**Camp 38** **- Pool Park Camp, Ruthin, Denbighshire**

Included in the 1945 ICRC Camp list – Labour Camp. 38. Pool Park Camp, Ruthin, Denbighshire.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | | | |
| 38(G.W.C.) | Pool Park Camp, Ruthin, Denbighshire | W. | Priswar, Ruthin | Ruthin 271 | Ruthin (L.M.S.) | Lt.Col.E.J.O’Connor, O.B.E. M.C. | v/1453/2 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 |
|  |  | 38 | Pool Park Camp, Ruthin | Denbighshire |  |  | Wales |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location:** Coflein gives NGR SJ 1045 5648. This site is in the community of Efenechtyd, about 1.2 km NE of Pool Park Farm / Hospital and 3km SW of the town of Ruthin.  **Before the camp:** The site is on the large Pool Park Estate. Remote farming land.  **Pow Camp:** Italian and then German pows.  Coflein description – “*World War 2 camp for Italian prisoners of war, consisting of several huts to the west of the B5105 road and a sewage works on the opposite side, set within the grounds of Pool Park (nprn 27812). Several buildings and the sewage works are shown on the OS 6in map of 1953 but these have been cleared by the time of the survey for the 1975 edition. The barracks for personnel serving at the camp was built in Park Road, Ruthin (nprn 403998).” (*B.A.Malaws, RCAHMW, 31 January 2006).  There was a cell block to hold pows sentenced for minor offences. Pows from other camps, (e.g. Pabo Hall Camp 119 in January 1945) were sometimes sent here to serve short sentences.  **1942** - Believed to have opened towards the end of the year.  **1943** - Visited by the ICRC. Capacity 750, guarded by the Pioneer Corps.  **1943** – attached hostels for Italians: Cerrig-y-Drudion; Llandrillo; Kinmel Park.  **May 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Western Command area, and in **November 1944** as an Italian Working Camp, (WO 32/10737). Italians were recorded as non-co-operators.  **1 August 1945** - an urgent memorandum was sent to this camp, and others, about maintaining records of Italians who were classed as ‘co-operators’. At this point many, sometimes all, of the Italian pows were in hostels / billets. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1963 |

**15 September 1945** - Hostels listed for pows from this camp, (WO 32/10737): Cae Rhys, Trawsfynydd, Merioneth - Llandrillo, Corwen, Merioneth

Oversight and development of re-education activities and English teaching for German pows was carried out by PID (Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office) / COGA (Control Office for Germany and Austria – UK). Visits and reports were made. The standard of the reports varied greatly. The visitors took little interest in activities other than re-education, they rarely mention welfare, sports, games, pastimes, crafts, etc of the pows.

**26 October 1945** – Visited by Mr Miller, (English Teaching Inspector) from PID. He stated the strength as 170 Germans, however it was still an Italian camp, the Germans were only located in 3 of its hostels – Cerrig-Y-Druidion; Glas Dir; Plas Bela.

Commandant: Major H J Barson. He complained that an expected political screening team had not showed up.

**June 1946** – the camp became ‘Germanized’. The Italian pows were moved to other camps / hostels or were being repatriated.

**4 July 1946** – 2 members of PID to; *“Organise re-education; Screen prospective billetees;* [review] *camp and hostel staff; visit hostels*”. Strength 2 officers, 1014 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col O’Connor, OBE, MC. [New] Camp Leader: O/Fw Seemann (B-)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Hennock Deputy C/L: St/Fw Mailaender (B-)

German M.O.: St/Arzt Schostal (B-)

The previous commandant, Major Barson was 2 i/c. The new commandant was not overly interested in re-education, but does not appear to have been obstructive to the development of activities by the pows. The Interpreter was of German origin and considered by the visitors to be too friendly with the pows – an officer interpreter was requested.

Despite the previous commandant’s request, 10 months earlier, only 53 pows had been screened. The camp was graded overall “grey/black.” 4 of the 7 hostel leaders were graded ‘C’ (black = Nazis) – all were considered to be unsuitable for their posts.

30 pow staff had arrived from Le Marchant camp 23 – all the other pows were from camps in USA and Canada and were C category.

It was reported that morale was ‘fair.’ It was stated that the pows had settled in very well, though this contradicts other comments. The pows from the USA had been promised they were to be returned to Germany, instead they found themselves in UK pow camps. One group had been sent from the USA to camps in Belgium where conditions were very poor, and then sent to the UK – “*They are very disgruntled.”* There had been very few complaints about the work carried out by pows in billets.

The main complaint concerned lack of mail getting through.

400 pows were ‘youth’ (under-25) – they were not regarded as a particular problem.

A small committee had been formed to develop re-educational activities. There was a lack of equipment, but ample accommodation. There was a lack of funds to buy items as the Italians had drained the Welfare Fund, created mainly by profits from sales in the camp canteen. The German pows agreed to pay 3d per week to build the fund back up (£121 in debt) – I am sure this also made the pows ‘disgruntled’, having to pay debts created by other pows!

The standard list of re-educational activities was given. Little had started, but there were hopes that activities would be expanded.

Wochenpost / Ausblick – 320 / 100 copies respectively.

Newspapers – British papers were received. Only 10 German newspapers had arrived in the main camp.

Library – Only 120 books.

Lectures – started and regular.

Discussion groups – Hoped to start in main camp.

Films – none. There was only DC current in the main camp and some hostels.

Wireless – 1 set with two loudspeakers in main camp. No sets in the hostels.

Camp magazine – none.

Information room – none.

Press review – twice a week with attendance in the hundreds.

English Instruction – Separate report. 100 copies of ‘English For All’ received and another 300 requested.

Other activities –

Religion – no pow padres. Protestant and RC padres visited the camp.

Education – Classes for shorthand, book-keeping, French and physics.

Theatre group – none. “*No talent.”*

Orchestra – 3 instruments, no sheet music.

The visitors reported that this camp needed assistance due to lack of funds, equipment, padres, and its isolated position. A segregation team to review political gradings was again requested.

**6 July 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. 201 pupils in the whole camp.

**18/21 November 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. 5 classes with 42 pupils in the main camp.

**25/26 November 1946** – Two visitors to carry out organising re-education and screening. Strength 3 officers, 965 OR.

No changes to senior staff. Note that the request for an Interpreter Officer had not been met, the S/Sgt was considered to be more experienced and had improved. There were still 4 category C pows in charge at hostels. There was a second German M.O. – St/Arzt Lautsher (B-).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C |
|  | 45 | 66 | 483 | 192 | 182 |

Morale had improved due to start of repatriations; a better mail service for most; knowing they could appeal against political grading; the start of a ‘bonus scheme.’

Electric supply was still poor due to there being only one generator and resulting in dim lighting.

350 youth pows. They were responsible for most of the re-education activities.

The 3d a week pow contribution to the Welfare Fund had increased to 6d, but included a ‘sickness benefit’ – I have not seen this referred to in other camps.

There were some improvements to the standard re-education activities – some more newspapers, though not many were getting to the hostels – more books sent by COGA – a small discussion group in the main camp – and, daily translated press reviews. A camp magazine was expected soon, (first print in December).

There continued to be problems with the supply of films – only two hostels had AC power capable of powering the projectors. Still no wireless sets in the hostels.

Religion – A RC padre (Goetzmann) was shared with camps Pabo Hall 119 and Queensferry 1014 – attendance only 15. No protestant padre. A local Welsh pastor visited the main camp each week.

Education – small classes for Book-keeping (20 pows), Shorthand (10), geometry (8).

Still no theatre group, but a string orchestra played classical music and visited the hostels.

**30 December 1946 / 2 January 1947** – Visit with same objectives as previous. With such a short space of time there was little change to comment on.

No change to senior personnel. Interpreter S/Sgt Hennock was praised for his involvement in re-education.

Out of 149 appeals against screening grades, 79 had been allowed. 182 category C pows had reduced to 100. Better grades meant earlier repatriation, in theory. 386 pows repatriated to date.

Steadily improving morale, especially with more relaxed restrictions allowing the pows to go out of camp more often.

**January 1947** – A new camp leader; Ramm (B+), appointed on recommendation from PID visitor. At some time during April, Ramm asked to be relieved of this post as he found it difficult to maintain discipline – he was subsequently transferred to Camp 119

**28 April to 2 May 1947** – Visit; instead of ‘Organise’, it was ‘Re-organise Re-education’ and instead of ‘Screen’, it was Re-screening for C’s. Strength 4 officers, 1559 OR.

With the take over of a satellite camp and various hostels, Pool Park became a very large camp covering Anglesey, Caernarfonshire, Flintshire, most of Denbigh and parts of Shropshire.

Commandant: Lt Col O’Connor, OBE, MC. Camp Leader: Bruno Olbrich (B)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Hennock Deputy C/L:

S/Sgt Engel German M.O.: St/Arzt A Laubscher (B-)

Sgt Sandig H M von Rauch (B-)

There was a clear disagreement between the commandant and the visitor about the removal of the previous camp leader, Ramm. However, it was the commandant who held the power in camps, not PID.

The new camp leader was previously hostel leader at Cae Lys.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Screening: | A+ | A | B+ | B | B- | C+ |
|  | 1 | 11 | 152 | 1048 | 346 | 5 |

+ 175 pows unscreened, newly arrived from Flaxley Green Camp175.

Re-screening upgraded many pows, e.g. a further 43 C grade pows were regraded as B’s. 68 appeals were still pending. 31 of 31 appeals had been allowed in this visit. This amount of regrading occurred in most camps. 961 pows repatriated to date. 5 recently arrived C grade pows were a “*disturbing influence*” and were to be removed to Watten Camp 165.

The British staff, apart from the 3 interpreters, were indifferent to re-education, as in most camps. *“The German is regarded as a beaten enemy but is treated correctly and fairly.”* The St/Sgt interpreters were praised for their work to develop re-education activities.

The visitor believed that morale was diminishing, especially in the main camp. The main factors being;

1. Pows felt unnecessary, petty restrictions were being applied here, but not in other camps. They resented morning and evening roll-calls.
2. Complaints that punishments were too harsh.
3. Some pows, especially at Bodelwyddan hostel were Singapore internees and resented being treated as pows.
4. Bad news from home.
5. Weather conditions in the bleak camp and isolated hostels.
6. Lack of hot water and lighting in many hostels.

Despite the fall in morale, it was considered that political progress was being made. This was attributed to: re-education; contacts with civilians; good treatment – this last reason was at odds with factors a and b above.

Re-education activities continued with the usual disturbances due to leaders being repatriated, other attractions such as sports and walking out in better weather, and general apathy. The size of the camp with 1 satellite, 13 hostels + billetees, was regarded as a problem. The standard list was given with many improvements:

Newspapers – “*supply is perfectly adequate*.”

Library – Good stock with 1000 additional books from Camp 1000. Books circulated to hostels.

Lectures – regular. Generally welcomed, but better weather often led to decreased attendance.

Discussion groups – Started but not well led.

Films – Shown in main camp. Still a problem of electricity supply in many hostels, so arrangements were in place for pows to visit main camp or Buckley and Bodelwyddan hostels.

Wireless – Sets in all sites, but one (unnamed).

Camp magazine – 260 copies (monthly?). The camp magazine was recorded as having different titles at different times – Das offene Wort / Lagerstimme / Der Neue Staat

Information room – a start was being made.

Press review – satisfactory + weekly news sheet.

Other activities –

Religion – limited interest, despite there being 3 padres.

Education – Book-keeping and shorthand being restarted in main camp. French in 2 hostels.

Entertainments – Orchestra diminished due to repatriations. Football popular.

**8 July 1947** – House of Commons Question re: ‘Sentenced German’

*Mr Skeffington-Lodge* *asked the Secretary of State for War whether in view of the evidence given at the trial to the effect that he was not the moving spirit in his association with a British girl for which he has been sentenced to 56 days' detention, he will review the case of Paul Herlach, No. 38 German prisoner-of-war working camp, Ruthin, [spelling Rultun] Denbighshire, with the object of reducing or remitting the punishment imposed.*

*Mr Bellenger -* *I am not in a position to comment on this case as the proceedings of the Court have not yet been received at the War Office.*

HC Deb 08 July 1947 vol 439 c205W

**8 to 17 July 1947** – Survey of Re-education. Strength; 3 officers, 1901 OR.

Changes to senior personnel - Sgt Sandig left; a new Deputy C/L; R Schuhmann (B), previously hostel leader at Cae Llys

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Simplified screening figures given: | A | B+ | B | B- |
|  | 30 | 359 | 1218 | 397 |

16 appeals pending. 1203 pows repatriated to date.

Morale had improved – positive factors; better weather, less restrictions, increased social activities and contacts with civilians. Negative factors; Bad news from Germany, delayed mail, delays to repatriations. Political progress was hampered by, “*lethargy and indifference.”* Working hours were often long as harvest got underway.

German staff working in the camp were unhappy that they were paid 5 shillings, while outside workers were paid 6 shillings.

The standard list of re-education activities was given – it varied very little from the previous report. Display materials for the Information room had arrived.

Increase in social activities noted with orchestras, theatre groups, football teams and sports facilities at the main and satellite camps. There were visits to the hostels.

Although many pows had good relationships with the local population, no formal contacts had been established. It was hoped these would develop.

**13 / 18 August 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength 1664. Just 3 classes with 27 pupils in the main camp – classes affected at all sites by harvest work.

A new commandant – Lt Col P M Marjoribanks-Egerton MBE.

**26 August – 3 September 1947** – Survey of re-education. Strength; 4 officers, 1684 OR.

Senior personnel – only changes to M.O.’s listed: St/Arzt A Laubscher (B-), G Brehme (B+), E Rosenberger (B).

The new commandant was more sympathetic towards the aims of re-education than his predecessor.

Morale continued to improve. The new commandant was contributing “*to a happier atmosphere*.” Petty rules had been removed and punishments for minor offences were less severe. There was one roll-call rather than two each day. The pows were allowed to stay out to 10:15 and sometimes 10:30. Contacts with locals were developing. Repatriations had increased.

The satellite camp and some hostels were expected to close and this caused some anxiety.

There had been little change to re-education activities, though attendance was often affected by very long working hours for the harvest. A new recreation room was being prepared at the main camp.

Formal outside contacts were being developed. Visits had been made to; Denbighshire County Council at Ruthin; Ifton Heath Colliery; Pant Asaph Monastery near Holywell. More visits were being planned. There was one negative event when the manager of the Tivoli Cinema in Buckley, put his cinema out of bounds for pows.

**5 days through October 1947** – Re-educational survey. Strength 4 officers; 2039 OR. 7 more hostels taken over from Camp 119.

The commandant continued to support re-education. Noted as being outstandingly good was Interpreter S/Sgt Hennock.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Screening: | A+ | A | B+ | B | B- |
|  | 1 | 3 | 305 | 1345 | 389 |

1473 pows repatriated to date.

Morale remained ‘*quite high*.’ Good effect of commandant with interest shown in welfare and re-education. The hostels transferred from the very well run Camp 119 were seen to have a positive effect. The future of St Martins and 2 other hostels had an unsettling effect on those pows. Because of the isolated nature of some camps, pows were being allowed to travel further than the 5 mile limit. There was a greater interest in politics. Pows from the Russian zone were particularly anxious about their future.

Notes on changes to re-education activities:

Newspapers – still received, but reduced due to low Welfare Fund.

Library – nearly 3000 books, being reorganized to ensure better distribution to the hostels.

Films – supply was unsatisfactory and some hostels still received no films due to no electricity or facilities.

Wireless - 6 hostels had broken sets. Many found it difficult to receive German stations.

Out of all re-education activities, the one that had the most positive effect on the pow’s outlook was direct contact with civilians. In this camp; *“the friendly attitude of civilians has done more than anything else to kindle a sympathetic outlook on the British way of Life*.” Formal visits had been arranged to: Local council meetings, Lanwnda Young Farmers Club, private dances, special religious services.

Religion – excellent relationships with Welsh churches, especially in the old Camp 119 area, (Llandudno Junction).

Entertainments – groups from Camp 119 were being integrated into existing theatre groups and orchestra.

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

**24-27 November 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength 1729. 3 classes with 47 pupils in main camp.

New camp leader; Erich Kaiser, previously leader at St Martin’s Satellite camp.

**4 days in December 1947** – Re-education survey. Strength 4 officers, 1725 OR. There seems to be no real purpose for this visit.

Commandant: Lt Col P M Marjoribanks-Egerton, MBE Camp Leader: E Kaiser (B)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Engel Deputy C/L: R Schumann (B)

German M.O.’s: G Brehme (B+); E Rosenberger (B); E Schmidt (B+)

Nevin was listed as a satellite camp rather than a hostel. It largely administered the hostels in Caernarvonshire and Anglesey.

Morale was “*quite good.”* The rate of repatriations had increased. Christmas leave away from camp had been granted. There was a keen political interest with the future of Germany under discussion. Negative aspects as before – poor mail, uncertainty of future of hostels, lack of electric lighting in some hostels. Caernarvonshire was suffering from lack of work for many of the pows.

50% of pows were youth. Contact had been made with local Boy Scout groups and pows invited to meetings at Rhuddlan and Rhyl. 19 pows had attended special youth training courses.

Re-education activities continued with some problems due to leaders being repatriated. Hostel leaders reported monthly on events at their sites.

Visits had been made to Denbighshire Assizes at Ruthin; Council Meetings; Denbigh Castle. Some pows attended WEA classes for English, history and Welsh. A pow concert and art exhibition were being held on a large scale in Ruthin.

**23/24 March 1948** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength 1016.

Lagersprecher: Heinz Maeder. 2 classes with 14 pupils. Comment – “*closes 15 April.”*

**8 April 1948** - Brief exchange in Parliament about the future of the camp:

*“Sir H. Morris-Jones asked the Minister of Works what the intentions of his Department are in regard to Pool Park Camp, Ruthin, in the county of Denbigh, now used for German prisoners of war; and whether on their departure this land will be released for agricultural purposes.*

*Mr. Key - It is the intention to retain part of the camp as a hostel for agricultural labour needed in the district. Unless some urgent Government need arises, the remainder—about five-sixths of the total area—will be derequisitioned on the departure of the prisoners of war.”* (House of Commons, written answers, **8 April 1948,** Volume 449).

**6/9 April 1948** – Final survey. Strength 3 officers, 550 OR.

Changes to senior personnel - No interpreters; new Deputy C/L F Baaske; German M.O. G Brehme left.

In many camps still open at this time a survey of attitudes towards the British was carried out. It was carried out in entirely unscientific ways; in some camps it was just a collection of pows showing hands to questions raised. At Pool Park a selection of pows was made, the report does not state how many, and there is no description of how the survey was carried out. For what it was worth the results were:

Hate 0% Dislike 12% Distrust 10% Indifference 8% Benefit of doubt 15% Liking 55%

The camp had not been visited by the ‘*Resettlement Team’* who dealt with repatriation issues.

Final comments by the visitor were that the camp had improved, especially after the previous commandant.

New dates had been set for closure – all hostels to close within 1 week, and the main camp by 30 April.

Known Camp Commandants

1945 - Major H J Barson

1947 - Lieutenant Colonel E J O’Connor, O.B.E. M.C. (I think he was with the Royal Lancashire Regiment)

1947 - Lt Col P M Marjoribanks-Egerton MBE, from the Royal Irish Fusiliers. The IWM holds papers concerning him and his wife on unrelated matters.

Camp and hostels + number of pows where known, (many figures were rounded):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not open |  | Unknown |  | Open |  | With another camp |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Main |  |  | Italian | 397 | 371 | 320 | 418 | 280 | 407 | 490 | 526 | 337 |
| Cerrig-y-Drudion |  |  | 70 G | 67 | 51 | 30 | 52 | 26 | 25 | 30 |  |  |
| Llandrillo, Corwen |  |  |  | 69 | 37 | 19 | 45 | 41 | With C101 | |  |  |
| Kinmel Park |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cae Rhys |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Glasdir |  |  | 50 G | 69 | 47 | 29 | 63 | 58 | 58 | 43 | 49 | 31 |
| Plas Bela |  |  | 50 G | 46 | 33 | 26 | 40 | 37 | 37 | 39 |  |  |
| Buckley |  |  |  | 97 | 97 | 70 | 65 | 51 | 48 | 63 | 16 |  |
| Llanrhaiadr |  | With Camp 100 | | 53 |  |  |  |  | With C101 | |  |  |
| Cae Llys |  |  | With C? | 88 | 57 | 37 | 54 | 54 | 79 | 66 |  |  |
| Bodelwyddan |  |  |  |  | 93 | 85 | 113 | 111 | 114 | 110 | 120 | 30 |
| St Martins Satellite |  | Camp 100 | | | | 448 | 431 | 359 | 254 |  |  |  |
| Sealand |  |  |  |  |  | 25 | 25 | 23 |  |  |  |  |
| Chirk |  | With Camp 100 | | | | 22 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hanmer |  | With Camp 100 | | | | 29 | 42 | 38 |  |  |  |  |
| Bryn-y-Pys |  |  |  |  |  | 75 | 144 | 138 | 115 | 100 | 26 |  |
| Morda |  | With Camp 100 | | | | 15 | 16 | 15 |  |  |  |  |
| Plas Power |  |  |  |  |  | 53 | 53 | 39 | 33 | 39 | 80 |  |
| Bodorgan |  |  |  |  |  | With C119 | | | 96 | 124 | 46 | 31 |
| Bont Newydd |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 42 | 45 | 19 | 28 |
| Four Crosses |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 40 | 37 |  |  |
| Nevin / Nefyn |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 43 | 47 |  |  |
| Sarn |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 39 | 26 |  |  |
| Tyn-y-Groes |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 50 | 34 | 30 | 20 |
| Vaynol Park |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 50 | 48 | 37 | 34 |
| Billets |  |  |  | 130 | 182 | 270 + 10\* | 343 | 391 | 513 | 391 + 3\*\* | 67 | 42 |
| Total | 750 cap | 750 cap | ? | 1016 | 968 | 1563 | 1904 | 1664 | 2043 | 1729 | 1016 | 553 |

\*10 attached at Acksea Camp 1018 \*\* detained or in hospital.

**After the camp:** Used for a short time for ‘European Volunteer Workers. Farmland. Some hut bases still visible.

The site as it is today - <https://repatriatedlandscape.org/pow-sites-in-wales/pow-camp-38-pool-park/>

< In use October 1943. Italian letter-sheet

**Further information:**

National Archives – FO 939/120 38 Working Camp, Pool Park camp, Ruthin, Denbighshire. Dated 1945-1948

Denbighshire Archives –

DD/DM/1682 Papers including reports of inspections of POW camps, including Pool Park, Ruthin. Dated 1947-1948

DD/DM/1799/204 Photographs and postcards of Italian pows at Pool Park Camp other notes on wartime years

**Satellite Camps**

**St Martins.** 19 miles from the main camp. Previously independent Camp 100.

**May 1947** – Officer i/c Capt Rowbottom. Camp Leader; L Ditterich (B) – he was in charge when it was Camp 100, aged 34, no party connections. Deputy C/L: H Kiehling (B+)

Continued to issue its own camp magazine. There was a small band and a theatre group, it was hoped the theatre group would visit the main camp.

**July 1947** – no change to senior personnel.

**August 1947** – New camp leader; K Kukurenda (B+), a printer and typesetter, Nazi party member 1931-45. “*Very sound and reliable. Very actively engaged in all aspects of re-education…. an excellent choice.”*

**October 1947** - New camp leader; E Kaiser (B), a painter, aged 39. No party membership. “*Sound and reliable.”*

There were concerns over the future of this camp. The camp magazine ended.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| St Martins Satellite |  | Camp 100 | | | | 448 | 431 | 359 | 254 |  |  |  |

**Nevin / Nefyn.** (Nevin used in all reports).80 miles from the main camp. (Previous details see Pabo Hall Camp 119)

**October 1947** – Listed as a hostel. Leader; E Schutz (B-), served in Jersey, a clerk. *“Not highly intelligent but satisfactory and actively helpful in a hostel with excellent re-educational facilities.”*

**December 1947** – Listed as a satellite camp. C.O. Capt J Rowbottom, previously at St Martin’s. Same pow leader as before. Unusual to have a Captain i/c with just 45 pows, but administration of other hostels was carried out from here.

Special Christmas celebrations were organised by 3 non-conformist ministers.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Nevin |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 43 | 47 |  |  |

**Hostels**

**Bodelwyddan**. 18 miles from the main camp.

Location – I have found records for 3 possible sites near to Bodelwyddan. 1 at Kinmel Park, (Kinmel listed in 1943 as a hostel with Italian pows (see below)); 2 HER site 142087 listed at SJ 005 755 (alongside the church); 3 HER site 132201 at Pengwern (SJ 017 762).

**November 1946** – Hostel leader; Erwin Budzun (B-) – aged 31, ex Singapore internee.

**May 1947** **to April 1948** - same hostel leader.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Bodelwyddan |  |  |  |  | 93 | 85 | 113 | 111 | 114 | 110 | 120 | 30 |

**Bodorgan.** 1 mile from the main camp. Located at RAF Bodorgan site SH 382 683.

Recorded as holding Italian pows, so would have been open and attached to another camp before 1946.

**October 1947** – Hostel leader; A Schneider (B), aged 30. Due to be removed from this position on the recommendation of the PID visitor.

**December 1947** – Hostel leader; H Mueller (B+), aged 32, student of philosophy, member of Hitler Youth. “*Efficient with a pleasant manner.”*

**April 1948** – same leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Bodorgan |  |  |  |  |  | With C119 | | | 96 | 124 | 46 | 31 |

**Bont Newydd.** 58 miles from the main camp.

**October 1947** – Hostel leader; H Freynick (B+) – a shoe dealer. “*Pleasant manner, intelligent and keen. Leads good discussion group. Most satisfactory*.”

**December 1947** – Hostel leader; A Clausen (B+), aged 26. “*An excellent choice.”* He was actively involved in re-education and had good local contacts.

**April 1948** – Hostel leader; W Kummer (B-).

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Bont Newydd |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 42 | 45 | 19 | 28 |

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| **Bryn-y-Pys**. 23 miles from the main camp. In the land around Bryn-y-Pys Hall, Overton – SJ 368 427.  Land used to station US troops until D-day.  “*After the Americans left, the camp was used to house Italian prisoners of war. They wore a brown uniform of sorts with yellow diamond flashes and to begin with they were escorted to their work on farms but as the war progressed, they were given bikes and allowed to cycle to work. We would see them riding their bikes daily through the village on their way to work on nearby farms. As far as I can recollect, they never caused any problems. We learned a few Italian profanities – which I shall not go into – which we used to shout at them as they rode by and then, as they stopped as if to give chase, we were off like long dogs. We were SO brave!”* <https://overton-on-dee.co.uk/images/stories/historyinpictures/Overton_in_WWII.pdf>  **May 1947** – Hostel leader; G Hummel (B) - “*Cheerful. Has good control.”*  **July 1947** to December 1947 – same leader.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 | | Bryn-y-Pys |  |  |  |  |  | 75 | 144 | 138 | 115 | 100 | 26 |  | |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1954 |

**Buckley**. 17 miles from the main camp.

Location – local memories place the site at what is now Pinfold Industrial Estate – SJ 276 652. Brick works were located there.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; Ofw Sachtleben (C), aged 31, had spent 2 years as pow in USA. “*Quite satisfactory*.”

**November 1946** – same hostel leader. Many pows working in the brick factory.

**January 1947** – Morale considered to be poor, partly due to uncongenial work at the brickworks. Many of the pows here had been held in Belgian pow camps where conditions and treatment had been poor.

**May 1947 to December 1947** – same hostel leader, (upgraded to B-). July - Comment that bad conditions at the brickworks had been righted.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Buckley |  |  |  | 97 | 97 | 70 | 65 | 51 | 48 | 63 | 16 |  |

**Cae Llys**. 18 miles from the main camp – at Cae Llys Farm SJ 275 685.

*“The camp is situated just off the Connahs Quay to Northop road and is adjacent to the junction with Bryn Gwyn Lane.*

*The camp housed Italian POWs from 1944 till the end of WW2 and then housed German POWs following the war end till 1947. The camp was handed back to the Williams family of Cae Llys Farm in 1952 for the return to agricultural use.*

*POWs worked on local farms and were engaged in public building works. The camp had a fairly relaxed regime and camp residents were able to frequent the local pubs in Northop Hall at times. The camp is an important part of village history. A number of POWs did not return to their homeland, instead they settled in the local area, married, raised families and became valued members of the community.*

*An extract from Vic Williams Booklet “We'll meet again Deeside 1937-1945” tell us - The first POWs to arrive were Italian and were accommodated at Cae Llys POW camp. Upon their arrival there were a number of local complaints. One was to Connahs Quay council that the prisoners had been seen playing football on a Sunday. Then, following the surveyors report to the Public Health meeting, great concern was expressed over the sewage disposal facilities at the camp. Here open latrines were feared to be contaminating the waters of the nearby Connahs Quay public reservoir. After an emergency meeting with the relevant Government officials the problem was solved.*

*The POWs were not thought to be dangerous and therefore were not always confined to camp. For example, on Sundays they were marched down Mold Road to attend Connah's Quay Catholic Church and were used as labourers, preparing roads at Bryn Road and the Butler-Clough estate for post war public housing schemes. There is also evidence that they were individually released from the camp for, in early December 1944, there is an account of an Italian POW cycling down the Mold Road when, close to the steep junction with the High Street, his brakes failed and, crossing the High Street at great speed, he crashed through the window of Mr Forber’s boot and shoe shop. Here he sustained serious injuries and was taken to a military hospital.*

*The public were forbidden to enter these POW camps for, at Hawarden magistrates court, two local women were summonsed under the defence regulations. Here they had been arrested by the local Home Guard for consorting in the woods with Italian POWs. Now they were charged with two offences- “conduct likely to prejudice discipline” and “entering without lawful authority”, a place where POWs were detained, both women were fined £2 each (today approximately £64).*

*Immediately after the war the Italian POW's were repatriated and replaced at Cae Llys with German POWs. They were also used on local post war housing projects and allowed out of camp. Cynthia Lloyd (writing from Tasmania in 1994) lived at Wepre Hall cottage at the time and tells us that, “after the war was over there were German POWs stationed up by Broad Oak Farm. They were given bikes and some of them found their way to Wepre Hall Cottage. Would you believe that the only person who wrote to us after the war was not one of the R.A.F at Wepre Hall, but an ex German POW.*

*Meanwhile post-war Germany was devastated and near starvation. As such, during this period of 1945 to 1947 Rivertown Church, Shotton sent monthly gifts of food to the families of these POWs at Cae Llys - the parcels were almost entirely tins of meat or fish, evaporated milk and cartons of sugar - “many letters of thanks were received from Germany from families of the POWs. The Germans left in 1947 and Cae Llys became a hostel for displaced persons…”*

*From -* <https://northeastwalestrails.com/56c68cf8de784c6fa6d0448c69e37f63.html> - the page also has a photograph of the last pow building at the site.

Became attached to pool Park from 1946.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; Ofw Hans Datz (C).

**January 1947** – New hostel leader; B Olbrich (B) – “ *a most suitable choice*.”

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; R Schumann (B) – business man, enlisted 1943. Nazi Party member from 1933. “*Pleasant and intelligent. Quite suitable*.”

**July 1947** – Hostel leader; W Scherf (B), aged 23, member of Hitler Youth. Spent 2 years as pow in USA. “*Has a pleasing manner and is an intelligent and promising youngster*.”

**October 1947** – New hostel leader; K Mirlein (B), aged 30, member of Nazi Labour Movement. “*Is proving fairly satisfactory, but is somewhat lacking in drive*.”

**December 1947** – same leader

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Cae Llys |  |  | With C? | 88 | 57 | 37 | 54 | 54 | 79 | 66 |  |  |

**Cae Rhys, Trawsfynydd, Merioneth.** A very isolated spot – SH 689 349.

**15 September 1945** - listed as a hostel for pows from this camp

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Cae Rhys |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Cerrig-y-Drudion, (Cerrigydrudion), Denbighshire.** 13/15 miles SW of Ruthin.

**1943** – Listed as a hostel for Italian pows.

**October 1945** – 37 pows attending English classes; teacher Erwin Weidner. Lack of books, texts and equipment. They had electricity and wanted to be included in the touring film circuit. A RC priest from Bala visited the camp; no protestant services.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Karl Sohn (C). Recommended that he be removed.

**November 1946** to May 1947 - same hostel leader, (upgraded to B). Again, his removal was recommended.

**July 1947** **to October 1947** – New hostel leader; W Dierks (B+), formerly hostel leader at Chirk – party member 1937-39, spent 2 years as pow in USA. “*A very sound type*.”

Still without electricity.

**December 1947** – Hostel leader; R Romahn (B)

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Cerrig-y-Druidion |  |  | 70 G | 67 | 51 | 30 | 52 | 26 | 25 | 30 |  |  |

**Chirk** (Previously a hostel for St Martins Camp 100 from 1943). 17 miles from the main camp.

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; W Dierks (B+)

**June 1947** – Hostel disbanded.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Chirk |  | With Camp 100 | | | | 22 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Four Crosses.** 72 miles from the main camp. Attached to Pabo Hall Camp 119 from 1944 with Italian non-cooperators, then German pows from 10 August 1945.

**October 1947** – Hostel leader; E Klaus (B+), aged 39, former Camp leader at Camp 1018. Owned small furniture shop. Joined Nazi party in 1933 *“when his sport club was transferred*.” Served with artillery on Eastern front. Was a camp leader at a pow camp in USA. “*Not brilliant but sincere and hard working… has excellent influence on younger Ps/W*.”

**September / October 1947** *–* transferred to Pool Park.

**December 1947** – same leader

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Four Crosses |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 40 | 37 |  |  |

**Glasdir** (near Holywell). 22 miles from the main camp.

Location – ? - there are several sites called ‘Glasdir.’

**October 1945** – two teachers for English selected, but no classes started. Shortage of books and texts. No electricity. No religious provision.

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; Gfr Maurin (B). Discussion groups taking place.

**November 1946** – Hostel leader; Wilhelm Weyler (B)

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; H Schwenn (B) – Berlin business man, no party connections. “*Intelligent and efficient. Very suitable*.” Discussion group had ended, but hoped to re-start.

**August 1947** – Same hostel leader. Still without electricity.

**December 1947** to April 1948 – Hostel leader; E Boehm (B+), aged 31. “*Quiet but should be satisfactory.”*

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Glasdir |  |  | 50 G | 69 | 47 | 29 | 63 | 58 | 58 | 43 | 49 | 31 |

**Hanmer** (Previously a hostel for St Martins Camp 100 from 1943). 28 miles from the main camp.

**May 1947** – Hostel leader O Flad (B-), aged 29, member of Hitler Youth, “*Handicapped by deafness. Uninspiring*.”

**August 1947** – Same hostel leader. Expected to close 10 September.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Hanmer |  | With Camp 100 | | | | 29 | 42 | 38 |  |  |  |  |

**Kinmel Park, Abergele, Denbighshire.** Is this linked toBodelwyddan?

**1943** – Listed as a hostel for Italian pows.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Kinmel Park |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Llandrillo** (yn Edeirnion), Corwen, Merioneth (now - Clwyd). 20 miles from the main camp.

**1943** – Listed as a hostel for Italian pows.

**15 September 1945** – again listed as a hostel for pows from this camp

**July 1946** – Hostel with German pows. Leader; Ofw Ernst (B-)

**November 1946** – Hostel leader; F Rammler (B), aged 31, member of SA 1933-36 and German Nazi labour organization (DAF) 1934-36. “*Sound and reliable.”*

**May to August 1947** – same hostel leader (upgraded to B+). Discussion group started.

Then attached to Glandulas Camp 101.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Llandrillo, Corwen |  |  |  | 69 | 37 | 19 | 45 | 41 | With C101 | |  |  |

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| **Llanrhaiadr (Llanrhaeadr / Llanrhaeadr-Ym-Mochnant).** 40 miles from the main camp.  Location – in area by SJ 129 256, next to ‘Works’ on the map.  Previously with St Martin’s Camp 100 from 1943.  **July 1946** – Hostel leader; Hptfw Unterlaender (Unscreened)  Not known when it transferred to Glandulas Camp 101.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 | | Llanrhaiadr |  | With Camp 100 | | 53 |  |  |  |  | With C101 | |  |  | |  |
|  | Ordnance Survey 1964 |

**Morda.** 30 miles from the main camp.

Previously with St Martin’s Camp 100 from 1943.

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; H Neubecker (B), aged 28, painter, intelligent, no party connections. Imprisoned by Kripo in 1938. “*Politically sound. Satisfactory*.”

**August 1947** – same hostel leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Morda |  | With Camp 100 | | | | 15 | 16 | 15 |  |  |  |  |

**Plas Bela**. (S of Abergele). 20 miles from the main camp. An isolated farm at SH 934 698.

**October 1945** - One class teaching English. Shortage of texts and equipment. No electricity. Pows complained that; “*instruments belonging to members of the orchestra in Isle of Man were not forwarded as promised*.”

**July 1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Menzel (C). Discussion groups taking place.

**November 1946** – Hostel leader; L Weissenborn (C), aged 33, Luftwaffe. No party connections. May, upgraded to B-.

**July 1947** – same hostel leader - “*Has become lackadaisical and has unpleasant manner. Is being replaced forthwith*.” [No, he was not].

**December 1947** – same hostel leader. Still without electricity.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Plas Bela |  |  | 50 G | 46 | 33 | 26 | 40 | 37 | 37 | 39 |  |  |

**Plas Power.** 18 miles from the main camp. To the West of Wrexham – Plas Power Park / Woods / House

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; H Holtnamm (B) – bank clerk, joined party in 1933 – “*Dreamy and uninspiring*.” Weekly discussion group meetings.

**August 1947** – Hostel leader; K Knetsch (B+); “*an improvement on previous hostel leader. Electrical engineer. Member of Hitler Youth*.”

**December 1947** – W Dreymann (B+), no party connections. “*Is restoring re-educational activities and doing well*.”

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Plas Power |  |  |  |  |  | 53 | 53 | 39 | 33 | 39 | 80 |  |

**Sarn.** 66 miles from the main camp.

**October 1947** – Hostel leader; K Jucker (B), age 21, farm worker. “*Although very young, is proving satisfactory and has confidence and a pleasant manner.”*

**December 1947** – same leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Sarn |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 39 | 26 |  |  |

**Sealand (Bees).** 25 miles from the main camp. Bees Ltd had large nurseries at Sealand.

**May 1947** – Hostel leader; H Grah (B) – appointed February, electrician from Cologne. No party connections. “*Quite satisfactory*.”

**July 1947** – same hostel leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Sealand |  |  |  |  |  | 25 | 25 | 23 |  |  |  |  |

**Tyn-y-Groes.** 36 miles from the main camp.

**October 1947** - Hostel leader; K Schipper (B)

**April 1948** – Same hostel leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Tyn-y-Groes |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 50 | 34 | 30 | 20 |

**Vaynol Park.** 50 miles from the main camp.

**October 1947** – Hostel leader H Meyer (B), 20 years old, law student. “*Very intelligent, doing good work and proving an excellent leader*.”

**April 1948** – Same hostel leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 9-10/45 | 7/46 | 11/46 | 5/47 | 7/47 | 8/47 | 10/47 | 11/47 | 3/48 | 4/48 |
| Vaynol Park |  |  | With C119 | | | | | | 50 | 48 | 37 | 34 |