**Camp 196** **Arbury Hall, Nuneaton, Warwickshire**

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| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | | | |
| 196(G.W.C.) | Arbury Hall Camp, Nuneaton, Warwickshire | N. | Nuneaton | Nuneaton 3421 | Nuneaton | Lt.Col.F.G.Holbrook, R.A. | 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 |
| SP 334 894 | 151 | 196 | Arbury Hall, Nuneaton | Warwickshire | 4 | Base Camp | Restored parkland. |

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| **Location:** To the SE of Nuneaton. Aerial photo, 1947 – [Ordnance Survey, OS Air Photo, 6 inch to the mile (1:10,560), Sheet 42/38 N.W.](https://maps.nls.uk/view/238921600)  **Before the camp:** Large country hall and estate. British and American troops were stationed in the parkland.  **Pow Camp:**  **End 1944 to start 1945** - Recorded as having Italian pows.  Memories – “*It was while I was there that I met the Yanks when they arrived and set up a camp on the estate. When they left it was replaced by a German prisoner of war camp. The German prisoners went on to rebuild the bombed church at Chilvers Coton in Nuneaton*.” BBC People’s War website, story by Anthony Harris, Article A8997105, 20 January 2006).  Memory of camp by pow Guenther Rosenkranz; |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1955 |

“*Camp 196 was a former US Invasion Camp, we were told, and the barracks (all Nissen huts with bunk beds for fifty men in each) were placed under trees and were well camouflaged, making this a very large camp, holding a total of one thousand men. When we arrived, there were no barbed wire fences or watchtowers and we had to build our wire cage and watchtowers under the supervision of the British Engineering Corps.”* <https://www.barbylhg.org.uk/Uploaded/1/Documents/2022%20Local%20Topics/GuenthersStorySep21Web.pdf>

**August 1945** – comments were passed to PID that the British officers at this camp believed their must be no political discussions. This was not the only camp where this misunderstanding occurred. (Letter in file FO 939/302).

**Unknown date – 1945/1946?** – “*The church at ‘Chilvers, Coton’ was hit. During the war we had German prisoners at Arbury Hall who volunteered to rebuild the church totally. One of the German prisoners was a master sculpture and he sculpted a Cross out of the stone. They built the church as an apology and as a thanks for the treatment that they received which they found good. The prisoners didn’t want to be here anymore than we wanted to be prisoners in their country.*

*The prisoners in the town were allowed out toward the end of the war and were polite and very well-behaved.*

*I worked in a shop that sold ‘Seaman’s socks’ oyster-coloured oily socks that were worn under the boots to keep your feet dry and warm. The prisoners bought these “coupon-free” socks to wear and used to walk around the town with their briefcases and actually looked like typical Englishmen.”*

From - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/69/a2942769.shtml>

**Spring 1946** – a large group of pows were shipped from Belgium where many had suffered extremely poor conditions. They stayed for a short while before being sent to other camps.

**15 March 1946** – Camp Magazine, No.2; [Der Steg : Zeitung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers 196 - The Wiener Holocaust Library](https://www.whlcollections.org/image/112876/)

**28 March 1946** – Death of a guard in suspicious circumstances. Private George Eric Wardleworth was suffering from pains in the stomach and was given medicine by a German medical orderly which proved to be a dangerous drug and caused his death. (News article from Manchester Evening News, 8 April 1946).

**January 1947** – RC padre, Pfarrer Kuepper, from this camp visited other pow camps.

Known Camp Commandants

c1947 Lt Col F G Holbrook, R.A. From the Royal Artillery. Varied service record including 1924 as 1st Assistant Chief Technical Officer at the Chemical Warfare Experimental Station at Porton. By 1932 an instructor with the Royal Tank Corps School.

**After the camp:** Parkland restored.

**Further Information:**

‘The Germans We Trusted,’ P H Taylor, Lutterworth Press, 2003 – Chapter 10 gives details of one family’s relationships with pows from Arbury Camp.

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|  |  | Money’ for use in Camp 196 only – dated **10 August 1946** |