**Camp 48** **- Greenfield Farm Camp, Presteigne, Radnorshire (aka Clatterbrune)**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 48. Greenfield Farm, Presteign, Radnor.

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| **1947 Camp list** |
| 48(G.W.C.) | Greenfield Farm Camp, Presteign, Radnor | W. | Priswar, Presteign | Presteign 60 | Presteign (G.W.R.) | Lt.Col.W.Harrison M.C. | v/1453/2 |

|  |
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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 |
|  |  | 48 | Greenfield Farm, Preisteign | Radnorshire |  | Wales |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location:** NGR SO 321 641.Greenfield Road, opposite Greenfield farm – still shown on the map. On the SE edge of Presteigne.**Before the camp:** Open field at the side of Clatterbrune house..**Pow camp**: The site was accepted as a pow camp in December 1941. An Italian pow construction gang was allocated from Camp 27 Ledbury to work with the Pioneer Corps. The camp opened in 1942. Wooden huts were built by the pows who were temporarily in tents. Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion to 1945. Later held German pows.**1942 – 1946** - Journal of Carlo Panizza, an Italian pow at Greenfield – introduced by his son Paolo Panizza; “*On May 28, 1942, an Italian arrived in Presteigne and entered the new prisoner of war Camp 48, named Greenfield Farm. That man was the corporal telegraphist Carlo Panizza, from Florence, PoW no.15859, captured in Northern Africa one and a half years before. On the spur of the moment, he wrote down in his diary the following note: “Camp 48 with tents but nice place on a hill. Huts under construction. Bad weather. A lot of rain.”**The following day Carlo was allowed to write home. “My dearest, as you can see, here is a new and – I hope – final change….” Carlo, then, spent four years in Presteigne.**Carlo was immediately involved in turning the cluster of tents into an organised structure: “When we arrived here, the camp was under construction and in the early days I worked like a builder!”**A few weeks later he was recruited in the Interpreter’s Office. In the same letter he describes his work: “We used to go to work in farms and due to my rank I was the crew chief, sometimes I worked too. Many times, the trip was longer than the actual hours of work. The main activity consisted in going around from farm to farm where Italians were placed.**Setting out in the morning and coming back in the evening could be tiring, but at the same time this was a sort of recreation for me and I enjoyed it as it was useful as well.* |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1962 |

*I’ve learned a bit of English, so that I can speak and write it, enough to get by, but it is not as good as I would like.”*

*After Italy’s surrender in 1943, Carlo – like many of Greenfield Farm’s prisoners – joined the so-called ‘co-operators’, prisoners who chose to acknowledge the status of co-belligerency with Allies. Did this improve their conditions?*

*“As long as we were simple prisoners everything was going right, but when we became co-operators we felt a hostility. Actually, it was rather a generic attitude based on a matter of principle, as people that used to contact us personally kept liking us. As co-operators, we enjoyed some more freedom but not a complete one. We could walk freely, but we were not allowed to use public transport; we were not allowed – not even then – to enter a canteen. In actual fact it is not that fraternisation was forbidden.*

*“We are paid 10s. a week, that means the possibility to smoke 10 cigarettes a day or to buy some indispensable articles, like toothpaste, shoe cream and so on.”*

*As Italy went through its most dramatic period of the war – when the front was advancing from south to north and overthrowing almost the whole country, tragically involving many civilians – Carlo’s mail bag from Italy was empty. “The worst period was when I had no news from you and I couldn’t know what was happening there. I was particularly worried when Florence was under the Germans, just after the armistice and the following short time of freedom, I didn’t know what might have happened to my dad and to my brother.”*

*On May 26, 1946, exactly four years after his arrival, Carlo boarded the Strathmore in Southampton. The ship, probably sailing for the Far East, called at Naples to drop off some hundred Italian ex PoWs. Carlo was finally back home,” said Paolo. “In September he married his sweetheart who had been waiting for him for seven long years. He died in 1989.”* (Powys County Times – article by Mark Lingard – 28 January, 2010).

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| **1943** – Hostels listed for Italian pows; Peterchurch; Newbridge; Dorstone.**7 July 1943** - ICRC inspection recorded 826 Italian prisoners.**May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Western Command area (WO 32/10737). The Italians were recorded as co-operators.**1944** - In an article headed “*Italian Pows left a souvenir”* (unknown newspaper) – 10 Italian pows left a sealed glass bottle embedded in concrete at a factory they constructed in Presteigne. Inside the bottle was a note written in English – *“This house was builded by prisoners Italian of war (on years 1944).**Martino Olivi, Rimini - Virgilio Moroni, Bergamo - Guiseppe Forcellini, Turin - Carlo Pazzini, Rimini - Guiseppe Negri, Turin*  *Allessandro Negri, Milan - Sabatino, Rome - Sergio Persico, Imola - Giovani Guizzo, Treviso - Ottavio Florian, Treviso.**Memorial. This house was build by the prisoners of war from the Presteigne camp who are named above. In the year 1944.”* |  |
| [The Collection | Peoples Collection Wales](https://www.peoplescollection.wales/discover/owner/George%20Lancett) |

**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.

**August 1945** – the hostel at Peterchurch was the first to hold German pows. The camp would gradually change from Italian to German.

**June 1946** – last of the Italians moved out.

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| 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, if any, in activities other than re-education. They rarely mentioned welfare, sports, games, pastimes, crafts, etc of the pows. |

**30 June 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1646. 127 pupils in 5 classes in the main camp + some who studied privately. 2 mess halls used for teaching.

Commandant: Lt Col W Harrison, MC. Lagersprecher: Stabsfeldwebel M Frommrich (Lagersprecher = Camp leader).

The Inspector stated *- “A good camp all round in my opinion.”*

The report talks of change in relation to the camp recently becoming German. Because of the change, the Welfare Fund, mainly arising from sales in the canteen, was low (£5), which meant it was difficult to buy supplies for activities. A shortage of teaching texts, dictionaries and materials was noted.

Other classes included foreign languages, book-keeping and shorthand.

Many of the pows had been held in camps in the USA. They had been incorrectly informed that they were returning to Germany, but instead ended up in camps in Britain, (some via very poor camps in Belgium). It does not state it here, but morale was usually very low for these pows. Other pows had arrived from camps in Canada – as they had been captured early in the war, many held on to their Nazi ideologies.

**30 July / 2 August 1946** – Re-education report. Strength; 2 officers (the MO’s), 1466 Other Ranks.

Commandant: Lt Col W Harrison, MC. Camp leader: Sfw M Froemmrich (est B-)

Interpreter: S/sgt Walters Deputy C/L: None

 German M.O.: S/Arzt P Bernigau (A); O/Arzt O Meidinger (B-)

The camp leader was stated to be; “*a poor type, but liked by the CO as he is able to maintain good discipline; he knows very little as to what goes on in the camp in regard to re-education*.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Political screening: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C |
|  | 2 | 85 | - | 48 | 862 | 52 | 387 |

Many of these grades were estimates. This was a very high number of ‘C’ (Black) grade Nazi pows, (26%).

As was the case in most camps, the commandant had no interest in re-education – “*His sole concern is the smooth running of the camp and a good labour output; he maintains that ‘ruthless’ discipline is the only way to achieve these ends.”* Commandants were not required to promote re-education, which was developed by the Foreign Office – the camps were under the control of the War Office. Very unusual at this camp was the statement that the 2 i/c and other British officers were keen for re-education – they usually followed the Commandant’s lead; “*Considerable friction between the C.O. and his staff is the result and the atmosphere is tense*.” Very little political progress was noted.

Morale was recoded as being very poor, with “*a feeling amounting almost to despair*.” The main factors were; 1. Bad news from Germany, especially the Russian zone, 2. Lack of information about repatriation, 3. News that other pows from the USA had been sent to Germany, 4. Lack of good will by the C.O., 5. Pows used as, “*Slave labour*”, 6. Feeling of being used by the British, 7. A rumour that the camp was to be closed, 8. A reduction in the cigarette quota.

It is hard to tell how much of this was due to agitation on behalf of some pows – especially by the C grades. Item 5 was stirred up by some politicians as well as pows – but they were paid for their work and non-fraternisation rules were gradually being relaxed. Item 7 was nonsense, yet still in this list. Particularly valid was item 2 – the government repeatedly delayed making an announcement on repatriation and this caused considerable frustration and anger, especially as countries such as the USA and even the USSR announced they were starting repatriations. In the USSR case this was largely propaganda, it held German pows up to the mid-1950’s.

About 30% of the pows were ‘youth’ (under-25). There was no special provision for them.

Activities in the camp were affected by long hours for the harvest. The standard list of re-education activities was given:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – 350/25 copies.

Newspapers – Four British papers at the main camp, 2 at the hostels except Dorstone and Talgarth. 6-8 German papers received weekly at the main camp.

Library – 450, mainly fiction books. Hostels were supplied with books every 2 months.

Lectures – every two weeks, (in most camps it was monthly), including the hostels when possible. Attendance said to be falling off due to depressed morale.

Discussion groups – none.

Films – Every three weeks by the YMCA.

Wireless – sets at the main camp and all hostels. News, especially of the Nuremberg trials, was listened to regularly.

Camp magazine – none.

Press review – ended due to lack of interest in the main camp.

English instruction – about 140 pows.

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| Other activities –Religion – RC looked after by a civilian priest. Little provision for protestant pows. The CO refused to organise this, stating that it was up to the churches to provide for the pows.Education – Small classes for Spanish, shorthand, book-keeping, and mathematics in the main camp. French classes at Dorstone.Theatre – A group had formed at the main camp. “*Material is self-written and not of a re-educational nature.”*Orchestra – a small group, light music only. A choir of 11 gave weekly performances.It is difficult to tell if this was a ‘bad’ camp or, as stated in June - *“A good camp all round…”* Many Commandants took no interest in re-education, but did promote sports, games, handcrafts, and welfare. Unfortunately, the reports rarely mentioned these, so it is not known if they were flourishing or not in this camp.**2/3 December 1946** – Re-education report and screening. Strength; 1 officer, 1446 OR. |  |
| The German band |

Commandant on leave; 2nd In command – Major Palmer, said to be keen to help re-education activities.

Interpreter, S/sgt Walters was described as a “*youngster*,” but extremely keen to promote re-education. Pows stated that; “*he is always ready to help them and put their cases forward in a fair manner*.”

Camp leader, Sfw M Froemmrich was upgraded to (B).

German M.O., not listed O/Arzt O Meidinger (B-), but another M.O. U/Arzt H Greiner (A). [Unterarzt - Not counted as an officer].

Simplified screening figures were used: A 24 / B 318 / C 68 / Unscreened 1037.

Morale was again recorded as very low. This time one of the factors was the large number of unscreened pows – the better the grading the earlier the repatriation, in theory. No grading meant no indication of when repatriation would occur. The misinformation given to pows from US camps was raised. Items 4 to 8, previously mentioned, were all omitted in this report. Politically, the white pows were trying to promote democracy – the greys were largely apathetic – the blacks were trying to point out that the failures in world affairs were faults of democracy, (“Dass heisst Demokratie” – loose translation; That’s democracy for you).

About 25/30% of pows were ‘youth,’ they were not regarded as a problem. A youth discussion group had been formed, and was guided by the German M.O.

The was a shortage of pows willing to take on leadership to promote activities. The standard list of re-education activities was given, noteworthy changes –

Library; 1556 books. A political discussion group had started. YMCA and Gaumont British films; GB films charged 6d. Weekly Press Reviews had restarted.

Other activities –

Religion – RC were ministered by San.Uffz Nibler (A) from Camp 27. Protestants had visits by civilian padres and some were able to visit Hereford Cathedral for special services.

Education – about 10% of pows attended classes for French, Spanish, shorthand, book-keeping, general history, at the main camp only.

The theatre, orchestra and choir (30 members) continued.

**27 January 1947** – Two members of the Segregation Section carried out screening – this was very late in comparison to many camps. Strength; 0 officers, 1304 OR.

A very different impression of the camp was given from the previous August. Management at the camp was “*excellent.”* The British staff were taking an active part in re-education. *“The C.O. holds weekly conferences with the Camp Leader, Studienleiter and teacher of English to advise on any matters relating to re-education and or Camp Welfare*.”

The Camp Leader – Max ‘Frommrich,’ aged 36, not a Nazi party member, was a member of the SPD (German Social Democrats), a regular soldier since 1925. He had been camp leader since March 1946. He formed a successful camp parliament which met monthly to deal with issues arising. *“A good disciplinarian and runs the camp excellently. He has a definite democratic outlook…. A reliable and straightforward character*.”

The M.O. - Dr Helmut Greiner, “*a sincere and honest man who joined the SA when he was 18 because he believed he could help to combat communism*.” He left the SA in 1934 and would not join the Nazi party. Interested in developing morale rather than re-education, believing, *“Germans are not mature enough for democracy and is somewhat pessimistic about the political future of his country. A good man for his position.”*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Screening: | A+ | A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C | C+ | Uknown |
|  | 2 | 75 | - | - | 1132 | - | 53 | 3 | 39 |

54 pows had appealed against their grading, 44 appeals were upheld.

Morale had risen, especially with fewer restrictions on walking out of the camp. Black graded pows had no influence in the camp.

RC Priest Josef Nibler, also worked with camps - Ledbury 27, Moreton-On-Lugg 686 and RA Camp Breconshire 697. He taught at a Dutch school from 1937 to 1942 when he was called up. Not a Nazi party member, and had been forbidden to hold church services by them.

**27/28 March 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1164. Down to 19 pupils in 2 classes in the main camp. This rapid fall in numbers was usual in most camps.

Mr Goadby, the headmaster of Presteigne primary school took a weekly conversational class of 12 pows.

**21/22 June 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Strength 1197. 0 classes in the main camp. Some pows studied privately and used ‘English for All.’

New Commandant listed: Maj. Houle.

Mr Nicholas, headmaster from Gladestry, gave weekly lectures at the main camp and Eardisley, and planned to visit other hostels.

**17/20 July 1947** – Re-educational survey. Strength; 2 officers, 1202 OR.

Commandant: Major S H Houle Camp leader: Sfw M Froemmrich (B)

Interpreter: S/Sgt Ross Deputy C/L: Gefr Franz Symne (B+)

 German M.O.: Oberarzt Dr Wolfgang Farber (B+) / Asst/Arzt Dr Andreas Wallner (A) / U/Arzt Dr Wilhelm Vinke

Several changes to senior staff. There was a shortage of officers. The interpreter was young, but had experience in another camp.

Deputy C/L: Was a musician, also ran the choir and orchestra.

Screening: A 4 / B+ 212 / B 797 / B- 191.

Morale recorded as ‘*good.*’ C grades had either been upgraded or moved to other camps. Positive factors – repatriation, relaxing fraternisation rules, being able to use English currency in shops (previously camp money only in use). Main negative factor continued to be news from home.

Some pows had recently been transferred from RAF holdings – many had been found to be truculent and refusing to work, but no reason was given for this attitude. The commandant had acted quickly to stop this.

The camp parliament had been disbanded due to repatriations. Re-education activities were affected by long hours at harvest.

No lecturers had visited the camp since 15 April.

A monthly camp magazine had started - *Das Wort* (The Word). A ‘Wall Newspaper’ was also being tried (news displayed on boards).

Religion – A new protestant padre, Heinrich Oskar (B+). Both padres toured the hostels.

Theatre – a very good group which also performed at the hostels when transport permitted. A theatre had been constructed in the main camp.

Orchestra – 8 members who also toured the hostels. Choir also performed.

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| **7 August 1947** – The orchestra was included in the programme to raise money for the War Memorial. *“48 Pow Camp Orchestra (By kind permission of Major Houle, Camp Commandant*.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/1-1LvAFYTuWK2WB-WxHk_Q>**16/20 September 1947** – Re-education report. Strength 2 officers, 996 OR.Commandant: Major S H Houle Camp leader: Sfw M Froemmrich (B)Interpreter: S/Sgt Ross Deputy C/L: None S/Sgt Jessen German M.O.: Oberarzt Dr Farber (B+) / Asst/Arzt Dr Wallner (A)The Commandant was, “*opposed on principle to the increased liberties and privileges of the PW,”* however, he was still co-operative.The new interpreter had little experience of re-education, but had worked in a pow transit camp.Screening – A 2 / B 996. Morale was recorded as good in the main camp, but poor in the hostels. Reasons for the hostels were; Transport not provided at times so they missed out on films; petty disciplinary orders by hostel NCO’s; no electricity at some sites. Visits to Worcester Cathedral and Hereford Times printing press had also been cancelled due to lack of petrol.Re-education activities were affected by long hours for the harvest and repatriations. Petrol shortages also affected activities, especially for the hostels – it was hoped this would be resolved with a delivery of 500 gallons of petrol. The standard list was given:Newspapers – 10 British papers were received by the main camp, less at the hostels. German papers were received privately and passed round.Library – very well stocked. Books exchanged with the hostels. |  |

Lectures – these had been resumed. At the time of this visit Dr Bohner was giving two lectures of over 2½ hours, with 50% attendance.

Discussion groups – the working committee was being restarted. Some hostels held evening discussions and weekly press reviews.

Films – Shown in main camp, but hostels had recently missed out. The Commandant promised to ensure transport would be available.

Wireless – 9 radios (1 private) in the main camp. All hostels had sets. German stations and BBC German news were popular.

Camp newspapers *– “Excellent*.” 350 copies fortnightly, of which 200 sent to hostels.

English instruction – No formal lessons. Visits by Mr Nicholas had to end due to lack of petrol.

One activity developed in most camps at this time was establishing formal contacts with local councils, and other organisations. Due mainly to remoteness, there were no formal contacts recorded at this camp.

**24/26 September 1947** – English Inspector’s Report. Total strength 991. As before, no classes at the main camp or hostels.

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

**18/21 November 1947** – Re-educational survey. Strength; 2 officers, 843 OR.

Only change to senior personnel – Deputy C/L A Blech (B)

Screening: A 2 / B 843. Number of pows repatriated to date; 441.

The Commandant had no interest in re-education, but he did not interfere with activities. “*The British staff is mildly antagonistic towards Germans, although treating them fairly and even leniently. The interpreters are not particularly helpful, probably because there is little encouragement.”*

Morale was “*fairly good.”* Positive factors were; pows treated leniently; pleasant and attractive surroundings; increased speed of repatriations. Some pows had volunteered to stay on as civilian labour in the UK. Negative factors; Bad news from Germany; apathy of German staff; indifference of local civilians, isolation of sites except Brecon; petty NCOs.

The standard list of re-education activities was given with little change to previous reports.

The theatre and orchestra were still giving shows. In a rare mention of sport “*Football is popular. Facilities for table tennis will now be improved at the hostels*.”

Some local contacts had been established – Magistrates’ courts at Brecon and Hereford; Council meetings at Brecon; Concerts held for pows at Presteigne and Brecon.

It was stated that the camp would be disbanded on **15 January 1948**.

Known Camp commandants;

Lieutenant Colonel W Harrison M.C. (Possibly Royal Tank Regiment)

Major S H Houle

**After the camp:** Now a small residential estate / football ground.

**Further information:**

Pictures above + a few more **-** [The Collection | Peoples Collection Wales](https://www.peoplescollection.wales/discover/owner/George%20Lancett)

National Archives FO939/130 48 Working camp, Greenfield Farm Camp, Presteigne, Radnorshire. Dated 1946-1947. Used above.

National Archives - FO 1120/214 – ‘Re-educational survey visit reports for camps 47 to 49’. Used above.

The Imperial War Museum has a copy of the magazine dated Pfingsten, (Pentecost) May 1947. Ref LBY E.J. 448.

**Camp and hostels + number of pows where known:**

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

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Main |  |  | 868 | 637 | 635 | 732 | 464 | 467 | 505 | 419 | 385 |
| Dorstone |  |  | 74 | 76 | 54 | 40 | 47 | 4 | 4 |  |  |
| Newbridge |  |  | 94 | 87 | 78 | 37 | 61 | 98 | 92 | 86 | 62 |
| Peterchurch |  |  | 86 | 80 | With C27 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Builth Wells |  |  | 49 | 55 | 52 | 48 | 47 | 49 | 49 |  |  |
| Eardisley |  |  | 143 | 142 | 120 | 59 | 124 | 140 | 139 | 119 | 95 |
| Llyswen |  | With C118 | 70 | 65 | 51 | 40 | 54 | 49 |  |  |  |
| Talgarth |  |  | 89 | 126 | 92 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Brecon |  |  |  |  | 62 | 68 | 79 | 95 | 82 | 90 | 75 |
| Cross Gates |  |  |  |  | 34 | 24 | 36 |  |  |  |  |
| Felin Fach |  |  |  |  | 79 | 82 | 73 | 94 | 103 | 65 | 66 |
| Billets |  |  | 173 | 200 | 190 | 174 | 179 | 201 | 230 | 219 | 162 |
| Total | 1000 cap | 826 | 1646 | 1468 | 1447 | 1304 | 1164 | 1197 | 1204 | 998 | 845 |

**Hostels**

**Brecon**. 32 miles from the main camp. Huts.

Location – Not confirmed – “*The abandoned Brecon and Radnor Lunatic Asylum in Brecon, Wales, was also a prisoner of war camp during the Second World War, used to hold captured German soldiers.”*

Before 12/46 - Attached to a different main camp.

**12/1946** – Hostel leader; Wachtm Spreen

**1/1947** – Leader Karl Spreen, (B+), aged 31, had been leader since 1946. A farmer. Not a Nazi party member. “*A good organiser and he has his men well under control. Has democratic outlook and sound views.”*

Morale at the hostel was largely good apart from a few young pows with Nazi ideas.

**7/1947** - The owner of the Coliseum Cinema in Brecon refused to admit pows, which had a negative affect.

**11/1947** – same leader.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Brecon |  |  |  |  | 62 | 68 | 79 | 95 | 82 | 90 | 75 |

**Builth Wells**. c.22 miles from the main camp. Huts.

Possible location – “*a prisoner of war camp was created in the area between the Castle mound and the river, with many of these prisoners (mostly Italians) working on the farms in the area.”* <https://www.wyeside.co.uk/builth-wells-history>

**May 1946** – Hostel recorded with German pows. It may have held Italian pows before this.

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; O/Wm Goldmann (B)

**1/1947** – Leader, Alfred Goldmann, upgraded to (B+), aged 32, electrician. “*A good camp leader as such but has made no attempt to report or suppress the C’s in his hostel.”* Devout Catholic who opposed the Nazis.

**7/1947** - same

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Builth Wells |  |  | 49 | 55 | 52 | 48 | 47 | 49 | 49 |  |  |

**Cross Gates.** (Crossgates, Llandrindod Wells). 15 miles from the main camp. Huts. SO 090 652.

Location / Memories -  Twenty-Six German Prisoners of war were accommodated at Briarfield in Crossgates and worked on local farms. Jim Griffiths remembers that they wore a coloured patch on their backs. None of them wished to escape as they would have been sent back into the army.

The Rector of Llanbadarn (Revd Evan Morgan) became their Chaplain and they attended Llanbadarn Fawr Church – one of the prisoners reading one lesson in German and translating the service for his colleagues. They sang the hymn tunes without saying the words.

One prisoner did not go home. Gustav Poetzl married Gladys Goodwin and became a faithful member of Llanbadarn Fawr Church. He came from the Sudetenland which had been annexed by Hitler. At least one prisoner, named Ernie, came back to visit after the war…..

One of the members, John Phillips had brought a weighing scale. These scales had been Land Army and (later) Prisoner of War hostel at Briarfield in Crossgates, and has subsequently been used to weigh babies ever since. <https://penybontlhgnotes.wordpress.com/author/penybonthistory/page/2/>

**12/1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Wagner

**1/1947** – Hostel leader; Hfw Josef Thiebach, (B-), did not join the Nazi party, a regular soldier. “*Very good hostel leader who is sincerely trying to rehabilitate himself… he has a very easy job since this hostel has the most harmless collection of greys with little education*.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Cross Gates |  |  |  |  | 34 | 24 | 36 |  |  |  |  |

**Dorstone, Herefordshire. (Hay)** c.20 miles from the main camp. Huts - there were some brick-built buildings for general amenities; canteen, cookhouse, wash house, toilets.

NGR SO 298 417.

**1943 –** hostel listed for Italian pows.

**January 1946 –** Hostel changed from Italian to German.

**1946 – 1947** - The Ewyas Lacy Study Group have a collection of records for Dietrich Voss of the German Army. He was captured in Italy and was a pow in the US, Belgium and at Dorstone in the Golden Valley in 1946. He arrived at Camp 48 in May 1946, together with about 300 other pows. A biography is on the website. Extracts for his time at Greenfield / Dorstone: <http://www.ewyaslacy.org.uk/Golden-Valley-/Digital-Archive-Voss-Collection-Background-to-Dorstone-Prisoner-of-War-Camp/1940s/rs_gdv_0149>

*“Food here was better being brought in twice a week by lorry.* *I remained there for about 3 weeks until I was moved as part of a group of 50 men, to a smaller camp in Dorstone in Herefordshire where we were told what jobs we would be going to. This work was allocated as much as possible according to our previous civilian jobs. I was one of a group of 10 who were dispersed to various farms….*

*Although I was required to return to the camp each night, I was trusted to come and go unescorted, a walk of about 2 miles. A warden would check with the farmer regularly that I was turning up and working well. At the farm I worked with the farmer, his wife, daughter and another woman. They had 12-14 cows to be milked.*

*The weather in the winter of 1946/47 was very bad, the snow was so deep that the lorry couldn’t get through to the camp and so the farmer used horses to get rations through.* *During this time the milk could not be collected so the farmers’ wife made butter and gave the skimmed milk to the camp to save it being wasted, a welcome addition to the usual rations.*



*Although at the end of the war I could have returned to Germany I decided that since my parents had died and that returning prisoners were being sent to the Eastern Front by the Russians, I would be better off staying in England. The farm I was working at was Newton Farm Westbrook, Hereford. It was owned by a Mr Timmins, we got on very well together and in late 1947, (I was nearly 21 yrs old by then) he applied for me to stay on, not to be moved to another farm…. From then on it was only an occasional police check to make sure there were no problems.”*

<http://www.ewyaslacy.org.uk/>

< Some remains existed in 2010.

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; Fahnjr Thewes (B). Not regarded as a good camp leader and expected to be changed. No electric light or film shows.

**12/1946** – Hostel leader; O/Fw Mueller

**1/1947** – Leader Georg Mueller (B), aged 32. Member of the SA since 1933… “*As this is only a small hostel he can well be left in charge, the men being out at work most of the time*.”

**6/1947** – Sometimes hostels were left with a small pow presence to prevent squatters. This may have been the case here, with just 4 pows.

**7/1947** – Hostel leader; Stfw Thaidigsmann (B), previously leader at Llyswen.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Dorstone |  |  | 74 | 76 | 54 | 40 | 47 | 4 | 4 |  |  |

**Eardisley.** c.12 miles from the main camp. Huts.

Memory of location – “*The area between school and railway line*.” NGR SO 316 490

**September 1945** – German pows at this hostel (may have held Italians before this).

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Werle (B). A ‘C’ grade pow gave press reviews after English lessons – it is surprising that this was allowed.

**1/1947** – Leader August Werle. Not a Nazi party member. A farmer. “*Well able to cope with his work.”*

One of the pows, Heinrich Van Hamburg (C), was found to be a Dutch national. He had never stated this in the past. He had been a member of the Dutch Nazi Party and volunteered for the Wehrmacht in 1944. It was recommended that he be sent to Toft Hall Camp 2, (holding mixed nationalities) and handed over to the Dutch authorities. A later note stated that this had been ‘*done.*’

Three C grade pows were transferred to Flaxley Green Camp 175.

**9/1947** - Due to have electric lighting installed. The local vicar took an interest in the pows.

**11/1947** – same leader

The hostel was transferred to the administration of Camp 27 and was last recorded with 70 pows in **January 1948**.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Eardisley |  |  | 143 | 142 | 120 | 59 | 124 | 140 | 139 | 119 | 95 |

**Felin Fach.** (Felinfach, Brecon) c.30 miles from the main camp. Huts

Local memories place Italian pows at this site before 1946.

**12/1946** – Hostel leader; H/Wm Bischofsberger

**1/1947** – Leader Max Bischofberger (B+), aged 32. Not a Nazi party member, and often had difficulties with them. A farmer. “*Intelligent and sincere… the hostel is well run.”*

The hostel had its own working committee to develop meetings and activities.

**7/1947** – Hostel leader; Hfw Josef Thiebach (B), previously leader at Cross Gates. Had its own choir which gave performances at the local church.

**11/1947** – same leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Felin Fach |  |  |  |  | 79 | 82 | 73 | 94 | 103 | 65 | 66 |

**LLyswen.** c.24 miles from the main camp. Huts.

**1943** – attached to Mardy Camp 118 with Italian pows.

**February 1946** – Hostel recorded with German pows. It may have held Italian pows before this.

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; S/O/Fw Thaidigsmann (B). No electric light or film shows.

**1/1947** – Leader Wilhelm Thaidigsmann. *“A rather colourless man with little personality and apparently not a very satisfactory superior to his men…. No party affiliations, a regular naval man.”*

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Llyswen |  | With C118 | 70 | 65 | 51 | 40 | 54 | 49 |  |  |  |

**Newbridge.** (Newbridge-On-Wye, Llandrindod Wells). c.25 miles from the main camp. Huts.

**1943** – listed as a hostel holding Italian pows.

**January 1946** – Hostel recorded as changing from Italian to German pows.

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; S/Fw Meyerdirks (B)

**1/1947** - Leader Arnold Meyerdirks. A regular soldier since 1923. “*He is a very strong personality who is ashamed of his military career… He is slow to warm up but was found to be a passionate hater of Nazism.”*

**7/1947** – Hostel leader; Ofw Georg Mattern (B), previously leader at Talgarth – he was being repatriated on compassionate grounds, but no details.

Education classes for English, French, shorthand, accountancy and photography.

**9/1947** – Hostel leader; Georg Mueller (B), previously leader at Dorstone.

The NCO in charge, Sgt Key, was very unpopular with the pows – nothing was done as the hostel was expected to close in a few days. It was still open at the end of November.

**11/1947** – Hostel leader; H Harke (B), iron worker, “*Quiet and unassuming.”*

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Newbridge |  |  | 94 | 87 | 78 | 37 | 61 | 98 | 92 | 86 | 62 |

**Peterchurch.** 18/33 miles from the main camp. Huts. NGR SO 350 383.

**1943** – listed as a hostel with Italian pows.

**August 1945** – first hostel for German pows

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; Fw Mrozik (B). No electric light or film shows.

Abbreviated memories – “*My earliest memories of my home at Penlan, Peterchurch… There were two Italian prisoners-of-war living in the house with us but I don’t remember their names. If the camp where they were billeted in, in this case on Wellbrook Road in Peterchurch, was a distance from the farm where they were working regularly the farmer could ask for them to live at the farm with his family. I would imagine this was a popular move with the men as farmer’s wives [and certainly my mother] were usually good cooks and there was always plenty to eat even when food was still rationed. Rabbit figured pretty often on the menu…*

*The reason I remember the Italians so well was because of the baskets they made in the evenings out of split hazel, which they dyed red and green as well as leaving some natural… The baskets were oblong in shape with a solid piece of wood forming the bottom with the upright spars stuck into it and woven in underneath. The sides sloped outwards slightly and there was a carrying handle. They were good and strong and Mum had hers for many years. I presume they sold some to locals but I don’t know. They also made Mum a basket with a lid attached to the main body of the basket by two circles of woven hazel on the one side and a peg and loop fastening on the other. She kept all her mending and sewing things in it and used it up until her death in 1982. My mother always said the Italians were lazy and expected her to wait on them so I have presumed they were from the south of Italy where I believe the women do the work and the men watch them!*

*The prisoners of war were based at the camp built for the purpose on the left-hand side of the Wellbrook Road. The land belonged to the Smith family of High House, and eventually became part of the Crossways estate. There were several long huts covered with corrugated tin and lined with tongue and groove boarding. I can’t remember if they were all half moon shaped but I know most of them were. There was a superintendent who had separate quarters one of whom was a Cockney & married a local girl. They made a Chapel for their Roman Catholic worship in one of the huts and this was furnished with the chairs, organ and, maybe, other things, from the disused Church of England Chapel of Ease at Urishay Castle. Sadly these things were probably sold off or otherwise disposed of when the last prisoners left.*

*After the Italians left the Germans arrived. I was a bit older by then and remember with affection Emil and Otto [Carl]. I have photographs of them both, dressed in their Sunday best POW uniforms, with their pride and joy, my father’s green Standard Fordson tractor. With it they learned to plough and plant, to reap and mow. Otto earned my parents’ gratitude when he grabbed my small sister from virtually right in front of the carthorses my father was bringing into the stable. As they galloped round the corner into the farmyard, Otto, washing his hands at the outside tap, saw that Mary was playing right in their path. He vaulted the wall, about four and a half feet high, and scooped her up. Before they returned to Germany they were for a short time at a camp at Tupsley where Otto was converted to the Christian faith.”* [Tupsley was a pow hostel attached to Ledbury Camp 27].

<https://www.ewyaslacy.org.uk/Golden-Valley/Oral-History-Memories-of-the-Second-World-War-in-the-Golden-Valley/1940s/rs_gdv_0166>

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Peterchurch |  |  | 86 | 80 | With C27 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Talgarth.** Huts. Camp 234 was located at Talgarth Mental Hospital, I do not know if this hostel was at the same site.

**January 1946** – Hostel recorded with German pows. It may have held Italian pows before this.

**8/1946** – Hostel leader; O/Fw Mattern (B). A small group of pows from Mardy Camp 118 were attached here and were accommodated in tents – no reason given for this.

**12/1946** – same leader.

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|  | 1942 | 1943 | 6/46 | 8/46 | 12/46 | 1/47 | 3/47 | 6/47 | 7/47 | 9/47 | 11/47 |
| Talgarth |  |  | 89 | 126 | 92 |  |  |  |  |  |  |