**Camp 68** **- Hallmuir Farm Camp, Lockerbie, Dumfrieshire (aka Halmuir)**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 68. Halmuir Farm Camp, Lockerbie, Dumfriess

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| Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English Heritage 2003 | | | | | | | |
| OS NGR | Sheet | No. | Name & Location | County | Cond’n | Type 1945 | Comments |
|  |  | 68 | Halmuir Farm Camp, Lockerbie | Dumfrieshire |  | German Working Camp | Scotland |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Location:** NGR NY 128 791. Next to Hallmuir Farm and Plantation. About 2.5 km SW of Lockerbie. The documents in the file call it Halmuir / but maps show Hallmuir.  **Before the camp:** Wood and moor land.  **Pow Camp:**  **1942** - camp constructed with capacity of 450. Italian pows employed by local farms and forestry. I have seen a pow letter sheet in Italian, 24 November 1942.  Appears to be ‘standard type’ with a main compound for pows with 24 huts surrounded by barbed wire fencing; and a guards’ area at the ‘front’ alongside the road with 21 huts.  **1943** – Hostels for Italian pows: Newbridge - Town Head (Garron) - Underwood (Langholm) -Kirkpatrick – Liddlebank - Closeburn  **5 May 1944** - Hostels listed for Italian pows from this camp, (WO 32/10737): - Closeburn, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire - Kirkpatrick, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire - Newbridge, Midlothian  **May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Scottish Command area and then as an Italian Working Camp, (WO 32/10737).  [In an article about the camp it was stated that - “*By May 1945, Hallmuir POW camp held 1968 prisoners; 1821 were German, 124 were Ukrainians who had been fighting with the German army and in the Waffen SS, as well as some French, Austrian, Czech, Romanian and Hungarian prisoners.”* <https://www.devilsporridge.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/FAR-FROM-HOME-FINAL.pdf> The total number may be correct, but it is way above other numbers in the reports below, and it is known that the Ukrainian pows who fought with the Waffen-SS were not brought to the UK until 1947]. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1957 |

**Before September 1945** - Mouswald Hostel opened with 70 German pows, (FO939/383).

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| Oversight and development of re-education activities and English teaching for German pows was carried out by PID (Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office) / COGA (Control Office for Germany and Austria – UK). Visits and reports were made. The standard of the reports varied greatly. The visitors took little interest, if any, in activities other than re-education. They rarely mentioned welfare, sports, games, pastimes, crafts, etc of the pows. |

**29/30 July 1945** – English Education Report. About 50 pows of varying abilities attending English classes.

There was a lack of materials, text and reference books. Some books, dictionaries etc had been bought using money from the Welfare Fund – raised by sale of goods in the canteen.

Barony Camp 182 was so close that 150 pows from there came to Hallmuir to listen to the visitor’s lecture on the History of the English Language.

**21 November 1945** – English Education Report. Main camp + four hostels (only 2 named – Newbridge and Closeburn).

Comment about the remoteness of the camp with no bus service.

Nearest hostel to main camp -a large house with no barbed wire. A room was set aside for classes.

**29 June 1946** – English Inspector’s Report. Main + 2 hostels + billetees. Total strength 883.

Commandant: Lt Col I M Kerr Lagersprecher (Camp Leader): Karl Post

Like most camps, the initial interest in learning English dwindled fast. The beginner’s class had been abandoned due to lack of interest. There were just 20 pupils in 3 classes at all sites + some studying privately.

**16-20 December 1946** – Re-education and political screening visit. This was the third re-education survey, but the previous 2 are not in the National Archive file. Strength 1 officer (the M.O.), 908 Other Ranks in main + 2 hostels and billetees.

Commandant: Lt Col I M Kerr Camp Leader: O/Fwl Karl Post (B)

Interpreter: Capt A Howard. Deputy C/L: Uffz Willems (B)

German M.O.: Ass.Arzt Dr Kunze (B)

Other than the Interpreter, the Commandant and British staff played no active role in re-education.

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| Political screening: | A | B+ | B | B- | C | Unscreened |
|  | 4 | 84 | 382 | 134 | 63 | 242 |

26 appeals had been made against the political grades – 24 had been allowed – the better the grade, the sooner repatriated, in theory. There were a further 86 appeals to be heard – including just about all of the C graded pows. 80 pows repatriated to date.

Morale was recorded to be ‘*considerably higher than on previous visits.*’ This was due to; a. the start of repatriations, b. addition freedoms and increased cigarette issue, c. Re-action to a more positive reception by the British people and press. Negative aspects were considered to be lack of social and re-education activities. There was a low interest in politics. The pows had largely adapted to life in the camp – refusals to work were rare – “*when they do occur, the guilty person is generally ostracised by his camp-mates*.”

Some of the pows destined to be returned to the Russian zone had applied to be repatriated to western Allied zones instead.

About 100 pows were ‘youth’ – under 25. They were not regarded as a problem.

Re-education activities were basic. The standard list was given:

Wochenpost and Ausblick – separate appendix.

Newspapers – A wide range of British papers were received. COGA sent some German newspapers (also Austrian papers, but the visitor pointed out these should be stopped).

Library – only 400 books for main and hostels.

Lectures – All sites visited every 5 weeks, and were well attended. Political subjects were not popular. The visitor added the note – *“PW are mostly simple minded people whose intelligence stand is low.”*

Discussion group – Disbanded through lack of interest.

Films – Fortnightly by YMCA and Gaumont Films – well attended.

Radio – pow programmes were listened to.

Camp Magazine - “*Feierabend*” (End of Work). Attractively put together and at least one political article included.

Information Room – Not started. A successful exhibition about handicrafts and art was held in the camp theatre.

Other activities –

Religion – 25% attended weekly services.

Education – None, other than English.

Theatre / Orchestra – said to have suffered from repatriations of its members – this seems a very weak excuse as less than 10% of pows had been repatriated.

Recreation – good facilities for outdoor sport, but no indication of what they were.

**January 1947** - Hallmuir became a satellite camp for Barony Camp 298 (was 182) at the end of January 1947.

[See Barony Camp 182/298 – Ukrainian pows arrived June 1947]

Known Commandants:

1946 – Lt.Col I M Kerr

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

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

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Main |  |  |  | 503 | 475 |
| Closeburn |  |  |  |  |  |
| Kirkpatrick |  |  |  |  |  |
| Liddlebank |  |  |  |  |  |
| Newbridge |  |  |  |  |  |
| Town Head |  |  |  |  |  |
| Underwood |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mouswald |  |  |  | 96 | 102 |
| Honduras |  |  | C612 | 131 | 169 |
| Billets |  |  |  | 153 | 163 |
| Total | Cap 450 |  |  | 883 | 909 |

January 1947 – main site, possibly some of the hostels, became satellite camp for Barony Camp 182/298.

**Further information:**

National Archives FO 939/149 – 68 Working Camp, Halmuir Farm Camp, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire. Dated 1945-1946. Used above.

Canmore - [http://canmore.org.uk/site/247030](https://canmore.org.uk/site/247030)

Vertical air photographs (106G/Scot/UK 145, 3346-3348, flown 12 July 1946.

There are many websites about the ‘Ukrainian chapel.’

**After the camp**: The Ukrainians stayed on at the camp as members of the European Voluntary Worker scheme for some years. Marks for the camp are clearly seen in aerial photographs. Now forestry with part of the site a recycling centre / waste ground.

A Ukrainian Chapel was developed inside one created previously by Italian, Austrian and German pows. It still exists as a listed building, description by ‘Historic Environment Scotland’ -

“*1942. Single storey, pitched roof, prefabricated hut forming Ukrainian Prisoner of War chapel. Painted corrugated asbestos on timber frame and concrete base. Timber door to N with flanking windows; former electricity pylon above; 2 windows each to E and W elevations. 4- and 6-pane timber windows. Corrugated asbestos roof.*

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|  | *INTERIOR: 6 bays divided by simple king-posted roof trusses. Timber partition forming altar-screen at S end; round-arched opening at centre through to High Altar; square-headed openings to sides. Timber pews, altars, lectern and other furnishings. Ceiling painted blue with gold stars.*  *MEMORIAL: by entrance. Timber post on concrete base, bearing plastic plaque inscribed, in Ukrainian and English "This chapel was created by Ukrainian POWs during their internment here after World War 2".* *Statement of Special Interest* *In use as an ecclesiastical building. This is the best preserved building surviving in the former Prisoner of War camp, 68 Working Camp, Halmuir Farm. Four other buildings from the camp still exist (two of these are formed from several huts joined together),* |  |

*but they are in a rather dilapidated condition. The camp probably dates from the early 1940s, and originally had 40 buildings. The Ukrainian POWs arrived here after the war in 1947, and previous to that it had been occupied by German and Italian POWs. This building is known to have been used as a chapel by the Italians. After the Ukrainians arrived, they fitted out the chapel in an enthusiastic, if necessarily make-shift manner. Paintings by the POWs hang on the walls, the candlesticks were made out of shell fragments, the banners flanking the altar were made out of the Italians? tents, and on the high altar stands a replica of a Ukrainian Cathedral, which was carved with a penknife. What is perhaps most unusual, is that the chapel remained in use after the camp was disbanded, and services in Ukrainian are still held here several times a year. This chapel is a truly remarkable survival, and is of significant historic importance. The only other surviving POW chapel in Scotland, is the Italian Chapel on Lamb Holm, Orkney. Although the Ukrainian chapel lacks the artistic achievements of the Italian Chapel, it is an equally evocative reminder of wartime spirit, and the way the prisoners found ways to overcome the privations of their situation.”*

The site as it is now – <https://repatriatedlandscape.org/pow-sites-in-scotland/pow-camp-68-halmuir-farm-camp-10/>

**Hostels**

**Closeburn** (Thornhill, Dumfriesshire)

It is now called The Meadows, on the Linkland Road between the school and the Croalchapel Road – NX 902 917. (Old maps show ‘Birswick’ which was alongside the site of the camp.

Local historians believe the camp was administered by Carronbridge Camp 293 after this.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Closeburn |  |  |  |  |  |

**Honduras.** NY 278 698.Previously Honduras Camp 612.

**12/1946** – Hostel leader; O.Maat Gutke (B)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Honduras |  |  | C612 | 131 | 169 |

**Kirkpatrick (**Thornhill, Dumfriesshire). Location ?

Kirkpatrick-Fleming or Kirkpatrick Durham? Honduras Camp above was listed as Kirkpatrick Fleming – same place?

### One memory – “*Ruby Hardisty mentioned Italian POW’s who were camped at Kirkpatrick Fleming  and would often cycle to Gretna to use the local amenities such as the cinema, “they were always at the pictures, that’s where most of them learnt English, the pictures mostly.*” <https://www.devilsporridge.org.uk/pows-gretna-object-of-the-month-display>

### The Honduras Camp was listed for German pows, so possibly; 43/44 Italian Camp as below – then independent Honduras Camp 612 – then Honduras hostel as above.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Kirkpatrick |  |  |  |  |  |



**Liddlebank.** (Liddle Bank / Liddelbank) NY 455 798

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Liddlebank |  |  |  |  |  |

**Mouswald**

Mouswald Hostel opened for German pows during 1945 (before September) with 70 pows – possibly held Italian pows before this.

**12/1946** – Hostel leader; O.Maat Steven. (B)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Mouswald |  |  |  | 96 | 102 |

**Newbridge** (Midlothian)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Newbridge |  |  |  |  |  |

**Town Head (Garron)** – Location?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Town Head |  |  |  |  |  |

**Underwood (Langholm)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1942 | 1943 | 5/1944 | 6/1946 | 12/1946 |
| Underwood |  |  |  |  |  |