



Above: Wall panels going up: Sally, Ken and Myles admiring the view. Below: The house on Hummock Island nestling amongst tussac, boxwood on 'black ground'



Below: Offloading 130 tons of building materials from the Concordia Bay's seatruck on the sand beach at Hummock Island.



Above: Traditional colours and materials were used for the house. Above centre - Left to right: Gethyn Roberts, Guillermo Pizarro and Michael McRae of Concordia Bay, Ken Passfield, Myles Lee, Mike, Julian and Bill Pole-Evans. Above right: Myles and Ken at work on the roof trusses

Hummock Island restoration begins

Sally Poncet
 HUMMOCK Island, situated five kilometres south of Roy Cove on West Falkland, is one of the largest of the Falklands' 200 or so prime ungrazed tussac islands.

With no introduced predators (rats, mice and cats) the island is a haven for wildlife, including Cobb's wrens, tussacbirds, burrowing petrels, rockhopper and Magellanic penguins.

And this despite the large areas of eroding tussac peat which are the result of decades of overgrazing. In 1987 when Roy Cove Farm was split into sections, the island became part of Crooked Inlet Farm owned by Danny and Joy Donnelly who wisely left the island ungrazed.

Now, 30 years on, the recovery of tussac and native boxwood is starting to become evident, although roughly a third of the island's 300 hectares is still eroding tussac peat, known locally as 'black ground'.

Below: Restoration begins: Sally planting the first of many tussac tillers on 'black ground' on Hummock Island



Stopping further erosion and speeding up the process of re-vegetation are key to restoring Hummock Island's wildlife habitat. The acquisition of the island last year by local conservation charity the Antarctic Research Trust (ART) is a first step in achieving this goal.

Already owners of the Sea Lion Easterly group off Sea Lion Island, the ART bought Hummock Island after a visit in February 2016 by ART trustees Benno Luethi and Klemens Puetz on board *Le Souvire* with Hugues, Marie-Paul and Marilou Delignieres.

Confident that restoration could be achieved, the ART, in collaboration with the Zoo Zurich in Switzerland, decided to invest further by constructing a new house on the island, a comfortable base for tussac planters and researchers. The modern two bedroom house with generator shed, running water and eventually solar panels replaces the old shanty which probably dates

from the mid-1900s and reached the end of its useful life a few years ago.

Construction began in late September with delivery of building materials to the island on *Concordia Bay*. Landing thirteen tons by seatruck took less than three hours and by lunch time Ken Passfield, Myles Lee, Mike, Bill and Julian

Pole-Evans and Sally Poncet (also an ART trustee) had also installed running water to the house site.

Over the next couple of weeks, Ken, Myles and Sally finished the concrete piles and generator shed, before starting on the house itself. They were joined by Peter Nightingale during the final week, and the house was wind and weatherproof

by mid-November.

While work on the house interior will begin later this summer, Hummock Island is now open for visitors to enjoy.

The Trust would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the project so far and is looking forward to many years of restoration work on the island.



Above: The distinctive shape of Hummock Island's 191 metre summit. Below: View from the island's summit looking over King George Bay

