**Camp 160** **- Military Hospital, Lydiard Park, Purton, Wiltshire**

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| **1947 Camp list** | | | | | | | |
| 160(P.W.Hosp) | The Military Hospital, Lydiard Park, Purton, Swindon, Wilts | S. | Prsicamp, Purton | Swindon 3436 | (Blank) | Major T.Garvey | V/1395/2 |

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| **Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English Heritage 2003** | | | | | | | |
| OS NGR | Sheet | No. | Name & Location | County | Cond’n | Type 1945 | Comments |
| SU 102 845 | 173 | 160 | Military Hospital, Lydiard Park, Purton | Wiltshire | 4 |  |  |

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| **Location:** The park is in Lydiard Tregoze about 5 km W of Swindon  **Before the camp:** Part of a country estate. In 1942 the 302nd station hospital for American forces was built in the park  **Pow Camp:** The Pow hospital camp used the huts built for the military hospital from 1943.  It is reported that the camp could hold / treat up to 220 pows.  A photograph shows guards at the camp – the huts in the background are not Nissen type – they appear to be wooden construction.    The German camp leader and senior surgeon from March 1945 to 1946 was Professor Werner Wachsmuth. He later became professor of surgery at Würzburg University (1946-1969).  News article about John Bailey, an interpreter at the camp who spoke eight languages;  “*Born Johann Waldorf in 1912 to a German mother and French Huguenot father, John first came to the UK in 1922 following his mother’s remarriage and changed his name as a result.*  *In 1936 he was involved in the Berlin Olympics, where Hitler’s speech raised concerns about the consequences of the Chancellor’s anti-semitism. John’s daughter, Elaine Newcombe-Jones, said: “After Hitler’s speech at the Olympics he became greatly concerned about the persecution of the Jews and began writing letters back to England, and from then on he was targeted because they* |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1960 |

*thought he was a spy. “This meant that when the war broke out and he tried to get back to England he couldn’t and he had no papers or documents. I think he was a prime target because he was writing home about the persecution of the Jews.”*

*John went on to travel around Europe, posed as a German sailor and worked with the Resistance to smuggle weapons and intercept German communications before finally making it back to the UK, where he became camp interpreter at Lydiard Park*.” (from - [www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/](http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/10561221.wartime-history-of-park-on-display/) ).

Camp commandant c.1947 Major T Garvey

One report stated that the camp was closed in March 1946, however it is still listed in the 1947 camp list above.

Camp 289 Lydiard House, near by.

** **Postal items:** POW letter-sheets 10 March 1946 and 10 June 1946 in German to Germany.

**After the camp:** The site was bought when it was still a pow camp in 1943 by Swindon Council. When the camp closed it was used for emergency housing up to the late 1950’s. 2019 Country Park

**Further Information:**

The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre have various documents about the acquisition and development of the camp.