TEMPORARY SETTLEMENTS AND TRANSIENT POPULATIONS THE LEGACY OF BRITAIN'S PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS: 1940–1948[1)]

With 16 figures, 7 tables and 3 photos

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Zusammenfassung: Temporäre Siedlungen und deren wechselnde Bevölkerung: Geschichte britischer Kriegsgefangenenlager 1940–1948

Obwohl Kriegsgefangenenlager im Zeitraum 1942–1948 zum Kennzeichen der britischen Landschaft wurden, und insgesamt 1500 Lager und Arbeitslager schließlich weit über 500000 Männer beherbergten, wurde ihnen als geographische Erscheinung kaum Beachtung geschenkt. Wesentliche Studien über Kriegsgefangene stammen von Politikwissenschaftlern und Sozialhistorikern in Deutschland und Großbritannien.

Dieser Aufsatz versucht, eine offensichtliche Lücke zu füllen, indem er der Entwicklung eines komplexen, militärischen Siedlungssystems nachgeht, das allerdings größtenteils verfallen ist, und indem er die Ziele analysiert, die der Standortwahl, dem Betrieb und der Entwicklung der Lager zugrunde lagen. Es werden detaillierte Karten des sich ausweitenden Gefangenenlagersystems sowie fünf repräsentative Lagerlagepläne vorgelegt. Auch ihre Rolle als Reservoir unfreiwilliger Arbeitskräfte, besonders in der Landwirtschaft zum kritischen Zeitpunkt des Wiederaufbaus nach dem Kriege, wird untersucht.

Die Mehrheit der damaligen Lageraufzeichnungen sind inzwischen verloren oder vernichtet, und die Generation derer, die für sie verantwortlich waren oder in ihnen bis 1948 gefangen saßen, stirbt aus. Nichtsdestoweniger reichen amtliche und private Unterlagen noch aus, die historische Geographie mancher dieser vorübergehenden Siedlungen zu „retten", bevor sie zum Jagdgrund der militärischen Archäologie werden. Dieser Aspekt der militärischen Geographie bleibt ein herausforderndes, obschon zur Zeit vernachlässigtes Gebiet für zukünftige Forschungsaufgaben.

Summary: Although prisoner of war camps became a feature of the British landscape between 1942 and 1948, eventually totalling around 1500 camps and hostels and housing over 500,000 men, they have attracted little attention as geographical phenomena. Most of the substantive research on the POW has been undertaken by political and social historians in Britain and Germany.

This paper attempts to fill an apparent gap by tracing the development of a complex military settlement system, now largely obliterated by normal forces of change and decay, and by analyzing the policies which led to the location, operation and evolution of the camp sites. Detailed maps of the expanding prison camp system, together with five representative site plans, are presented. Their role in providing involuntary labour at a critical period of post-war recovery, particularly for agriculture, is also examined.

Today most of the contemporary camp records have been lost or culled, and the generation responsible for, or confined in them up to 1948, is dying out. Nonetheless, the public and private records, are probably still sufficient to "rescue" the historical geographies of many of these transient settlements before they become the preserve of military archeologists. This aspect of military geography remains a challenging, if currently neglected, field for future research.

Introduction

Some fifty years ago an extensive network of camps, hostels and hospitals across the United Kingdom, used for housing prisoners of war (POW) and surrendered enemy personnel (SEP) during and after the Second World War, was closed down. Many, and perhaps most, of the structures have since the summer of 1948 disappeared without visible trace or reverted to their original purpose, although at their peak some 390 major sites and – if main camps, satellites and hostels are included – 1500 camps were involved. Most of the 157,000 Italians and 402,000 Germans, in two overlapping phases, made up their transient populations. Towards the end of the war and thereafter some tens of thousands were billeted directly on farms. By contrast with Germany's network of 53 principal POW camps and 8 internment camps at 30 June 1944 in Europe (ICRC 1944), these camp settlements were eventually a locally well-known and widespread feature of normal civilian life across much of Britain, and they formed an important part of the cultural landscape, although their overall extensiveness was deliberately kept from public awareness.[2)]

However, unlike such enduring concrete fortifications as pillboxes and anti-tank obstacles, many POW camp structures built of timber or corrugated iron were sold at the end of the war and their sites have proved more prone to redevelopment, or neglect and decay, than these defensive structures. Detailed evidence of their former existence and extent is in consequence more circumstantial and inferential. Indeed, the stage

[1)] Dedicated to the memory of Professor ROBERT WALTER STEEL, 1915–1998.

has already been reached when some have been re-surveyed by local historians as part of their fieldwork or by "rescue" archeologists prior to redevelopment of their sites: the examples of the plan of Island Farm (Camp 11, near Bridgend), based in part on a contemporary scale model, included in VINCENT (1990), and that of Stanhill Hostel, a satellite of Camp 146 at Newton near Preston, surveyed by the University of Manchester Archeological Unit (TAYLOR 1997, 7), are doubtless but two of many such instances. There is to date no central register or repository of site plans known to the writer, a fact confirmed by the Ministry of Defence in a communication from the Army Historical Branch dated 23 September 1998.

In terms of access to personal records and memories, prisoners, camp staff and former employers alike form a rapidly diminishing pool of witnesses. For many prisoners the camps were no doubt landscapes of despair and the years spent in confinement deliberately forgotten by them. FAULK (1977, 191) cites a memorable line from a German report on POW: "they are islands of men living in an eternal Yesterday", and the tranquillity of many former camps today makes it difficult to envisage the harsh reality of their past. The official records appear to have been heavily culled, not only in terms of day-to-day administrative documents but also in the camp plans, maps and photographs which accompanied them and are referred to in War Office and other restricted files at the Public Record Office.[3]

The making of the camps: official policy and practice

Such was the course of the war until the allied landings which began the North African Campaign in November 1942, that German and Italian POWs remained small in numbers: the decision in 1942 to transfer Italian POW has been noted, whereas the main flow of German prisoners to Britain began only after

[2] Such camps may not have stimulated the same degree of popular interest as did the exploits of British and Commonwealth POW in German camps like Oflag IV C at Colditz Castle in Saxony which reportedly still receives 10,000, chiefly British, visitors each year (F.A.Z. 1998 a a. b), yet for many reasons, and not least the growing interest in Britain's military heritage, it would seem timely to collate the information on what are in effect "deserted villages" before their collective geography is entirely forgotten. They raise many obvious questions of how and why their particular sites were chosen in secret by the military authorities of the day; of the construction and development of the camps; and of their planned purpose and changing functions during wartime operations and in the aftermath of hostilities. Some measure of the interest in military archaeology, and particularly in military fortifications, is evident in journals like Fort, published by the Fortress Study Group since 1975, the Airfield Review, published by the Airfield Research Group since 1979, and in publications generated by the Defence of Britain project. Set up in 1995, and intended "to inform conservation strategies by compiling a database of British 20th Century defence sites" (cf. Defence Lines, its quarterly newsletter, LOWRY 1996 and English Heritage 1998), the undertaking is timely and demonstrates the practicability of engaging individual volunteers and societies in a nationwide fieldwork programme. Published since 1973, the quarterly magazine, After the Battle, includes occasional articles on individual POW camps written by local enthusiasts (VINCENT 1990; WEST 1991) or by former prisoners (ROSSBERG 1990).

[3] Specialized academic, no less than more general, interest in the subject of POW camps and their transient populations is, of course, long-standing, but the literature in English is diffused across many fields, ranging as it does from the autobiographical (BREITENSTEIN 1976; SULZBACH 1976) and the private journals of former POW to the social-historical and political (LIDDELL HART 1951; SULLIVAN 1979; BISCHOF a. AMBROSE 1992; MOORE a. FEDEROWICH 1996), from the record of British re-education programmes (FAULK 1970 a. 1977) or the role of the churches, welfare organisations and individuals (HARRISON 1996; TAYLOR 1997; MOLTMANN 1997), to the medical, and particularly the psychological and psychiatric, consequences of imprisonment (KORNHUBER 1961).

Among the primary sources, the War Office papers in the Public Record Office, are an essential foundation, as are those in the Prisoner of War Division of the Foreign Office, the Cabinet Office and inter alia the Ministry of Agriculture a. Fisheries papers. It should be noted that every military unit, including the POW camps, was required to keep a war diary, the equivalent of a ship's log. The archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva – Switzerland having been the "protecting power", charged with regularly inspecting all permanent camps under the Geneva Convention of 1929 – are a key source, largely in French: in particular, these reports of the former Service des Camps are held in the ICRC archives in Geneva.

German-language sources are prolix and range from the 22-volume official history (Zur Geschichte der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen des Zweiten Weltkrieges), particularly the volumes on German POW in British hands (WOLFF 1974) and on the re-education programme in Britain (FAULK 1970), to the "grey literature" of POW diaries. The volumes of the "Scientific Commission for the History of German POWs", published between 1962 and 1974 before the PRO archives were opened (MOORE a. FEDOROWICH 1996, 3), were based primarily on German and Swiss sources. There is no official British history on POW to compare, but *Hansard* is an essential contemporary record of oral and written parliamentary answers and debate in both the Commons and the Lords over official policy towards, and treatment of, the camps and their populations.

the invasion of France in June 1944. To that extent, the history of the camps falls into three distinct operational phases: *the early war years* (1939 to 1942) with internment and temporary detention the principal concern, although the War Cabinet had already been made aware by January 1941 through the County War Agricultural Executive Committees that agricultural labour was in short supply (MOORE 1996, 27–8); the *middle period* from late-1942 to 1944, when the camp system was consolidated and Italian POW dispersed to meet the demands of the labour market; and the *late- and post-war period* 1944 to 1948, when German POW came to dominate a phase of rapid expansion and diversification. A fourth phase of *closure and abandonment* after mid-1948 might be added as the camps were de-requisitioned and reverted to their former roles as private properties, from estate houses to hotels, or took on new roles as army and displaced persons' camps, civilian prisons, or even industrial estates. The parallels between the short life-cycles of these 1,500 settlements and England's 3,000 "lost villages", deserted between the 14th and 18th centuries (BERESFORD 1954; DYER 1998), are at the least thought-provoking.

Internment and accommodation of enemy aliens had been a priority from the outbreak of war, but was under the control of the Home Office. Captured enemy personnel, such as *Luftwaffe* and submarine crews, were screened, debriefed and interrogated as part of intelligence gathering by three departments – the Prisoner of War Interrogation Section (Home) or *PWIS (H)*, the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre *(CSDIC)* and the Military Intelligence Department 19 *(MI19)* (DE NORMANN 1986) – before most were deported to Canada and the United States.

Each military command HQ in Britain ran a main POW *base camp* where German prisoners would be screened by the PWIS (H) and politically "graded" before being sent on to other camps. The grades A+ to C+ (or colloquially the white, grey and black) depended on the assessment of their ideological views, which ranged from "super democrat" to "hard-core Nazi". Notwithstanding reports of haphazard and at times chaotic screening, the population geography of the camps was therefore by no means a fortuitous mix, and reflected the military perception of security risks, the task of maintaining camp discipline and order among the heterogeneous prisoner population, and the later, over-riding needs for POW labour.

Table 1: German POW in the United Kingdom: quarterly returns from March 1941 to September 1948

Deutsche Kriegsgefangene im Vereinigten Königreich von Großbritannien: Vierteljahresberichte von März 1941 bis September 1948

Date		Total	Date		Total
1941	March	550	1945	March	156,100
	June	950		June	207,000
	September	1,700		September	208,950
	December	1,850		December	211,300
1942	March	1,150	1946	March	265,000
	June	200		June	385,450
	September	300		September	402,200
	December	550		December	355,200
1943	March	900	1947	March	305,800
	June	650		June	267,250
	September	650		September	220,000
	December	1,100		December	155,700
1944	March	2,550	1948	March	82,800
	June	7,900		June	2,790
	September	90,000			
	December	144,450			

Source: War Office files (PRO), WOLFF (1974). Rounded figures.

This paper is largely concerned with examining the forces and circumstances which shaped these temporary settlements as they were expanded to accommodate their transient populations between 1940 and 1948, rather than what happened in them. Before discussing the phases of camp construction, some idea of the scale of the problem can be gained from Table 1 which presents the prison population data, but takes no account of the accommodation needs of their guards.

At their peak, German POW captured by Britain in various countries totalled around 3.5 million, those held in the British Isles just over 402,000 (Fig. 1). By comparison, the Italian POW population expansion in Britain effectively began from February 1942, when the decision was taken to bring 28,000 to the country for

Local newspapers across Britain provided a sporadic but informative reportage on the camps' activities and many to this day continue to carry "human interest" stories on former prisoners who have maintained or re-established links with their erstwhile captors, employers or friends. But undoubtedly a most under-utilised source are the German-language camp newspapers, of which WOLFF (1974) lists no less than 268 titles. One of the most professionally produced, Die Zeit am Tyne, the newspaper of Camp 18 in Northumberland, included high quality artist's impressions as well as photographs of the camp buildings. Such newsletters were by their nature ephemeral and where copies have survived, some may still lie largely unrecognised in local or county record offices or church archives.

Finally, many oblique and vertical aerial photographs of camp sites from the wartime and post-war period are held by the National Monuments Record.

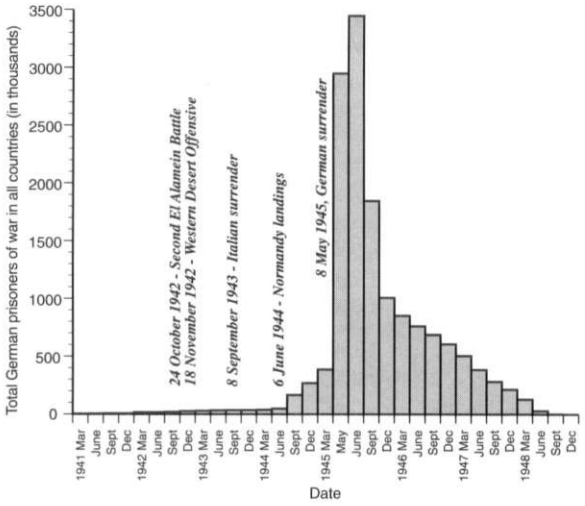


Fig. 1: German POW in British hands in all countries, 1941–1948

Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in britischer Hand in aller Welt 1941–1948

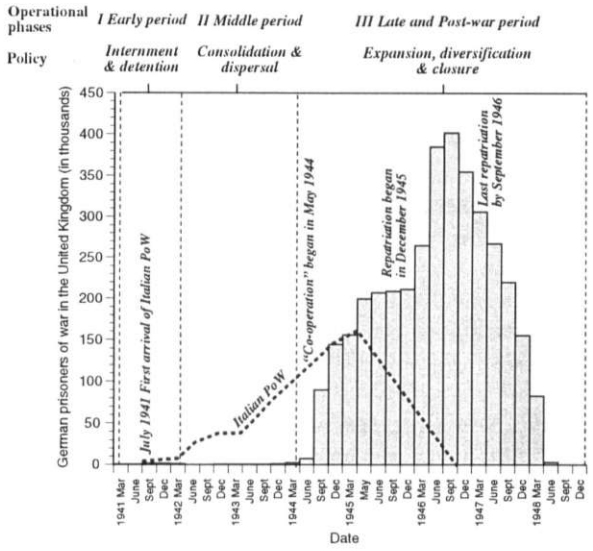


Fig. 2: Italian and German POW in Britain, 1941–1948

Italienische und deutsche Kriegsgefangene in Großbritannien 1941–1948

labour; by June 1944 this had risen to 108,246. For the period from March 1941 (with 55 POW) to June 1944 (7,900) German POW numbers were insignificant, actually declining to 213 by June 1942 through deportation and repatriation (Fig. 2). Although linked to the shortage of accommodation, deportation of POW along with internees to the dominions, chiefly Canada, was essentially an outcome of what Moore terms "the exigencies of War" during a disastrous period, which included the Dunkirk evacuation in May – June 1940, and the persistent threat of invasion coupled with the fear that POW might be liberated by German paratroopers in this event.

Unsurprisingly, the general War Cabinet policy was for all superfluous German POW to be sent overseas: around 3,000 were shipped to Canada in July 1940, leaving only 238 in the camps by August 8th. With the downing of *Luftwaffe* crews this rose to 850 by 25th September 1940 at the height of the Battle of Britain, but the policy remained in force until 1944 even though the decision to bring Italian POW labour into Britain had been taken by the end of 1941, when there was a seemingly inexhaustible supply (MOORE 1996, 29).

By the end of 1944 German POW outnumbered the Italian, and the relevant War Diaries record the reopening of a few camps and the transfer of German POW to camps previously occupied by Italians – 14 such re-allocations in September 1944 and 20 in November 1944 alone (WO 165/59).

The decision to employ the first tranche of German POW – some 16,000 – was only taken in October 1944, and until that date German camps were places of detention or custody, generally surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by the military, unlike the Italian camps where POW were often assigned to small unguarded satellite hostels or billeted directly with farmers. For these reasons, this paper is mainly concerned with the camps in their role of accommodating German prisoners in the third phase of the camps' history from late-1944 to mid-1948.

Once the decision to open a Second Front in Europe was taken, the need to plan for a marked expansion of the number of POW camps, run by the War office, was pressing. Two maps (Figs. 3 a. 4) represent the rapidly changing situation between the end of 1941 and a deliberately and systematically planned expansion phase over the period 1944–1947. Following the Normandy invasion, increasing numbers of Germans were transferred from North West Europe and later from America as the supply of such labour for work in agriculture and elsewhere became part of the government's post-war reconstruction and recovery programme and indeed reparations policy (Fig. 2).

Ten or twenty years later they might have been considered akin to military *Gastarbeiter*, but when debating the liberation and repatriation of prisoners under Article 75 of the Geneva Convention, speakers in the House of Lords had raised the moral issues of continuing to use the camps to provide compulsory human labour, a concern taken up by some parts of the print media (*Hansard: Lords*, 11 July 1946, col. 377–401 and 12 February 1947, col. 561–608). Some had been in

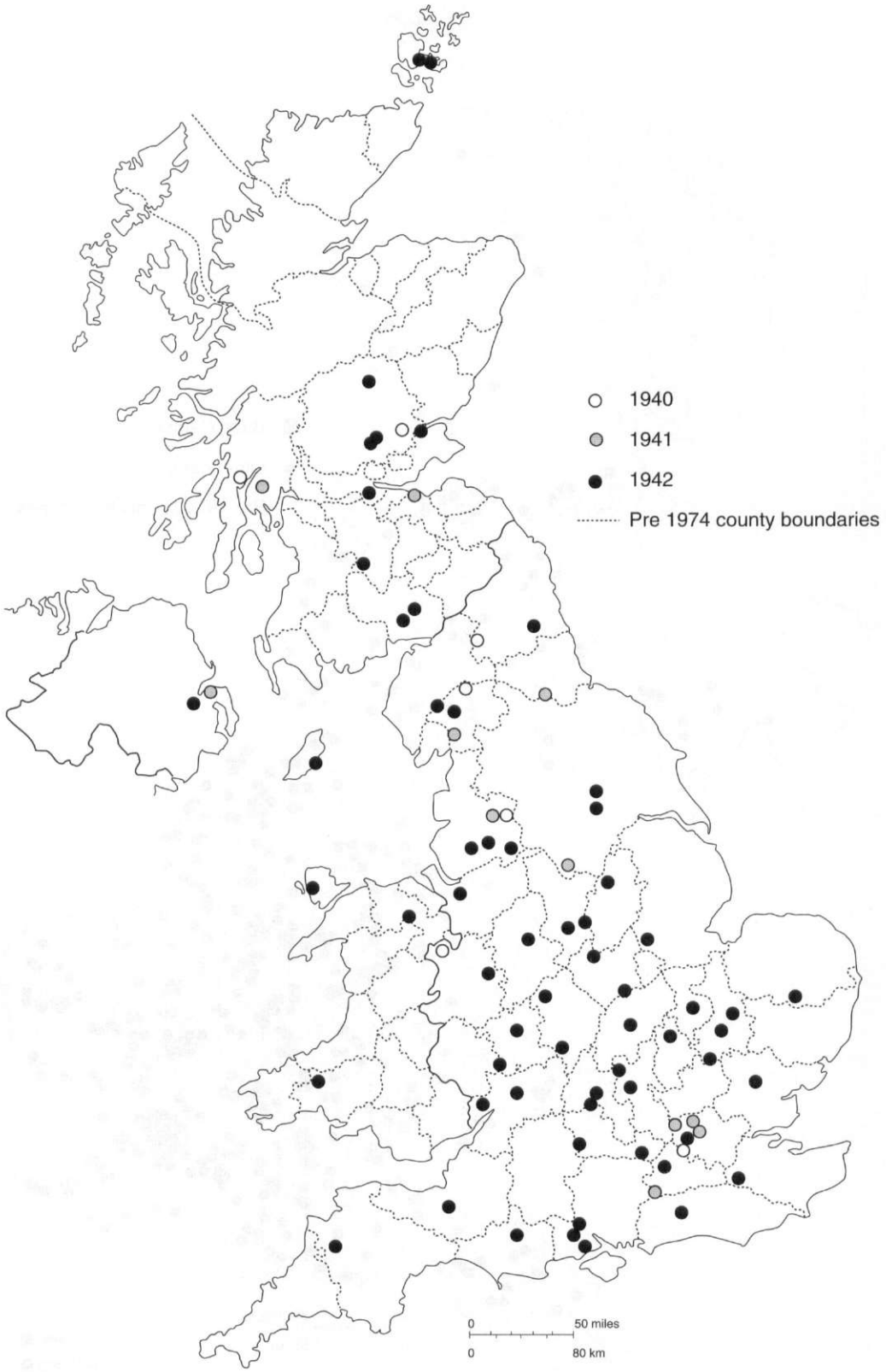


Fig. 3: POW camps in Britain, 1940–1942. The early war years: internment and detention
Kriegsgefangenenlager in Großbritannien 1940–1942. Anfangsjahre: Internierung und Haft

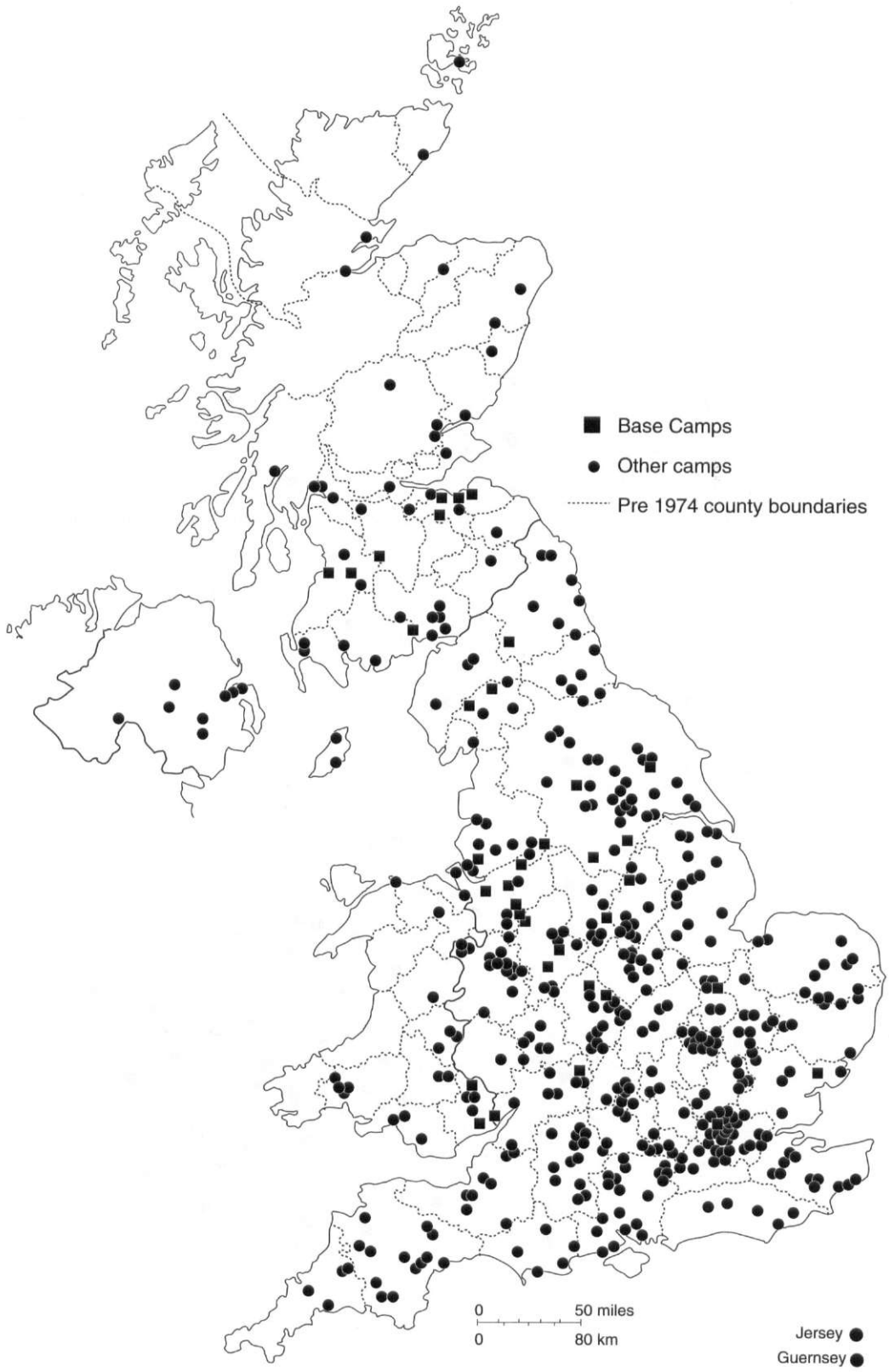


Fig. 4: POW camps in Britain, 1944–1947. The late- and post-war period: expansion and diversification

Kriegsgefangenenlager in Großbritannien 1944–1947. Spätere und Nachkriegsjahre: Erweiterung und Diversifizierung

captivity since the battle of El Alamein in late 1942, when 30,000 POW were taken, and were to remain prisoners until mid-1948. By contrast, all German POW in Britain after the first World War had been repatriated by November 19, 1919, one year after the armistice.

For such numbers, the logistical problems of providing secure accommodation, which would meet the requirements of the Geneva Convention, are obvious from Table 1. At their peak the average monthly POW flows in late 1944 reached 27,000 men, rising to 40,000 in early-1946. Over the 27 months from July 1944 to September 1946, the flow of German POW averaged 14,600 per month. The War office files on *Enemy Prisoners of War. Employment and Accommodation* provide a useful, if incomplete, record of the detail of this planned expansion, and the Directorate of Prisoners of War (DPW) made periodic "returns of accommodation in prisoner of war camps".

The situation in the first year of war is represented in Table 2, which records 9 *alien internment camps*, ranging from those in remote locations like Douglas on the Isle of Man, Lochgilphead in Argyllshire and Holywood in Northern Ireland, to London and the Home Counties. At this date there were still only 11 *POW camps*, 8 of which were in Northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They included Camp 1 at Grizedale Hall near Hawkshead in the Lake District and Wilton Park (Camp 20) near Beaconsfield in Hertfordshire, both of which were later to become celebrated for different reasons. Among the internment camps, Latchmere House (Camp 020), near Kingston upon Thames acquired notoriety as MI5's secret interrogation centre.

Barely one year later the DPW's November 1942 *Return of Accommodation in Prisoner of War Camps in the United Kingdom* registered an increase from these 20 camps and one hospital to 74 numbered camps. These were differentiated in five categories as German, Italian and Vichy French *prison camps, invasion camps*, and *Italian working camps*. At this stage in 1942 the *German POW camps* at Ferryhill (No. 4), Ascot (No.7), Swanwick (No. 13), Penrith (No. 15), and No. 99 military hospital held only 105 officers and 479 other ranks, roughly equal to the 97 officers and 422 other ranks of *Vichy French* held at Grizedale (No. 1), Edinburgh (No. 12) and Lochgilphead (No. 24). The 53 *Italian working camps* (numbered sequentially as Camps 25 to 78), with 79 officers and 35,000 other ranks and the 4 *Italian labour camps* (Nos. 2, 8, 9 a. 12) with 12 officers and 2165 men are considered below.

As early as February 1940 the War Minister had been asked whether arrangements were being made: *"as in the last war, for German prisoners to be hired out for manual labour on estates and farms, or by contractors for works of afforestation, agricultural operations, land drainage, road making etc; and whether suitable prisoners' camps will be organised for these purposes in various parts of the country ?"* (*Hansard: Commons*, 20 February 1940, col. 1138–1139).

Table 2: POW Camps and hospital, and alien internment camps, in Britain, 1940

Kriegsgefangenenlager und Internierungslager für Ausländer in Großbritannien 1940

(A) POW camps:	
Camp 1.	Grizedale Hall, near Hawkshead, Lancashire
Camp 2.	Glen Mill, Oldham, Lancashire
Camp 4.	Windlestone Hall, Rusheyford, Co.Durham
Camp 6.	Glenbranter, Argyllshire
Camp 8.	Warth Mills, Bury, Lancashire
Camp 9.	Kempton Park Racecourse, Sunbury-on-Thames
Camp 10.	Cockfosters, Barnet, London
Camp 12.	Donaldson's School, Edinburgh
Camp 13.	The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire
Camp 14.	Holywood, Belfast
Camp 20.	Wilton Park, Beaconsfield, Hertfordshire
(B) Hospital	
No. 4	General Hospital, Knutsford, Cheshire
(C) Alien Internment Camps	
Camp 001.	Oratory Schools, London SW3
Camp 003.	Racecourse Aliens Camp, York
Camp 005.	Winter Quarters Camp, Ascot, Berkshire
Camp 006.	Lingfield Racecourse, Hampshire
Camp 009.	Huyton Camp, Liverpool
Camp 010.	Isle of Man Camps, Mersside, Douglas
Camp 015.	Knapdale Camp, Lochgilphead, Argyll
Camp 018.	Holywood, Belfast (Special War Office camp)
Camp 020.	Ham Common (Latchmere House), London SW

Source: Appendix A a. B, WO 199/405, PRO, dated 28 January 1941

Despite the fact that 65,497 German POW had been employed in the First War, the response was an unequivocal rejection by the minister concerned. As late as 1943 similar questions on employing German prisoners were met with near-identical denials on June 29 and 20 July, and employment of German POW remained "off limits" as a wartime policy until August 1944.

By contrast, growing numbers of Italian POW were already intended for agricultural employment. In a minute dated 17 June 1941, the War Office had already acknowledged the importance attached by the Ministry of Agriculture to the projected use of Italian POW as agricultural labourers in Scotland. Commenting on military objections on operational grounds to certain

proposed camps, it noted that the Scottish Command: *"realise the scheme is designed for the good of the country as a whole, and that it is not a question of dumping prisoners anywhere"* (WO 199/405).

A decision had been taken as early as July 1941 that 28,000 Italian POW *"should be brought to this country for labour"*: of these 15,580 were allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture, a further 2,600 to the Scottish Department of Agriculture, and 3,000 to the Ministry of Supply for work in timber production (WO 199/407). The DPW return dated 23 November 1942 (WO 199/407) illustrates the outcome of this development, when the Italian POW population already numbered 37,424 men, distributed between 5 *POW camps* (Camps 2, 8, 9, 12 and 17) – with Camps 18 (Haltwhistle, Northumberland) and 21 (Comrie, Perthshire) designated as labour camps but unoccupied –, a military hospital, and no less than 53 *working camps*. Most of these latter were built to accommodate 750 men each, but ranged in capacity from 1500 at Camp 33 at Bicester (Oxon) to 200 at Camp 32 in Anglesey.

The policy of establishing such working camps marked an important new phase in the geography of the camp system. In a minute dated 8th November 1941 the authorities noted that: *"the original decision to bring Italian POW to this country to work in agriculture was that they should be housed in guarded camps containing at least 500 prisoners"*.

An obvious defect of the large camp system was, however, that: *"Many men have to be taken long distances to work. Long journeys seriously reduce the number of hours of actual work that can be put in, especially during the short winter days. They also make heavy demands on transport and petrol"*.

The monthly *War Diaries* provide details of POW employment statistics and developments on this front: one from April 1942, for example, noted that of 40 new camps, work had started on 26, and of these 21 were being built by the Italians themselves, the remainder by civilian labour or employing ministries (WO 165/59).

There were many practical difficulties in dispersing Italian POW, including the fact that few understood or spoke English, or had any acquaintance with English agricultural methods (WO 199/406). Nonetheless, the scheme went ahead and orders were issued in November 1942 that, where employers were at such a distance from the Camp that working parties were impracticable, POW in batches of 50–70 were to be accommodated in hostels administered by the parent camp, with the hostels normally limited to three per camp (WO 199/409). Prisoners were permitted to walk up to 3 miles to their place of employment, but beyond that transport had to be provided. Following the allied landings on the Italian mainland on September 3rd and that country's surrender on September 8th, 1943 the situation changed radically. As Moore (1996, 32) has noted: the Italian surrender *"was to be a catalyst that transformed the politics and economics of using POWs as labour in Britain"*.

Proposals were put forward in the December for reorganisation of Italian POW employment under which they were to be offered the status of *"co-operators"* and recognition as *"co-belligerents"*. Such POW were permitted employment without escort and without restriction as to locality. They were also permitted to work unescorted during the hours of blackout – a great saving in the manpower committed to guard duties.

By May 1944 56,166 Italian POW had volunteered to co-operate out of the 93,251 eligible under the scheme and by June 108,246 were engaged in service and civilian work, 13,525 alone being billeted on farms. By the end of the war in Europe there were 118,000 Italian "co-operators" and the Secretary of State for War was being pressed to allow those who wished to return to Italy to do so: his response was that their future was still "under consideration".

The history of the Italian POW in Britain between 1940 and 1945 has been chronicled by CONTI (1986), whose original map of the co-operators camps involved has been amended here as Figure 5. These 80 main camps, supplemented by a further 114 labour camps, extended from Dingwall (Ross and Cromarty) in northern Scotland to Ashford (Kent) and St.Columb (Cornwall) in southern England. Generally located in rural areas, they were heavily concentrated in the Midlands and South East.

Employment of German POW followed a very different course, although the relevant War Diary for January 1944 already records that they were being employed on an "experimental basis" when: *"969 specially selected German POW for labour purposes arrived in the UK on 20th January 1944. They are earmarked for agricultural work under military supervision from Camps No. 97 and 103"*.

Between July and August 1944 the numbers of German POW in Britain had risen from 9,000 to 40,000, and by the end of 1944 had reached 144,450. In a War Office memorandum (0103/5425 PW) dated 9th August 1944, it was announced that German POW, with the exception of submariners, airmen and ardent Nazis, were to be employed in the United Kingdom on agriculture and forestry. A later minute, dated 23 October 1944, from GHQ confirmed that: *"The need for PW labour still exists, and it has been decided that much more use can be made of German PW labour if they are permitted to work in small unescorted groups. Such an arrangement will obviate the necessity of bringing further large numbers of Italian PW to this country"*.

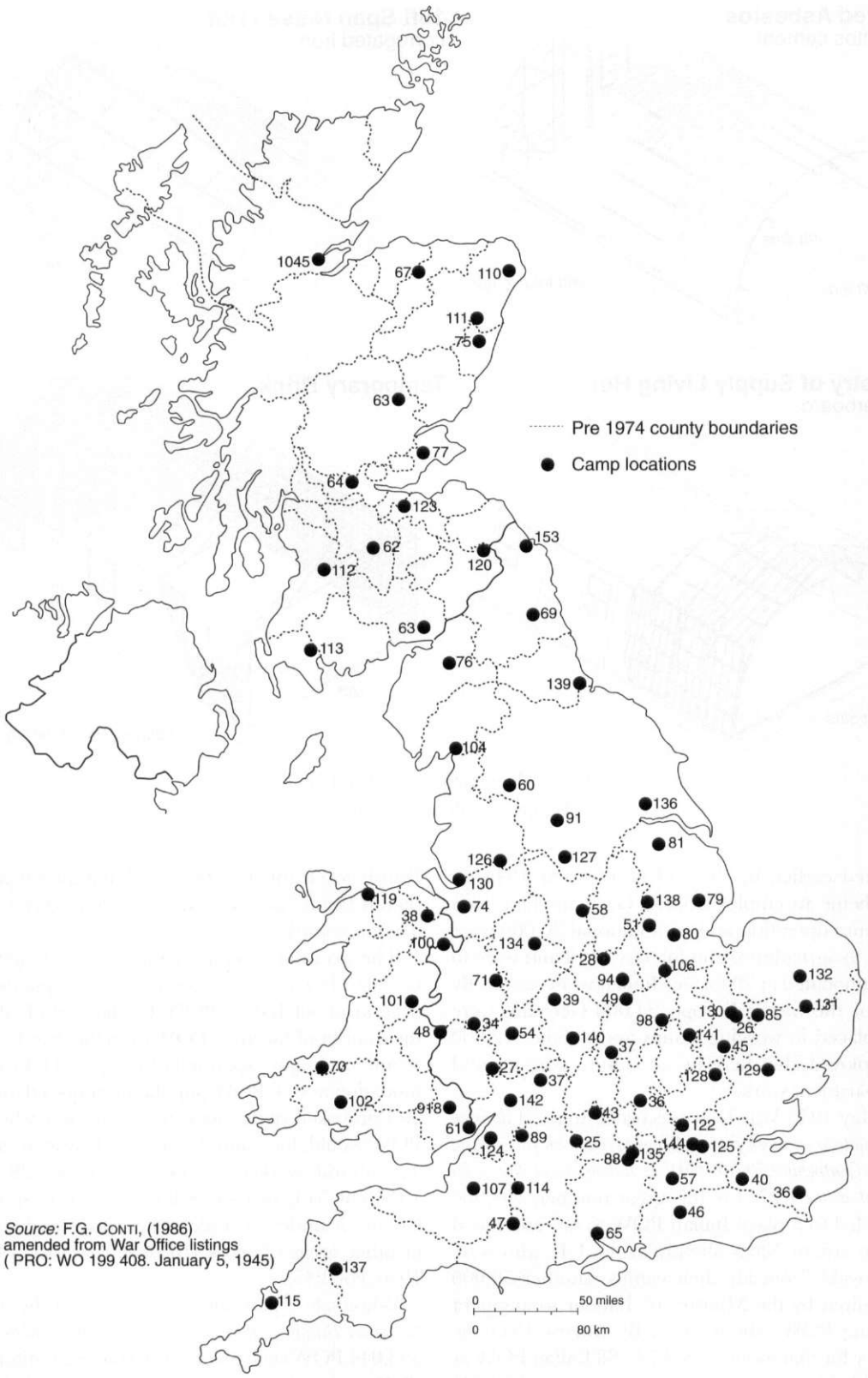


Fig. 5: Italian working camps and labour battalions in Britain, 1945
Italienische Arbeitslager und -einsätze in Großbritannien 1945

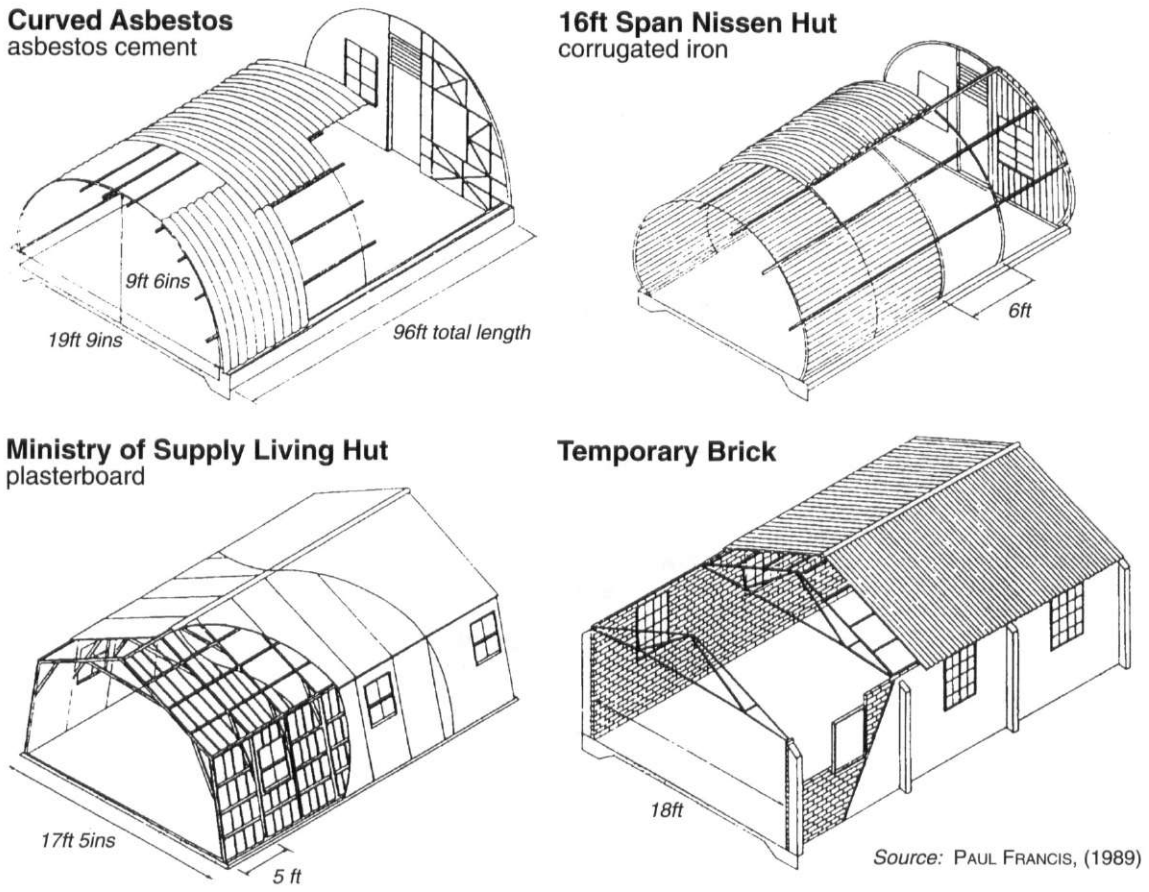


Fig. 6: Main hutting types in the camps
Haupttypen der Lagerhütten

As noted earlier, by the end of the year 1944 an initial scheme to employ 16,000 Germans had been brought into operation and an additional 20,000 were allocated to agricultural and forestry work and were to be accommodated at 20 former Italian work camps. By the end of the war in Europe, 34,000 Germans were already placed in working camps and another 12,800 were employed elsewhere in agriculture, forestry and War Department work.

The May 1945 War Diary recorded that: "*A decision has been made to earmark from holdings of German prisoners of war on the Continent 250,00 POW, excluding ardent Nazis, for employment in the UK*". Of this great number, 154,000 were needed to replace Italian POW to be repatriated and those ardent Nazis already in the UK who were "unemployable" outside their camps; another 50,000 were required by the Ministry of Labour to augment the existing POW labour force. By August 1945 the War Diary for that month listed 73,268 Italian POW as being still held in camps, 56,389 in hostels, and 22,931 as billeted on farms. But by the October of 1945 the British government had resolved that their repatriation should begin "*as soon as the harvest is completed and when transport is available*".

The decision to employ much greater numbers of German POW, as a concomitant of the planned repatriation of all Italian POW by the end of 1946 and the transfer of German POW from the near Continent, required a major expansion of camp and hostel accommodation as one POW population replaced another. It also provoked parliamentary debate over whether the POW would, for example, take work away from British agricultural workers (*Hansard: Commons*, 28 January 1946, col. 543), be used by farmers as a cheap source of labour, or undercut trade union wages and conditions in other areas of work (*Hansard: Commons*, 14 March 1946, col. 245).

Wholesale repatriation was advocated by one M.P. "*to relieve Britain of the necessity of supporting and feeding*" the 353,044 POW then involved. To the suggestion that the POW were a burden, the minister responded that the great majority were in fact engaged in work of the

highest importance, and that: *"No arrangements have been made or are in contemplation for the repatriation of the German prisoners. On the contrary, arrangements are in hand to bring further German prisoners to this country from other areas in considerable numbers to make good the loss of Italians, and to supplement the prisoner-of-war labour forces"* (*Hansard: Commons*, 7 February 1946, col.1878–1879).

Indeed, a week after the German surrender, another M.P. had raised the question of how many guards would be needed to guard the German prisoners, and asked whether it would be very much better: *"if all these men, both English soldiers and Germans, were cultivating the land and providing food rather than producing less food owing to the one having to guard the other?"* (*Hansard: Commons*, 17 May 1945, col. 2629).

Already by January 1946 the total of German prisoners had overtaken that of Italian POW, with 194,500 Germans as against 142,000 Italians (*Hansard: Commons*, col. 418, 169). (There were 16,344 of other nationalities, including 12,000 Austrians in the overall total of 353,044). By March 5th Germans numbered 225,000, Italians only 105,000 (*Hansard: Commons*, 26 March 1946, col. 203–204), and little more than two months later the German POW population had increased to 338,000, with 163,000 working in agriculture and 116,000 in other occupations (*Hansard: Commons*, 4 June 1946).

Camp categories

In the early phases of the war there were relatively few POW to accommodate. Country houses and estates, hotels, textile mills or even racecourse buildings were requisitioned by the command land agent and pressed into service as POW and internment camps and existing army and airfield camps and other government buildings were re-designated for this purpose. In December 1940 there were 11 POW camps and 9 internment camps and even in September 1941, the War Office listed a mere 16 POW camps under four categories: those *partly occupied* (Nos. 1, 2, 6, 8, 13, 15 and 24), *unoccupied* (Nos. 7, 9 and 23), *under construction* (Nos. 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21), or *not yet started* (WO 199/406). By the end of 1946 these had developed into a complicated network of around 1500 *base camps, transit camps, working camps, hospitals, satellite camps* and *hostels* scattered across the British Isles from Cornwall and the Channel Isles to Caithness and Orkney. Some existing camps were re-designated when vacated by departing American or British invasion troops; others were hastily set up on greenfield sites. Some, like Camp 197 at Chepstow, which was made up of 5 self-contained camps to accommodate 5,270 POW, were actually miles apart. At the end of the war, except for those few which were conveniently located as transit camps for arrivals and repatriations, the base camps were transformed into working camps, the administrative centres of *"a complex of conveniently located Satellite Camps and small Hostels"* (FAULK 1974, 32).

Hutting types

In size the original base camps could house several thousand prisoners, whereas the labour camps were normally designed for 800–1,000 POW and the hostels for 450 and less. The layout of a few sites is considered elsewhere, but details of military construction techniques and materials and design (FRANCIS 1989; LOWRY 1996), are important in understanding the ephemeral character of very many of the camp settlements. Broadly speaking some early camps were of a superior building standard than later ones, as supplies of high quality peacetime sectional hutting gave way to cheaper, simpler alternatives. (The Geneva Convention of 1929 required prisoners *"to be housed and fed no worse than the garrison troops of the capturing power"* and permanent camps to be regularly inspected by the ICRC). Military living quarters were planned on a basis of space allocations for officer and other ranks; by mid-1943 these were scaled down from 45 square feet to as little as 32 square feet of living space for other ranks. From 1942 the design of all military hutting (Fig. 6) was the responsibility of an Inter-Departmental Committee on Hutting, and its production and supply was handled exclusively by the Ministry of Works (FRANCIS 1989).

The familiar semi-circular *nissen hut* design, developed in the First War, and built of corrugated iron or steel was reintroduced in 1941 when timber and labour shortages became acute, and some examples have survived at former camps like Cultybraggan. Nissen's design had the merit of easy assembly in 16, 24 or 30 foot spans in multiples of 6 foot bays supported by tee-shaped ribs. Similar semi-circular structures, known as *curved asbestos hutting*, were introduced from May 1942, the sheets being bolted together using unskilled labour and without need for a roof frame.

Pre-fabricated timber-frame huts were being mass-produced from late-1943, some using lightweight plywood or felted-plasterboard cladding. Whereas conventional brick or concrete block structures required skilled tradesmen, these latter could be easily assembled by unskilled or POW labour upon prepared foundations in the appropriate bay lengths with an 18 or 24 foot span. Later they were easily dismantled and re-deployed or

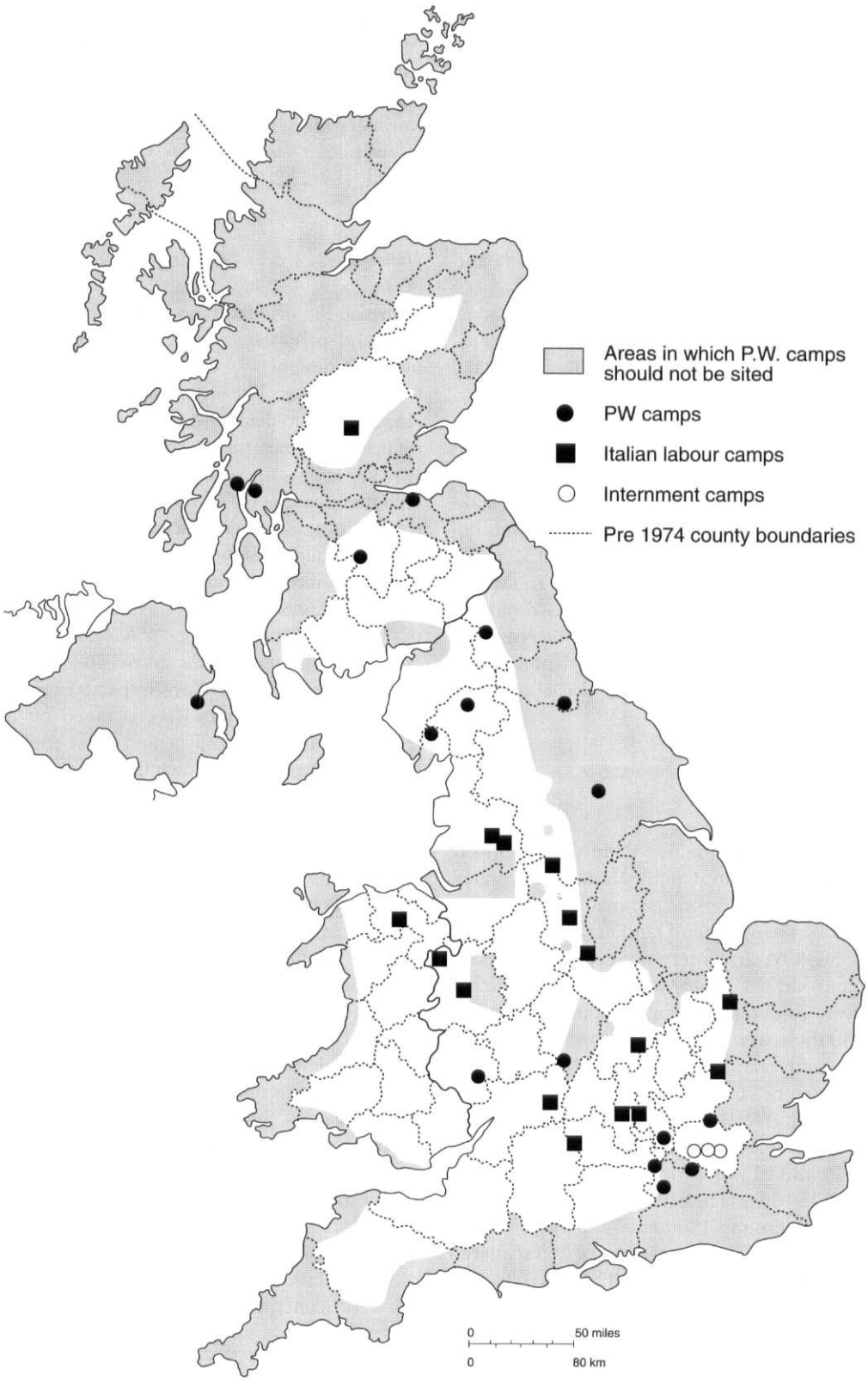


Fig. 7: POW camp siting and the restricted areas as in September 1941
Standortwahl für Kriegsgefangenenlager und Sperrgebiete, Stand vom September 1941

sold-off by the armed services, leaving the thin concrete or brick foundations as the main "archeological" evidence of their existence at many sites.

From 1942 *concrete hutting*, generally with concrete slab or brick walling, was produced under a variety of trade-names, all designed by the British Concrete Federation (hence the "*BCF light hut*"). In 1943 the Ministry of Works brought out a new design, *the standard 24 foot span hut*, normally c. 120 feet in length. Its reinforced concrete frame allowed any suitable cladding material to be employed (FRANCIS 1989). In some camps the large *Romney huts* with a single span of 35 feet, were constructed from tubular steel ribs supporting a skin of corrugated iron: they were generally used for storage or workshops, or even canteens and cinemas. DE NORMANN (1996) includes illustrations from such huts at Camp 23 at Devizes, re-skinned in the 1980s and used for the county's highways department stores.

The War Office files on *Enemy Prisoners of War. Employment and Accommodation* track a programme of construction of these cheap and simple buildings, undertaken initially by the Ministry of Works and Building and later by other employing ministries, civilian labour or in part by the Italian or German prisoners themselves.

Site selection and the restricted areas

In principal, growing demand for additional camp accommodation could be met in three ways: by extension of existing camps, sometimes as tented camps, by construction of new camps, or by the construction or acquisition of hostels which were normally limited to three per parent camp. *Tented accommodation*, even if it was "winterised" by duck-boarding, raised obvious humanitarian, logistical, and environmental health problems and Article 10 of the Geneva Convention specifically forbade the use of tents for POW after the month of November. Nonetheless, many German POW had to spend the winter of 1945–1946 in tents, and these were only finally dispensed with in the autumn of 1946 (FAULK 1977, 35). In practice, however, the construction of additional camp accommodation faced a formidable range of restrictions and constraints as to site and operation before work began. Figure 7, re-drawn from a War Office map dated 18 September 1941, illustrates the extent of *restricted areas* and the confining of most of the early camps to a zone remote from coastal areas and major military installations.

Through 1940 and to a lesser degree until August 1941, defence against amphibious invasion had been a priority, particularly in the coastal area from Portland to the Wash and north to the Cromarty Firth, (CHURCHILL 1949). Initially restrictions prohibited the siting of any camp within the *alien protected areas* (otherwise referred to as *pink areas*), generally from 20 to 50 miles from North Sea and Channel coasts and at a varying distance from coasts in most other areas; within 10 miles of any "important area" or divisional military headquarters; and within 5 miles of any aerodrome outside the main protected areas. Since airfields included parent and satellite aerodromes, and main, relief and emergency landing grounds, these spatial restrictions would later have proved unworkable when demand for working camp sites rose from the spring of 1942 as the first Italian POW were employed. One War Office minute, dated 15 February 1941, summed up the dilemma: *"The locations will presumably depend largely on requirements of labour subject to the overriding operational aspects..... accommodation, except in large towns, is at a premium. We haven't measured distances accurately. The proposal not to create camps within a 50 mile limit from the coast looks like limiting sites to a very small area in the country !"* (WO 199/405). By February 1942 new rules were promulgated that no camp should be sited less than 3 miles radius of an airfield, within 10 miles of the coast south of the Severn-Wash line, or within 20 miles of the ports of Hull, Middlesborough, Newcastle and Edinburgh (WO 199/407).

Working camps involved activities as different as farming and quarrying, forestry and dam and road construction, which by their rural nature required camps in close proximity to such operations, often in areas where defences were thin or where railway lines and roads were in theory vulnerable to sabotage.

Objections from the armed services were sufficient to veto sites proposed by the employing ministries and, to add to the complications, the Commander-in-Chief was already in February 1941 recommending that "*for operational reasons*" the alien internment camps in the South East at Lingfield, Ham Common, Ascot and the London Oratory Schools should be removed to less vulnerable locations. Chief Constables from counties as widespread as Dorset, Lancashire and Cumberland objected to proposed camps on the ground of public order, fearing clashes between unescorted German POW and United States troops or, in counties like Kent and Sussex, with civilians who "*have suffered so severely from enemy action*" (WO 199/408).

However, by December 1941 planning for 1942 and 1943 was already in hand and the Ministry of Agriculture regularly submitted lists of *reserve sites* for approval by the home forces command with supporting reconnaissance surveys on water supply, drainage, electricity

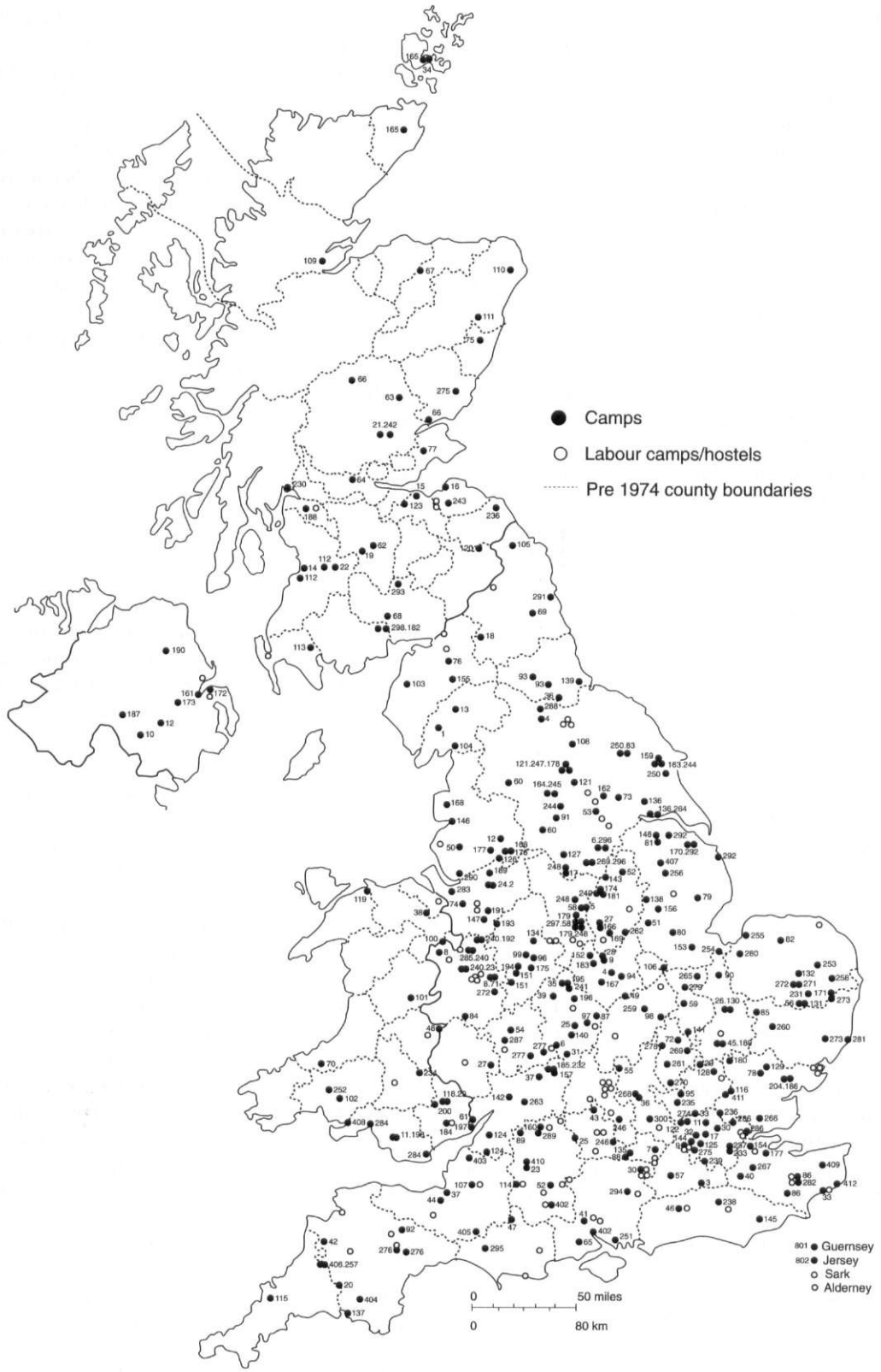


Fig. 8: Principal German POW camps in Britain, 1944–1948
Hauptlager deutscher Kriegsgefangener in Großbritannien 1944–1948

and railway access. Such sites were given "clearance" on *security* and *operational* grounds by the military authorities, whereas sites were approved on what were termed *medical* and *engineering* grounds by the Ministry of Works and Planning.

Until at least December 1942, the military authorities at GHQ *"were opposed to disclosing the geographical whereabouts of Prisoner of War Camps on operational grounds"* (WO 199/406).

Expansion and diversification

The final phase of camp building is shown in Figure 4, compiled from War Office lists of the POW camps, and demonstrates the dense network which delivered at its peak a German POW labour force of c. 330,000 men. In the spring of 1945, apart from the purely transit camps, officers' camps, hospitals and a few special status camps for training (as at Wilton Park) or the YMCA camp (at Norton), there were still only 50 base camps, 27 labour camps with 9 under construction, and 9 labour companies for the c. 150,000 German POW already in Britain.

Detailed distribution maps have apparently not survived in the War Office files. Colonel H. FAULK commented that: "*Maps of camp locations certainly existed as a necessary convenience for charting the establishment and disbandonment of camps, but they had no function beyond that and were not retained*" (Personal communication dated 16.9. 1996). However, the Official German History of this period includes not only numerical lists of Camps 1 to 1026, and the geographic location of the most important camps, but also provides four maps covering the main/transit camps and the work camps in the British Isles (WOLFF 1970).

These German maps form the basis of Figure 8 and include the camp numbers, although it should be noted that, when comparisons are made with War Office and contemporary Red Cross lists, not all camps were in existence at any one time and inevitably some errors needed correction here. In the absence of a discernible system or logic, the use of camp numbers rather than names in the official records generates no little confusion in consequence, as some camps were closed down or re-allocated for other purposes, whilst others were arbitrarily re-numbered or even shared the same number at several sites separated by several miles.

In the course of researching the vexed subject of a definitive camp inventory, the most telling comment was found in the archives of the CIRC in Geneva in a letter dated 15 March 1948 from the London delegation to the Geneva office in response to a request for a list of all camps. The writer noted: *"We think it would be almost impossible to compile such a list such as the American authorities are asking for, and any attempt would be very confusing and serve no useful purpose. Not only have numbers and location of camps in Great Britain changed continually, but as you know, it has frequently happened that a camp at the same location has had a succession of different numbers, and a camp with the same number has moved to a succession of different locations. Furthermore, nowadays many camps continue to exist in their old locations, but are known as satellites or hostels of other camps, and have no longer a number of their own. We ourselves could certainly not compile a list of all camps which have ever existed, and we very much doubt if the War Office could either, as their staff has changed considerably during the years, and most of their departments are now closing down"* (CICR Geneva, File G17LOC/4024). Some fifty years later the reader might well wonder to what extent such apparent disorder and disorganisation extended to the day-to-day running of the camps themselves.

Table 3: Total numbers of POW camps in Britain by county for the period 1944–1948

Gesamtzahl der Kriegsgefangenenlager in Großbritannien nach Grafschaften geordnet, für den Zeitraum 1944–1948

England					
Bedfordshire	8	Herefordshire	1	Shropshire	16
Berkshire	9	Hertfordshire	9	Somerset	7
Buckinghamshire	6	Huntingdonshire	3	Staffordshire	13
Cambridgeshire	8	Isle of Man	2	Suffolk	7
Channel Isles	2	Kent	15	Surrey	8
Cheshire	9	Lancashire	12	Sussex	6
Cornwall	4	Leicestershire	9	Warwickshire	13
Co.Durham	6	Lincolnshire	16	Westmorland	3
Cumberland	4	London	5	Wiltshire	13
Derbyshire	7	Middlesex	7	Worcestershire	5
Devon	12	Norfolk	10	Yorkshire	33
Dorset	4	Northamptonshire	7		
Essex	12	Northumberland	8		
Gloucestershire	9	Nottinghamshire	9		
Hampshire	21	Oxfordshire	7		
Northern Ireland					
Armagh	2	Co.Down	3	Tyrone	3
Scotland					
Aberdeenshire	2	Fifeshire	1	Refrewshire	1
Angus	1	Invernesshire	1	Ross & Cromarty	1
Ayrshire	3	Kincardineshire	1	Roxburghshire	1
Banffshire	1	Kirkcudbrightshire	1	Stirlingshire	2
Berwickshire	1	Midlothian	5	Sutherland	1
Caithness	1	Lanarkshire	2	Wigtownshire	3
Dumfriesshire	5	Orkney	1		
East Lothian	2	Perthshire	3		
Wales					
Breconshire	3	Denbighshire	1	Monmouthshire	6
Cardiganshire	1	Flintshire	1	Montgomeryshire	1
Carmarthenshire	3	Glamorganshire	3	Radnorshire	1
Caernarvonshire	1				

Table 4: Main and satellite camps, hostels and hospital in North East England, 1946

Haupt-und Satellitenlager, Arbeitslager und Krankenhaus in Nordostengland 1946

Camp Name	Population	Hostels
18 Featherstone Park	3927	Plen Meller
69 Darras Hall, Ponteland	1159	Bothal Barns (Ashington) Catton (Allendale)* Colwell (Whittington) Druridge Bay, Eshott (Tynemouth) Kitty Brewster (Blyth) Prestwick, Raylees (Otterburn)* South Gosforth Wylam
93 Harperley, Crook	948	Bedburn (Hamsterley) High Spen (Rowlands Gill) Lanchester Langton Grange (Staindrop) Usworth (Sunderland)
105 Wooler	1134	Cornhill (Coldstream) Craster, Ellingham, Haggerston Hetton House (nr. Wooler) Hurworth (nr. Darlington) Low Lynn (Beal), Rothbury Westwood (Wooler), Whittingham
139 Wolviston Hall	447	Bishop Middleham Billingham Cowpen Bewley (Billingham) Coxhoe Hall, Kiora (Norton) Manor Farm (Hartlepool) Sedgefield
667 Low Byrness Redesdale,	442	
669 Tyne J. Camp Gosforth Newcastle	n.a.	
Military POW Hospital, Bishop Auckland	217	
Working Party, Walworth Castle, Darlington	n.a.	

Source: HARRISON, A. (1996) and Army Northern Command

* Catton, Colwell and Raylees are recorded in Die Zeit am Tyne as Featherstone Camp hostels.

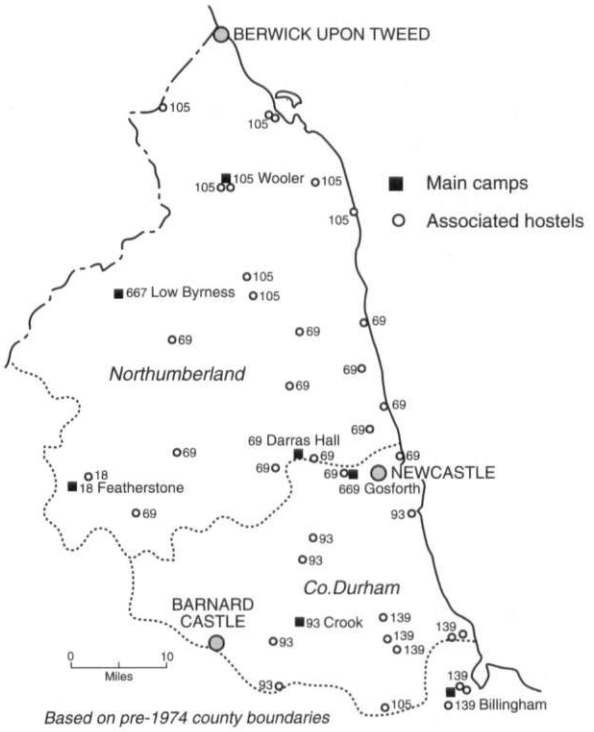


Fig. 9: North East England: location of main and satellite POW camps and hostels, 1946

Nordostengland: Standorte der Haupt- und Satellitenlager und Arbeitslager von Kriegsgefangenen 1946

The geography of the camp settlements generally correlated well with major areas of arable farming in lowland areas of Britain. Yorkshire, with 33 camps, excluding satellites and hostels, had by far the largest number, equivalent to 7.5% of the national total. Lincolnshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Essex and Shropshire each accounted for 3–4% of camp numbers. In Scotland Dumfriesshire, headed the list with 5 camps, and in Wales Monmouthshire had 6. Overall England had about 83% of the camps, Scotland 10% and Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands the balance (WOLFF 1970, 28). Although it has only proved possible to locate archival records of a minority of the *individual camp* POW populations, figures of agricultural workers, disaggregated by *county*, are a useful proxy and are discussed below.

The maximum number of camps listed by the "old" pre-1974 counties collated from a location list dated 5 January 1945 (WO 199/408) and supplemented by the lists in the German History of 1974 (WOLFF), and those of the International Red Cross in Geneva, is detailed in Table 3 and should be read in conjunction with Fig. 4. Whereas England had only one county (Rutland) with no main camp, Scotland had no camps in 12 counties, Wales none in 3, and Northern Ireland camps in only Belfast and Co.Down and Armagh.

Academic interest in the camps and the interaction between POW and the host population continues to bring to light detailed research from non-military historiography which bears upon the extent of these camps and their dispersed populations. HARRISON's recent work on the spiritual welfare of German Roman Catholic POW in North East England, based on diocesan files, is just such an example, making available statistics on an entire region's camp and hostel infrastructure not to be found in the PRO or other official archives (HARRISON 1996).

In a list of main camps and hostels dated July 1946 and provided by the Army's Northern Command,

HARRISON collated information on the 7 POW camps in the diocese, with 36 associated hostels, and in some cases their overall population. These data are recorded in Table 4 to illustrate both the remarkable extensiveness of these locations and in the hope that searches of other diocesan and church archives, might make possible a much more detailed inventory across Britain of the POW hostels in particular. The distribution of these camps and hostels is shown in Figure 9, and confirms the relatively dense network which reduced "journey to work" times, although there are frequent criticisms in *Hansard* and elsewhere that POW effectively only worked from 9 till 4 each day.

POW camps as settlement types

Although all the camps were designed and built to accommodate POW in a limited range of hut types behind a secure perimeter fence, as FAULK has preceptively noted: *"No two camps were exactly alike and consequently the camp itself was the psychological unit of imprisonment. Each camp evolved a tone, an atmosphere of its own, consisting of socially approved attitudes and opinions which were obvious to all and understood by all"* (FAULK 1977, 33).

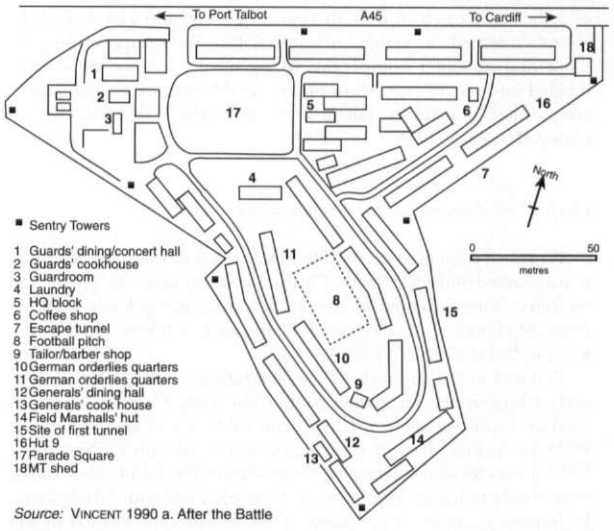
General orders governing the conduct of all camps were promulgated in two government documents: *Orders for Prisoners of War Camps in the United Kingdom* (1941) and *Administrative Instructions for Prisoners of War Camps and Working Companies* (1945). But whether they contained 5000 prisoners or 25, as settlement types the 1500 POW camps and hostels were markedly heterogeneous.

Certain camps had enjoyed an existence far removed from that of a prison before they were requisitioned, and reverted to their former role after 1948. One such case was Camp 13 at Shap Wells near Penrith, a former spa hotel built in 1833 and rebuilt in its present form in 1914 to 1916. Set in high Cumbrian fell country, its upper floors were originally used to house German naval and air-force officers considered escape risks. It later became a special camp for about 50 "white" officers. Another was Camp 300 at Wilton Park near Beaconsfield, which was first used as an interrogation centre with Latimer House and Trent Park, later becoming a relatively luxurious "cage" for high ranking officers. Known officially as the "Training Centre", but somewhat improbably to some German inmates as the "dream palace" or "democrat factory" after it was opened in January 1946 to provide six-week re-education courses to selected prisoners, estimated by 1948 to have totalled one per cent of all German POW. The name Wilton Park was deliberately retained by the British Foreign Office when it established its college at Steyning in West Sussex, but no trace of the nissen-hutted camp remains today (cf. oblique aerial photograph in VINCENT 1990, 47).

Since so few site plans have survived and later reconstructions from aerial photographs or ground survey are of only limited value unless former camp staff or inmates can be found to identify the function of individual buildings, this section will present five relatively well documented and contrasting cases as settlement types. The internal arrangements of camp buildings and functions varied considerably, not least because single accommodation blocks might house between 15 and 120 POW. Using Red Cross reports, WOLFF (1974) provided a useful functional division for Camp 22 in Cumnock, Ayrshire, which housed 3,400 POW. Of the 166 barrack huts, 110 were designated for living/sleeping space, 9 each for ablutions, latrines and sick-bays, 5 each for cookhouses, dining halls and workshops (tailors, cobblers etc), 4 for shower rooms, 3 for drying rooms, and 1 each for the chapel, theatre, canteen, hobby shop and delousing chamber, with 2 unused. This proportional share of roughly two/thirds of POW buildings given over to living huts and one third to their other needs appears to have been commonplace, judged by the Red Cross camp inspection forms, and is demonstrated in the site layout of Eden Camp and of Goathurst Camp in Figures 12 and 13.

Camp 11/198 (Island Farm Camp): Glamorgan

First occupied by munitions workers and later by American infantry, this camp described in 1990 as still standing virtually untouched, has been the subject of detailed field research (VINCENT 1990), not



Source: VINCENT 1990 a. After the Battle

Fig. 10: Island Farm Camp, Bridgend, Glamorgan
Lager Island Farm, Bridgend, Glamorgan

Photo 1: Former Camp 18. Surviving brick buildings with camp bakery (foreground) and accommodation Block (camp radio, chaplains' offices etc.) beyond (1998)

Das ehemalige Lager 18. Erhaltene Backsteingebäude mit Lagerbäckerei im Vordergrund und Unterkunftsblock (Lagerradio, Pfarrerbüros etc.) weiter hinten (1998)

least because of the successful escape through a tunnel by 66 POW in March 1945. After an enquiry it was almost immediately emptied of prisoners and converted from a "cage" to a "special camp" (and re-numbered Camp 11) to house those senior German officers not accommodated at Grizedale (Camp 1) or at Wilton Park (Camp 300).

From January 1946 all the senior officers were housed at Camp 11, which was located outside Bridgend on the A48 Cardiff to Port Talbot road in the undulating country of the Vale of Glamorgan, and these generals and the four field-marshalls, including von Rundstedt, were provided with single rooms. A further 130 junior ranks, serving as batmen, cooks and mess orderlies, were separately accommodated (VINCENT 1990) .

Although VINCENT describes the camp plan (Fig. 10), which lacks a scale, as "by no means definitive" because the purpose of some buildings remains unknown, the outline clearly shows what was a mixture of prefabricated accommodation blocks and brick-built ablutions blocks each with a tower housing a water tank and boiler typical of most other POW camps. Surrounded by a security fence, Island Farm included 8 sentry towers around the periphery, and was of sufficient size to include both a parade ground and a football pitch. VINCENT records a double enclosure within the camp, forming an inner and an outer compound. Many of the larger camps were divided into secure "cages" to house the different categories (black, grey, white) of prisoner, but in most the barbed wire was entirely removed by early-1946.

Camp 18 (Featherstone Castle): Northumberland

Camp 18 presented a very different scale and character, although it was linked indirectly with Camp 11 when General Heim was recruited from Bridgend as the new German camp leader in May 1945 (SULLIVAN 1979, chapter 9: Camp of Confidence, and SULZBACH in BREITENSTEIN 1976).

Situated in the grounds of a castle largely reconstructed in the early 19th century, but dating back to the 13th, Camp 18 was first used as a training camp for American soldiers and later for Italian POW in the first phase of camp construction. Already by November 1942 it was listed as having accommodation for 5,150 other ranks, second only to Lodge Moor Camp (17) in Sheffield with 8,100 places. Its isolated location on the banks of the South Tyne framed by the fells of the northernmost Pennines earned for it the name of Death Valley from its first inhabitants, American troops, on account of its remoteness (SULLIVAN 1979).

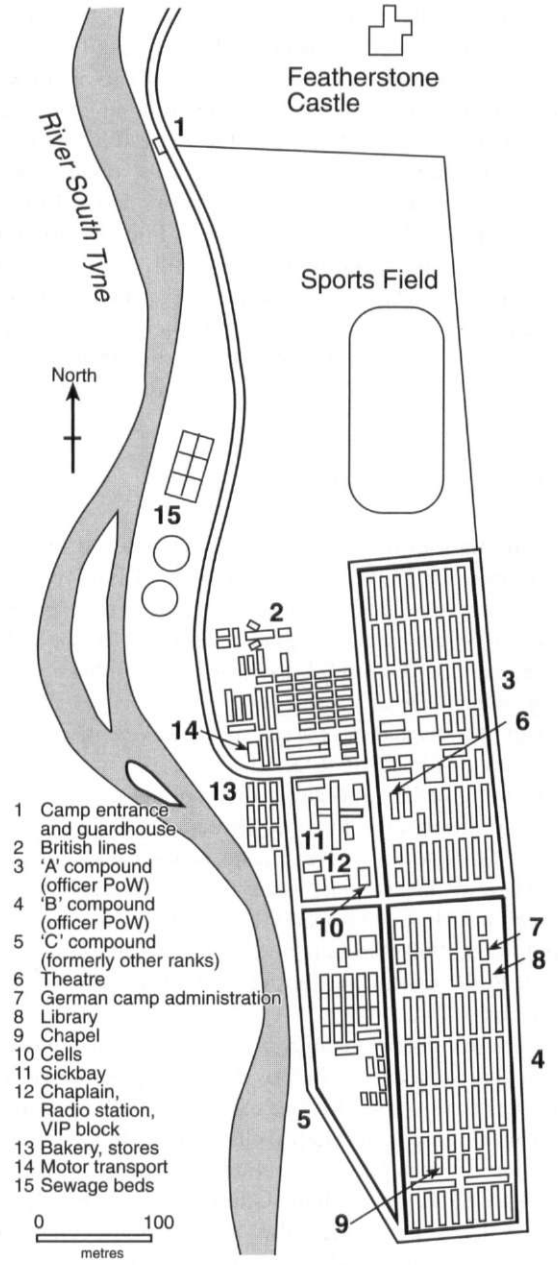


Fig. 11: Featherstone Camp, Haltwhistle, Northumberland

Lager Featherstone, Haltwhistle, Northumberland

Despite its important role as one of the two main officer camps – the other was Camp 186 at Llanmartin near Newport, Wales – no camp plan has apparently survived, although the author has reconstructed a plan from a 1946 aerial photograph (Fig. 11). The camp newspaper, Zeit am Tyne, published from June 1946 to March 1948, contains an artist's sketch of the Bayrischer Platz in the north camp and two photographs of Camp 18 in its final issue, and an issue dated March 1947 published drawings of three of the four satellite hostels. The first hostel at Plenmellar opened in December 1945 as an overflow camp with 120 POW, and the three smaller ones housed a total of 200. Since under the Geneva Convention commissioned officers were under no obligation to work, the others were all volunteer work

Photo 2: Aerial view of former Camp 21 (Comrie) still in active use as Cultybraggan. Army Training Camp, with many surviving nissen huts in 1998

Luftansicht des ehemaligen Lagers 21 (Comrie), heute Militärausbildungslager mit vielen erhaltenen Nissenhütten (1998)

camps – Catton in the Allen valley was opened in June 1946 and was, according to the March 1947 issue of Zeit am Tyne, followed a month later by Raylees, a former radar station near Otterburn, and Colwell at Whittington. HARRISON (1996) assigns all three to Camp 69 at Darras Hall, and one must assume that hostels were supplied with POW labour from different base camps. All the POW were involved in agricultural and road drainage work, and in summer a further 40, and in winter 25-30, officer POW were billeted directly on farms in the area.

At times Camp 18 held 4,000 or more German officers, plus some 600 German orderlies, who were housed in the standard prefabricated timber and nissen huts in groups of 80 to 100. The camp included nearly 200 separate huts, arranged in an elongated grid extending roughly 1.5 kilometres along the South Tyne and separated from the now dismantled railway from Haltwhistle to Alston by a narrow belt of wooded hillside. From late-1945, as with most camps across the country, the barbed wire perimeter fence was removed. Today a few intact brick-built structures survive, together with the now disused sewage farm, the hut foundations, and the camp gate with a commemorative plaque erected by members of the former prisoners' Featherstone Park Association (HELLEN 1997 b).

These surviving foundations once supported the housing for a range of activities and facilities which made Camp 18 a small, densely populated but sophisticated township. SULLIVAN described it as "a huge adult education centre, with its law school and language school, numerous vocational and cultural courses and political study groups"; it contained not only a large library, but four stages, one a marionette theatre, another for operetta and light entertainment, but also two rival playhouses, the Theater der Zeit and Theater am Tyne. Were it not for the literature and media reports in both English and German which celebrated many of the positive aspects of this particular camp, it would be hard to envisage the life led by these transient communities. Elsewhere it was the rule that, in FAULK's graphic words: "The British side controlled every physical need of life - the supply of food, clothing and heating, accommodation, work, finance, hygiene, transport, discipline and medical services. … Among themselves the POW possessed only a cultural and psychological life of their own" (FAULK 1977, 36).

Camp 21 (Comrie): Perthshire

Like Featherstone Castle, Comrie (Fig. 12) was among the 24 POW camps already in existence by late-1941. Situated in a remote corner of Perthshire at the lower end of Glen Artney and virtually on the banks of the Tay, overlooked by mountains rising to 500–700 m, it was well suited to its role as a maximum security camp and housed large numbers of ardent Nazis, including members of the Waffen-SS. The whole was divided by barbed wire into 5 separate cages, two of which were for officers. Comrie became notorious for the domination and intimidation exercised by the "black" POW over those regarded as anti-Nazi and defeatist. In December 1944 it was the locus of the murder by a secret court within the camp of a suspected traitor, Rostberg, thought to have betrayed a planned mass escape at Le Marchant Camp (23), in Devizes before his transfer with 32 ringleaders to Comrie. The so-called "Devizes Plot" (DE NORMANN 1986) led to the High Court trial and execution in Pentonville Prison of five of these POW, to the transfer of all 2000 officers in a single day, and to the disbanding of the camp in 1945.

Today Camp 21 continues to be used by the British Army under the name "Cultybraggan Training Camp", and many of the camp's original nissen huts are still maintained as accommodation for up to

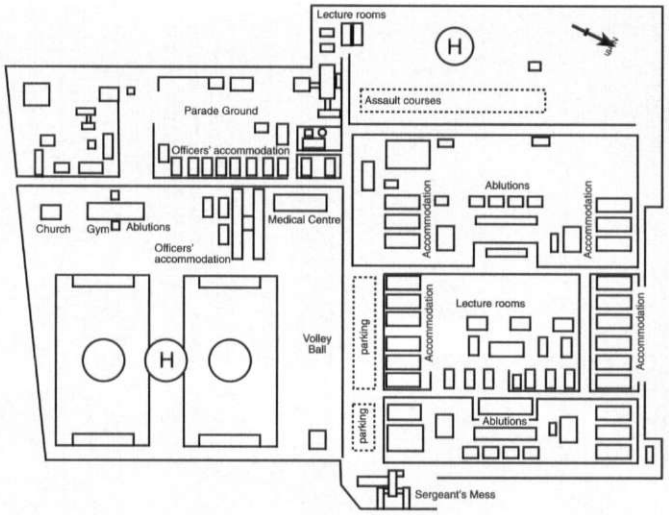


Fig. 12: Comrie Camp, Cultybraggan, Perthshire
Lager Comrie, Cultybraggan, Perthshire

650 personnel who are sent there on exercises. Figure 12 illustrates the contemporary land use of this military settlement, which retains some of its wartime huts but has in part replaced them by football pitches, helicopter pads, an assault course and parking space. The brick-built water towers, like the old cell block (now an armoury) are still conspicuous, but plans are in hand for a complete rebuilding programme in 1999. Camp 21's foundations will perhaps shortly disappear beneath military redevelopment and become part of Britain's military archeology.

Camp 44 (Goathurst): Somerset

The small Goathurst Camp (Fig. 13), just outside Bridgwater, is included because an excellent site layout plan survives of this small German working camp housing up to 750 POW and providing agricultural labour for a fertile part of Somerset. The POW compound with adjacent soccer pitch and vegetable garden, together with the more scattered accommodation for the military and ministry of agriculture personnel, and a camp chapel, occupied only a very small part of an extensive site and like many camps of similar size was barely visible to the public behind the screening trees. In plan it was probably typical of the many camp settlements of this size which were purpose-built.

A history of wartime Somerset (HAWKINS 1988) includes an appendix on the 8 POW camps in the county and records that Goathurst initially housed Italians, 500 of whom were living in and c. 200 living out on local farms by 1943. From July 1944 Camp 44 was vacated for German POW, the Italians being transferred to another camp at Cannington.

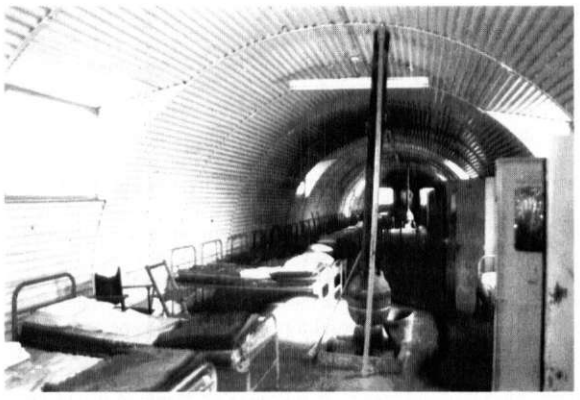


Photo 3: Former Camp 21 – nissen hut interior, still in use for British Army personnel

Das ehemaligen Lager 21 – das Innere einer Nissenhütte, die heute noch von der britischen Army genutzt wird

Camp 83 (Eden Camp): Yorkshire

Situated on the northern fringe of Malton in Yorkshire, Eden Camp (Fig. 14) occupies a special place in the geography of British POW camps insofar as it has been privately restored as a war

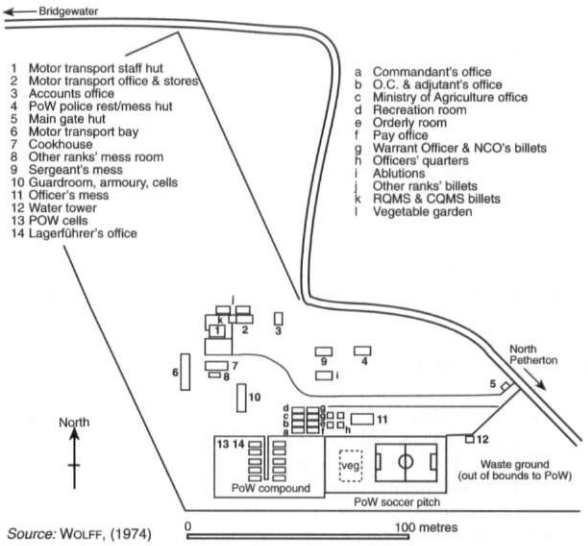


Fig. 13: Goathurst Camp, Bridgwater, Somerset
Lager Goathurst, Bridgwater, Somerset

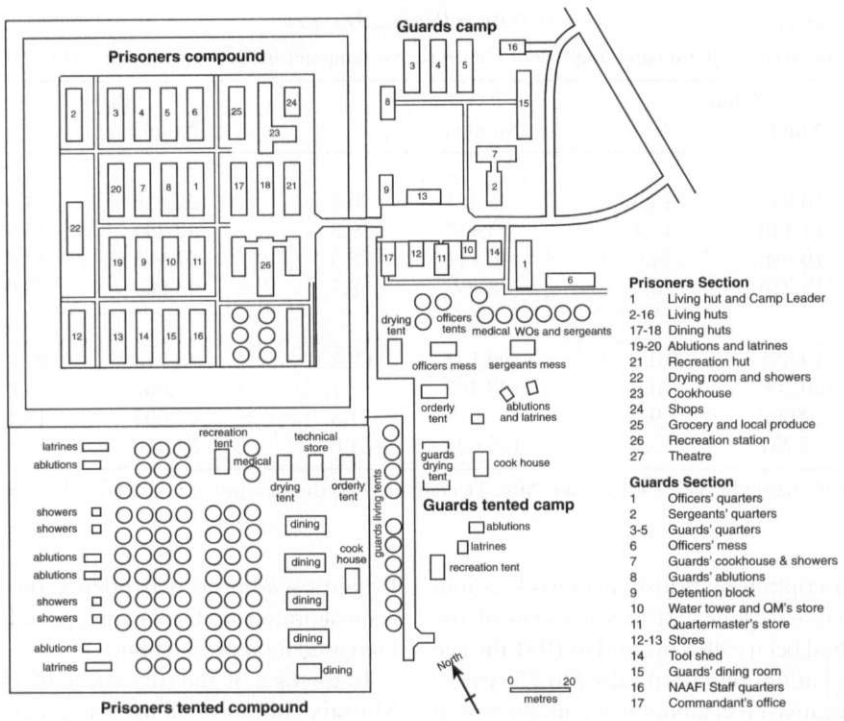


Fig. 14: Eden Camp, Malton, North Yorkshire
Lager Eden, Malton, North Yorkshire

museum since 1986. The site occupied 8 acres and the layout plan reproduced here illustrates how this compact camp, erected on a level site in 1942, provided both hutted and tented accommodation for 250, and later up to 1,150, prisoners and their guards. The camp was built by a private contractor and handed over on completion to the military police, responsible for the camp's overall security, and the military guards who escorted POW to local farms each day. Of the 45 huts, only 18 were used for housing 64 men each, the remainder providing the hospital, mess hall, chapel, ablutions etc. Most of the huts have survived and one still preserves the interior and contents of the POW period, with others housing exhibition material and static displays on the wider theatres of the 1939–1945 war.

The Camps and the Labour Market

Under the 1929 Geneva Convention the employment of POW was closely regulated. Article 9 forbade their use in areas exposed to the fire of the fighting zone; Article 31 required that they should have no direct connection with the operations of war, and Article 32 forbade the employment of POW on unhealthy or dangerous work. After the collapse of Italy in 1943 and the introduction of "*co-operators*", who were permitted to work without restriction as to locality and without escort, the problem of using large numbers of British military personnel for guard duties was significantly reduced. Nevertheless, as Figures 11 to 14 show, the accommodation set aside for guards and administration made up a substantial part of those main camps where German POW were held in increasing numbers, until they began to move outside the camps in the autumn of 1944.

The problem of dealing with ardent Nazis was a real one, particularly during the years when the outcome of the war remained uncertain. External discipline was the responsibility of the British under a camp commandant, whereas internal camp discipline was delegated to German NCOs under a Lagerfuehrer. As already noted, all German POW were screened and classified as "*white*", "*grey*" and "*black*", and this was profoundly important in terms of a segregated workforce. As late as July 1945 the "blacks" (see Table 5) were in the majority and made up disproportionately of younger, often fanatical, men of up to 35 years who had effectively known no political system but National Socialism. During the war years sorting POW into such political categories had the effect of producing "*screened camps*", the "*white*" ones in theory free of Nazi domination and allowed to function without guards (FAULK 1977, 80). After the war, and with the progressive collapse of social cohesion within the POW populations, re-education and denazification could proceed, but the cumulative proportion of "*black*" POW remained above 50% until August 1945, that of "*greys*" rising from 30% to nearly 82% over the 20 months recorded below.

Table 5: Political categorization ("screening") of German POW in Britain, 1945–1947

Politische Kategorisierung („Untersuchung") deutscher Kriegsgefangener in Großbritannien 1944–1947

Date	"White" Number	%	Grey" Number	%	"Black" Number	%	All POW
1945							
April	10,948	15.3	21,821	30.4	38,938	54.3	42.8%
May	11,148	14.4	23,453	30.3	42,730	55.3	40.6%
August	16,936	24.0	46,711	38.6	57,413	47.4	60.4%
December	19,238	12.3	93,793	59.7	43,968	28.0	78.7%
1946							
February	19,835	10.5	99,182	60.8	43,718	27.0	77.6%
May	20,706	10.5	133,385	67.7	42,867	21.8	52.6%
August	22,602	9.3	172,979	71.3	47,003	19.4	61.7%
November	7,254	3.1	189,601	81.8	34,890	15.1	62.7%

Source: WOLFF (1974), based on War Office data. After December 1946 the monthly lists ceased to be cumulative totals

Given the conscription of British farm workers into the armed services - by June 1940 six per cent of the male workforce had been called up, and in 1941 the age for reserved occupations had been raised to 25 years – demand for alternative farm labour was a major reason for bringing Italian and German POW to Britain in two overlapping "waves". Such was the shortage of farm labour that the Women's Land Army was re-formed in 1939 and not disbanded until 1950. Founded in World War I as an experiment, at its peak in 1943 87,000 of these women were employed in the regular workforce across the United Kingdom, whereafter women recruited into war work were directed to munitions factories and numbers fell back to c. 50,000.

As early as June 1941, 26,000 Italian POW had been "earmarked" to provide agricultural labour, and the War Office papers record that by June 1944 no less than 108,246 Italian POW were employed in service and civilian work, 13,525 being directly billeted on farms and 16,800 in 260 hostels and 30 labour detachments across the country.

It is not appropriate here to explore the details of the contribution made by POW farm workers to a precarious domestic, and later constrained world, food supply, save to set in historic context its overall importance (DAVIS 1977; MCKENZIE 1994). When the *County War Agricultural Executive Committees (WAECs)* and the Ministry of Food were set up in 1939 to raise output and productivity and to improve the marketing and distribution of wartime food supplies, British farming was, in land-use terms, dominated by pastoral and agricultural husbandry and still emerging from a long agricultural crisis marked by depression, neglect, and - under-capitalisation. It was ill-equipped in 1939 to respond to the call, in the face of German threats to Britain's sea-borne dependence on food imports, for re-invigorated arable farming, land reclamation and increased food production.

In the face of the submarine blockade of Britain, a Ministry of Agriculture campaign encouraged the ploughing-up of permanent grassland, which was to affect over 5 million acres between 1940 and 1943 and to lead to an intensified, more highly mechanized agriculture and steadily rising productivity (BROWN 1987; MURRAY 1955), ultimately increased demand for extra farm labour. The number of male and female "*regular*" workers in the United Kingdom overall, which had stood at 663,140 in 1939 – with a further 140,386 "*casual*" workers - peaked at 724,936 and 231,532 respectively by 1943.

Such an intensification of farming could be met only in part by an additional 50,000 "*land girls*", 8,000 conscientious objectors and a few thousand labourers recruited from Eire, and at harvest times up to 350,000 adult (holiday) volunteers and school children, with service personnel drafted as and when available, raised the total to well over 1.3 million at peak periods.

The first 969 German POW "*specially selected for labour purposes*" arrived in the UK on 20th January 1944. Unflattering though it may now seem, a contemporary Commons question which asked whether the Minister accepted "*the suggestion that Germans, who are our enemies, are better workmen than Italians, who are our Allies?*" (*Hansard:* 7 December 1944, col. 723) may indicate the extent to which attitudes towards and among the Italian POW had changed since the first intake made up predominantly of peasant farmers from Southern Italy in July 1941, who were regarded as "*particularly suitable for employment on farms and on land reclamation work*" (SPONZA 1996).

Table 6: German POW participation in the British workforce, 1944–1948

Beteiligung deutscher Kriegsgefangener an der britischen Arbeiterschaft 1944–1948

Year/Quarter		Total POW	Working number	POW as %	Agriculture number	Agriculture as %	Other number	Other as %
1944	I	1,750	85	5.0	n.a.	n.a.		
	II	6,500	335	5.0	n.a.	n.a.		
	III	46,300	4,630	10.0	n.a.	n.a.		
	IV	126,150	17,000	13.5	16,000	94.1	1,000	5.9
1945	I	148,170	37,500	25.3	n.a.	n.a.		
	II	195,400	50,000	25.6	n.a.	n.a.		
	III	209,350	70,000	33.4	n.a.	n.a.		
	IV	209,430	118,120	56.4				
1946	I	230,520	183,000	79.4	100,800	72.7	37,800	27.3
	II	352,080	279,650	77.4	163,000	58.4	116,000	41.6
	III	391,880	330,000	84.9	158,000	52.9	140,500	47.1
	IV	368,300	259,650	70.5	n.a.	n.a.		
1947	I	328,950	213,820	65.0	n.a.	n.a.		
	II	280,000	168,380	60.1	127,000	73.4	46,000	26.6
	III	269,980	173,000	64.1	n.a.	n.a.		
	IV	184,100	92,050	50.0	n.a.	n.a.		
1948	I	109,700	43,880	40.0	n.a.	n.a.		
	II	34,270	10,280	30.0	n.a.	n.a.		

Sources: WOLFF (1974) and *Hansard*

The official agricultural employment statistics (the *"June Schedule"*) for the period 1939 to 1948 demonstrate the growing importance of POW working on agricultural holdings throughout the country, although separate figures are available only from 1944 in England and Wales, from 1946 for Scotland, and for individual counties throughout Britain from 1946.

Demoralization, defiance and indiscipline increased among some members of this now heterogeneous group after their country's defeat in the summer of 1943, and the recent work by SPONZA is particularly valuable in demonstrating the complexities of their transition from enemy to allied status. This change may have left the Italians "*at the bottom of the pile of desirable foreign labour*" in 1945, but it triggered very similar parliamentary criticism in late 1946 of government preparedness "*to use the slave labour of a conquered nation, to bolster up the restrictionist economy that they want*" (SPONZA 1996, 221).

Notwithstanding these ethical issues, by March 1945 of the 150,000 German POW in Britain approximately one quarter were being employed (*Hansard:* 28 March 1945, col. 1397). Two months later, after the cessation of hostilities, a further 250,000 were "*earmarked from holdings*" (largely in Belgium, but some from America) for employment in the UK, notwithstanding the precedent that between 1914 and 1918 a maximum of 63,000 German POW had been employed in Britain and that by 1919 all German POW in Britain had been repatriated between September 24 and November 19, 1919. Of this "*compulsory labour*" 154,000 were needed to replace Italian POW awaiting repatriation. By January 1946, the 194,500 German POW already outnumbered the 142,000 Italians (with other nationalities, an overall total of 353,044 POW) and by July 1946 all Italians had been repatriated.

Parliamentary written answers provide only periodic information on the changing balance of Italian and German labour in particular sectors of the economy up to this date, and WOLFF (1974), who had no access to the papers in the Public Record Office, has commented on the imprecision of, and gaps in, the numerical data released in parliamentary answers. Certainly the official Ministry statistics of POW working in agriculture show striking inconsistencies when compared with parliamentary "answers": the former registered 91,366 in June 1946 (M.A.F. 1952), whereas the latter registered a 1946 peak of 212,000 (*Hansard*: August 2, col. 283) which, if accurate, equated in global terms to a quarter of the entire UK workforce engaged in farming. The introduction to the agricultural statistics for the 1939–1944 period comments that in 1944 farmers were required for the first time to furnish separate figures for WLA members and POW employed, but that occupiers' returns appeared "*to understate the numbers of members of the W.L.A. and prisoners then at work*" when compared with the statistics collected through the county branches of the WLA and the County WAECs.

Table 7: German and Italian POW employment by sector, January 1946

Beschäftigung deutscher und italienischer Kriegsgefangener im Januar 1946, nach Sektoren geordnet

Government Department	Germans	Agriculture Italians	Total
Ministry of Agriculture (E & W)	94,300	48,600	142,900
Dept. of Agriculture for Scotland	6,500	3,800	10,300
Totals	100,800	52,400	153,200
Department	Germans	Industry Italians	Total
Ministry of Works (housing sites, building materials, manufacture etc).	30,000	3,700	33,700
Ministry of Supply (iron & steel, non-ferrous metals, storage etc)	nil	4,800	4,800
Board of Trade (timber production Fertiliser industry etc)	4,800	6,500	11,300
Ministry of War Transport etc)	2,000	9,900	11,900 (railways and roads, quarries, canals
Ministry of Food (milk, milling, Seed oil threshing)	800	2,750	3,550
Ministry of Fuel & Power (gas coal distribution)	200	1,150	1,350
Totals	37,800	28,800	66,600

Source : *Hansard* 14 March 1946, 245–246

Notwithstanding such reservations on county and farm-level returns, the summary in Table 6 provides the best available indication of the increasing dependence on German POW at a time when many British servicemen were still awaiting demobilization, and 45,000 enlisted farmers and farm workers were still engaged in military duties elsewhere (*Hansard: Lords*, 5 March 1946, col. 1090). The official agricultural employment statistics (the "*June Schedule*") for the period 1939 to 1948 demonstrate the growing importance of POW working on agricultural holdings throughout the country, although separate figures are available only from 1944 in England and Wales, from 1946 for Scotland, and for individual counties throughout Britain from 1946.

That 56,166 Italian co-operators were working by May 1944 and by May 1945 118,000, has already been noted. The numbers of German POW working in agriculture peaked at 163,000 men by the summer of 1946, although the agricultural ministry/departmental returns for the three constituent countries of the UK show only 91,366 POW as regular workers in 1946 and 88,324 in 1947; casual workers, numbering 165,892 and 170,265 persons in the two respective years, are differentiated only by age and sex, but presumably included POW in their number.

With the growing manpower shortage, the camps and hostels therefore became increasingly important in their changing role as labour barracks rather than prisons for the German POW. Parliamentary proceedings reflected this development and the growing concern among MPs that better use should be made of POW. As early as mid-1943 one had noted that: *"in the last war the Germans had every prisoner of war card-indexed and put him in his peace-time occupation" (Hansard:* 3 August 1943, col. 2062*)*. In post-war Britain the range of work undertaken was relatively narrow compared to such a systematic approach, although POW labour became important in the massive programme of reconstruction and recovery (Tab. 7). Some men were directed to the housing programme and were employed in road-making, sewer construction, housing site preparation and general civil engineering work, some to a range of miscellaneous occupations from laying post-office cables to cleaning beaches under the direction of "*user departments*", others were employed by the War Office on "*camp duties*" and "*labour duties*". Despite the numbers of former miners amongst the POW and the fact that 50,000 Germans were working in French coalmines by March 1945, any attempt to employ them in coal mining was resisted.

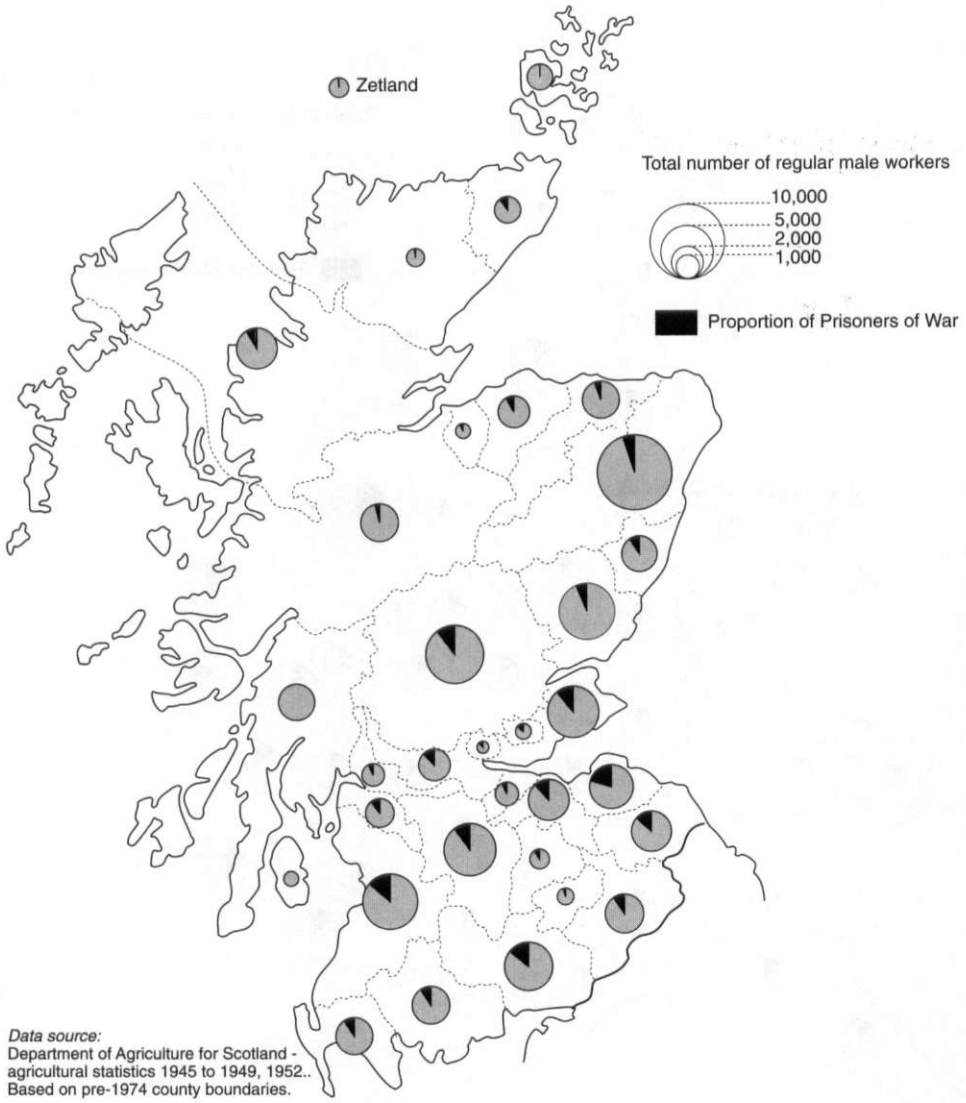


Fig. 15: POW and the agricultural labour force in Scotland, 1946
Kriegsgefangene und die landwirtschaftliche Arbeiterschaft in Schottland 1946

Although the POW contribution was undeniably vital in the war years, in its aftermath it was eventually to raise considerable concern over the ethics and political expediency of prolonging compulsory labour as a *de facto* form of war reparations. The Bishop of Chichester argued that this response to a domestic manpower crisis employed Germans as "*serf labour*" on British farms (cf. Lords Debate on German POW and Internees, 12 February 1947, *Hansard:* col. 561–608). Depending on their skilled or unskilled status, they were paid at an hourly rate of three-farthings to a penny-halfpenny, or up to six shillings per 48-hour week, at a time when the minimum wage for a labourer was 75 shillings a week.

This most "visible" sector of the POW labour force lends itself best to geographical analysis. Using annual returns of the number of prisoners employed on agricultural holdings by county (Figs.15 and 16), the geographical distribution of this POW component of the agricultural workforce can be graphically demonstrated. In absolute numbers the June 1946 return of POW employed on agricultural holdings showed that Lincolnshire, with 7,437 out of 36,026, and Yorkshire, with 6,310 out of a regular workforce of 43,193 had the highest concentrations. These counties were followed by Norfolk with 4,390 POW in a workforce of 31,084 regular farm workers, Essex with 3,558 of 23,841 and Kent with 3,121 of 28,957. Westmorland had the

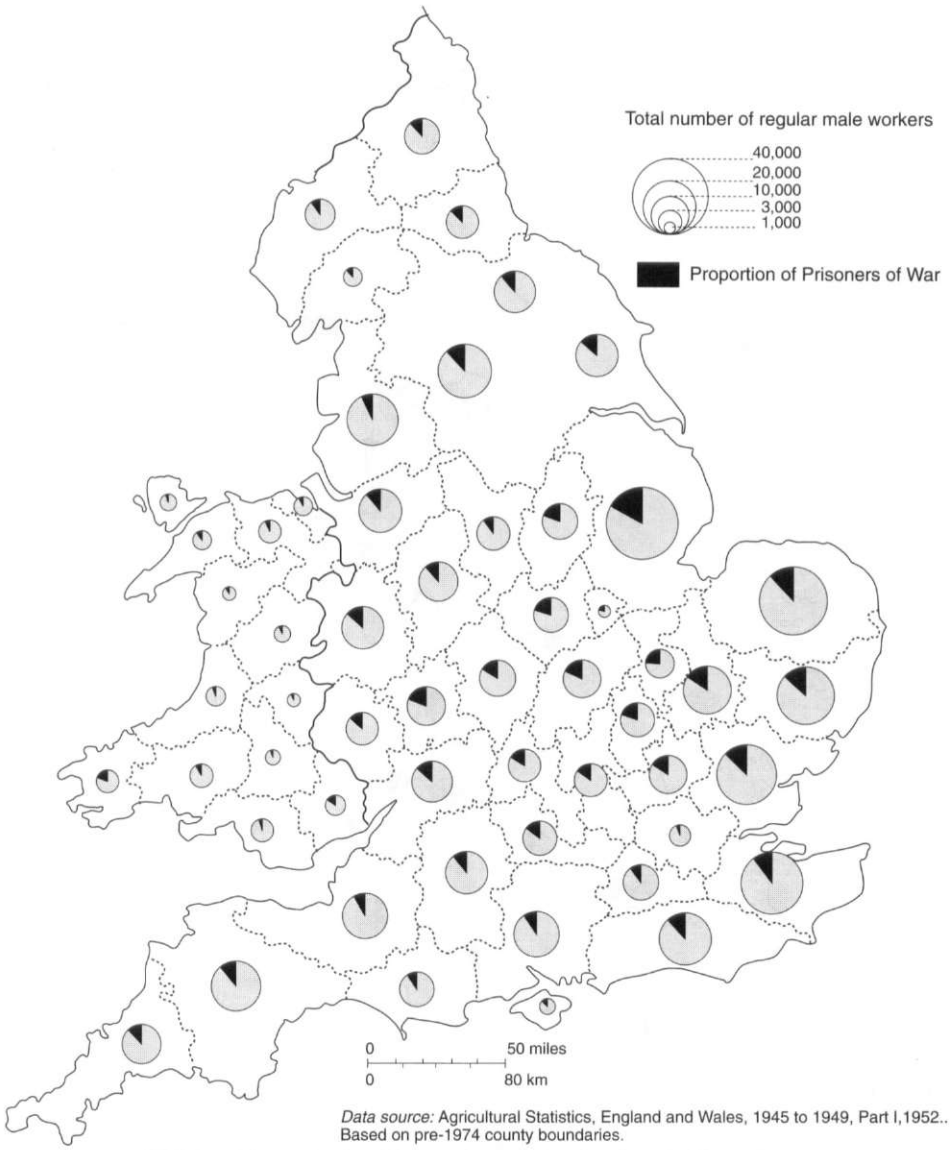


Fig. 16: POW and the agricultural labour force in England and Wales, 1946

Kriegsgefangene und die landwirtschaftliche Arbeiterschaft in England und Wales 1946

lowest number of POW among the English counties (346 of its 2,678 regular workers). In Wales only Pembroke, with 875 of 3,541 and Monmouth with 575 of 2,949 substantially exceeded this figure, whereas in Scotland Ayr with 860 of 8,331, East Lothian with 854 of 4,712, Dumfries with 690 of 5,272 and Perth with 681 of 7,936 were markedly dependent.

According to MURRAY (1955, 273), the labour productivity of POW was rated between 0.65 (billeted) and 0.45 (non-billeted) when measured against a regular British male worker over 21 years, rated at 1.00. Notwithstanding this "adjustment", the POW formed a substantial part of the farming workforce in most counties, a fact which is a striking feature of the maps of Scotland and of England and Wales for 1946. These maps of Scotland and of England and Wales underscore the importance of the 1,500, largely rural, camp settlements which delivered POW to farms for three full years after the end of the war in Europe.

The expected food shortages had persisted in both Britain and mainland Europe after 1945, and Germany required massive imports of grain from America: distribution problems were exacerbated by the harsh winter of 1946–47, but by the summer of 1948 the food crisis had ended (TENT 1992). It is interesting to reflect that some food rationing continued to operate in Brit-

ain until 1954, long after it had ceased in Germany in 1949 and all POW had been repatriated. Had the original plan to transfer upwards of 730,000 Germans to Britain after May 1945 been implemented (MOORE 1996, 37), every second or third farm worker in many counties might have been a captured or surrendered German and the camps and hostels discussed here would probably have numbered in excess of 2,500 sites. No less than 25,252 of the German POW "*elected to stay in Britain*" after 1948, many of them remaining as farmworkers or marrying into farming families. In a newsletter to former German POW in Britain, dated May 1999, G. LIEBICH has estimated that 25% of this number had since died, and a further 15% had emigrated to North America and Australia or returned to Germany by 1999 (G. B. C. LIEBICH, personal communication).

It is perhaps not generally known that whilst German POW were still widely employed in Britain, the British government was actively recruiting immigrant workers in Germany from October 1946 under the aegis of four programmes; operation "*Westward Ho*" alone brought 74,412 workers to the country between April 1947 and December 1950 (STEINERT 1996). Ironically, some were housed in former POW camps redesignated as hostels as they were vacated by fellow Germans.

An interim assessment and conclusion

This research has sought to fill a gap in the recorded geography of the POW camps as a short-lived but important feature of Britain's landscape. It has pointed up the remarkable spread of a network of military prison settlements during the period 1940 to 1948, and the equally remarkable absence of a coherent official record which would help in explaining the process of change which transformed these originally clandestine prisons into the raw material of military archeology. Not enough is known about the camps collectively to attempt here any re-interpretation of their overall historic importance or the flow of POW between them, although it seems clear that as sources of compulsory labour the inhabitants played a significant part in post-war recovery, most notably in agriculture.

Some answers to the questions of how sites were selected, constructed and used have been presented, but the research agenda on prison camp geography outlined here remains immense, not least because the exigencies of wartime conditions and the restrictions of military and official secrecy made, and still make, such work particularly difficult. On several grounds, further research is a matter for urgent action as part of a co-ordinated rather than a piecemeal programme. Those who were once involved in the operation of the camps, or who were detained in them, form a fast-disappearing group, and with their demise the individual and collective memory will be lost for ever. Where French geographers in particular have provided model studies of the impact of the armed services on the landscape both at home, as in the evolution of the French military real estate in France (LE MOULT 1986), and abroad, as in the French military occupation in Germany from 1945 to 1993 (ENGELS-PERREIN 1997), comparable British research has been limited.

Published in December 1998, and after completion of the research reported here, a massively documented and illustrated history of the Wickrathberg POW Camp T E A-9 near Mönchengladbach in Germany (REINERS 1998), set up by the Allies in 1945, has been added to the camp literature. A model of meticulous fieldwork and archival research, it provides an impressive reminder of work which might still be attempted by military geographers and military historians in Britain on some of their own major camps.

However, the *Defence of Britain* project has been timely in responding to the task of recording wartime buildings and other structures and its inventories will surely provide the raw material for more detailed analysis. The *Deserted Medieval Village Research Group's* county gazeteers and recommendations for selective preservation of sites (BERESFORD a. HURST 1971), has since 1952 provided an example of what might be done. Once clandestine settlements, the former prison camps are now deserted relics of a war fought, on land if not in the air, exclusively outside mainland Britain. Military geography, at least in this sense of their historic record, seems deserving of revival.

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