**Camp 2** **(& 190) - Toft Hall Camp, Knutsford, Cheshire**

Included in 1945 ICRC List - Base Camp – Toft Hall Camp, Knutsford, Cheshire

|  |
| --- |
| **1947 Camp List** |
| 2(B.C.) | Toft Hall Camp, Knutsford, Cheshire | W. | Priscamp, Knutsford | Knutsford 560 | Knutsford | Lt.Col.J.S.Windsor, M.C. | v/202/4 |

|  |
| --- |
| **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 |
| SJ 7538 7626 | 118 | 2 | Toft Hall Camp, Knutsford | Cheshire | 4 | Base Camp | Large camp in parkland to northeast of Toft Hall, 20 huts in guards’ compound, 58 within prisoners' compound enclosed by a double perimeter fence with guard towers. |

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| --- | --- |
| **Location:** the estate is south of Knutsford, off the A50 Toft Road / Holmes Chapel Road.**Previous use:** The Hall is a 17th Century country house, however it is the parkland beside the hall that was used for the camp. St John’s Church, mentioned below, is across the road.NB - The number for this camp is in question prior to 1944. |  |
| **POW Camp:** Opened 1942, closed 1948.**18 August 1942** - International Red Cross (ICRC) visit; Italian prisoners, capacity 1500.**1943? / 1944** – Site was used as part of the US 3rd Army headquarters. 3rd Army’s code name was ‘Lucky’ and the headquarters in England was divided into Lucky Forward located at nearby Peever Hall and Lucky Rear at Toft Hall. **1944** – site re-opened as ‘German’ working pow Camp 190, with Polish guards.**1945** – Renumbered as Base Camp 2. There were many problems. | From - <http://holmeschapelhistory.co.uk/vedaytours.html> |
|  | Ordnance Survey 1952 |

Reports show that this site was a ‘holding-space’ for very mixed nationalities and those whose ‘*residential qualifications’* were dubious. Some pows, having served with the Germans, were simply not wanted by the nations they wished to return to. Some were trying to disguise their German nationality and service record. There were also many sad cases. Some pows had been held in concentration camps before being conscripted into the Axis forces. Some were stateless.

Many of the British staff appear to have been ineffective, apathetic and unsuitable.

Though inspected for re-education and English Instruction, too many visits were inefficient and pointless.

**28 October – 7 November 1946** – A visit by Mr Crouch of the ‘Segregation Section’. Strength: 3 officers, 1093 OR. There were no hostels or pows in billets.

Commandant: Lt.Col P Windsor Camp Leader: Fw. Fabry, Hendrick*.*

Interpreter: Capt O Burstin Deputy C/L: Wm. Heene, Harald

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening figures: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C | C+ | Not known |
|  | - | 51 | - | 228 | 601 | 130 | 14 | 2 | 12 |

 + “*58 accepted by their governments and awaiting transport”.*

There were well over 20 different nationalities and this was given as a reason why little re-education work was being carried out. The circumstances of a few pows were described to reflect the international nature of the camp and the difficulties that many were facing:

The camp leader had been at this camp for two years, and had been in post as leader for 5 weeks.

*“Fabry is a Dutchman, 34 years old, a Catholic and comes from Utrecht. His parents were German. His wife is Dutch and is now living in Utrecht. He claims always to have held anti-Nazi views and, in 1941, when he was called up for service with the German Army, he feigned illness and succeeded in avoiding military duty until 1942. Then he was told he must either serve or be shot. He was sent to an A.A. unit in Germany and was later stationed at Hamburg and Osnabrueck…*

*Fabry gives the impression of being a strong capable character possessing considerable intelligence. He has a pleasant and agreeable personality. He has a very difficult task calling for firmness, diplomacy and human understanding in dealing with men of so many nationalities and of such varying ages.”* The age range was from 19 to 61.

The deputy leader, Harald Heene, was also 34 years old. He was Czech by birth and had been a member of the NSDAP from 1939-40. “*He shows little interest for or understanding of politics. He would like to live in Germany working in harmony with the rest of Europe”.*

Gefr. Friedrich Piffl was the Organiser of Studies. A lawyer, aged 45. A member of the Henlein Party (Sudetan Nazi Party) from 1935 to 1939, and then a member of the NSDAP from 1939-1942 - “*a clever fellow, smooth and ‘smarmy’”.* Piffl did not want to go back to Czechoslovakia, but to Austria where his English born wife was living.

Gefr Werner Lange (A) was employed in the Camp Accounts Office. He was German, but left for political reasons as he was a social democrat, trade unionist and a Quaker. “*In his factory at Naarden, Holland, he states he printed illegal identity and ration cards which were used by the Dutch underground. He was called up in 1942 and claims to have deserted in the same year. He worked for the BBC in Bush House in 1944 in the PW transmission to Germany*. [This was the ‘Ascot-Brondesbury Scheme – further details under Brondesbury Camp 32]. *He was promised his freedom but found himself in Camp 2 in December 1944.*

*Lange wishes to be released either in England or in Holland.”*

A couple of POWs who had spent time in concentration camps were briefly noted; Wikelaus Gall in Buchenwald for 3 years; Raimund Biemann in Buchenwald for 4½ years. Another had been held in the Kiel Gestapo Prison for political activities against Nazism. “*These men hear and know of the release of ex-NSDAP officials. Consequently, they tend to spread gloom, are a living advertisement of the penalty of being anti-Nazi and contribute to an atmosphere which is becoming more and more anti-British.”*

In general, this very mixed-bag of pows was described as politically; “*confused, apathetic and uninterested in reasons for the war... They were dragged into the German service either by coercion, glamour, flattery or a desire to be in on the apparently winning side. Quite a number have served in several armies.”*

Many of the pows were rejected by the countries they stated they belonged to, or wished to settle in. Repatriations were therefore slow.

Quite apart from the desperate psychological condition for many of the pows, the camp itself also contributed to the depressing nature of being held there; *“…surrounded by a mass of barbed wire and searchings are very frequent, but this does not prevent escapes which are constantly occurring.”* Most escapes were a matter of just wanting to get outside for a while, rather than real attempts at getting home.

Recommendations were made:

*1. All PsW… who have been in Concentration Camps should be repatriated speedily.*

*2. Foreign governments should be asked to accelerate the repatriation of the nationals.*

*3. The residue of rejects should be sent to Displaced Persons camps in Germany for disposal.*

*4. Men over 50 should be repatriated. I attach a list of Dutchmen who are above this age.*

*5. Lectures should be given.*

*6. One PW told me that he had requested an interview with the Commandant and had to wait 1 month for a negative answer. Such matters should be speeded up.*

Some lectures were eventually arranged – but there was very little, if any, follow-up to the other recommendations.

**18 February 1947 – the wide range of nationalities held at the camp was raised in the House of Commons:**

*Mr. Stokes asked the Secretary of State for War how many prisoners of war are detained in Toft Hall Camp,*Knutsford, *Cheshire: and what are their nationalities.*

*The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Bellenger) - There are 1,516 prisoners of war held at Toft Hall Camp, claiming 26 different nationalities. Ninety-five per cent of these prisoners of war are German, or of German racial origin, with residential qualifications in the countries to which they wish to return.*

*Mr. Stokes - Is my right hon. Friend aware that the prisoners of war themselves complain that they belong to 38 different nationalities, and that the majority of them were pressed into German service against their will? Will he please hurry with the examination of their individual cases?*

*Mr. Bellenger - Yes, Sir. I will do my best*. (Hansard - Volume 433)

**21-23 May 1947** – Dr R Koch visited the camp to report on re-education. Total strength 1437 – 21 officers and 1416 other ranks.

Commandant: Lt.Col Windsor Camp Leader: Wachtm. Fabry (A) [“*reliable and highly suited”].*

Interpreters: Cpt Burstin; S/Sgt Reingewuerz; S/Sgt Kessler Deputy C/L: Hpt. Gefr. Schaefer (A)

 German M.O.: St.Arzt Trabl (B); St.Arzt Holzki (A)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening figures: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C |
|  | 1 | 104 | 2 | 205 | 970 | 117 | 38 |

It was recorded that 33,134 pows had been repatriated. I do not know how this figure was arrived at – in 1948 the number was recorded as 1500 pows repatriated to date.

The visitor was not impressed with the re-education activities at the camp. The Commandant was leaving the army within a fortnight and it was stated that he had, “*very little contact with the Ps/W.*” Furthermore, “*He and his officers do not show the slightest interest in re-educational problems.”*

The only person who showed any interest was the Interpreter Officer Captain Burstin, but he was to be demobbed in 2 months time and was over-worked. The two staff sergeant interpreters were described as; “*young, inexperienced and unreliable*”; Kessler was “*particularly unsuited*”.

There were 32 different nationalities of pow. The largest groups were:

630 Czechs, mainly from the Sudetenland;

430 Austrians – “*but only 60 are ‘genuine’ cases”*; many were not born in Austria.

80 Jugoslavs;

75 Dutchmen of German origin.

The visitor’s objectivity is questionable with comments such as: “*’Study Leader’ (but only nominally) is Dr.Pfiffl (B), a Czech lawyer from Prague of German origin. He is inactive, slimy and unpleasant*.”

More positively; “*Interpreter Meisinger (B) is a German whose parents are naturalized Canadians. Born in Germany and educated in Canada, he is a good type*.”

Morale was seriously affected by the apathetic attitudes of British staff, compounded with repatriation issues for many pows. “*Men have been waiting for repatriation in this camp as long as 2½ years. Some civilians were captured at the beginning of the war (merchant seamen etc) although most of the men have been interrogated by representatives of their governments, no decisions are given or they come in extremely slowly. The Dutch and Czech authorities are particularly slow. Applications for repatriation have been pending with the Dutch government for about 3 years. Families in Jugoslavia and Czechoslovakia believe that their men refuse to return. Denials by the Ps/W do not pass censorship*.”

In many inspection reports, complaints and concerns were given a brief general mention and were referred for further investigation. This report was different:

*“Bitter complaints are made about the spiteful attitude of the Adjutant Capt. Brewer and the QM, Lt James, specially of the former. Vicious methods of searching and arbitrary confiscation of property are alleged and mainly confirmed by the IO and other members of the British Staff. It is stated, for instance, that men have been searched in public when walking out in town and that contents of parcels checked already by the I.O., have later been taken away during searches in barracks. Guards are alleged to damage PsW’s reputation with civilians by stating that Ps/W in the camp are criminals, - a judgement of which the officers seem to approve. High barbed wire, armed guards, lack of sports-equipment add to the depression. Some men graded ‘A’, have been in concentration camps for years. They are particularly bitter and disillusioned.*

*The pitch of despondency in this camp has reached danger point. Mass walking out*.”

Comments regarding political progress were entirely negative. Many of the pows came from democratic countries before they were invaded, but had become apathetic. Men from east European countries were unwilling to express views in fear of reprisals when they were returned home. A lot of the blame for their predicaments was placed by the pows on the British.

Regarding the activities Dr Koch had come to inspect, he stated – “*Re-education does not exist in the camp*.” This was an exaggeration as he did list some standard re-education activities:

Newspapers – supply was adequate.

Library – 1211 books altogether. More needed.

Lectures – two a month. Less political subjects and more on art, literature, education and economics were requested.

Discussion groups – none and no interest.

Films – German films every 3 weeks. English films were wanted.

Wireless – One set in C/L’s office with 2 loudspeakers for OR’s and canteen. Another set in I.O.’s office serves 3 loudspeakers fixed in the open. 2 more loudspeakers wanted.

Camp Magazine – Ceased in November. The Commandant had insisted on a translation in English of every item.

Press reviews – no interest

English instruction – see separate reports

Information room – None yet, but material requested.

Other activities:

Religion – a very popular RC priest had recently left the camp; 2/3 of the pows were RC. The Protestant Padre, Machmar (A) was a new arrival, but was, “*not popular and is unsuitable”* – a special report had been submitted regarding him and it was requested he be transferred.

Education courses – none

Entertainments – An attempt was being made to start a theatre group. There was a 15-man orchestra that was active and popular. There was a lack of sports equipment and “*the football ground is to be converted into a Cricket-pitch for British staff*.”

In his conclusion, Dr Koch did not see that re-education would be improved with the unpleasant atmosphere within the camp.

**26/27 June 1947** – English Inspector’s Report by E F Peeler. Strength 1419.

Commandant: Lt.Col J.A. Clegg. [New] Lagersprecher (Camp leader): Fabry

There was 1 classroom with about 60 pows studying English. The English teacher, Dr Piffl, [sic] was being repatriated the following day and no replacement had been found.

**13 – 15 August 1947** – Dr Koch returned for his second visit regarding re-education. Strength 1173 – 16 officers; 1157 Other ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col Clegg Camp Leader: Wachtm. Fabry (A)

Interpreters: Capt Trambala; S/Sgt Reingewurz; S/Sgt Kessler. Deputy C/L: Hpt Gefr.Schaefer (A)

 German M.O. St.Arzt Dr.Trable (B); St.Arzt Dr. Hozki (A)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening had been simplified: | A | B | C |
|  |  | 93 | 1075 | 5 |

15% of the pows were ‘youth’ (under-25) – this was lower than in most camps.

The visitor believed that there were signs of improvement at the camp. The new commandant was away on leave, but was seen as a beneficial influence, (not for long). The adjutant was co-operating. Arbitrary searching had been stopped. However, the 2 S/Sgt interpreters were still regarded as unsuitable for this international camp.

29 nationalities were recorded, the majority were still facing difficulties over repatriation.

Morale was low, but slowly improving, (not for long). The two main negative factors were slow repatriations and the camp still encircled by barbed wire – most other camps had removed, or considerably reduced security by this time. Political interest was slowly increasing with topics such as the Marshall Plan and economic problems, however organised political activities were not popular and difficult with such mixed nationalities.

There had been few developments for re-education activities. The materials for an exhibition previously requested had arrived. A few items such as discussion groups, press reviews and English Instruction were planned, but had not yet started.

Religion – A Roman Catholic priest Bruggenolte visited from Marbury Camp 189. The unpopular protestant padre was still present.

Education activities – planned, not started.

Entertainment – The theatre group needed replacements for repatriated members; plays were needed. The 15-man orchestra conducted by Wamser was very active. There was no mention of what happened to the football pitch.

Outside contacts – it was hoped that some visits and contacts with outside organisations such as the Rotary Club would start soon.

Although there were signs of improvement, especailly with attitudes of the British staff, Dr Koch saw little chance for major improvements.

**15/16 August 1947** – Following straight on from the last report, an English Inspector, Mr R D Miller arrived. There was a variation in pow numbers - the strength was recorded as 1256 (with 50 Germans) – instead of 1173 (and 62).

The visit was a waste of time as classes had been abandoned. Preparations for the visit were totally inadequate - people Mr Miller expected to meet were not present. He also admitted that what “..*surprised me was that this is not really a German P/w camp at all”.* He questioned whether this camp was one the English inspectors should deal with – they were mainly interested in German pows.

**15/17 October 1947** – The third general survey visit by Dr R Koch. Strength 12 officers; 959 OR.

Commandant: Lt Col A J Clegg Camp Leader: Hpt Gefr.Schaefer (A) Previously the deputy.

Interpreters: 2/Lt Roach; S/Sgt Reingewuerz; S/Sgt Kessler. Deputy C/L: O/Gefr Vlach (A)

 German M.O. St.Arzt Dr.Trabl (B); St.Arzt Dr. Hozki (A)

Political screening had been simplified; A : 70 \ B : 901. 27 different nationalities recorded.

Not all of the negative atmosphere within the camp was down to the British management. Of the 62 men claiming to be Germans, 59 were actually of mixed nationality. The largest group claimed to be Czech (557), but only 140 had been accepted by Czechoslovakia. News had arrived that the families of 25 pows had been expelled from The Netherlands and sent to Germany. There were many other cases where nationality was rejected by ‘home countries’.

The difficulties faced over repatriations needed good interpreters to work with British and foreign offices – however, in this camp the new Interpreter Officer, 2/Lt Roach, did not speak German, and, “*does not know anything about the job*”. The 2 s/sgts were unpopular with the pows and the British staff, they were again described as; “*unsuitable”.*

The previous hoped for signs of improvement had vanished. *“Morale is very low. Within the last 6 weeks, 3 men had to be sent to mental hospitals, one had to be removed by force, a scene which brought much unrest to the camp.”* The M.O.’s expected that there would be more cases.

A pitiful standard list of re-education activities was given:

Newspapers – Adequate. Papers from nearly all European countries were available.

Library – 2200 books. Up by 1000 since May.

Lectures – Decreased to just 2 in 2 months.

Discussion groups – none.

Films – YMCA films fortnightly.

Wireless – Adequate.

Camp Magazine – None.

Press reviews – None

English instruction – No lessons

Information room – None yet, but material requested - again.

Other activities:

Religion – the RC priest from Marbury Hall Camp 189 continued to visit. The Commandant wanted the protestant padre to be removed, however, the visitor regarded him as “*unsuitable, but harmless”.*

Education – none

Entertainment – A 7 man orchestra was being reformed. There were organised sports activities.

Outside contacts – Small groups of pows were invited to attend WEA lectures and UNA meetings at Knutsford. 12 men had attended the Petty Sessions at Knutsford Courts.

**24 October 1947** – Despite his previous comments, Mr Miller returned for another pointless English Inspection.

Strength – confusing figures without explanation. Total strength was 1022, but strength of main camp was given as 983 – no hostels or billets were listed.

The visitor had planned to give a talk, but again no arrangements had been made by the camp for this and it was cancelled. There were no English classes to inspect. It has to be questioned why a telephone call was not made to find this out beforehand, considering the previous failed visit.

**14 November 1947** - Camp number included in an ‘Urgent Memorandum’ (FO 939/270) regarding inspection of food parcels.

**31 December 1947 to 2 January 1948** – Dr Koch returned for a general survey. Strength 769 – 10 Officers, 759 other ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col Clegg Camp Leader: H/Gefr. Schaefer (A) [Together with his deputy, seen as popular, but not very active].

Interpreters: 2/Lt Roach; S/Sgt Kessler. Deputy C/L: O/Gefr. Vlack (A)

 German M.O. St.Arzt Dr.Trable (B)

Screening – A: 48 / B: 721

23 different nationalities recorded with continuing difficulties over repatriation:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Argentinians | 5 |  | Austrians | 159 |  | Belgians | 3 |  | Brazilians | 2 |
| British Canadians | 2 |  | Czechs | 418 |  | Danes | 2 |  | Dutch | 33 |
| French | 5 |  | Germans | 90 |  | Hungarians | 6 |  | Italians | 4 |
| Luxembourgeois | 2 |  | No nationality | 1 |  | Norwegian | 1 |  | Portuguese | 1 |
| Rumanians | 5 |  | Spanish Arabs | 1 |  | Swiss | 7 |  | Turkish Armenians | 3 |
| Uruguayan | 1 |  | Venezuelian | 1 |  | Yugoslavs | 17 |  |  |  |

The Czechs – just 60 accepted for repatriation.

Austrians – “..*most of whom were born in Jogoslavia, their families are now in Austria”.*

Germans – of which “*84 are Czechs, Dutchmen etc who have been rejected by their governments. 6 are genuine Germans, employed as clerks*”.

The Dutch were of German origin – “*only 5 are now going home, most of the others have been waiting for 2-3 years to get a decision whether they are allowed to return to Holland to re-join their families*”.

The Hungarians – “*have never been interrogated by their government*”.

Political values were not shared between the nationalities and many were sceptical and bitter. There were few communists, “*though many wish to return to countries under Russian domination*”.

Hopes that the commandant would initiate changes had been dashed; “*The Commandant’s cooperation is only fair; he shows little interest in our problems. His interpretation of rules and regulations is not always helpful and sympathetic*.”

25% of the pows were youth. They were not seen as a special problem and links had been made with the Boy Scouts and the Unitarian Youth Club in Knutsford. One had attended the Youth Camp, (Trumpington Camp 180).

There had been little change to the very limited re-education activities. The unsuitable protestant padre was still at the camp. The theatre group had closed. The orchestra was down to 4 men. Poor clothing was an issue for some pows.

Despite little support from the British staff, some outside contacts had been made with the WEA and UNA Knutsford. Pows had their own separate Sunday services at the local church; "*This shows they were very much part of the community*," said churchwarden John Roberts.

**4/7 May 1948** – Final survey, carried out by E P Williams. Strength 17 officers; 1241 OR. This survey was an appalling whitewash of previous concerns.

Commandant: Lt Col J A Clegg Camp Leader: H/Gefr. K Schaefer (B) [Previously listed as (A)]

Interpreters: Capt R G Bardens; S/Sgt H Kessler. Deputy C/L: None

 German M.O. St.Arzt Mainfeltz (B)

Simplified screening: A:28 / B:1230. 1500 pows repatriated to date.

S/Sgt Kessler, described previously as ‘*unreliable*’, ‘*unpopular*’ and ‘*particularly unsuitable’* was noted as; “*showed signs of efficiency*.” (Signs of!). The new IO was on leave.

Surveys were carried out in camps still open at this time of attitudes towards the British. They were held in an unscientific manner, often in front of British guards - their value is dubious. In this camp, 160 pows who had recently been transferred from Marbury Hall Camp 189 were surveyed – **NOT** those who had been held here for some time.

The visitor pointed out that the pows surveyed had been transferred from a “*pleasant camp”* and they had; “*Become acquainted with a friendly population in the best possible surroundings. Work has been congenial and treatment good.*” Whereas, barbed wire fencing and a guard company were still in place at Camp 2, one of the very few remaining with such measures - prisoners newly arriving from other camps found this aspect of the camp to be disturbing.

Mr Williams went on to describe the long-held Camp 2 pows as; “*such a heterogeneous group… that an analysis of their views would be of no value*.” This was utter nonsense; an analysis would have been just as valid if the survey was devised and carried out in an appropriate manner. He went on to say; “*their standard of intelligence is extremely low and illiteracy not infrequent.”*… an opinion not expressed in any previous report, and, if true, for which absolutely nothing had been done to improve.

The results are virtually worthless – and too late to have any meaningful response:

Hatred 2%

Dislike 1%

Distrust 10%

Indifference 30%

Liking 57%

A further ridiculous statement was made about the pows that had been held in Camp 2; “*It may be that the non-German element has acquired its less friendly attitude to the man in the street from the distrust with which the ordinary civilian regards them. Whilst the people of Knutsford seemed to me to be fonder of the company of PsW that those of any other town I have visited, they regard those from countries other than Germany with suspicion and, indeed, as Quislings*.”

The comments comparing ‘*man in the street’* to ‘*ordinary civilian’* to ‘*people of Knutsford’* were totally illogical. The extremely limited contacts allowed pows at Camp 2 in comparison to other camps by 1948, is ignored; (a later comment, about Outside Contacts – “*little has been done in this direction*”). How would they know pows were from other countries? Why had the pows been described as ‘criminals’? Were the locals ever informed that many were anti-Nazis, that some had been held in concentration camps, that many were Sudetan… Knutsford Council refused permission for PsW to attend their meetings, unlike many other councils.

Mr Williams was desperately floundering to come up with reasons why the pows in this camp had been largely ignored. In some aspects he did not even manage to find reasons. A resettlement team had apparently visited the camp on 2 April to assist the many pows who were unable to find countries that would accept them. Such work had been carried out in many other camps well prior to this. It gets worse when the visitor stated he was; “*not able to contact any PsW who had met the members of the team”* (!)

Another team was expected that week, but Mr Williams stated; “*It is unlikely that a team can be very effective in such a camp, - except in the case of the ex-189 PsW*”.

Poor excuses were raised for the lack of re-education activities – “*low level of intelligence*” (new excuse) and “*constant changes in camp population*” (not true) – films had only just started (not true) – there had never been a camp magazine (not true).

To exacerbate the situation and view of the British for long term Camp 2 pows, a programme of activities was arranged for the newly arrived German pows from Camp 189.

Finally, despite the comments about arrangements being made by the British for ex-189 pows, blame for the lack of re-education for Camp 2 pows was placed on them; “*There is little evidence of any real effort having been made by the PsW in the time past to get something going*”.

**June 6 1948** – Perhaps it is good to end with at least one positive aspect of this appalling pow camp. Just before being repatriated, the last pows in the camp presented a certificate to the local church. It is still on display and states:

"*May God richly bless the congregation of St John's the Evangelist Church and their minister* [Rev. Brind] *- May the same spirit of Christian fellowship, which united us here, also bring together our people in a life of peace and goodwill*."

Known Commandants:

? – June 1947: Lieutenant Colonel John Stephen Windsor, M.C. – Major with South Wales Borderers, becoming Lt Col on taking over pow camp.

June 1947 - 1948: Lieutenant Colonel J A Clegg (possibly Royal Hampshire Regiment).

**After the camp:**

(Not to be confused with another ‘Toft Hall’ used as a party house). The land went back to the estate, as park and woodland. Local website stated parts of the foundations to pow huts in the woodland were still visible in 2010. The Hall has had several uses including offices. It is currently (2019) a refurbished, luxury house.

The site as it is now - <https://repatriatedlandscape.org/england/pow-sites-in-the-north-west/pow-camp-2-toft-hall/>

**Further information:**

National Archive References: FO 939/293 (1946-1948) and FO 939/85 (1947-1948) – used above.

National Archives - FO 1120/206 – ‘Re-educational survey visit reports for camps 1 to 4’. Between 1946 to 1948 inspections were carried out at various camps for German pows regarding the provision of re-education programmes. The quality and detail of the reports vary greatly – used above.