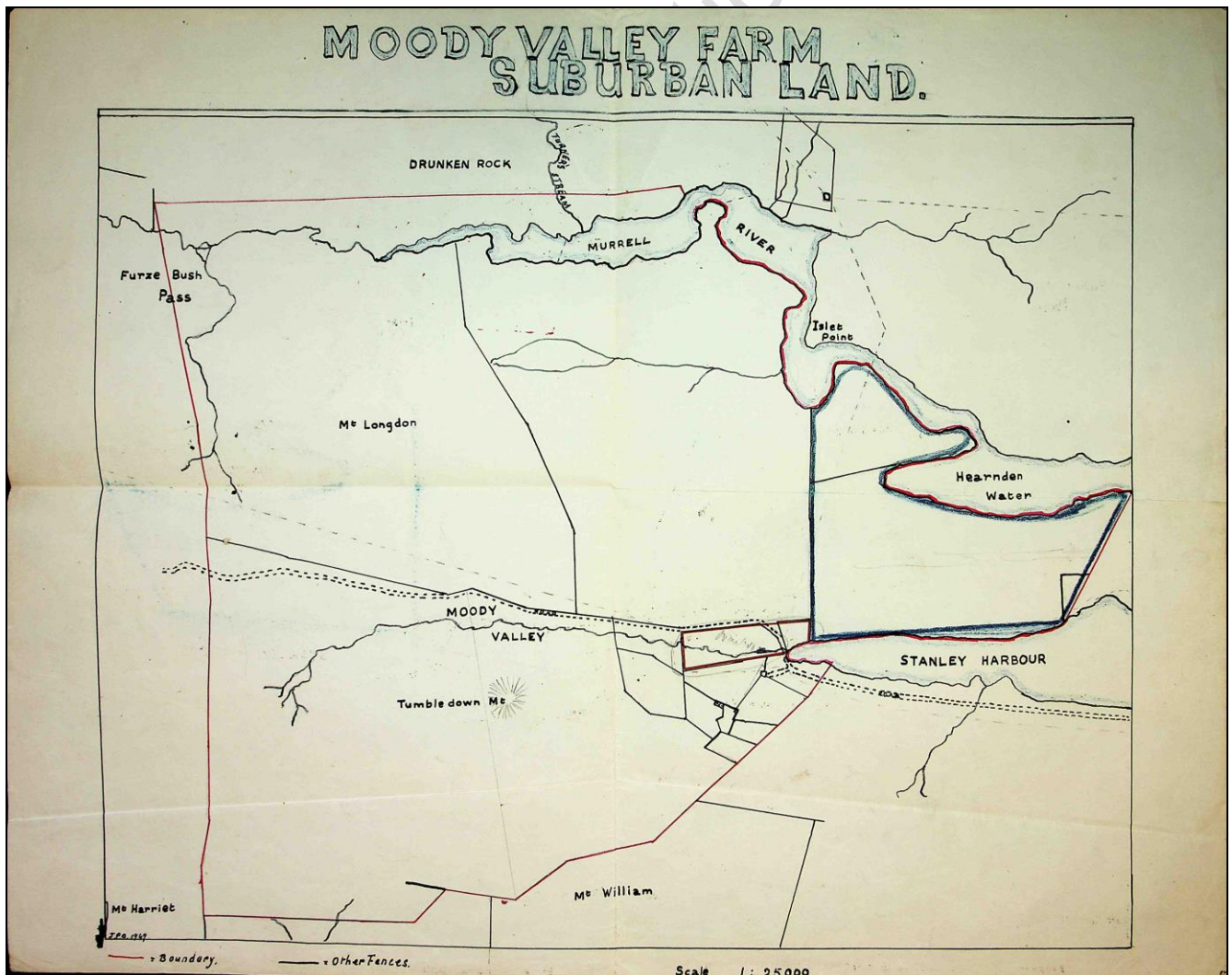


Hannah had predeceased him; dying 21 September 1916, age 57 from influenza and pneumonia. [BUG-REG-8; 163]

His executor applied to have Crown Leases 41 and 42 transferred to **Christoph Peter William BENDER (junior)**; 800 acres more or less to the North of Stanley Harbour and 6,975 acres more or less known as Moody Valley Farm, together with all buildings, stock and installations. [BUG/EAM/1#8]

By November 1930 Christoph had purchased several hundred sheep, erected over twelve miles of fencing, and cultivated over two acres of waste ground, as well as draining, ditching and other work. [BUG/EAM/1#8]

On 20 April 1931 the two leases were renewed for twenty one years. Lease 70 at an annual rental of £56-16-10 containing 6,975 acres more or less, less 92.4 acres reserved for Government purposes. Being Suburban Lot No 78 bounded "North by the River Murrell to 'Furze Bush'. East by a line from the head of Hearnden Water to the head of Stanley Harbour and thence to Mount William. South by a line from Mount William south-west then west to Mount Harriet. West by a line from Mount Harriet to 'Furze Bush'." Lease 71 at an annual rental of £6-13-4 containing 800 acres more or less. Being Suburban land North of Stanley Harbour bounded "West by a line running from the head of Hearnden Water to the head of Stanley Harbour. South from the head of Stanley Harbour to Fairy Cove. East by a fence of the Falkland Islands Company Ltd running from Fairy Cove to Watt Cove, as readjusted in the year 1925 and as now standing. North by Hearnden Water to point of commencement." [BUG/EAM/1#13]



On 2 July 1936 Governor Henniker-Heaton wrote '*An Order is issuing for sequestration of Moody Valley Farm*' and the Stock Inspector was released of his duties on 2 July 1936 to take over complete management of the farm but was released from these duties on 31 August 1936.

Under the will of his father, **Christopher BENDER** was required to pay his sister, **Jessie BENDER**, an annuity of £100 out of the profits but he had failed to do so and it was brought before the Supreme Court in 1947.

On 1 January 1949 **Christopher Peter William BENDER** acknowledged receipt of the notice to quit and deliver up to the Government all the farm known as Moody Valley Farm on or before the 1 April 1949. There were two dwelling houses with outhouses, wool shed, hay shed, smaller sheds, approximately 13 ½ miles of divisional fencing, dipping pens and dip. His sister, **Jessie BENDER**, was allowed to remain in her house with the garden, hen run and peat rights as long as she wished. The other house was occupied by the shepherd and had a garden, greenhouse, and small adjacent paddocks. On 28 February 1949 a public notice was issued proposing the lease of Moody Valley Farm containing 7,000 acres or thereabouts for 21 years from 1 April 1949 at an annual rent of £72 for the first five years and £100 for the remainder of the lease. [BUG/EAM/1#13]



L-R The 'new house' and the 'old farmhouse' from the south east

Moody Valley Farm was leased to **James Willison MILLER** for 21 years from 1 April 1949. On 25 April 1949 he informed Government that the west end upstairs room in the dwelling house that formed part of his lease had no flooring and that he was willing to remedy the defect provided that Government would supply the necessary material at their expense. By 28 December 1950 he had improved the dwelling house and painted all of the buildings. [BUG/EAM/1#13]

**James Willison "Jimmy" MILLER**, age 72 and a sheep farmer, disappeared from the *Fitzroy* at sea on 5 August 1953 between 5.45am & 8.30am. Death was presumed by drowning or he may have died from shock in the water. His body was not recovered. The joint executors of the estate, ALAZIA and R HILLS, appointed F BURNS to work the farm and he commenced Saturday 5 September 1953. [BUG/EAM/1#13]

In a report on a visit to Moody Valley Farm on 4 and 6 July 1954 it was recorded that with the exception of about half a mile of the boundary fence between Hearnden Water and Fairy Cove the boundary and division fences were all in good repair. The dwelling house was in a good

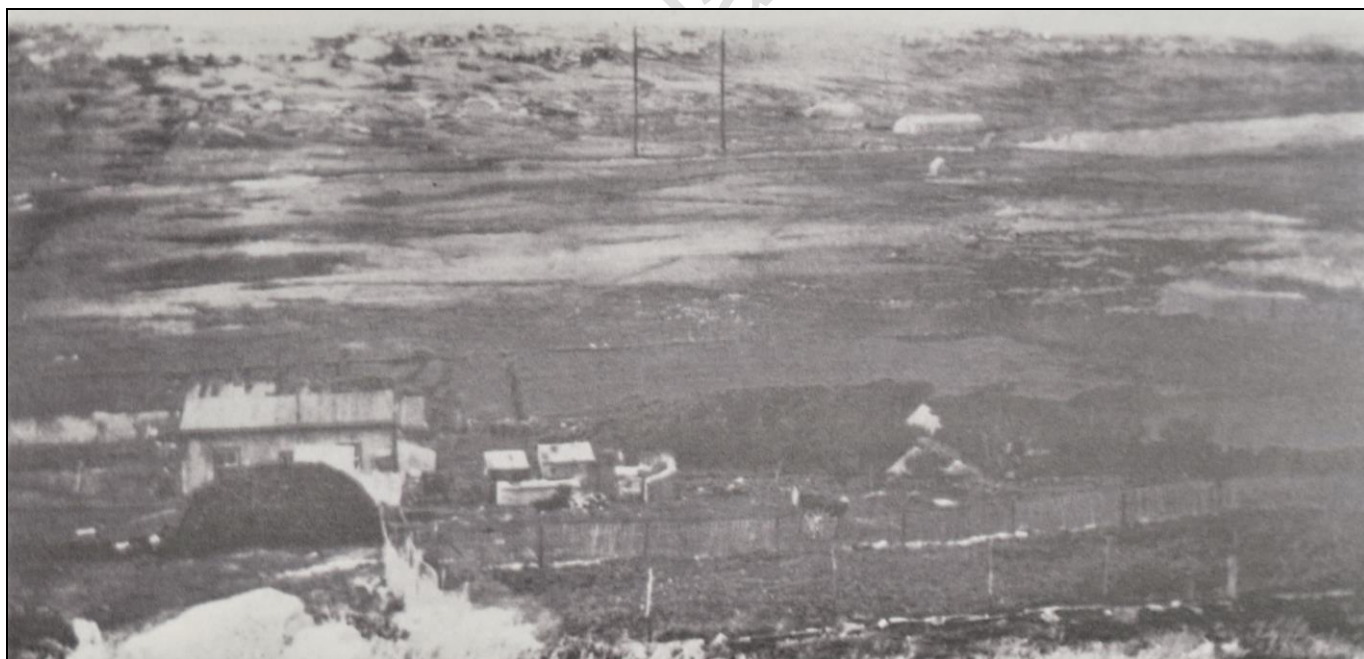


condition with no sign of damp and Mr Hills intended having the outside of the house painted in summer. The other farm buildings were in a reasonable state of repair and the sheep yards were being renewed and repaired. On 31 July 1954 approval was given to Government subsidising the cost of ditching at Moody Brook Farm to the extent of 25% of the cost up to a limit of twenty miles of ditching. [BUG/EAM/1#13]

The beneficiaries of the will of **James Willison MILLER** sold their shares to his niece and her husband and on 31 March 1958 the lease of Moody Valley Farm was transferred to **Heather** and **Richard HILLS**. By 13 January 1959 Mr Hills had carried out a considerable amount of drainage work to the north and west of Mount Longdon in the valleys that run north and south along the boundary fence of the Moody Valley Farm to the north of the track and along the southern side of the Murrell River; approximately five or six square miles at least covered with fairly effective drainage channels through which a considerable amount of water was passing. There was still no resident shepherd. [BUG/EAM/1#13]

In 1960 **Richard HILLS** applied to have electricity connected to the farm. It was noted that near his farm there were two other potential customers; Mr Nicholson at the Admiralty Wireless Station and Miss Bender who lived a little distance to the south east. [BUG/EAM/1#13]

In a report on a visit to Moody Valley Farm on 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April 1965 it was recorded that the interior of the house was in a good condition with no sign of any leaks or damp. The corrugated iron on the roof was very old and should be probably renewed within the next two years. The dip was old and would not last much longer and the shed and sheep yards were sufficient for the number of sheep put through them. It was agreed in May 1965 that the lease would be amended so that there was no resident shepherd. [BUG/EAM/1#14]



**L-R The 'new house' and the 'old farmhouse' from the south**

**Jessie Hannah BENDER**, age 69, died 18 October 1966. The keys to her house were handed back to the Falkland Islands Government. By 23 February 1972 her house was described as having no water, electricity or sewerage services laid on and badly in need of rebuilding in places. In 1974 her house was included in the new lease of Moody Brook Farm issued to **Richard** and **Heather HILLS**. By 13 May 1976 it was agreed that the house would never be used for habitation again and would be best demolished and any sound timber salvaged used for building purposes on the farm. [BUG/EAM/1#14]

In 1983 the house was described as *"the old derelict cottage set amongst the trees"* and known as Miss Benders' Cottage.

In 1984 the original farm was split with the Mount Longden Block and the Tumbledown Block and the Mount William Block leased separately. Wireless Ridge was retained as Common Land. An agreement to purchase the two houses and the land surrounding them was made with **James STEPHENSON**. By the end of January 1985 he had done a considerable amount of work to the old farmhouse including a new roof and windows. He had also cultivated a garden and repaired a lot of the stone walls surrounding the property. The "new house" to the west of the old farmhouse was considerably war damaged and dilapidated. The two houses and 3.418 acres of land were sold to him in 1985.



The 'new house' (west house) from the south east, one of the fireplaces and the view out of a north window - circa 1992







The old (east) farmhouse circa 1992







**Remains of a stone building circa 1992**



**The wool shed - note the same wooden piles as the old farmhouse - 1992**