**Camp 141 - B****eeson House Camp, St Neots, Huntingdonshire (Cambridgeshire)**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 141. Beeson House Camp, St.Neots, Huntingdonshire.

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| **1947 Camp list** | | | | | | | |
| 141(G.W.C.) | Beeson House Camp, St.Neots, Hunts. | E. | Priswar, St.Neots | St.Neots 184 | St.Neots | Lt.Col.F.W. Hargreaves | 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 |
| TL 190 625 | 153 | 141 | Beeson House Camp, St Neots | Huntingdonshire  (Cambridgeshire) | 5 | German Working Camp | Precise location not identified, NGR given for Beeson Close, Little Paxton, St Neots |

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| **Location:** The English Heritage location is not correct. There were 2 camps in St.Neots – Wisteria House and Beeson House which were both on Huntingdon Street. Wisteria was provided for Italians; Beeson was used for Italians and then Germans.  ‘Wistaria’ House on Huntingdon Street is shown on the 1889 OS map at TL 186 606.  Beeson House was used as a postal address/offices with the camp on fields behind at TL 186 608, opposite what is now Almond Road. (This has been questioned, as a photograph of ‘Mrs Beeson’s House’ shows it to be a little further S at the junction of East Street TL 185 604).  **Pow Camp:** Italian collaborator Pows listed from 1944 until at least September 1945, then a German Working Camp.  **November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion, (WO 32/10737). |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1889 |

**29 November 1944** – Death of Italian pow Francesco Germano by an accident at a farm. He was later reinterred at Brookwood Military Cemetery.

**24 June 1945** – Death of Italian pow Bruno Colombo by drowning in the River Great Ouse. He was later reinterred at Brookwood Military Cemetery.

“*Bedfordshire Times and Independent - Friday 29 June 1945 - ITALIAN DROWNED.*

*A-24-year-old Italian prisoner of war, Bruno Colombo, billeted in a P.O.W. Camp in Huntingdon Street, St. Neots, was drowned on Sunday afternoon while bathing in the backwaters of the River Ouse near St. Neots Paper Mill. At the inquest on Monday afternoon, the Coroner, Mr. Lionel Abrahams, returned a verdict of accidental death, and said it had been disclosed in evidence that the prisoner was bathing at an unauthorized spot, where it was dangerous, as the water was shallow in some places and contained deep holes in others; also, as far as could be learned, Colombo could not swim.”*

**9 July 1945** – PID Progress Report 123 (FO 939/383) noted a hostel at Little Barford.

**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.

**25 August 1945** – Death of German pow Franz Luckey, riding a bike and involved in a car accident. He was later reinterred at Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery.

**3 September 1945** – 2 new hostels recorded for Italians at Gaynes Park (S/L Site Staughton) and Wintringham Hall in Progress report 153 (FO 939/383). Both had a capacity of 100.

**15 September 1945** - Hostels listed for pows from this camp, (WO 32/10737): Cockaynes, Alresford, Essex / Diddington, St Neots, Cambridgeshire

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< 1945 Italian letter-sheet

**Summer 1946** - A note on a re-educational survey for Trumpington Camp 45 states that two hostels – Gransden with 27 pows, and Woodbury with 259 pows, were transferred from Camp 45 to Camp 141.

**October 1946** - 2nd edition of the camp magazine - The Camp Courier, 14 pages - [Der Lagerkurier : Zeitung des P.O.W. Camp 141 St. Neots - The Wiener Holocaust Library](https://www.whlcollections.org/image/99592/)

Gave details of games played by HQ and hostels – Football matches, handball, ‘ping pong’ and billiards + a football match against Sawtry camp 59 and a handball match against Histon camp 1025.

**30 May – 2 June 1947** - As part of the re-education programme administered by the Control Office for Germany and Austria (COGA), Paul Bondy, a German-speaking refugee gave lectures at the main camp and 7 hostels.

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

Known Camp Commandants:

c.1947 Lieutenant Colonel F W Hargreaves

**Further Information:**

London Metropolitan Archives – ‘Stapel, Chaplain Henning (POW Camp 141): Correspondence including material from his father Dr Wilhelm Stapel with detailed biographical accounts. Dated 1946 – 1947. Ref LMA/4288/A/04/117

The Imperial War Museum have a copy of the magazine, dated December 1946, ref LBY E.J. 378.

\* ‘A Biography of Heinz Kummer’ – J Slack – Guidelines Books – 2012. Many details and some pictures of life at Beeson and hostels – some ‘errors,’ in particular the reference to the pow who was shot at Monrush pow camp.

**Hostels** –

**Catworth.** NGR TL 085 732.

**1943 / 1944** – listed as a hostel for Italian pows administered by Sawtry camp 59.

**October 1946** – with Beeson, mentioned in camp magazine.

**Cockaynes**, Alresford, Essex. Perhaps at Cockaynes Wood, just N of Alresford?

**Diddington**, St Neots, Cambridgeshire.

Located in Diddington Park near to large US camp and hospital, TL 192 661. Memories recall Italian and German pows.

**October 1946** – mentioned in camp magazine.

**Gaynes Park** (Search light site Staughton) TL 146 652.

**3 September 1945** – new hostel recorded for Italians. Capacity of 100.

**1945** – Recollections (\*) 6 huts (1 dining, 1 cookhouse, 4 accommodation), about 100 pows, 3 guards under Sergeant Roberts.

**October 1946** – mentioned in camp magazine. Recorded the death of POW Gustav Gaebel on 2 October 1946 at St. Peters Hospital, Bedford; he was later reinterred at the Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery.

**Gransden**

**Summer 1946** - A note on a re-educational survey for Trumpington Camp 45 stated that this hostel with 27 pows was transferred from Camp 45 to Camp 141.

**Hemingford** TL 277 709.

In Hemingford Park. Site first used by Royal Engineers, later as a pow camp for Italians and then Germans, and later still accommodation for displaced persons.

“*It seems that even the POWs became part of the community. There were no guards as such at Hemingford Park. The men worked on the local farms and in the basket making workshop and were allowed to grow vegetables in gardens around their huts. They played football with the local team on Vicarage Fields and were invited to eat with local families. Peggy Seamark remembers a German POW teaching the children to ice skate on the village pond; a ship in a bottle was presented to one family and another POW made sandals for the children.”* <https://hemlocs.co.uk/WW2Project22March.pdf>

**October 1946** – mentioned in camp magazine. “*The Hemigford cabaret band performed at the main camp and at the Diddington Hostel with great success; two hours of non-stop entertainment provided a welcome change to the party's routine*…..”

2 news reports from unknown newspaper; (from <https://hemlocs.co.uk/scrapbook.html> )

**17 March 1947** –– *“In the still of this morning's sunshine there was graphic evidence all over the county of the devastation caused by last night's gales which produced tornado-like gusts screaming over the countryside at a velocity of 99 m.p.h. A tree fell across a Prisoner of War hut and Hemingford Abbots and seriously injured the occupants.”*

**23 February 1948 -** Typhoid at Hemingford Grey Prisoner of War camp

**Little Barford**

**9 July 1945** – PID Progress Report 123 (FO 939/383) noted this hostel.

**October 1946** – mentioned in camp magazine.

**Wintringham Hall.** TL 219 598.

**3 September 1945** – new hostel recorded for Italians. Capacity of 100.

**October 1946** – mentioned in camp magazine.

**Woodbury**

**Summer 1946** - A note on a re-educational survey for Trumpington Camp 45 stated that this hostel with 259 pows was transferred from Camp 45 to Camp 141.

**October 1946** – mentioned in camp magazine.