

BATTLE of BATAFIELD
INVESTIGATION SOCIETY

Warriors Through the Landscape

An Appreciation of
Norton & Carburton POW Camps
1944—48



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Mercian
Archaeological Services CIC



At Carburton Camp: Supporters shelter under the tree of knowledge (and also from the rain)

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Suggested Reading

Thresholds Of Peace: German Prisoners and the People of Britain 1944 – 1948
By Matthew Barry Sullivan

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to all contributors, especially Robert Ilett, Mrs. June Ibbotson, Astrid and Chris Hansen, David Kay (for that phone call !), Mercian Archaeological Services CIC and the project supporters who endured the rain in their mackintoshes at Carburton Camp.

Lest we forget (the obvious), again, total appreciation to Mike Condon for the artwork and visual flair in this publication, without which, this would be much less arresting.

Foreword

Setting the Scene

By: Paul Jameson
BOHIS Chairman

The idea underpinning the Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society's (hereafter "BOHIS") Heritage Lottery Fund ("HLF") project title, "Warriors Through The Landscape" was an examination of the diversity of possible military consequences upon the landscape through the ages (largely around Cuckney) but also to assess the corollary, ie. how the landscape might have impacted military fortunes.

BOHIS gained £58,000 funding in February 2018 and the project started in May, possessing 3 major strands.

1. An invasive search for Cuckney Castle via digging 2 trenches
2. Topography (ie. Landscape studies – 3-D landscape modelling also utilising LIDAR to reveal features followed by, "Ground Truthing" (investigating the clues provided by LIDAR).
3. Academic research of Norton & Carburton POW camps (as we initially could not gain access to either of the camps)

In searching invasively for Cuckney castle via 2 trenches we hoped to find evidence left by warriors from the anarchy of Stephen & Mathilda (1135-54).

Synergistically, we were also striving to reveal elements of Saxon cultures (c. 410 – 1066) and possibly evidence from the Battle of Hatfield (632) itself, although the latter was always ambitious.

Did the River Poulter (as part of the landscape) trap fleeing soldiers allowing them to be caught and slaughtered?

In academically researching the 2 POW camps (and latterly obtaining permission to visit Carburton camp) we hoped to reveal a wealth of information from a variety of sources and then assemble those experiences, disseminating via 300 copies of an HLF funded POW book.

The anticipated data sources were previously published POW camp articles and 2 presentations kindly provided by local historian, Robert Ilett.

We also advertised our 2 presentations and interactive workshops in 3 local papers, and it was hoped that lots of people would attend & share their experiences and that they too could become part of the Community book.

However, things rarely run to plan, Robert Ilett's presentations & the interactive workshops were both very poorly attended, yet still very interesting for the few who made the effort.

Additionally, further academic research did not reveal a large quantity of information about the camps.

This all seemed to be culminating in a struggle to produce a worthwhile document, yet these things have a habit of evolving organically (necessity being the mother of invention) and some great alternative sources were revealed which could be even better than those anticipated.

Firstly, we visited local resident, Mrs. June Ibbotson, (3 times) to fully understand and document the wealth of her materials. Especially revealing are the 1973 and 1995 Norton Camp Reunion albums. She has also provided some background information about German POW sculptor extraordinaire, Franz Egmont Seibel.

This links to another story

Way back in early 2017, a local Cuckney resident called David said that he had just been visited by a gentleman called John Hansen, who lived near Bradford.

John had resided in David's house (for at least a year between 1945 and 1948) and was obliged immediately with a guided tour of the property by David, the owner.

Within a couple of weeks I rang John, who asked if he and his brother Chris could meet (probably one Saturday) in Cuckney in the near future.

To my eventual annoyance, I didn't immediately take him up on his offer, because I explained that we had not even presented an HLF grant bid (never mind secured one!) and that it was therefore premature to meet.

Now I know differently and will treat similar future scenarios in a different manner.

BOHIS were then awarded a grant in February 2018 and very soon afterwards I rang John again to arrange a meeting.

His wife Astrid answered and informed me that he had recently taken ill with suspected (& subsequently confirmed)

brain cancer and that he could not take my call personally.

Since then I have communicated with Astrid and John's brother, Chris on numerous occasions.



Our local advertising campaign

From Astrid Hansen, (John's wife) 25/5/18

Unfortunately events overtook John and Chris's intentions to visit Cuckney but I have found what I can from family notes. Their father, Pastor Wilhelm Hansen, was a minister in the Deutsche Evangelische Kirche (Lutheran).

From 1930 to 1957 he was in England. He had responsibility for several German congregations in England, coming to Bradford in 1933. The war of course interrupted this work and he was interned on the Isle of Man 1939-45. From 1945 to 1948 he was YMCA Secretary and Director POW Work, Norton Camp, mainly we think concerned with those trying to trace their families.

During this time he lodged at the farm in Cuckney and for part of the time, his wife and sons rented the cottage where David now lives. John is not sure how long they were there, but at least a year. The boys attended the local school. John must have been about ten, Chris a few years younger. John remembers riding a big farm horse. They had a kitten which had the misfortune to jump into a tin of paint with potentially fatal consequences, however it was cleaned with a paint solvent and thoroughly washed and while this was being done, prisoners at the camp rigged up a drying chamber heated with electric light bulbs and the kitten survived and lived to a good age.

The camp was obviously seen as a perfectly safe and suitable place for Mrs Hansen and the boys to visit. One of the POWs was a sculptor, we think he was quite well known but neither John nor Chris can remember his name. He sculpted very good busts of the two children, which we still have. I'm attaching a photo showing the young man with Mr & Mrs Hansen, Chris (the curly haired one) and John. You are welcome to use this and the information, such as it is.

The distinguished theologian Jurgen Moltmann was a POW at Norton and has written about his time there.

From Astrid and Philip Hansen, (John's wife and Son) 13/7/18

John Hansen 24 September 1937 – 10 July 2018

We are very sorry to have to inform you that John passed away a couple of days ago and as a friend of his we know you would want to know.

Please forgive the very impersonal nature of this email, but I am sure you will appreciate we have a lot of people to get in touch with in light of the huge number of people who knew him.

We are sorry if this comes as a shock if you didn't know he was ill, but he was diagnosed with brain cancer in April and lived out his last three months in contentment, peace and no pain at the excellent Cottingley Hall Care Home. Philip and I were with him at the end and take comfort from the fact that his end was very peaceful, with no distress, pain or drugs.

John's funeral will take place at 12 noon on Thursday 19th July at St. Matthew's Church, Wilsden, Bradford – a place with which he was closely associated since the early 70s. It will be followed by celebratory drinks at the New Inn, another Wilsden institution with which he was very familiar.

Astrid: "One of the POWs was a sculptor" ...

His name was Franz Egmont Seibel.

As part of our journey through June Ibbotson's materials we discovered some facts and photos of him, including one in later life. Franz died in 2006.

Astrid: "He sculpted very good busts of the two children, which we still have ..."

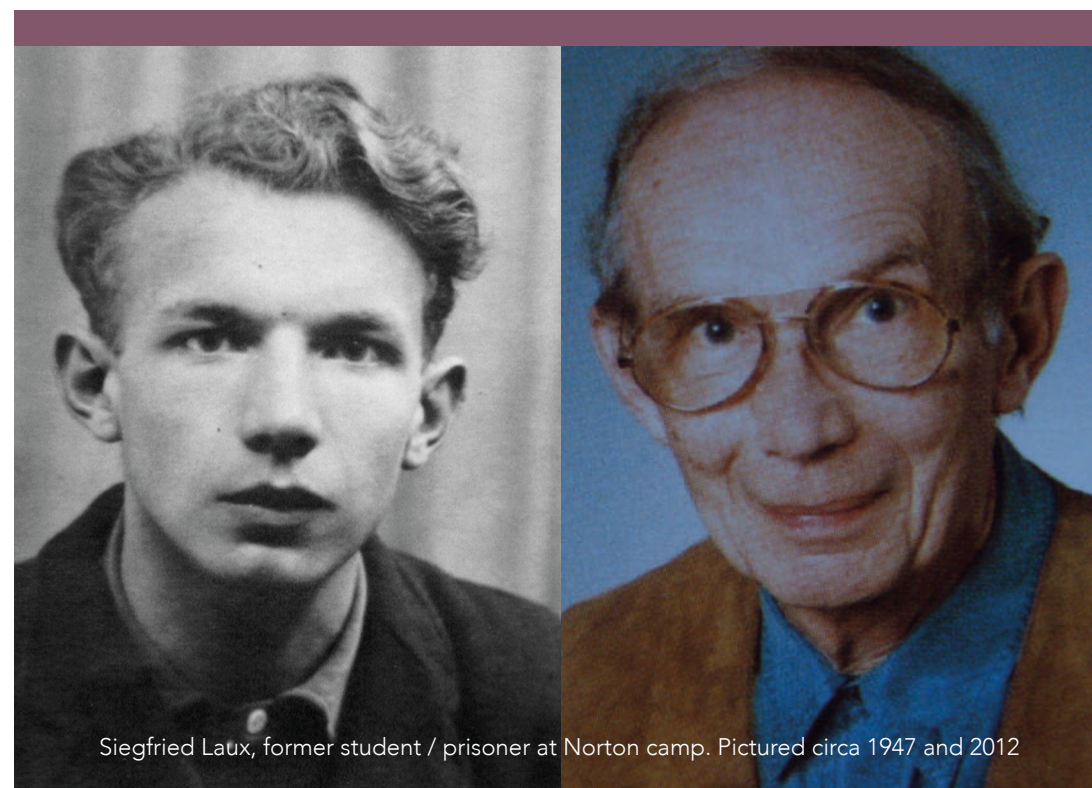
Thanks to Astrid and to John's brother Chris, we now have a variety of pictures of these busts and we think that you'll enjoy seeing them as much as we first did. Personally, I think that they are superb!

Introducing Robert Ilett



Robert Ilett is a Worksop man who after retirement from his legal practice has pursued research into local history to have local people and events recorded before memories fade away completely.

Robert is the author of 'Whose Memorial' a work describing the restoration of a medieval chapel at Worksop Priory church as Worksop's second war memorial and also a short biography of Worksop's First World War V.C. Bill Johnson in conjunction with Bassetlaw District Council to commemorate the centenary of the action for which the award was made.



Siegfried Laux, former student / prisoner at Norton camp. Pictured circa 1947 and 2012

Sixty years after the closure of Norton Cuckney Camp I decided that unless the local memories of the camp were recorded that its remembrance could be lost forever.

This set me on the road of not only talking to long standing local residents but also, as will be seen from the sources, of a period of study of the background to the often tragic events which affected the men who became occupants of the camp.

Eventually I was able to make contact with Siegfried Laux, a former student / prisoner, in Germany. We developed a mutual respect and friendship, with Siegfried providing me with much information and other material to enable the camp experience to be personalised.

My thanks are due to local residents Colin Taylor, Mary Stokes, June Ibbotson and to the Welbeck Estates Company for allowing access to the, now returned to parkland, camp site. Chris Adams and Alex Doody have willingly given of their time in helping with translations from the German. The late Muriel Godfrey kindly effected the introduction to Siegfried Laux.

I have been able to develop a better understanding of the terrible time in European History covered by the life of the camp and particularly the suffering inflicted on so many ordinary people both in and out of uniform. A similar study by any politician keen to go to war would and should give rise for serious reflection.

Robert Ilett
Retford - August 2015



Siegfried Laux, pictured with Robert and Catherine Ilett

The Golden Cage

Norton Camp

By: Robert Ilett

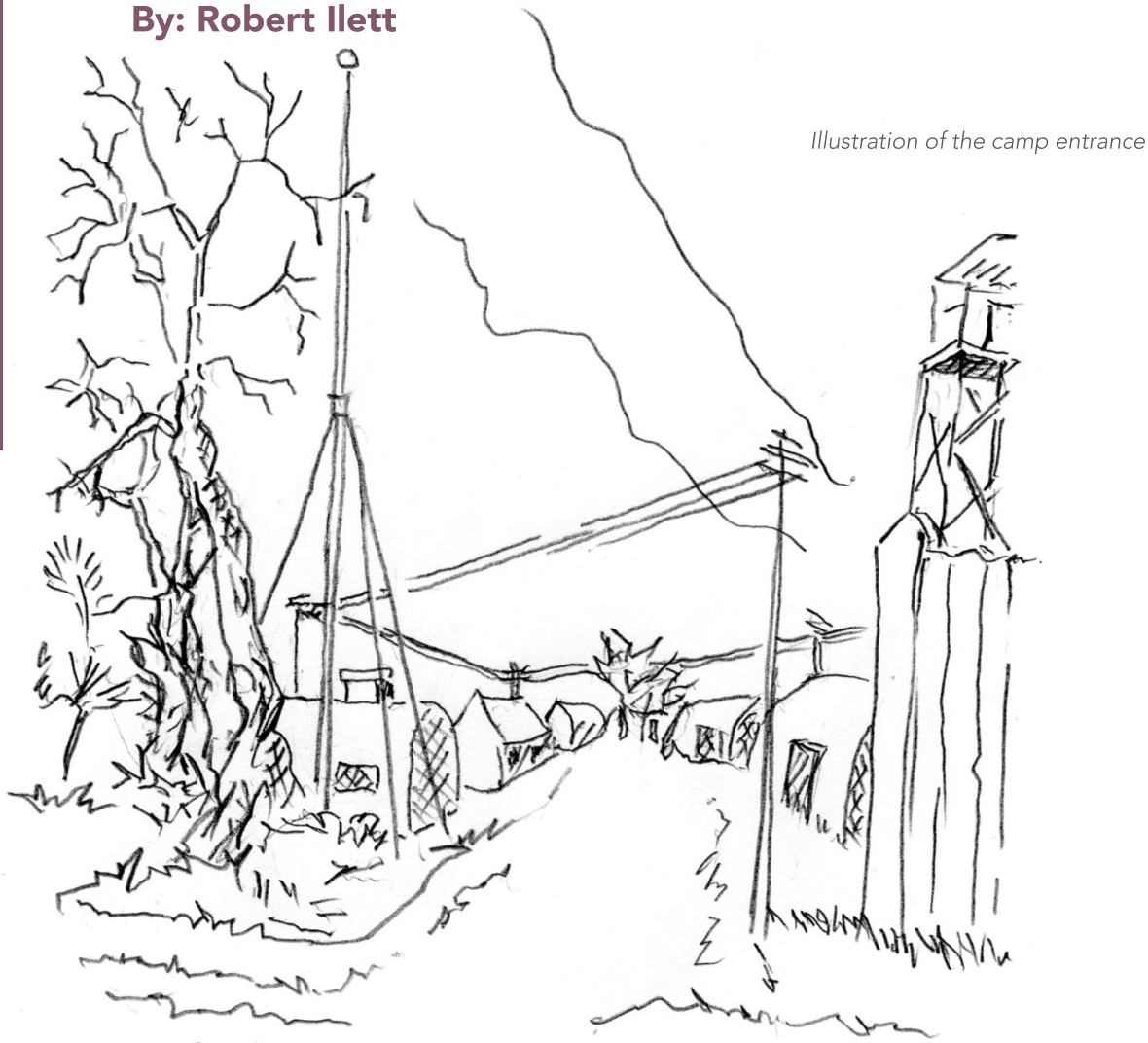
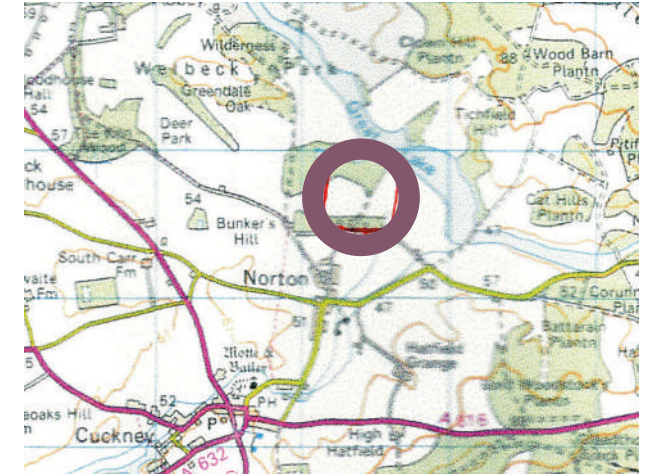


Illustration of the camp entrance

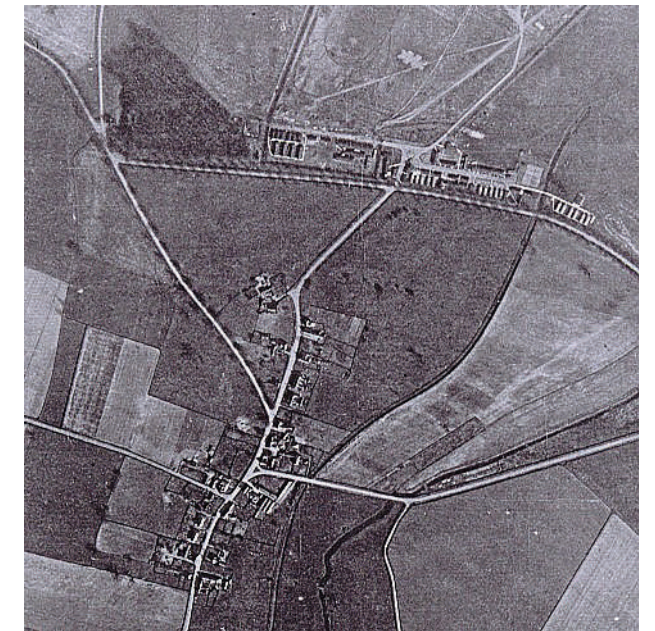
Sketch of the gateway, designed by Frank Canning

It was only ten days after the dropping of the first atom bomb on Hiroshima in Japan that, in stark contrast, a ceremony took place in parkland on the Welbeck Estate in North Nottinghamshire putting down a small marker of hope for the future. On 16 August 1945 an open air ceremony marked the opening of a Study Camp at the prisoner of war camp 174 at Norton Cuckney on the South Western edge of the estate. Over 250 German prisoners were addressed at the ceremony by an American John Barwick, a Swedish Lutheran Pastor Birger Forell and the senior German Chaplain Damrath. A camp choir had already been formed and sang two hymns together with Mozart's 'Brother stretch out your hand' as part of the ceremony accompanied by the eight members of the camp orchestra.

John Barwick was the representative of the International Red Cross and had a long record of service in ensuring the fair treatment of those who could be put in peril. He was described by Matthew Barry Sullivan as 'impulsive, brash, immensely energetic and helpful and very American'. John Barwick represented the YMCA in the Middle East both before the Second World War, as Foreign Work and World Service Secretary for Palestine 1923 / 1926 and after when he issued a significant report of the Kibya (Qibya) massacre by the Israeli authorities and their use of American arms. He was also the author of the 1941 Report on Aliens interned in Britain. Without doubt it was his interest in and dynamism which contributed to the change of status and use of Norton Cuckney Camp.



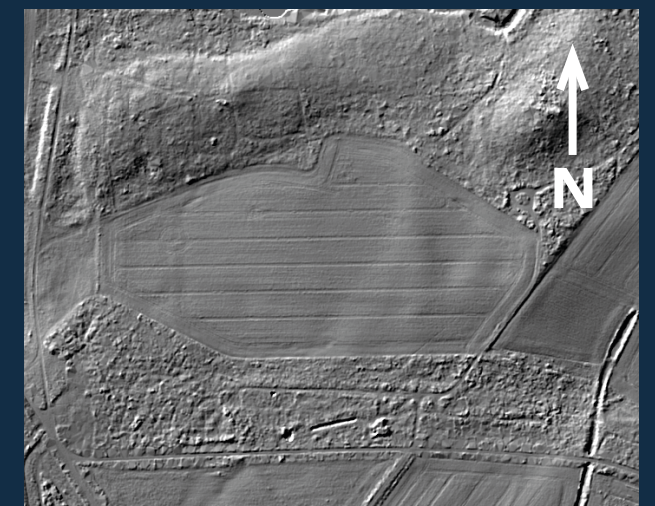
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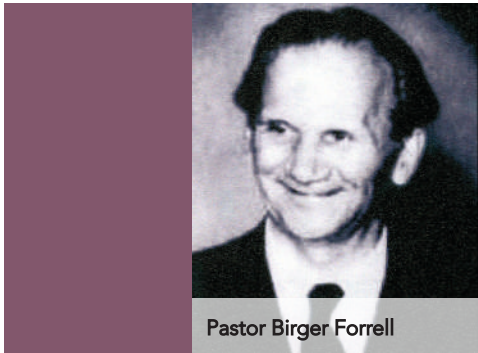
Norton Camp entrance



The entrance to the Norton Camp as it stands today



2018 LIDAR survey of Norton Camp



Pastor Birger Forrell was born at Soderhamn in Sweden in 1893 and in 1943 as Pastor of the Carolikirche at Boras in Sweden he was appointed by the World Council of Churches to take care of German

Prisoners of War in England and Scotland. He had met Gandhi in 1927 in India but his visit was shortened due to the sad death of his two children. Because of his work with prisoners and refugees he was called the father of prisoners of war and brother of refugees. He continued his work after 1945 in Germany when he negotiated the creation of a village for the housing of returning refugees.

The purpose of the camp established at the instigation of the YMCA and Birger Forell was to provide education of carefully selected young Germans prisoners who had not had the opportunity to complete their Abitur, the final school leaving examination, and also included a faculty of theology for the training of both Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy. The International Red Cross acted as the supervising authority.

Within a few weeks the camp, which had a total capacity for 400 men contained 30 officers and 263 other ranks. Until the previous June the camp had housed German officers some of whom had been *nasty Germans*, as described by one local resident, many of whom were committed National Socialists and therefore categorised as 'Black' prisoners who had caused trouble at Bridgend Camp in Glamorgan and at the nearby Carburton camp. The new occupants were 'White' prisoners and in the fullness of time were recognised locally as *nice Germans*.

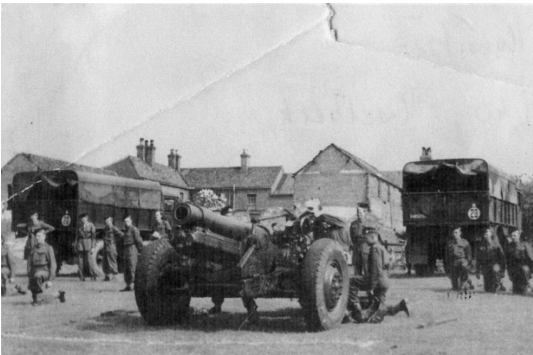
During 1940 the whole of North Nottinghamshire became a location for the training of troops and the storage of munitions. The estate adjacent to Welbeck, Clumber Park the ancestral home of the Dukes of Newcastle, became 24 Ammunition Sub Depot of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. On 1 January 1940 Norton Camp saw the arrival of the mounted regiment the Scottish Horse Yeomanry who were dehorsed, during the terrible winter and mainly quartered under canvas, to become the mechanised 79th (Scottish Horse) Medium Regiment RA on 15 February and the 80th (Scottish Horse) Medium Regiment RA on 15 April. In the Autumn of 1940 these two regiments moved to Leicestershire to complete their training with one then seeing service in North Africa and Italy and the other in North West Europe after D-day.



Prisoners selected to complete their Abitur

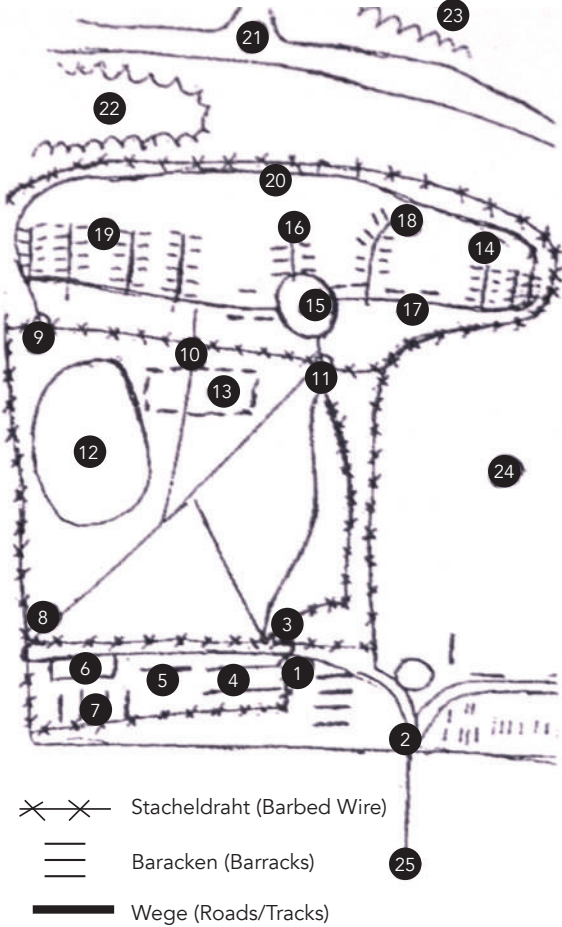
In the last days of 1940 and the first days of 1941 British troops captured so many Italian prisoners in the North African desert that at one stage they were counted by the acre. According to the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden 'Never had so much been surrendered to so few'. The North African prisoner accommodation, called cages, was so limited that the prisoners, over 200,000 in number had to be dispersed to India, Australia and Southern Africa. At the same time the Ministry of Agriculture was pressing for the use of Italian prisoners of war as agricultural labourers and also to work on drainage and reclamation work. Non military work of this nature was permissible under the terms of the Geneva Conventions. By the end of 1941 over 9,000 Italians were so employed giving rise for the need for hutted camps, the construction of which was planned to be completed by October 1942 and it was during this phase of building that the hutted camp at Norton would have been constructed. There is local recollection of it being occupied by Italians whose unruly attitudes were contrasted with the 'correct' behaviour of later German prisoners.

The United States declared war on Japan, but not Germany, following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour of 7 December 1941 but it was Adolf Hitler himself who delighted Winston Churchill by immediately declaring war on the USA in what must have been one of his prime misjudgements of the war. Within a month Churchill and the American President had met and decided on a policy of defeating Germany first before dealing with Japan.



The Welbeck Estate played host to many Army units between 1941 until after the end of the war but particularly in the build up to D-Day (6 June 1944). Canadian and American units, in addition to British Army units, were stationed there and indeed it was an American medical centre which provided health facilities to Norton Camp after the end of the war. The Canadian troops were especially respected and well liked, in some cases well loved, locally evidenced by the numbers, of mainly young women, who arrived at Worksop railway station to say their goodbyes when the rumour of the Canadian departure in the late Spring of 1944 circulated.

Prior to the late Summer of 1944 there was only a limited number of German prisoners in Great Britain and these were mainly Luftwaffe and U-boat crews who had fallen into British hands. The limited number of Germans captured in 1940 had mainly been sent to captivity in Canada and those taken in the North African desert campaigns were transhipped to the USA and Canada.



1	Prison Gate	German gatekeepers at the gate
2	Street Gate	Unarmed British Guards
3	Gate to the Barracks	
4	Accommodation	Professors, headmaster and speakers. Sick bay.
5	Workshops	Tailors, cobblers and barbers. Kitchen storeroom
6	Kitchen	
7	Mess Halls	I Permanent staff II/III Students IV Professors
8	Recent camp exit	
9,10,11	Access to barracks through barbed wire	
12	Sports ground	
13	Vegetable garden	
14	Theological camp	
15		
16	Managers accommodation	With library, quartermaster's store, information room and YMCA welfare staff accommodation
17	Reading Room	Access to British and German newspapers. Showers, wash room and toilet block
18		
19	Teachers' training camp	Accommodation. Work and reading rooms. Stationery stores. Cinema. Catholic Chapel
20	Perimeter path	
21	Assumed lakeside track or lake	
22	Wood	
23	Deer viewed	
24	Meadow	with cluster of trees
25	Road	To Norton village

However following D-Day, and particularly after the closing of the Falaise Gap blocking the escape route of German troops in the Falaise Pocket of whom some 500,000 were taken as prisoners, the numbers of prisoners progressively increased from 7,922 in July 1944 to 207,000 in June 1945.

All were screened after capture and placed in categories of Black, C and C+, the national Socialist (NAZI) extremists, Grey, B, men who although usually National Socialist were essentially decent men who had done their duty serving the Fatherland and White, A, those men who were not National Socialist. Later a further category was introduced dividing prisoners according to age so as to distinguish between those younger men who had known only a National Socialist society, those of the age group which had brought Adolf Hitler to power many of whom were unswerving fanatics serving his cause and the older men who could remember life under democratic institutions.

A change of the situation for Italian prisoners occurred in 1943 when, after the fall of the fascist dictator. Benito Mussolini, negotiations took place in July between the Allies and the new Italian government led by General Badoglio. Although the Allies had a policy on unconditional surrender by Germany and Japan the American president insisted on negotiations with the Italians, there were many Italian voters in the USA and elections were approaching. Because its forces had borne the brunt of the fighting against the Italians, Britain only reluctantly accepted the proposal and had great concern for the 74,000 British prisoners in Italian hands.

The result was that after 8 September 1943 Italy became a 'Co-Belligerent' against Germany meaning that there could be a gradual relaxation of restrictions placed on Italian prisoners in Britain with many moving into hostel type accommodation or actually living on the farms employing them. Thus camp space was freed up for German prisoners.

German prisoners arrived at Norton Cuckney in the late summer and autumn of 1944 and as has been shown accommodated the extremists from Carburton in the spring of 1945. All German troops had sworn a personal oath to Adolf Hitler in the form "I swear to God this sacred oath that to the Leader of the German empire and people, Adolf Hitler, supreme commander of the armed forces, I shall render unconditional obedience and that as a brave soldier I shall at all times be prepared to give my life for this oath". It is difficult to countenance Tommy Atkins or Jack Tar swearing such an oath or that King George would expect them to but to all German soldiers the swearing of an oath could not lightly be ignored and many who by 1945 were not sympathetic to the cause still felt bound by the oath. However the end of the war in Europe in May 1945 following the suicide of Hitler saw an acceptance of failure of National Socialism and the need,

however reluctantly to accept a democratic way of life by the majority of the prisoners. This process was helped by the compulsory viewing of films showing the conditions of the concentration camps but many still remained committed and suspicious of British motives and intentions.

The British plan was for repatriation to take place on the basis of White prisoners first, followed by the Grey and then the Blacks. It would obviously take some time for the de-classification process to take place in Germany with initial fears that some violent resistance could be encountered which could be fed by the premature release of prisoners, indeed as late as December 1946 the die-hard Nazis were still operating as an underground movement threatening to spread bacteria causing the Allies to hunt down and arrest 600 people, (Peter Eden, formerly Werner Engel b. Breslau quoted in Denazification - Helen Fry p.91) and the physical conditions in Europe were hardly conducive to a further influx of mouths to feed. The danger of famine was very real and for the first time bread rationing was introduced in Britain to release supplies for the continent.

There was a substantial shortage of agricultural workers in Britain and many prisoners were put to work on the land with many making long standing friendships with the employers and local people particularly after the relaxation of the no-fraternisation rules in December 1946. The Geneva Convention provided for repatriation as soon as peace was made but the unconditional surrender of Germany meant that no peace treaty was signed to trigger this provision.

This enabled a programme to demonstrate the values of democracy to be introduced in the camps some of which were converted to full educational establishments. Featherstone Camp, near to Hadrian's Wall, became a large adult education centre with courses in law, languages, politics and other vocational and cultural subjects.

Wilton Park in Buckinghamshire had been a prison of high ranking German officers but by January 1946 had become an institution for the training of effective leaders and the creation of responsible individualism and democracy along the lines of a British University and indeed adopted the Oxford tutor system. At Radwinter near Saffron Walden a Youth Camp, later moved to Trumpington, Cambridge, was established to deal with the particular of the 'lost generation' of Hitler Youth who had grown up during and had been thoroughly conditioned by National Socialism so that they could be given individual self respect and new hope for themselves and their country. Thus so it was that camp 174 Norton was allotted for use as a 'Sixth Form' and Teacher Training College and as a Theological College as shown in the introduction.



The Nissen Huts, each housing 12-14 men



Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Arnold was the first Commandant of this new style camp and Oberstleutnant (First Lieutenant) Otto Klenk the Camp Leader of, in September 1945, 30 officers and 262 other ranks. The use of the camp for enclosing officer prisoners had changed to its new use on 15 June 1945 with a capacity for 400 men in 50 Nissen huts housing 12-14 men using bunk beds. The International Red Cross inspection report dated 25 September 1945 shows that lighting was by means of electricity and the heating from coal stoves. Several huts were used as classrooms.

Concerns were expressed as to the adequacy of the bed clothes provided for winter use and that the lighting and heating in the classrooms would have to be improved. The sanitary provisions were good with toilets and showers with hot and cold water and provision was made for each prisoner to take two hot baths. This was at a time when most local households regarded a weekly bath as the norm.

Complaints were made about the food with 1,800 to 2,000 calories a day being provided for each man. The prisoners complained of constant hunger suffering from inability to concentrate, weakness and giddiness and most had lost weight since entering the camp. The obligation under The Geneva Convention was to provide food equivalent to the rations issued to British troops but the local civilians often felt that this

meant that the Germans were treated better than themselves leading to a great deal of resentment. Medical services, under a German doctor and a German dentist were available for Norton and other camps on the Welbeck estate situated some 500 yards away from the camp including a dental section provided by the Americans who were also camped on the estate.

The prisoners were issued with 'battledress' type clothing including two pairs of shoes and an overcoat. Although the 'protected personnel' and the teachers were paid, the students, at this stage, were not, although they were issued with toiletries and sweets from Y.M.C.A. funds. This meant that the right to buy a ration of 40 cigarettes a week from the canteen was not of much use to them.

Both Protestants and Roman Catholics were able to participate in separate religious services with the Roman Catholic Chaplain at the nearby Carburton camp visiting to say the mass on Wednesday and Saturday. There was a large playing field on site to provide for leisure activities with a library of some 6,000 volumes including 1,200 novels, a camp cinema where a film was shown once a week, plus newspapers and radio access were available. As has been seen the camp had its own orchestra. A total of 11 classes and 4 courses were already being taught with a further 80 prisoner/students due shortly.



Norton Camp Catholic chapel Altar

Shortly after this report Lt. Colonel Arnold moved on so that his abilities as a prison commandant could be replaced by the talents of Major A. F. Broughton whose personality made him more suitable to be the head of a training establishment. The author Matthew Barry Sullivan quotes Major Broughton as follows: 'You accuse me of being pro-German. You could not have made a bigger mistake. I am pro-humanity'. Respected as a soldier but also for his humanity Major Broughton was a devout Roman Catholic and probably a member of Opus Dei as it was known that he wore a hair shirt or its equivalent on a daily basis. It seemed typical of him that he should purchase out of his own pocket the communion wine for both Catholic and Protestant worshippers.

A theological student, Jorg Eichert, put on paper an account of his time at Norton Camp and prepared a map showing the layout of the camp as at October 1946.

Jorg described the daily routine at the camp initially making the point that since the prisoners did not have watches, often taken as 'souvenirs' at the time of capture, and there being only one central clock, it was the bugle call which governed

daily life and procedures. Reveille at 6.30am (7.45 am on Sundays) called the men from their bunk beds with straw mattresses with 3 blankets to go and perform their ablutions and return to make their beds before 7am when the next bugle call to summon the men, with beaker, cutlery and wooden platters, to breakfast in the mess hall would be heard. Breakfast consisted of tea, without milk or sugar, ladled from pails at the door and then bread, Margarine and jam in measured portions at the place setting. Most Germans being used to dark bread as part of their way of life never fully appreciated the virtues of white bread but accepted that this was an English peculiarity and that it was better than nothing.

Roll Call was sounded at 7.15 and 7.25am with this duty eventually being handed over to senior prisoners when notices were also read. Hymn books were then collected from the barracks and a service conducted by the curate or a senior student at the chapel on the hill followed by cleaning duties before reading time between 9/9.15

am and 1 pm. The theological students enjoyed a relaxed regime and could use the mornings for exercise or reading the newspapers in the information room and there were guest lecturers and visitors from all over the world to inform and entertain.



Lunch was at 1pm and then work and reading in the work barracks where the atmosphere was like that in an old fashioned library with speaking and even whispering frowned upon. The clergy of Geneva, amongst others, provided many books with more routine stationary items coming from Sweden. 5pm was the time for dinner with porridge, which Jorg describes as milk soup with oat flakes and raisins, white bread, margarine and as a spread sausage, cheese or fish paste. In the evenings lectures, organised activities, films, shows and theatre were often held but otherwise choir practice nights were on Monday and Friday. Wednesday saw bible studies and on Thursdays evensong at 9.45pm was replaced by vespers with a weekend service on Saturday. 10.30 pm was the time for the last call for 'lights out'. A practice of which Jorg approved as it prevented working into the night causing damage to health.

Jorg describes life and studying in the camp as quiet, secure and undisturbed by food and clothing worries; there being a monthly exchange of worn clothing for new. He appreciated that 'The English did not interfere with us' behaving without reproach and making an effort to understand the prisoners but nevertheless all had a wish to get back home to their loved ones after many years of separation.

Perhaps the most famous of the theological students was Professor Jurgen Moltmann who came to God directly as a result of his experiences as a prisoner of war. He was given a bible by an army chaplain when held in a Scottish camp, although at the time he would have preferred cigarettes, and it was Psalm 39 which he

says 'held me spellbound' and this together with the kindness shown to him and his colleagues by Kilmarnock miners and their families which drove his decision to become a pastor. Born into a secular family in 1926 he had seen the horror of the fire storm at Hamburg (the RAF 'Operation Gomorrah') in July 1943 when serving as an air force auxiliary prior to being conscripted into the Army when he was captured near Arnhem in the Autumn of 1944. Jurgen regarded Norton Camp, which he entered in the Autumn of 1946, as a blessing and as a kind of monastic enclosure. Unlike Jorg he regarded 'lights out' as a time to stoke up the iron stove with wood purloined from the Welbeck woods so as to illuminate night-time discussions between the students. On returning to Germany in 1948 he continued his studies at Gottingen University where he received his doctorate in theology in 1952. A prolific author, he has done much to promote the theology of liberation and Christian Eschatology being eventually appointed emeritus professor of theology at Tübingen University.

No one person can properly be regarded as typical of another or even of a group. Jorg Eichart and Jurgen Moltmann can be taken as representative of the theological students at Norton and consideration should be given to the general education work of the camp from the experience of the prisoner-student Siegfried Laux. Siegfried was 7 years old in 1933 when Hitler came to power and thus it was the tenets of National Socialism which, apart from his family, moulded his formative years. His father was a natural conservative nationalist who felt the fall of the monarchy in 1918 deeply. He



Film shows, theatre and similar activities were often held

had suffered serious head injuries in The Great War and maintained his military tradition by becoming a member of the Stahlhelm, a right wing organisation of former soldiers. Originally sceptical of the National Socialist German Workers Party (the Nazis) and its posturing and policies and being repelled by the bullying machinations of the SA he had by 1938 become a party member perhaps to preserve his job or feeling that Hitler's bloodless 'victories' by absorbing Austria into the German Reich and the reoccupation of the Rhineland coincided with Herr. Laux's views of national greatness. Siegfried's mother passed to Siegfried her love of music and art. Siegfried was the antithesis of the tall blond Aryan German of Nazi myth. He was a sickly child and although he tried to build up his bodily strength he never reached the standard required by the Hitler Youth and his hand eye-coordination was such that he could not even march in step. Siegfried's defence mechanisms led him to become a secret collector of Hitler jokes and air dropped propaganda leaflets and an, illegal, listener to foreign radio broadcasts, when alone in the house, enabling him to view the war from a different perspective.

Like Jurgen Moltmann and whilst still a schoolboy, Siegfried was drafted into the Luftwaffe as an auxiliary as it was common practice to use young boys to help man air defence ack-ack batteries, comprising the fearful 88 millimetre guns, where he worked alongside Russian prisoners who had volunteered to obtain meagre better rations. After this came 6 months service in the Labour Corps in Austria and then, at the age of 17, call up into the Army in July 1944. After two months training Siegfried found himself and his unit on 12th September loaded like beasts of burden moving towards the front in the Eifel to face General George Patton's 3rd US Army. Scared and feeling abandoned in the rain soaked forest, Siegfried soon became a prisoner of the Americans who treated him well although the leader of some irregulars of very unmilitary appearance threatened him with a pistol in a quest for information. Many years later Siegfried realised that his tormentor fitted the description of Ernest Hemingway who was known to be in that area at the time.

Siegfried had been allowed to keep an almanac of Bible quotations and poems with a few photographs which proved to be of great comfort as he made a difficult journey to Cherbourg where he was handed over to the British having endured a stay in tented camps with dreadful hygienic conditions prior to being shipped to Southampton where he began to feel safe on hearing church bells and appreciating the humanity of being given a blanket and a mug of hot tea by a guard who called him 'comrade'. An auspicious start to his stay in Britain.

As with all other prisoners at this time, Siegfried was 'processed' at Kempton Park including having a medical and being given extra food because of his malnourishment before being transported by train, with upholstered seating - a surprise to many of the prisoners, to Camp 19 in South Lanarkshire. This was a camp of Nissen huts with bunk beds, straw mattresses and coke stove heating. Because of his knowledge of schoolboy English, Siegfried was able to establish the truth of the false latrine rumours that the prisoners were to be handed over to the Russians and developed a good relationship with the guards who slipped him newspapers.

The prisoners also received copies of the New Testament from people Siegfried describes as conscientious objectors, almost certainly Quakers, helping with the discussion round the stoves, initially dealing with lack of food which changed to the 'Number One' subject amongst young men when the food improved; together with all sorts of other discussion indicating that a substantial number of men were still sticking with the ideology of National Socialism. Siegfried enjoyed having the benefit of a good library and developed an admiration of Robert Burns' poetry and a love of the Scottish countryside.

Having built up a friendly relationship with an elderly guard to the extent that Siegfried and his colleagues were entrusted with his rifle whilst he went off for breakfast. It came as a great shock in April 1945 to have his attitude dramatically change when the newspapers published pictures of the liberation of the Belsen concentration camp. The facing up to the horrors shown and worry about his parents made this a most nervous time to be relieved so far as Siegfried was concerned when he learnt though a report in the News Chronicle that his home town, Heidelberg, had been captured undamaged by the American 7th Army and received confirmation via the Red Cross that his family home was undamaged, his parents unhurt and that they were longing to see him.



Cardinal Frings attended Norton Camp as a guest speaker

Out of the blue Siegfried learned that he had been chosen to attend Norton Cuckney camp so as to complete his education. Most impressed by the quality of the guest speakers such as Cardinal Frings, Bishop Dibelius from Berlin and Pastor Niemoller, the surrounding atmosphere, particularly the bird life, and the quality of the library enabling him to soak up everything he could glean of German culture, all that was missing from his education under National Socialism, particularly his love of poetry. Another joy was going through the wire to gain night-time surreptitious access to the Great Lake in Welbeck Park to enjoy moonlight swimming in the silence of the night.

A real change occurred in December 1946 when the rules against fraternisation were relaxed enabling the prisoners to get out and about and meet up with local families particularly with the help of the Pentecostal Mission. Siegfried and his friend Helmut Wirth were invited to the home of Syd and May Humby in the mining community of Shirebrook and greatly appreciated drinking tea in front of a crackling fire with the hosts sharing their meagre rations with them. The prisoners were given two days leave that Christmas which was spent with the Humbys when they were given a present of sweets and some money which the young John Humby has collected for them. Siegfried was also befriended by the Godfrey family of Garside Street Worksop where he was often invited for a meal. Both these families showed a great deal of common humanity as they were subject

to criticism for entertaining the enemy, particularly by those who had lost family members in the war or who had relatives still serving. During this break a visit was made to the cinema to see 'A Tale of Two Cities' when Siegfried found himself standing for the National Anthem.

Siegfried continued his studies and obtained very good marks in the exams until finally in March 1948 it was time to be repatriated. Siegfried found it hard to say his farewell to the new friends he had made but did take with him a copy of 'The Tale of Two Cities' given to him by Syd Humby and a blessing from Major Broughton for his homeland and a wish for a world of peaceful co-habitation.

Siegfried found his journey home via Ostend very depressing as he passed through a shattered land of poverty, refugees and emaciated people - 'everything was grey, grey, grey'. He found the American authorities would not recognise his qualifications so he had to study all over again carving out a career in the judicial service. Joy was found in his relationship with Irmgard, a



Siegfried Laux with George Godfrey at 33 Garside St, Worksop

Sudetenland German, driven out of her homeland after the war with whom he was to enjoy a long and happy marriage as a family man.

The camp was further inspected on the 7th May 1947 by an inspector named E. A. Aeberhard at a time when the numbers totalled 594 including the students totalling 420 with Y.M.C.A staff, permanent camp staff and hospital staff and patients making up the total. The inspector provided the camp leader Lt. Willy Lassen with a copy of the Geneva Convention but in a camp run by Major Broughton this must have been an academic exercise. Willy Lassen described the food as 'excellent' but the replacement clothing was not sufficient due to short supplies, a matter taken in hand by the Commandant although it was understood that this was also a prevailing problem in other camps.

One death of a 46 year old lieutenant from endocarditis after he had been transferred to Naburn Hospital York in the previous January had been recorded. The general state of health and nutritional were reported as 'GUT' and it was noted that the camp library held a total of 9,740 books including 2,300 fictional works in addition to the text books. There had been no escapes nor complaints to be made. The report concluded with the comment 'Excellent Camp. Treatment is good'.

A further visit by a Dr. G. Hoffman took place on 29th September 1947 when the strength was shown as 407, no doubt due to repatriations which had taken place since the last inspection. There were no complaints about the food and it was noted that the prisoners were supplied with 'workers rations' i.e. The level of calories were equivalent to those provided for manual workers. The infirmary held 5 patients (1 mental case, 1 sciatica, 1 recovering from appendicitis, 1 with inflammation of the middle ear and 1 with an abscess of the ear). The general health of the prisoners was reported as 'Good'. The final full inspection was conducted by M.R. Aaberhard on 21st January 1948 when the camp had a strength of 555 German prisoners when it passed on more than satisfactory terms although the medical services were having to deal with many nervous conditions particularly of prisoners from the Russian zone and it was noted that the total numbers of text-books, historical and religious works totalled 11,000. There were no complaints and thanks was expressed for the 'intellectual assistance'.

The final inspection took place to coincide with its closure on 16th April 1948 when the numbers had fallen to 439 although 'The Norton Camp Closing Festival' consisting of services of farewell meetings and concerts were held between 12th April and 23rd April. The closing ceremony attended by guests, included the Protestant Bishop of Sheffield and the Roman Catholic

Bishop of Derby, staff and students and was held amongst the trees in the large open air theatre which had been constructed by the officer prisoners in 1944. The General Secretary of the National Council of the YMCA acted as chairman when the main speaker was Brigadier R.V. Hume, O.B.E the Director of the Education Branch of the British Zone of the Control Commission in Germany with the camp leader Willie Lassen and John Barwick also speaking.

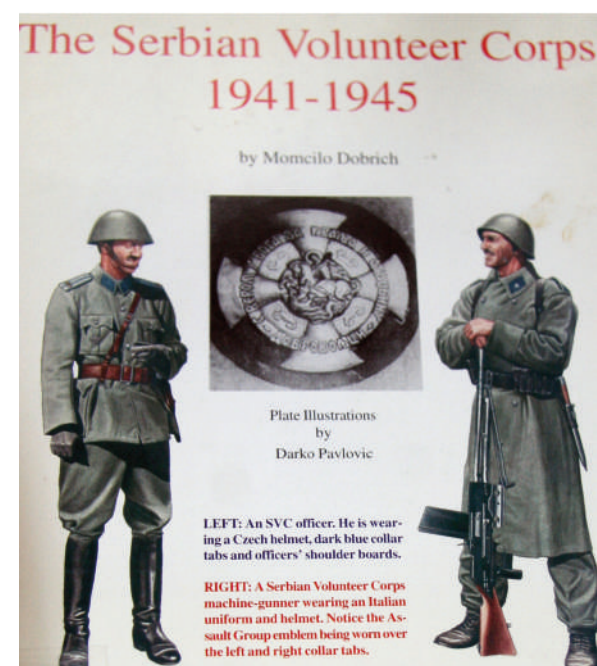
Both bishops later addressed the students in the dining hall and a 'coffee party' was given by the teachers after supper at which Major Broughton and Captain Johnson of the War Office, were the guests of honour with Red Cross and World Student Relief representatives. The report concludes :

'From all that was said in the various speeches it appears that the Camp Commandant, Major Broughton, has been an excellent camp commandant who without disregarding his regulations, managed to treat and to assist the POW in a manner which is an honour to him and to the Detaining Power'.

When all the prisoners had been repatriated probably by the end of May but certainly no later than the end of August 1945 the camp ceased to be the responsibility of the War Office and was handed over to one of the agencies responsible for the housing of civilians.

The country faced shortage of labour in certain critical areas of the economy with the benefits of demobilisation being offset by the introduction of Nation Military Service for young men at the age of 18. The government sought to alleviate the problem by the recruitment of foreign labour, initially under 'the Baltic Cygnet' scheme whereby young Baltic women were recruited to perform menial jobs in hospital expanding to larger schemes such as 'Westward Ho', 'North Sea and Blue Danube' primarily designed to recruit workers for agriculture, textiles and mining.. Up to January 1951 there had been 85,270 recruits from these and other sources with the majority (35,876) in agriculture and coal mining (10,978). Many of these recruits called Displaced Persons locally, as indeed many of them were but technically they were European Voluntary Workers. Norton Cuckney provided accommodation for those allotted to work in North Nottinghamshire during the late forties and fifties.

Towards the end of its existence the camp also accommodated men from the rump of the Serbian Volunteer Corps. This corps had been formed in September 1941 in Serbia modelled on the Waffen SS and equipped by the Germans who were well impressed by the Corps then of 3,000 men in five battalions with cavalry and a small air support unit.



By 1944 its strength had risen to 9,000 men under General Nedic but under German tactical command and in the same year it was given the title of the Serbian SS Volunteer Corps. So in less than a quarter of a century the forces of 'gallant little Servia' (sic) so badly treated by the Central Powers in The Great War had now become a pariah organisation fighting for the Axis powers in World War 2. At the end of the war three regiments were surrendered to the communist forces of Tito and were promptly executed. Two of the regiments fighting in Italy surrendered and remained in the West. In fairness it must be said that most of the men in the Corps had originally been motivated by their nationalism in wishing to serve Serbia and it was the lottery or the unforeseen circumstances or war which decided their fate. The men of Norton Cuckney were part of the regiments which had surrendered in Italy. Four of them were to die at Norton Cuckney and are buried in Cuckney church grounds.

Sources and acknowledgements:

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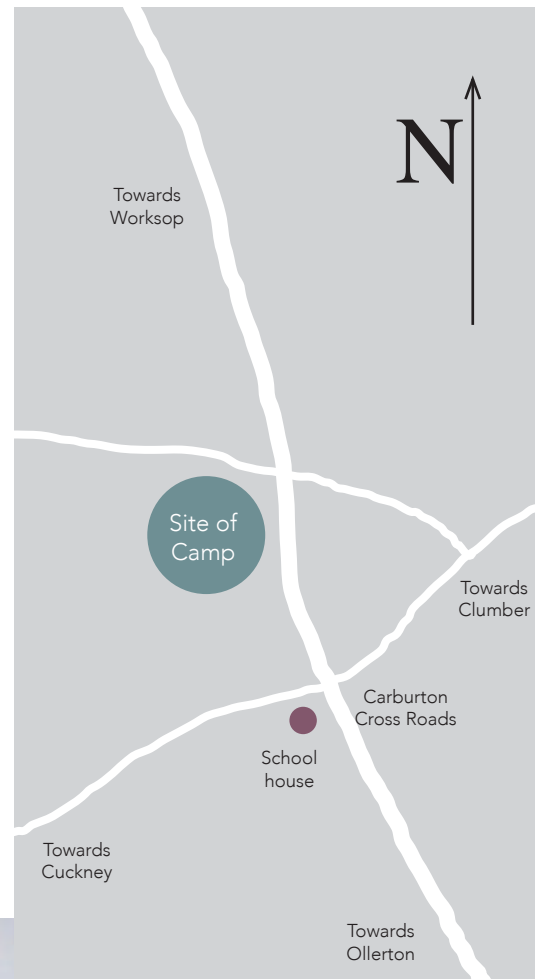
Revd. Simon Cash. Priest-in-Charge. St. Mary's Cuckney

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Visitors to the Dukeries will be very familiar with the village of Carburton and its cross roads where a turn off the Ollerton-Worksop road will lead to Cuckney and then Creswell Craggs on a road running alongside the Welbeck lakes or through the village past its early medieval church and Mazine House into Clumber Park. At the cross roads there are now Tea Rooms in the old village school, closed so arbitrarily by the County Council in 1977 and where tea can now be taken under the tree in the grounds where the children once had for lessons on a fine day. During the Second World War the whole area was devoted to military purposes including training areas and camps, munitions dumps and tank parks. From 1943 onwards the children would have seen, on looking North from the school field, an Army camp occupied from time to time by different troops including Canadians as Carburton Camp was used as a overflow from Tweedsmuir Camp near Aldershot in dealing with medical and mental cases.

After the Ides of March

Robert Ilett describes how a quiet Scot outwitted Nazi bullies in the Nottinghamshire countryside.



Location of the Carburton Camp



2018 LIDAR survey of Carburton Camp



Brothers Doug & Fernie Palmer (left & right respectively), with their mother, Evelyn May outside, "the old chapel" at Carburton Camp



Girl Guide camp buildings erected on the original camp foundations



Henry Faulk addresses a group of amused prisoners

Reproduced by courtesy of The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum

In the Summer of 1944 the nature of military use of the area changed as men and supplies moved out following the D-Day invasions. Before then Britain held only a relatively small number of German Prisoners of War but this situation changed rapidly as the Allies advanced through France and Belgium.

Carburton Camp became Prisoner of War Camp 181 initially holding mainly NCOs and other ranks. If you had to be a prisoner of war then being in a camp on the Welbeck Estate of the Duke of Portland must have been one of the better options although, particularly towards the end the war, anxiety about the fate of their loved

one at home was a dominant feature in their thoughts. There were three categories of German prisoners:- Category A (Whites) - these were men who were decidedly not National Socialist, Category B (Greys) comprising the bulk of prisoners many of whom still had faith in Adolf Hitler appreciating what he had done for their country in the thirties but who were in the main ordinary men who had 'done their duty' and Category C (and C+) (Blacks) who were the committed National Socialists still with absolute faith in Hitler and even as prisoners ready to perform any task in fulfilment of the aims of the Third Reich. In 1945 a report further categorised the prisoners as :- group 1-

those under 26 who had known no other system than National Socialism, Group 2- men between 26 and 35 who had helped to put national Socialism into powers making them fanatical with a determination to dominate and Group 3- the older men who knew life before Hitler came to power and were more likely to be anti Nazi.

The camp comprised a larger type of Nissen huts, probably Romney huts, set out in rows and capable of holding more than 1,400 men complete with a Medical centre, administrative buildings, cookhouse and dining area, separate latrines and shower blocks and meeting huts. The

main entrance was off Piper Lane to the North of the camp with an additional entrance to the South just North of Carburton Cross Roads. Each hut was capable of holding 50 men with beds at the far end and mess facilities with tables near to the door. Heat was provided by a cast iron pot bellied stove fired by solid fuel of one sort or another. Food was brought from the kitchen in dixies and eaten at the tables in the huts. There must have been at least 30 huts for the prisoners with other huts near the entrance to house the guards and other staff.

On the 10th March 1944 there was a mass breakout by 70 German officer prisoners from Camp No.198 at Bridgend Glamorgan and two weeks later all the German prisoners from Camp 198, including the escapees who had been recaptured were transferred to Carburton

The interpreter at Carburton was a Scot named Henry Faulk and the Commandant was a Lieutenant- Colonel Ellison.

Before the war Henry Faulk, a Dundee man, had been a grammar school master with a degree in French and German from Glasgow University. He had been commissioned into the Cameron Highlanders but a serious road accident in 1943 removed him from active service. His Calvinist background made him liberal in both politics and religion and his concern was with community and mankind and not self. During his student days he had been in Berlin when the National Socialists won 47.3 per cent of the vote in the election of 1933. Not only had he then witnessed political violence he had whilst a schoolmaster attended German Labour Service camp at Heidelberg providing an insight into the effect of National Socialist teaching on young people. At Wandsworth Camp he had dealt with difficult and threatening situations and was no doubt the right man in the right place to deal with the Germans from Bridgend. When he first arrived at Carburton he had dealt with the existing prisoners with respect on a man to man basis and had so obtained their confidence that all of them volunteered for outside work making Carburton the only Midlands camp to provide any workers at all at this stage.

Late on Thursday the 23rd March 1944 more than 1,200 officers from Bridgend arrived at Worksop station and marched the five miles to Carburton Camp. Since the breakout, Carburton had been largely cleared of its previous prisoners and turned into a high security camp with a double barbed wire fence and watch towers.. In the meantime, Faulk had handpicked 250 other ranks from the previous prisoners, who on being interviewed by him, personally agreed to stay and help keep the incomers under surveillance. There was no love lost between the average German soldier and the officers but the volunteers did include a dentist, two doctors and two padres all of whom were officers. As Faulk himself stated, 'Well aware of the risks involved, they will still ready, as a matter of moral conscience, and respect for themselves as Germans, to stand by the British in the job of bringing the real Nazis under control'.

The Departments for Prisoners of War at the War Office understood that these officers must be treated with the utmost caution as events later on were to demonstrate so vividly. At Comrie Camp 21 just before Christmas in 1944 a German 'A' class prisoner was beaten to death having been falsely convicted of 'treason' by a barrack room court and later on in Redmires Camp at Sheffield a similar fate awaited another prisoner falsely accused of giving away escape plan at Devizes. However no concern appears to have been necessary with regard to the civilian population who do not appear to have been at risk at any time, even from escaping prisoners. At Carburton the school at the crossroads only some 200 yards away from the Southern entrance of the camp was fully functional during the lifetime of the camp providing primary education for up to 40 children at a time and the two Welbeck Estate lodges near to the Northern entrance were throughout occupied by families with young children without the parents feeling any need to be over protective of them.

The sequence of events can be described as follows 23rd March 1945. The officers from Bridgend Camp arrived at Worksop station in the evening and marched singing aggressive national Socialist and German Army songs through the town and out to Carburton. It was virtually dark when they arrived at Carburton, so in black out conditions then prevailing, only limited hand lighting was allowed, making for difficult reception arrangements. Faulk immediately became a targeted man as his faultless German and the misunderstanding of his name, 'Faulk' sounded like 'Volk' to the prisoners, gave rise to the assumption that he was a German traitor. Two of the German officers were in fact 50 year old railway officials who had been given military ranks so as to have the authority to run the railways. They had performed the cardinal sin of sending one of the permitted post cards to their families instead of, as directed, sending them as birthday cards to Hitler. Both were savagely beaten for their actions at Bridgend they arrived as stretcher cases, one being immediately sent to hospital and the other allowed to move in with the Other Ranks.

With knowledge of the standard layout of the camps the Germans had been organised on the journeys by the assumed leaders and allotted to huts so that tight control could be kept. The darkness enabled the plan to proceed and frustrate the planned British proposals. When daylight came it was discovered that the central hut was occupied by the camp leader, Colonel Lempe but the next hut was occupied by his Adjutant, allegedly a Gestapo officer who held the reins of real power. The Leader was 'guarded' by two tough gatekeepers who prevented any approach unless authorised by the Adjutant with the camp notice board on which were posted were posted war communiqués from both sides was also shielded to prevent the notices being read, regarded as propaganda they were in fact accurate. Similar steps were taken to prevent access to loud speaker messages.

The previous inmates had constructed a camp chapel entirely from waste materials which was impressive enough to be visited by outside architects but which incurred the wrath of the incomers from Bridgend. The retained Other Ranks report that to show their contempt the

German officers planned to tear down the cross from the roof which attempt was foiled by Faulk illuminating the area with car headlights and posting sentries. Having been so frustrated the Germans decided to befoul the chapel by using it as a toilet on the following night but were frustrated by the posting of guards.

On the morning of the 24th March the Germans asked for a meeting with the British senior officers and Col. Lempe with his Adjutant met with Col. Ellison and his Interpreter when the Adjutant did most of the talking pointing out that such a large camp was difficult to administer and so the Germans offered to run many of the services, including the kitchens, canteens, the discipline of the the Other Ranks and, most significantly, the accounting of pay cards.

Under the terms of the Geneva Convention the officers were entitled to be paid a sufficient amount for the purchase of goods in the canteen against an obligation for the amount involved being re-imbursed at the end of hostilities, no money charged hands as the issue of credits was dealt with by bookkeeping only. The Camp authorities understood only too well that the purpose was to retain all goods for the benefit of the loyal Nazis and thereby provide a sanction for the control of all in the camp.

The Germans also made an attempt to get their hands on the railway men since 'officers should not be housed with Other Ranks' but the spokesman for the Other Ranks advised Ellison and Faulk, 'They don't want to look after them. They want to kill them'.

Faulk had been given a free hand by his Colonel and saw to it that none of the German requests were granted.

Focus now moved to the Sick Quarters where two doctors from the previous residents were in charge. In the intake were 14 doctors and those who were senior to the resident doctors entered the Sick Quarters and demanded to take over but were rebutted as under the terms of the Geneva Convention the two who were already in place were under the orders of the holding power and not the German military. The next device was to organise a large sick parade to show that the two doctors could not cope without more help. The existing staff decided to deal with the matter but asked for an extra supply of pills for a certain effect. The queues were worked through and during the following night so were the recipients who spent a very restless night. Although queues for medical treatment ceased, six burly men reported sick with false systems which required prolonged treatment. The doctors knew the purpose was to gain access to and then destroy the Sick Quarters and to beat up certain of the patients. On learning this, Faulk had them removed to a military hospital where much to their annoyance they were kept under observation on a strict dietary regime for six days.

The Crisis

Crisis time had now arrived as the Nazis realised that their inability to obtain mastery was starting to look like a humiliation and they made a last effort to exert authority. A Fehmgericht (secret court) was held which, for the crime of 'treason', condemned to death by hanging that very night, the Catholic padre, Father Lot, one of the original prisoners. Faulk would not allow his removal from the camp as this would have amounted to a clear victory for the Nazis, but had his hut boarded up and provided him with a whistle. The whistle was blown deterring the execution party which had disappeared before the guards could get to it.

After some officers entered the kitchen, the confrontation with a large cook swinging a huge iron ladle deterred them, as did the resistance of the staff in the camp office, when the office was entered and threats made. 'High noon' had arrived and the day after the foiling of the attempt to hang Father Lotz, Faulk spoke to Colonel Lemke alone and told him he would personally be held responsible under law for any further acts of violence. Colonel Lemke at last took on his responsibilities, announcing to a parade of all the camp that he would hand over the culprits himself. The Special Court and the Raiding Squad were disbanded.

The camp staff had stood firm under the example of Captain Faulk, having developed a new group identity capable of withstanding all threats made against them. The end came on 4th April with the removal of 250 core Nazi officers to a nearby camp at Norton Cuckney. With the death by suicide of Hitler on the 30th April, followed shortly afterwards by the final surrender, most resistance ceased and the officers were further dispersed.

A German View

There is on record a German view of the events at Carburton. A former bookseller who became a Lieutenant in the German army, Siegfried Bandelow was captured in August 1944. After being wounded in the leg and arm, when his corps surrendered, and having passed through the reception and interrogation centres at Kempton Park and the London Cage, he eventually found himself at Bridgend where he joined the theatre group.

Bandelow considered the transfer to Carburton as a punishment and considered that Captain Faulk had recruited German personnel as informers after promises of better treatment. He claims to have got a great deal of fun by knowing this and that the Colonel had threatened to hand them over to the Russians. Bandelow claims that it was as a result of political – military interrogations that the 'dangerous' prisoners were identified but then states that the choice of those who moved to Norton Cuckney was completely arbitrary.

It does seem likely that many of the prisoners transferred to Carburton were only too pleased to pass on information enabling Captain Faulk and his colleagues to take such prompt counter measures and that it was as a result of the humiliation of the extreme elements that enabled Colonel Lemke to belatedly exercise his authority in disbanding the Special Court and Raiding Squad.

The general rule of the British authorities was to strictly observe the protocols of the Geneva Convention both out of respect for the convention and to make sure no excuse was given to the Germans not to apply the convention to Allied prisoners.

The combination of being able to reach and understand individuals, together with his ability to deal with fanatics, marked Henry Faulk out as a man who should be given further special responsibility. He was promoted and as Colonel Faulk played a key part in the 're-education programme' of German prisoners.

Such was the respect with which he became held in Germany that he was asked to write an account of 'Re-education' in the German Official History of Prisoners in the Second World War. He did this after he had returned to being a grammar school teacher, writing the script for this 800 page book in his own hand in his perfect German.



Siegfried Bandelow

Acknowledgements

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Ground Truthing 20th & 21st September 2018

By: **Paul Jameson** BOHIS Chairman

When designing the components of our HLF bid (submitted Dec 17) we originally had physical exploration of both Norton & Carburton camps firmly in mind.

However, the Welbeck Estates Company Ltd. were not initially receptive to this idea, so this evolved into a more academic exercise.

Whilst that element has been maintained, having asked again, Welbeck were amenable to the idea of a couple of days of, "Ground Truthing" at Carburton camp only to follow up any clues provided by the LIDAR (eg. we could see many base units for the huts in the forest) and for general examination.

The enthusiasm & keen eye of Mercian's Andy Gaunt ensured that items were spotted & appreciated that many of us might have missed, including some ancient Silver Birch trees.

It didn't take long to start revealing the multiplicity of brick bases that had once been part of the huts that typically held 12 to 14 men each.



Classroom frolics



Evidence of internal camp roads



Red camouflage - all courtesy of Nick Mason



Steve Horne measures the dimensions of a hut base



Steve Horne & Nick Mason



Modern Girl Guide camp hut on the original base of one of the POW huts

Testimonies



Conversation with Joseph Bennett (born 1923)

7th February 2013

Sherwood Forest in Wartime

Warwickshire Yeomanry were the first to be stationed in the Forest at the beginning of the WWII. They were a cavalry regiment so they commandeered all the stables:

not just Edwinstowe Hall and local farms, but behind the Black Swan and the Jug & Glass. After Dunkirk they retrained to drive tanks.

POWs Displaced Persons

The German prisoners worked on the farms all round the district. There was a big camp for them at Carburton. As you go past Carburton crossroads and up the hill towards Worksop you come to a lodge the first one on your left-hand side and you go past, there's a lane goes up to a fairwood. They were in there.

In 1946 when I got demobbed they were all U-Boat prisoners. All sailors. They let them out at night – they couldn't get away, they'd nowhere to go. The lads in the village who'd been in the navy in the War used to sit on the wall on the corner.

(The wall was opposite the Royal Oak–near Forest Lodge, beside the shop.)

The Germans would come walking by. We used to be talking to them- where had they been taken prisoner and where had they been?

I finished up writing to one because he was the same age as me and he worked at the Pit in Germany and I worked at the Pit in Britain. I was on the pit top then and he was underground. His name was Freddie. I asked him - why did you go in the U-boats?

He said "When they tell you, you go. They're going to shoot you. You don't stand and argue!" He said, "I hated every minute."

Anyway he got sunk in the Bay of Biscay. They were taken prisoner and I got a picture of the ship that pulled them out. He was over the moon.....

(Freddie was on U-608. The crew were rescued by HMS Wren.)

The Italians were up here. There was an open space at the other end from the cricket pitch (opposite the fairground) all elderberries, brambles and tree stumps. When I came home on leave it had all been cleared and levelled off and there

were two goalposts up. They made a football pitch out of it.

Were they based up at Rufford Abbey? No, here in the Forest when the Army had left this camp. When the Italians left, the Displaced Persons arrived from Europe.

I gather they were very friendly. I remember one worked at the Pit. He didn't bother going home. Quite a lot of the Displaced Persons Poles, Czechoslovaks even Russians, I worked with down the Pit. They daren't go home. They said, "If I go home they'd say I was collaborating with the enemy because I was freed in Germany." They were good workmen Russians and Poles.

Mrs Robinson

They used to come on the Forest with these little stalls. There were several up there selling things, taking photographs with these old cameras - "Developed on the spot".

The end cottage up the road here that was George Shepherd and his wife. There was a little window on the side. They used to sell jugs of tea and hot water.

Russian Log Hut

You could go to Centre Tree and then straight along Chestnut Avenue. Big chestnut trees on either side and you got to Blackpool that's just at the back of it

They were arguing where it went and years ago in the pub one night someone said the

Americans had bought it and shipped it off there. And I said I will find out because my auntie's brother is Head Forester for Welbeck Estate. So I went over to Holbeck and I said "Now then Dennis*, what happened to the Russian Log Hut?"

He said, "Part of it's a ladder in my garden, a lot of it was used as a fence in the park and the rest was just thrown down in the timber yard in a big heap.... It was blinking scandalous, but the Army had ruined it." (*Dennis Snodin)

Robin Hood's Larder

That blew down and Portland College made all wooden things out of it.

It was not far from the Russian Log Hut.



Conversation with David Naish (born 1940) & Ruth Naish (born 1931)

March 2013

I understand you used to take food from the farm to the Italian POWs in Sherwood Forest:

When was that?

D & R: 1944-1946

Father had a little Ford van KV0791- allowed petrol and to use Budby Road as we had the Asserts Field at the bottom of the hill.

We delivered farm vegetables to both Edwinstowe and Carburton

What was the name of the farm?

D: Tally-Ho Farm now known as Forest House Farm

What items did you supply?

D: Milk, potatoes, turnips and cabbages

Did you get to know any of the POW's or the Displaced persons?

D: Yes, many Italians from Carburton worked in the fields hoeing sugar beet, picking potatoes, threshing etc.

They used to bring my mother (Muriel) their tea rations in exchange for coffee

They liked her a lot as she spoiled them! They made me a Mickey Mouse money box

Did any of them work on your farm?

D: One Latvian from Edwinstowe Camp "Jan" stayed after the war and was a great friend of the Starbrook family. My father thought a great deal of him, he was a good man and a very hard worker

When were local people allowed back into the Forest?

D: From late 1946-early 1947 onwards

Do you have any memories of the Fairground?

D: From about 1948 the Turville family started to visit Edwinstowe for 1 week in September

Originally they set up down by the Maun, then in Hollow Lawn field*-just below the bungalows, until Father's landlords -Thoresby gave them a place alongside the cricket field-as now-in about 1960. They then took the rent!!

(*Thynghowe experts suggest perhaps a corruption of Hollow Laund Field)

Testimonies courtesy of Steve Horne of, "Friends of Thynghowe" (archaeological society)

A mystery solved!

Franz Egmont Seibel – An Appreciation

Early in the summer BOHIS received an e-mail with a wonderful photograph attached.

It was from Astrid and John Hansen.

John's father was a Lutheran pastor who worked at Norton POW camp on behalf of the Y.M.C.A.. He was particularly concerned with helping POWs, due for release, to trace members of their families.

Included in the photograph were John's brother Chris, Pastor Hansen, his wife, and another man. There were two fantastic sculptured heads of the boys in the background.

This unnamed man was certainly the sculptor so the search was on to find out who he was. The quality of his work was superb so we knew he must be a famous artist.

Out of the blue came information, chatting to the secretary of a local history group I learned

that there was a wood carving displayed on the windowsill of Barlborough Hall School. It was reputed to be the work of a German POW who had donated this beautiful carving when he was repatriated at the end of WW2.

Many of the prisoners made two return visits to Norton, Cuckney and Langwith in 1973 and 1995 and it was at one of these visits a lovely book was presented to Mrs June Ibbotson. It was the life and work of Franz Egmont Seibel and included in the images was the carving at Barlborough School and Norton Camp POWs making a Nativity for Cuckney Church.

Franz was working on a sculpture in the background. Very young when interred at the Camp (possibly 19 or 20 years) and Pastor Hansen must have recognised his considerable talent as he was allowed to attend Mansfield Art School.

By: Jennie Johnson



Norton Camp POWs making a Nativity for Cuckney Church.

Paul Jameson : "I asked Chris Hansen to take high definition shots of the busts from all angles and I think that he did an excellent job.

The curly haired ones are of Chris and the straighter haired ones are of his brother John, who sadly died of brain cancer on the 10th July 2018."







Zehntes Jahrgedächtnis

Franz Egmont Seibel
Holzbildhauer
* 8. 9. 1927 † 20. 10. 2006

Ein guter, edler Mensch, der mit uns gelebt,
kann uns nicht genommen werden;
er lässt eine leuchtende Spur zurück.
(Thomas Carlyle)

Vor zehn Jahren ist unser Vater Franz Egmont Seibel gestorben, vier Jahre später seine Ehefrau und unsere Mutter Irene Seibel. Dankbar bleiben wir für die Geborgenheit zu Hause und die Zukunftsmöglichkeiten in der Welt, die sie uns geschenkt und eröffnet haben. Sie leben weiter mit und in uns.

Die Kinder laden zum Jahrgedächtnis für Franz Egmont und Irene Seibel am Samstag, 15. Oktober 2016, 18.00 Uhr, nach Hauenstein in die Friedenskirche zur Vorabendmesse ein.

Hauenstein, Dahn und Aachen, im Oktober 2016

Tenth Anniversary of the death of Franz Egmont Seibel -Wood sculptor Franz and Irene gave their children a wonderful home and the courage to face the world, their memory lives on. Family and friends were invited to the tenth anniversary of Franz's death in 2016 to celebrate the life and dedicate the gift of a woodcarving to the Peace Church in Hauenstein

"a good man who lived with us will not leave us, he lives in our hearts for ever".
(Thomas Carlyle)

Translation courtesy of Jennie Johnson

1973 Camp Reunion

Pictures: Courtesy Mrs June Ibbotson

Paul Jameson: Jennie Johnson & I visited Mrs June Ibbotson 4 times during the space of a few weeks. Whilst we couldn't elicit any background information re. the 1973 reunion, this is a vital component in the story of Norton camp. 1973 represents and celebrates the 25th anniversary of the camp closure in 1948.



Photos courtesy of Mrs June Ibbotson

The University of Barbed Wire

1945 - 1948

By: Mrs June Ibbotson

It was in 1945 that the already established POW camp at Norton changed its focus. Previously it had housed various types of German prisoners.

This special camp was the brainchild of Swedish Pastor, Birger Forell of the Y.M.C.A. .

He realised, that as victory over the Germans became fact, it would be much better to send back to Germany, Germans, who were trained as priests, teachers, youth workers and craftsmen rather than superimposing British teachers upon them.

He put the idea of this Christian approach to Winston Churchill himself. Churchill acknowledged the feasibility of the suggestion & arranged that training should take place at Norton Camp.

Young prisoners in camps in North America & Britain were selected to come, some to complete their studies interrupted by war & others to begin studying at Norton. Thus the, "University of Barbed Wire" was established.

Its Commandant, Major A.E. Broughton, a Roman Catholic, gave the camp its motto –

"Fidis non armis" (through faith not arms)

He was devoted to his students & their welfare, in fact, he was asked if he was "pro German" (quite a derogatory term at this time). He answered, "No, I am pro humanity !".

Almost a thousand students passed through Norton Camp between 1945 – 1948.

They played a vital role in establishing the New Germany.

Two former students became leading theological thinkers of the age, Professors Moltmann & Noller, another became organist at Cologne Cathedral (he practised at Cuckney Church).

Franz Egmont Seibel became a world renowned woodcarver. He was tutored at Mansfield School of Art.

Examples of his work can be seen in the altar front at Barlborough Hall School and the Angel Candles at Warsop Church. He carved the figures of the Nativity which he gave to Cuckney Church.

Many students went on to mould the minds of the young people of their own country through their work as priests, teachers & youth workers.

The relationships formed by the students at Norton were such, that they tried to have annual reunions, even in a divided Germany.

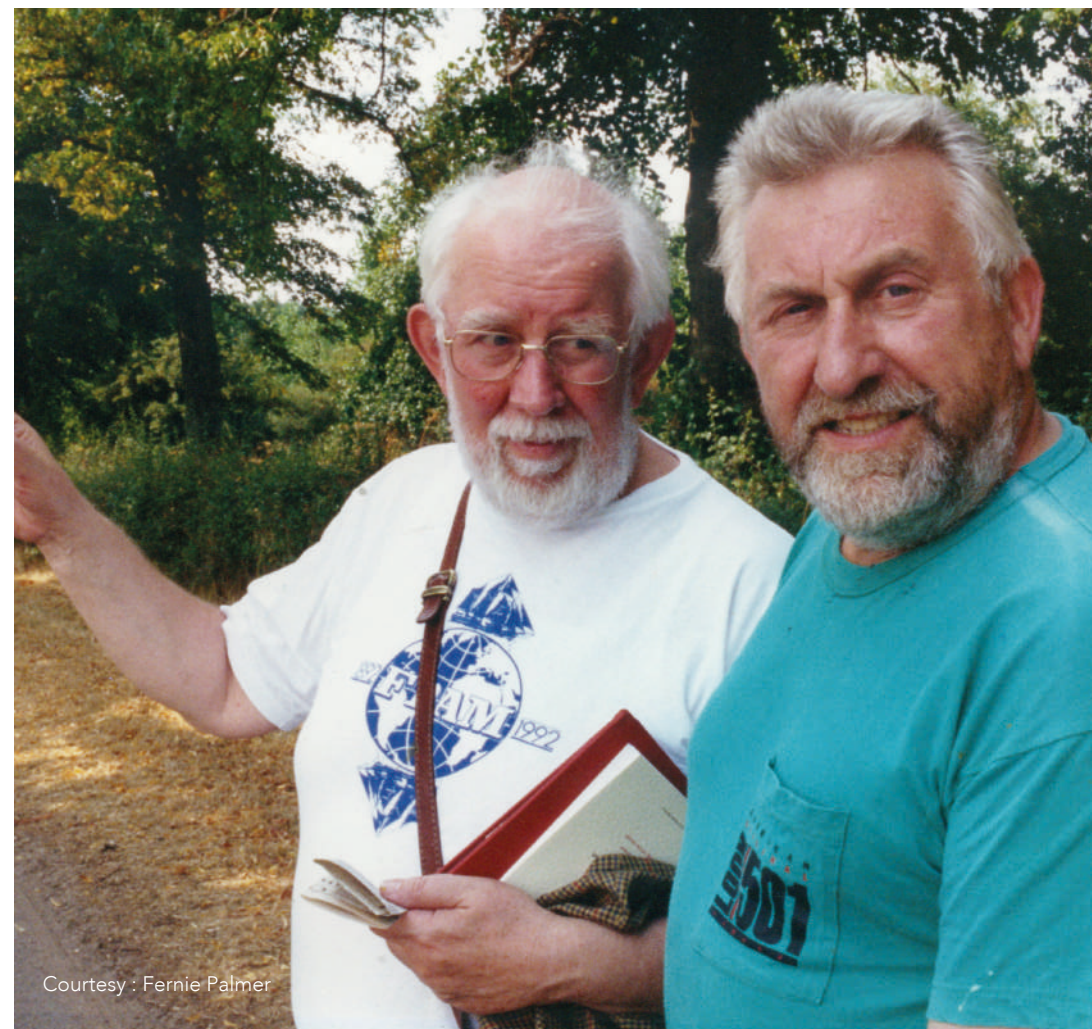
Some came back to Norton after 25 years but it was in 1995 that they decided that, on this, the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the University, they wished to hold their reunion at Norton and to publically express their gratitude to the people of the locality & rekindle friendships made under very different circumstances.

As a local resident, & as a Blue badge Tourist guide, I was asked to arrange accommodation, plan, with them, their itinerary in the area. Their visit had started in London, then they came to stay at Brackenhurst College. From there, a visit was made to Coventry (we were received by the Provost of the Cathedral, a most moving experience for us all, as we prayed together).

There were guided tours & civic receptions at Nottingham and Retford but the highlight & purpose of their visit was a return to Norton Camp.

On Saturday we journeyed to Norton, memories were roused as they trod through the undergrowth, the only visible signs of their camp were the concrete foundations of their hutments, in which they had lived and learnt.

Many tales were forthcoming as they remembered their time at Norton, especially



Courtesy : Fernie Palmer

Ex prisoner, Hans Wimmer, with local farmer Fernie Palmer outside the entrance to Norton Camp in 1995

vivid were the times they "escaped" to swim, by moonlight, in Welbeck Lakes.

Someone had bought a record made by the choir at the camp. Unfortunately the record player did not work, but nothing daunted, the visitors burst into song !!

On the Sunday the guests had requested an Ecumenical Service at St. Mary's Church, Cuckney (where they had worshipped 50 years ago) to be followed by lunch to which they invited all villagers to share fellowship, food and memories.

The service was conducted by the Vicar, Rev. John Williams and Professor Gerhard Noller preached the sermon, taking as his text, Corinthians 12 v. 1-13 & John 8 v. 36 "Can we still believe in miracles ?".

From his sermon, we learn that life at Norton Camp & the kindness the students received from people in the locality during 1945-8, gave a real meaning & purpose to many young men, who eventually went back to their homes to lead by their example & bring new hope to a troubled land.

This was expressed by Rudolph Ahlers,

"The Victors in war did not treat us as losers. They respected us as human beings, gave us another chance of finding, in a truly Christian way, hope & purpose in our lives".

Address
Ansprache

zur Farewell-Party in Cuckney oder Mansfield
20. August 1995

Hans Joachim Quistorp
Pfarrer i.R.
Huppenbergstr. 21
63943 Wachtberg-Pech
Tel. 0228 / 32 48 67

It is now fifty years ago that we came to Cuckney, Ex-soldiers of Hitler's Germany, finally in coloured battle-dress as PoW's. In Norton Camp, four months after the end of the war, they wanted to make a new beginning with us young Germans - young men wanting to serve their church and their country now in peace for instance as teachers, as leaders of YMCA groups and as parsons. That was the idea and the plan of Rev. Birger Forell, the great Swedish friend of Jesus, who later on became a friend of us all. His English and American friends and helpers from the international YMCA enabled him to realize that plan. So we began our studies, privileged above the mass of our more than 300.000 comrades in the many different camps in the UK. Our teachers were PoW's just as we were. It was only later on that Rev. Forell could send us tutors from England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, from Switzerland and from our own country. We have swotted nearly as hard as hard-working monks in a monastery, thus laying a good foundation to our later studies at home and in our profession. Indeed, I am grateful to Norton Camp, for it made me work later on as a parson in Germany and Belgium for thirty years with great joy. - Sometimes we were even merry - and naughty in Norton Camp. We played football and sang in the choir. We performed Shakespeare's "As you like it" on the stage of our camp. Naturally, we behaved badly sometimes, creeping through the fence of barbed wire, scrounging Christmas trees from the wood or swimming unobservedly in the Welbeck Lake - strictly forbidden! On the other hand, it was a time of trial for our patience, a time of great concern about our families. Although we had a friendly commander, Mayor Boughton, we were still imprisoned, we were bereaved of our freedom - after the war. It was not before early summer in 1948, that the last of us were repatriated. They came home to our country, which was battered to pieces and heavily damaged by bombs, without a government of its own. And many of us had lost their families and their home in the meantime and could not go back to them. Up to the present day, we have heartache thinking of the victims of the war, thinking of our dead comrades and of all these

Гознак. 1953.

II

murdered lives in all nations on both sides of the front. How comforting it was, that we could experience the healing of our wounds by reconciliation not only in Norton Camp, but even more so in the parish of Cuckney!

Here on the cemetery, my "Second Mother" is buried, and I am happy, that I can thank her once more in public now: Mrs. Alice Skelton! She was one of the many people in Cuckney who have been friendly to us.

She had to change her views and prejudices just as we had to change ours. During the war, she had written caustic patriotic poem for the newspapers, calling us "Huns". But afterwards, when we were allowed to leave our cage, the camp, for hours, she met my friend Arno, and after his repatriation, I was received instead of him as a second son next to her little Jim.

Then she rhymed: "He came to us with smiling face

Another boy of German race ...

I know t'would ease his mother's heart

Should I play a friendly part . . . "

And how well did she play this friendly part! She comforted me, when the bitter news came of my Father's and my Brother-in-law's death. She found pleasure in my youthtime-romance at Hamburg and longed with me for repatriation day:

"A mother looked on with joy in her heart,
was willing and happy to take a part
in this happy story of real true love
and prays: Help be sent him from heaven above..

In this woman not only the soul of Cuckney or the well-known British fairness came to meet me but charity, faith and hope of a true child of God!

When she was absent from home on Sundays sometimes she used to put the key under a stone in the front garden, so that I could warm myself near the fire-place. Since that time, I know that reconciliation is the name for the key of God's kingdom on earth, - in spite of all that can be argued against that. -

Ten years later, I was allowed to visit Mummy Skelton for the last time before her death, - as a free man now, as a father and minister who could show his children and his parishers nothing better than this example of reconciliation and peace. "Hans, I knew you would come back once more" she said when she welcomed me. Perhaps she hears now the Ex-PoW's singing on their last meeting with the people of Cuckney, full of gratitude in heart and soul:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot . . . ?"

Гознак. 1953.

Theology in a Prisoner of War Camp

This is an extract from *A BROAD PLACE* by Jurgen Moltmann, who traces his theologian vocation back to a POW camp number 174, Norton

On the 17th September 1944, things became serious. The British operation, "Market Garden" began, with parachute landings in Eindhoven and Arnhem.

We marched all night as far as Asten, a march of more than 35 kilometres, and met scattered soldiers who were falling back, some of them wounded.

In the morning we were spread out along the banks of the Albert Canal, and had to dig ourselves in.

All night long, grenades howled over our heads and rained down in the village, and there was the sound of fighting on the bridge. Since there was no longer anyone in command of us, we moved hither and thither individually, trying to find our unit.

When we gathered together the next morning, only half of the company was still alive, the men who had lain closer to the bridge than us were dead.

From September 1944 until February 1945, we were in South Holland, in the Reichswald Forest and in Cleves, allegedly at the front. But since I had no overview, and never arrived at one, I never knew where we were.

At the beginning of February 1945, British and Canadian troops started the offensive that was to take them into the Ruhr by way of Cleves and the Reichswald Forest. We were alerted and set on the march to Cleves.

We passed through the deserted town, arrived at a previously prepared trench, came under heavy fire there, turned back, and were led to a hill with an observation tower where parachutists were already in position.

There we came under heavy artillery attack. When the rifle fire came closer, we shot back, but couldn't see where we were shooting.

In the evening the first heavy British tanks drove up the hill through our positions and occupied the tower. It became clear that we were shut in.

We gathered together and tried to break out but

only got as far as the broad field in front of the hill, and a cemetery. There we were shot at from all sides. I ran into a nearby semi-ruined house, crawled into the attic, found a sheet of tin, and hid under it.

Because I was hungry, thirsty and covered in lice, it was clear to me that the next night I should either have to succeed in breaking out or have to surrender.

On a woodland path I saw some British soldiers, threw myself into a hedge, and lost my glasses. Then I ceased to care.

I stumbled on through the wood and through British communication lines, where they were all asleep in their tents.

I drank water out of puddles, and finally reached a state of complete exhaustion. While I was looking for a hiding place in a more densely wooded part of the forest an English soldier jumped up in front of me.

"I surrender" I called, as clearly as I could, but at first he thought I was one of his mates who was playing the fool, then he called some of the others.

They came and we talked. The next morning their Lieutenant gave me a mess tin of baked beans. It was the first food I had tasted for days, and I loved baked beans ever since.

Moltmann was held in a prison camp in Belgium where he experienced deep spiritual despair, and then, when hostilities ceased, was transferred to a camp in Kilbarnock.

In the spring of 1946, I realised that for me, captivity was going to last longer than I had thought.

So I applied to be sent to an educational camp in which "baby prisoners" could retake their messed up Abitur, the final school leaving examination, which was required for the university.

This possibility did exist in the camp culture.



Moltmann (third from left) then 16, as an air force auxillary in Hamburg during the destructive air-raids

I passed an English language test, and on 25th June 1946, guarded by a soldier with a rifle, I was put on a train and travelled in a special compartment through sunny and oh – so – peaceful central England to camp 174 in Cuckney, near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire.

Romantically situated in the park belonging to the Duke of Portland, it was an educational camp, intended to train teachers and protestant pastors for post war Germany, and it was set up by the British YMCA and financed by the American businessman John Barwick.

Norton camp was England's generous gift to German prisoners of war.

At the entrance I was greeted by some high ranking German army chaplains, the like of whom I had never seen at the front and never knew existed. But I was soon assigned to the Abitur course, which was run by German teachers among the prisoners, and was recognised by the Hamburg school authorities.

For us, Norton camp was a kind of closed monastic existence: the day began at 6:30am with a bugle reveille, and ended at 10:30pm, when the lights were put out.

All at once we had time, plenty of time, and we stood, intellectually famished as we were, in front of a wonderful library put together by the YMCA.

Not least among my memories are the moving sermons of the camp chaplains Rudolph Halver and Wilhelm Burckert. They were the first sermons of my life, and I could still repeat some of them today. In my minds eye I can still see the long procession of prisoners on the way to Cuckney village church, or to the Methodist chapel, where the minister was Frank Baker, whom I met again at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

At night, we sometimes crawled through a hole in the fence in order to fetch wood from the Duke of

Portland's park for the iron stove that stood in the middle of the hut.

How much time we had for night time talks in the glow of the stove, long after the lights had been put out. I have never again lived so intensive an intellectual life as I did in Norton Camp.

We received what we had not deserved.

We lived from a spiritual abundance we had not expected.

On 15th August 1946 I wrote to my family :

"I end most days in a curious way. In our camp there is a hill covered with huge old trees, it really is the centre of camp life, for there is a little chapel on it where we meet for evening prayers, so as to end our day with a hymn and collect our thoughts for new life".

In the camp I often walked along the fence in the evening and looked up to the chapel on the hill and I sensed that God was drawing me.

In April 1948, I came home with the last but one transport from Norton Camp, travelling via Harwich, Hook of Holland and Munsterlager; I was discharged on 19th April.

After spending more than 5 years in barracks, camps, dugouts and bunkers, I had experienced something that was to determine my whole life.

For that reason, this time is for me so important that I would not have missed a day of it.

Chad

Newspaper Article
May 1995

Nostalgic return for Germans

AS BRITAIN commemorated the ending of the Second World War this weekend 23 old German prisoners stepped off a bus and back almost 50 years in time as they revisited their former PoW camp at Norton.

The camp, near Cuckney, was established at the end of the war with help from the War Office and the YMCA as a centre of learning for returning prisoners who would go on to become teachers and ministers in the new Federal Republic.

And on Saturday the men stood blinking in the Nottinghamshire sun among the overgrown tracks that are all that remain of what became known as 'The University of Barbed Wire.'

Reconciliation

One former prisoner-cum-student was Alfred Schnbacher who arrived in 1946 after being captured in Africa.

"It is a bit like coming home," he said as he gazed around at the scene of his internment. "Everything has changed. It is like revisiting your childhood."

Alfred studied theology at Norton and went on to become a pastor. "The British people were the first real Christians who spoke of reconciliation with us."

Alfred and his former comrades were on a five-day visit to England which included a visit to Coventry Cathedral, Nottingham YMCA and Southwell's Brackenbury College.

But the highlight was the visit to the camp site where the years fell away as the former prisoners gathered in a circle among the cow-parsley and sang along whistfully with their younger selves on an old gramophone recording made of the Norton camp church choir.

Helmut Ost spent a year at Norton from 1947-48 as a young corporal. He described his time in the camp as very special for all the men.

"It was a very fine time here for me," he said. "We had had total war, but here we had total peace."

Wandering around the site First Lt Wilhelm Burkert who used to give lectures in The New Testament found again the oak tree where he would sit preaching to the men.

Another friendship established at that time was between Wilhelm Thearer and the young Canon Robert Warburton of St. Peter's Church which today is twinned with Wilhelm's own church in Deizisau near Stuttgart.

"Conditions here were very very good," said Herr Thearer. "We were received like human beings. It was very nice. I became friends with one local family who presented me with a Bible before I left which I still have today. It is my most treasured possession."

The Germans attended a special service at Cuckney Parish Church before returning home on Monday.



FOTO-M5338/14

The former students of 'The University of Barbed Wire' pictured at their reunion on Saturday

AMONG the hundreds of Burma Star and Royal Navy veterans gathered at Mansfield's Cenotaph for Sunday's service of remembrance was Jim Swordy.

Fighting with Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, Jim was taken prisoner in Singapore in 1942 and was sent to a PoW camp to work on the infamous Burma railway.

Now living on Mansfield's Bellamy Road the 74-year-old remembers his time there as a terrible one.

"We were starved, beaten, tortured and denied medical attention," he said.

"Many of us suffered malaria, dysentery, ulcers and skin diseases. We were forced to work sometimes up to 30 hours a stretch."

While feeling no ill will towards the Japanese people as a whole, Jim is still bitter about his experience.

Atrocities

"Three friends of mine who escaped were recaptured and executed by the Japanese," he said. "I will never forgive the Japanese Army for the atrocities they committed, but I don't hold it against the civilians."

And he is not satisfied by the recent pronouncements of regret from the Japanese government. "As far as I am concerned the majority don't mean it. We want them to say to the world 'we were ashamed of what happened.'"

Mary Shelton (65), of Burlington Drive, admitted to a lump in her throat during the service.

As a young girl with the St. John Ambulance service Mary picked among the rubble of Coventry to retrieve the dead and wounded.

"It was a beautiful service," she said. "But a very hard day. I lost three brothers during the war. We try to remember the good days, but it brought a lot back."

Courtesy : Johnston Press PLC

50 YEARS ON

The Emotional Return Visit of Former Prisoners Of War

"It seldom happens that twenty five Prisoners of War (POWs), some with their wives and some widows of dead comrades, return by choice to the place of their deprivation. Captivity in wartime is generally perceived as something oppressive and humiliating. However in the case of Camp number 174 (Norton Camp near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire), we are talking of something special."

(Part of a paper written by Klaus Loscher on behalf of his fellow prisoners.)

The full text follows Pastor Noller's Sermon.

In 1944 towards the end of the war, the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) realised that with the ending of hostilities, Germany would need help to recover.

Amongst their many needs would be a requirement for trained teachers, youth leaders and ministers of religion, to enable the nation to re-establish itself.

The Y.M.C.A., working through the World Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s in Geneva, gained the support of the British War Office authorities, who agreed that the Y.M.C.A. should set up a camp with their support for appropriate courses of study.

The camp was established at Norton, with the motto displayed over the entrance **"Fide Non Armis"** – i.e. By Faith Not By Weapons.

Every fortnight some 200 "students" would walk the short distance to St. Mary's Church, Cuckney for a service of worship.

"The University Of The Barbed Wire" commenced its life in 1945 and concluded its mission in April 1948. During that period some 1,000 young Germans were trained to the English equivalent of 'A' level to enable them to take salient posts to work on their return for the future well being of their country.

The relationships established at Norton Camp were such that the prisoners have been meeting in reunion ever since – and particularly in recent years. For the 50th Anniversary of the ending of the war, they expressed the wish to meet in Britain, visiting as many of their old haunts as possible, particularly Cuckney and Norton.

"CAN WE STILL BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?"

A SERMON

GIVEN BY

PASTOR GERHARD NOLLER

(A FORMER GERMAN PRISONER OF WAR)

ON

SUNDAY 20TH AUGUST 1995

AT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF CUCKNEY

(ST. MARY'S) IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

IN THE PRESENCE OF FELLOW COMPATRIOTS
(SOME OF WHOM WERE ALSO FORMER P.O.W.'S)

AND A BRITISH CONGREGATION



TO MARK THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE TIME WHEN AS PRISONERS OF WAR
THEY WERE "STUDENTS" IN A CAMP SET UP
AT NORTON, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
(IN THE CLOSE VICINITY OF CUCKNEY)

BY THE

WORLD ALLIANCE OF Y.M.C.A.'S

WHICH WAS NICKNAMED

BY THOSE INVOLVED AS

"THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BARBED WIRE"



GERHARD NOLLER

PREDIGT (SERMON) IN CUCKNEY AM 20. AUGUST 1995

TEXT: 1KOR 12,1-13; JO 8,36

1 CORINTHIANS 12, 1-13; JOHN 8, 36

Liebe Gemeinde. Liebe Freunde.

Dear Congregation. Dear Friends.

“Können wir noch an Wunder glauben?” lautete die Frage auf dem Titelblatt der bekannten amerikanischen Wochenzeitschrift “Time” unter dem Bild einer sehr realistischen Darstellung der Auferstehung Jesu Christi an Ostern dieses Jahres. Im Mittelpunkt der Titelgeschichte stand die Auferstehung. Gleichzeitig aber wurden viele Leute befragt, ob sie in ihrem Leben Wunder erfahren hätten. Es gab viele bejahende Antworten. Was würden wir antworten?

“Can we still believe in miracles?” This question was put under a very realistic cover picture of Christ’s resurrection by Time the famous American newsmagazine at Easter this year. The central subject of the cover story was the resurrection. But simultaneously they also had asked a lot of people, if they had experienced miracles in their lives. Many people said yes, they had. What would be our answer?

Das Wunder meines Lebens heißt Norton Camp. Heute wie vor 50 Jahren, und heute in der Erinnerung noch mehr als damals, ist es für mich ein Wunder, daß es nach den Schrecken des Krieges, in der trostlosen Lage als Kriegsgefangener und angesichts einer ungewissen Lebenszukunft ein Studienlager gab, wo ich anfangen konnte zu studieren, ohne Sorge um meinen Lebensunterhalt um Studiengebühren oder sonstige Kosten. Das kam unerwartet und überraschend – wie ein Wunder.

The miracle in my life is named Norton Camp. Fifty years ago it was a miracle and today in my memory it is even more a miracle, that after the terrible war, in the desolate situation as a prisoner of war and facing a very uncertain future, there was a students’ camp, where I could begin to study without having to worry about my livelihood, about study fees or about other costs. It came about unexpectedly and surprisingly as miracles use to.

Von Lager ist nichts mehr zu sehen. Voller Leben und Geist existierte es nur drei Jahre lang von 1945-1948. Wenn ich an ein sichtbares Merkmal aus dieser Zeit denke, dann steht das Bild dieser Kirche von Cuckney vor mir, die sehr nahe am Lager war und uns ihre Türen zu einem frühen Zeitpunkt geöffnet hat. Daß wir heute nach 50 Jahren Frieden zwischen unseren Völkern diesen ökumenischen Gottesdienst feiern, gehört für mich mit zu dem Wunder von Norton.

The camp has disappeared. Full of life and spirit it existed only three years from 1945 till 1948. When I think of a visible sign, I find in my memory the picture of this

Cuckney church, which was nearest to the camp, with its doors open to us at a very early stage. Part of this miracle is, that today we worship together in this ecumenical service after fifty years of peace between our nations.

Wir lebten damals in einer ganz besonderen Situation. Wir waren Gefangene, aber wir waren frei von der Todesangst, die uns viele Jahre bedrückt hatte. Wir waren Gefangene, aber wir waren frei vom Zwang einer intoleranten Ideologie und von der Willkürherrschaft eines totalitären Regimes. Unsere leibliche Bewegungsfreiheit war eingeengt, aber die Freiheit unseres Geistes und unseres Glaubens war ohne Grenzen. Wir erhielten Zeitungen aus aller Welt, und wir begegneten literarischen Werken, die uns lange verschlossen waren. Hinter Stacheldraht lernten wir eine neue Freiheit kennen.

We lived in a unique situation. We were prisoners, but we were free from the fear of death, that had oppressed us many years. We were prisoners, but we were free from the tyranny of an intolerant ideology and from the reign of terror of a totalitarian regime. Our physical freedom of movement was limited, but the freedom of our mind and our faith was without borders. We could read newspapers from all over the world and we discovered literature and books, that formerly were closed to us. Behind barbed wire we experienced a new freedom.

Doch das Wunder von Norton Camp hatte noch eine andere Qualität. Wer hier eintrat, der war umschlossen von der Wirklichkeit des lebendigen Jesus Christus. Ob Dozent oder Student, jeder war in der Lage, die vielen Aspekte wissenschaftlicher Theologie kennenzulernen. Aber hier war mehr als die Neugierde wissenschaftlichen Forschens. Hier war der auferstandene Jesus Christus gegenwärtig.

The miracle of Norton had still another quality. He who entered here, was surrounded by the reality of Jesus Christ. Everybody, teaching or studying in the camp, could learn the various academic aspects of theology. But here was more than the curiosity of research. Here the spiritual reality of Jesus Christ risen was present.

Jahr um Jahr erscheinen neue Bücher auf dem Markt, in denen kluge Leute die Frage zu beantworten suchen, wer Jesus wirklich war. Sie vermuten, seine Wirklichkeit sei verdeckt von den Zeugnissen der Schrift, und suchen den wirklichen Jesus hinter der Bibel, gleichsam in ihren Hinterzimmern und Kellern. Aber dort entstehen immer nur neue irreale Bilder von ihm. Den wirklichen Jesus zeigt uns Gott durch seinen Geist in der Heiligen Schrift. Jesus, wie Gott ihn selbst gedacht und in der Bibel geoffenbart hat, er allein ist wirklich. “Niemand kann Jesus einen Herrn heißen außer durch den heiligen Geist”, sagt Paulus. 1Ko 12,3. Professor Rawley hat uns vor 50 Jahren in seiner Vorlesung hier den Satz gesagt: “Theologen sollen nicht Meister vieler Religionen, sondern Diener einer Religion sein”.

Year by year new books are published, in which clever people pretend to know, who Jesus Christ was in reality. They suppose the real Jesus hidden by the texts of the New Testament and therefore they seek him behind the Bible, in its back rooms and in its cellars. However, they only produce new pictures without reality. The real

Jesus is represented by the Spirit of God in the Holy Scripture. Jesus, thought by God and revealed in the Bible, he alone is real. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost" says the apostle Paul (1Cor 12,3). Professor Rawley, an Englishman, taught us in his lectures here fifty years ago: "Theologians should not be masters of many religions, but servants of one".

Weil der wirkliche, der lebendige Christus uns frei gemacht hat, darum waren wir als Gefangene noch in ganz anderer Weise frei, wie es bei Johannes heißt: "Wenn euch der Sohn frei macht, dann seid ihr recht frei" Jo 8,36. Jesus Christus war unser Bruder in unserer Einsamkeit und langen Getrenntheit von zu Hause und von unseren Familien. Ihm konnte jeder seine individuelle Vergangenheit bekennen und konnte um Vergebung bitten für persönliche Schuld und für die kollektive Schuld unseres Volkes. Der lebendige Christus war bei uns in unseren Gottesdiensten und Gebeten, in den Vorlesungen, in Diskussionen und Meditationen. Unsere verschiedenen Traditionen und unterschiedlichen Gaben waren in ihm eins. Wir waren viele Glieder, aber ein Leib in Christus.

Being liberated by the living Jesus Christ we were free in a different way. As it is said in the Gospel of John: "If the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8,36). Jesus Christ was our brother in the loneliness and longlasting separation from home and from our families. To him every one of us could confess his personal past and could ask for forgiveness for individual guilt and for the collective guilt of our nation. The living Christ was with us in our services, in our prayers, in the lectures, in discussions and meditations. The differences of our traditions and the diversities of our gifts were united by his spirit. We were many members, but one body in Jesus Christ.

Gottes Wunder in der Geschichte geschehen durch begnadete Personen. Es waren Männer wie Bischof Bell von Chichester, wie Pastor Birger Forell aus Schweden, wie der Amerikaner John Barwick, der Leiter der YMCA-Kriegsgefangenenhilfe in London, die die Idee eines Studienlagers für Kriegsgefangene entwarfen. Sie führten sie mit der Unterstützung vieler anderer Personen und Institutionen aus, nicht zuletzt der militärischen Stellen vor Ort und im Kriegsministerium.

The miracles of God in history are accomplished by inspired persons. There was a man like Bishop Bell of Chichester, there was Pastor Birger Forell from Sweden, there was the American John Barwick, head of the YMCA-War Prisoners' Aid in London. They had the idea to found a students' camp for German prisoners of war. They translated the idea into practice, supported by many other persons and institutions, last not least the regional military and the war office.

Norton Camp wurde in den drei Jahren seiner Existenz zu einem Modell weltweiter ökumenischer Begegnung. Repräsentanten der verschiedensten Kirchen aus vielen Ländern besuchten uns hier. In meinem ganzen übrigen Leben habe ich nicht mehr so viele bekannte Persönlichkeiten der Kirche gesehen wie hier in Norton Camp zweieinhalb Jahren. Sie predigten und lehrten uns die Realität Christi in Form der weltweiten Verbundenheit seiner Kirche, ihrer Bereitschaft zur Versöhnung und

ihrem Willen zum Frieden. Hunderte von uns haben in ihren Berufen als Pfarrer, als Lehrer, als Jugendleiter oder in sozialen Diensten diese Botschaft an ihrem Platz in Deutschland als Frucht des Studiums hier weitergegeben. Die relativ kurze Zeit in Norton hinterließ vielfältige geistliche Spuren über eine lange Zeitspanne hinweg.

In the three years of its existence Norton Camp was a model of an ecumenical meeting-place. Many representatives of various churches from many countries visited us here. Never in my whole life have I seen so many distinguished persons as I did in those two and a half years in Norton Camp. They preached and taught us the reality of Jesus Christ in the form of the worldwide community of churches, their readiness for reconciliation and their wish for peace. Later in Germany, hundreds of us in our professions as pastors and ministers, teachers, youthleaders or in social services have passed on this message to others each at his place as a fruit of the time in Norton Camp. The relatively short time here has left manifold spiritual footprints for a long period.

Anders Nygren, der Professor und spätere Bischof von Lund in Schweden hat uns, unvergeßlich für ein ganzes Leben, in seinen Vorlesungen den Begriff der christlichen Liebe beschrieben, als jene Liebe, die nicht zuerst das Große, Edle, Reiche und Schöne liebt wie die Liebe der Welt, sondern die das Schwache das Verachtete, das Geschlagene liebt. Sie manifestiert sich in Gottes Menschwerdung, in seinem Herabsteigen, im Kommen Jesu zu den Armen, den Kranken, den Sündern, in seinem Weg nach Golgatha.

Anders Nygren, professor and later Bishop of Lund in Sweden, has taught us in his lectures, unforgettable for a whole life, the idea and meaning of Christian love, of charity, that doesn't love the mighty, the great and the beautiful in the first place as the worldly love does, but that loves the weak, the poor and the oppressed. This love is manifest in the incarnation of God, in his descent, in Jesus' going to the poor, the sick and the sinners, in his way to Calvary.

Von dieser Liebe haben wir nicht nur in den Vorlesungen gehört, sondern wir haben sie hier erfahren. Daß wir von so vielen in diesem Lande nicht als Feinde betrachtet und behandelt wurden, sondern als Mitmenschen und Mitchristen angesehen und angenommen wurden, war ein großes und ganz wunderbares Erlebnis. Es begann mit Einladungen bei einzelnen christlichen Gruppen und Gemeinden. Später wurden wir Mitglied in der Christlichen Studentenbewegung. An ihrer großen Westminsterkonferenz in London im Januar 1948 nahm eine beträchtliche Anzahl deutscher Kriegsgefangener als Delegierte teil.

We did not only hear of this love in the lectures, but we experienced it here. Many people in this country did not see us and treat us as enemies, but rather accepted us as fellow human beings and fellow Christians. Indeed, that was a great and most wonderful experience. At first there were invitations by Christian groups and congregations. Later, we became a member of the Christian Student Movement and in January 1948 a considerable number of German prisoners participated as delegates in the big Westminster Conference in London.

Die Einladungen reichten über die christlichen Gruppen und Gemeinden hinaus. Als Spieler in unserer Lagermannschaft denke ich gern an die Fußballspiele gegen englische Mannschaften aus der Umgebung. Auch das waren immer Begegnungen voller Freundlichkeit und Menschlichkeit.

The invitations and meetings also went beyond the Christian groups and congregations. As one of the players of our camp team I like to remember the soccer matches with English teams in the neighbourhood. There was much human kindness in these encounters, too.

Die Akzeptanz, die so selbstverständlich geschah, war sehr eindrucksvoll und überzeugend. Das hat unseren Glauben und unsere politische Einstellung geprägt für ein ganzes Leben. Ihre Gemeinde war das erste Glied in der Kette christlicher Liebe. Lassen Sie mich in dieser Stunde fünfzig Jahre darnach Ihnen herzlich danken für alles, was wir empfangen haben.

The acceptance, which was granted so spontaneously, was very impressive and convincing. This experience has formed our Christian faith and our political attitude and commitment till today. Your congregation was the first link in the chain of Christian charity. Let me in this hour fifty years after the events give you hearty thanks for everything we received.

Die Jahre vergehen, wir sind alt geworden. Einige sind uns im Tod vorausgegangen. So haben wir vor wenigen Monaten unseren Freund Franz Gebert verloren, der uns ehemalige Nortonen über viele Jahre zusammengehalten und unsere Treffen organisiert hat. Er starb mitten in den Vorbereitungen für dieses 50 jährige Jubiläum. Ich weiß, wie sehr sein Herz an diesem ökumenischen Gottesdienst hing. Wir beten für ihn und alle Verstorbenen und befehlen sie der Gnade Gottes. Wir werden ihnen folgen im Glauben und Wissen, daß wir auch als Gefangene des unentrinnbaren Todes frei sind durch die Wirklichkeit des lebendigen Jesus Christus. Seine Auferstehung ist das Fundament aller Wunder. Sie ist Gottes Wirklichkeit und seine Möglichkeit für uns. Gott sei Ehre, Preis und Dank für alle seine Wunder.

The years pass, we have grown old. Some don't live anymore, Only three months ago we lost our friend Franz Gebert, who bound us together and organized our meetings for many years. He died preparing this 50th anniversary. I know, he set his heart on this ecumenical service especially. We pray for him and all the departed and commend them to the grace of God. When we shall follow them, we know and believe, that also as prisoners of unescapable death, we shall be free through the reality of the living Jesus Christ. His resurrection is the foundation of all miracles, is God's reality and his possibility for us. We worship God, we give him thanks and we praise him for all his miracles.

Amen

Jabbok, he related the experience of Jacob, the patriarch, to the POWs sorrowful experiences, which would bring them blessing in the end as it did to Jacob.

He was made aware of the life giving strength of forgiveness and reconciliation during meetings with simple miners.

Professor Dr. Gerhard Noller (Reutlingen) said in his sermon in the old church at Cuckney, only 1½ miles away from the former camp: Although there is nothing left to see of the Norton Camp, let this church therefore be a symbol of reconciliation. It has again today opened its doors to the former POWs. That can only be described as a miracle.

After the service there were moving scenes for everyone: English people from the village of Cuckney and the surrounding area had come to find again their old German friends whom they had not seen for a long time by showing old photos from family albums and pictures of sporting competitions between themselves and the POWs and also by bringing wooden toys which the POWs had given to the village children as presents at Christmas.

The former POWs prepared themselves for the ten day programme of visits with morning prayer. As a rule the saying for the day was explained. Time and again there were opportunities of clarifying biblical statements through experiences in captivity.

The visit to England attracted an unexpectedly lively response in the English media by the newspapers, radio and television. The large number of questions from journalists was mainly answered by the leader of the group Hans Hallier, Federal Secretary of the German CVJM (Bielefeld), to whom all members are very grateful for his exemplary preparation and running of the trip.

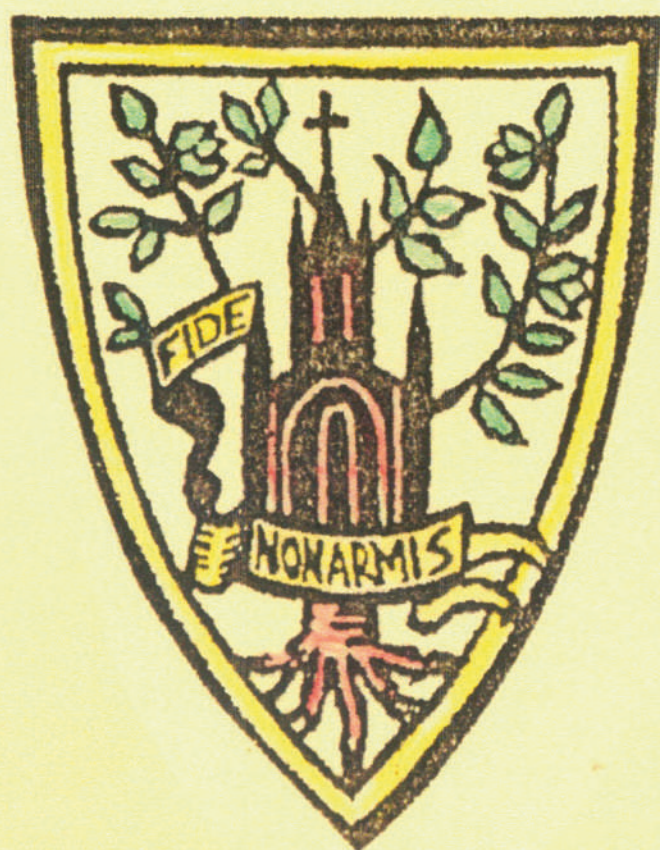
Klaus Loscher

(The author, Klaus Loscher is vicar and study director of the school in Bayreuth. Translation from German by Alex and Liz Trott.)

NORTON - CAMP

1945-1995

University behind barbed wire



FINAL NORTON-CAMP:

*Time has gone, nature has
takes over and is stronger
then the concret ways.*



*Stations of a journey
of remembrance*



Toys made by prisoners and given to hospitable English families



Dr Gerhard Moller, a former POW Student of Norton, preached "The wonder of Norton"



Records from a former POWs choir

Many years ago hundreds of German POWs marched to this church, having permission to have German services



Conclusion: Upon Reflection

By: Paul Jameson BOHIS Chairman

People often assume that the internet is a super portal to all information but this is largely untrue and even if available is sometimes unverifiable. In our particular case, there is little information "out there" regarding Norton & Carburton POW Camps. Hence we advertised in 3 local papers for participants in 2 POW camp lectures kindly provided by Robert Ilett and in 2 POW camp workshops all of which were unfortunately sparsely attended.

Robert has also provided major articles for this publication.

As a supplementary alternative, we therefore cast the net wider and were rewarded by materials from the 1973 & 1995 reunions and some literature on master sculptor, Franz Egmont Seibel, courtesy of Mrs June Ibbotson (who was also involved in the latter re-union).

Chris & Astrid Hansen also braved their personal loss to provide information and high quality pictures of those beautiful sculptures of John & Chris Hansen, undertaken by Franz Seibel as a POW internee. They came courtesy of a loft from a house in a village near Bradford (not the internet!).

Proof that good things don't always come easily.

Also thanks to the Welbeck Estates Company Ltd. for granting us access to Carburton Camp for a couple of "Ground Truthing" (examination) days in the latter part of September 2018, led by Andy Gaunt of Mercian (our archaeology providers and supporters).

A resilient bunch of about 8 of us braved the rain (certainly on Day 1) to see 1st hand the evidence still in existence that bears testament to a large camp (much concrete and brick still lurks beneath the ever encroaching foliage). It is also where supporter Nick Mason introduced the hitherto unknown concept of "red camouflage" via his waterproof jacket, although this element may require further work (another partial success!).

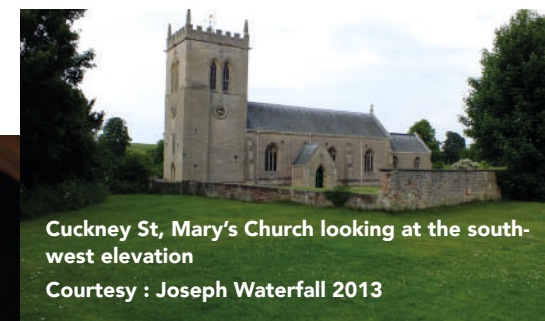
We've also purchased & dipped in to the excellent book, "Thresholds of Peace" by Matthew Barry Sullivan for extra information.

Thanks also to the Cecil Brown Collection for allowing free use of some of the photographs utilised (especially the poignant one on the back cover).

In summary, whilst this HLF funded community book may only be a "heavy flavour" of what information might be available, we hope it will be a cohesive and enjoyable read and a potential reference source for future productions by others.

As we're producing 300 free copies and providing a free electronic copy of the book on both the BOHIS & MERCIAN websites (guaranteed for 5 years) then we hope that an even wider audience will eventually enjoy this research.

After all, what's the use of information if it doesn't have an audience?



Cuckney St. Mary's Church looking at the south-west elevation
Courtesy : Joseph Waterfall 2013



Cuckney Church interior c. 1920
Courtesy : Bob Needham Collection

BATTLE of HATFIELD INVESTIGATION SOCIETY



Closing Ceremony of the Norton Camp Y.M.C.A. Schools for German Prisoners of War,
Norton Camp, Cuckney, 16th April 1948

Courtesy: Cecil Brown Collection

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