**Camp 71** **- Sheriffhales Camp (Sheriff Hales), Shifnal, Shropshire**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 71. Sheriffhales Camp, Shifnal. Shropshire.

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| **1947 Camp List** | | | | | | | |
| 71(G.W.C.) | Sheriffhales Camp, Shifnal, Salop. | W. | Priswar, Sheriffhales | Shifnal 100 | Shifnal | Major B.Wright | v/1452/2 |

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| **Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English Heritage 2003** | | | | | | | |
| OS NGR | Sheet | No. | Name & Location | County | Cond’n | Type 1945 | Comments |
| SJ 757 115 | 127 | 71 | Sheriffhales (Sheriff Hales) Camp, Shifnal | Shropshire | 4 | German Working Camp | STANDARD type. |

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| **Location:** Off the Sheriff Hales Drive. About 7km NE of Telford. Marked as Agricultural Hostel on map.  **Before the camp:** Farmland  **Pow camp:** Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion to at least 1945, then German pows. (Several sources state that German pows replaced the Italians in 1943 – this is incorrect).  **1943** – Capacity stated to be 2000. Hostels for Italian pows: Cheswardine; Gnosall; Shrewsbury (Monkmoor); C.S.D. Wellington; R.A. Camp Trawsfynydd.  **5 May 1944** - Hostels listed for Italian pows from this camp, (WO 32/10737): Barmouth, Merioneth; Hadnall, Shrewsbury, Salop; Rhyl, Flintshire; Shrewsbury, Salop; Towyn, Abergele, Denbighshire; Wellington, Hereford.  **May and November 1944** - The camp was listed as an Italian Labour Battalion under the Western Command area and then as an Italian Working Camp, (+Pioneer Corps Groups), (WO 32/10737). The Italians were recorded as non-co-operators.  Memories – “*As the first batches of Italians were marched down from Shifnal to Sheriffhales camp, the locals booed them through the town. Opinions slowly changed as social barriers broke down. ‘I was treated like a son’ said Italian Angelo Toffanin of the farmer who employed him. Local women bought hungry-looking PoWs packets of fish and chips, much to the displeasure of the English soldiers guarding them.”* (Wellingtonia, Issue 1, Autumn 2008, the Newsletter of the Wellington History Group).  **1 August 1945** - an urgent memorandum was sent to this camp, and others, about maintaining records of Italians who were classed as ‘co-operators’. At this point many, sometimes all, of the Italian pows were in hostels / billets. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1954 |

**15 September 1945** - Hostels listed for pows from this camp, (WO 32/10737): Apley Park, Bridgnorth, Shropshire; Cheswardine, Market Drayton, Salop; Crackleybank, Telford, Shropshire; Gnosall, Stafford; St Georges, Abergele, Denbighshire; Shrewsbury Depot, Salop

**1947** – the list of camps recorded a War Establishment Number (v/1452/2) for up to 1250 pows. The rank of the Commandant is major, not Lieutenant Colonel.

**22 February 1947** - pow Wilhelm Kunz killed himself by throwing himself onto a railway line near Shifnal. Later buried at Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery.

**23 August 1947** - One of the early marriages of a pow to a British woman after relaxation of fraternisation rules. 29-year-old pow Wilken Ranck, married 26-year-old Elsa Andersen at Stirchley church. Among those there to congratulate them were former POW comrades and dozens of smiling villagers. “*Theirs was a story of enduring love, as*

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| *their romance had begun before the war, and there was a twist as here the bride was not British, but Brazilian. Ranck, serving at that time in the German merchant navy, had met Elsa on a Brazilian beach, and they became engaged.*  *On the outbreak of war, he joined the Afrika Corps and was captured in Tunisia. He became the first prisoner from the Sheriffhales camp to take advantage of a scheme whereby prisoners could assume civilian status by remaining in the country as farm workers. He worked for a Mr W Evison, of Holmer Farm, Stirchley. His bride had become a governess to a Brazilian family in London, but gave up the post to marry Wilken and begin married life in Stirchley.”*  [*https://www.expressandstar.com/news/nostalgia/2023/03/13/former-enemies-who-risked-all-for-love/*](https://www.expressandstar.com/news/nostalgia/2023/03/13/former-enemies-who-risked-all-for-love/)  **14 November 1947** - Camp number included in an ‘Urgent Memorandum’ (FO 939/270) regarding inspection of food parcels.  **1948** - Reported that the camp was still open. One pow requested to stay in Britain and recalled being still at the camp – by then as a volunteer worker – in August 1948.  **Numbers of pows** |  |
| After the camp. The fountain had been built by the pows. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Open |  |  | With other camps |  |  | Unknown |  |  | Not listed / not open |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Main |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cheswardine |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gnosall |  |  |  |  |  |
| Monkmoor (Shrewsbury) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Trawsfynydd |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wellington |  |  |  |  |  |
| Barmouth |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hadnall (Shrewsbury) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rhyl |  |  |  |  |  |
| Towyn |  |  |  |  |  |
| Apley Park, Bridgnorth |  |  |  |  |  |
| Crackleybank, Telford |  |  |  |  |  |
| St George |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shrewsbury Depot |  |  |  |  |  |
| Billetees |  |  |  |  |  |
| TOTALS | 2000 cap |  |  | 1250 cap |  |

**After the camp:** Housed European Voluntary Workers for a few years.

The reredos from the camp chapel was recovered prior to demolition and is currently stored in Whitchurch, Shropshire.

**Hostels**

**Apley Park**, Bridgnorth, Shropshire**.** Location – NOT confirmed, believed to be SJ 651 126, where the later European Volunteer Workers hostel was located.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Apley Park, Bridgnorth |  |  |  |  |  |

**Barmouth, Merioneth**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Barmouth |  |  |  |  |  |

**Cheswardine,** Market Drayton, Salop. There were Italian pows held at the Cheswardine Parish Hall.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Cheswardine |  |  |  |  |  |

**Crackleybank**, Telford, Shropshire. Crackleybank is just on the southern edge of Sheriffhales, so this hostel was probably an annexe to the main camp.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Crackleybank, Telford |  |  |  |  |  |

**Gnosall.** Memories place it atSJ 829 211 (between Ashbrook Close and Greenfields).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Gnosall |  |  |  |  |  |

**Hadnall.** Village 9km NNE of Shrewsbury.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Hadnall (Shrewsbury) |  |  |  |  |  |

**Rhyl, Flintshire**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Rhyl |  |  |  |  |  |

**Shrewsbury**

**1 Monkmoor**

**2 Shrewsbury Depot**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Monkmoor (Shrewsbury) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Shrewsbury Depot |  |  |  |  |  |

**St George,** Abergele, Denbighshire (St George is a village close to Abergele). Very close to the large Kinmel Camp.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| St George |  |  |  |  |  |



NOTE: I am not sure that the address given was correct. There is also a St George district of Telford – at the junction of Cricketers Lane and Limekiln Bank (SJ 713 109) there was an Italian pow camp with Nissen huts linked to Sheriffhales. *“After the war, the Nissen Huts were turned over by the Army to local families – or were taken over by squatters – until an housing shortage was tackled. Many of the families in the Nissen Huts would later move into Prefabs.”*

The Army handing over one of the Limekiln Bank Nissen Huts <https://rowleyanth.wordpress.com/author/tonyrowley46/page/3/>

**Towyn, Abergele, Denbighshire**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Towyn |  |  |  |  |  |

**Trawsfynydd R.A. Camp.** General location of the camp SH717 319.

*“Trawsfynydd Holiday Village occupies part of a large army camp of the 20th century. Prisoners of war were kept here in both world wars, and the site was later used for power station constructors.*

*The War Office bought land in this area in the first decade of the 20th century and established a camp, mainly for artillery training by regular and territorial soldiers. Facilities were installed at Trawsfynydd railway station for the army’s heavy equipment, supplies and troops. The camp, known as Bronaber after a nearby farm…*

[It was a site for a WW1 pow camp] *- Unusually, the same camp was used to house PoWs again in the Second World War. This time the prisoners were Italian. They worked six and a half days a week for one penny per hour. Jobs varied with the type of farm and the season, but generally the most onerous went to PoWs. Prisoners also toiled on road maintenance and in quarries*.” <https://historypoints.org/index.php?page=site-of-army-and-pow-camp-trawsfynydd>

Memories – German pows recalled, however this does not prove they were held at Trawsfynydd:

*"I married during World War Two and my husband and I settled to live on my family home farm in Trawsfynydd. As all our farm workers had gone to war, we had Prisoners of War working on our farm. I remember two in particular - one from Italy and the other from Germany. Henry, the prisoner of war from Germany was always very tidy, and every day he used to take his bed linen and blankets outside to hang on the washing line. Henry was always very helpful around the farm and worked more hours that was necessary, and was also very friendly despite the language barrier. On the other hand, the Italian prisoner of war would never help out and as soon as his work was finished he would go straight to his room and stayed there until the next morning.*

*We didn’t have to pay the Prisoners of War as the authority dealt with that issue. We knew this money would not be much; therefore, we used to buy cigarettes for them out of pity*.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/82/a1317782.shtml>

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Trawsfynydd |  |  |  |  |  |

**Wellington C.S.D.** (Central Supply Depot).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1944 | 1945 | 1947 | 1948 |
| Wellington |  |  |  |  |  |