**Camp 109** **Brahan Castle (Estate), Dingwall, Ross-shire**

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 109. Brahan Castle Camp, Dingwall, Ross-shire.

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| **1947 Camp list** | | | | | | | |
| 109(G.W.C.) | Brahan Castle Camp, Dingwall, Ross-shire | Sc. | Priswar, Cononbridge | Cononbridge 266 | Dingwall | Lt.Col.K.G.O’Morchoe | v/1453/2 |

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| **Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English Heritage 2003** | | | | | | | |
| OS NGR | Sheet | No. | Name & Location | County | Cond’n | Type 1945 | Comments |
|  |  | 109 | Brahan Castle, Dingwall | Ross-shire |  | German Working Camp | Scotland |

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| **Location:** NGR NH 517 554. On the A835, 18 km NW of Inverness.  **Before the camp:** Country estate. Left in trust 1923. Estate used for army training.    **Pow Camp:** Italian, then German pows.  Canmore – “*It comprised a guard camp and a fenced prison camp with recreation field. The land was according to Brahan Estate leased to the Ministry of Works from 1944 to 1957*.” Though this record suggests the camp opened in 1944, there are records of three hostels for Italian pows in **1943**: Drumdevan, Fearn, Munlochy. One German pow stated there were about 12 accommodation huts with 18/20 pows in each at the main camp, there would have been other huts used for cooking, dining, recreation, cells…...  < The A835 can be seen at the bottom of the picture, with the camp alongside.  **November 1944** - Listed as an Italian Working Camp, (+Pioneer Corps Group), (WO 32/10737). The Italians were listed as non-co-operators.  **1 August 1945** - an urgent memorandum was sent to this camp, and others, about maintaining records of Italians who were classed as ‘co-operators’.  **3 September 1945** – Progress report 153 recorded a hostel for Italian pows at Boblainy, capacity 50. (FO 939/383).  **15 September 1945** - Hostels listed for pows from this camp, (WO 32/10737): Drumdevan, Inverness; Nigg, Aberdeen. |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1959 |

**1946** – Additional intake of pows from camps in the USA. Most had very low morale as they had been misinformed in the US that they were being repatriated. Instead, they found themselves in working camps in the UK.

**1946** - A brief description of the camp – Marching from Dingwall Station; “…*Passing a village on our left* [Maryburgh] *we saw a number of huts just off the main road, another camp with many timber huts.*

*We were all tired after the long march. In the US we always had transport. We were assigned to our accommodation and instructed to line-up for food within half an hour. The huts were more comfortable than those at distant Cultybraggan and should be warmer, we thought… we learned we were at German PoW Camp 109 at Brahan Castle. This was a main camp serving several smaller ones.”* (\*ref below)

**25 June 1946** – There was a suicide at the camp: Dingwall Sheriff Court – Records of Fatal Accident Inquiries (National Records of Scotland – Reference SC25/15/1946/1).

*“Fritz Saalbach, German prisoner of war, 109 German Working POW Camp, Brahan, Conon Bridge, hanged himself on 25 June 1946 in bathroom of prisoners' compound – entry dated 22 July 1946.”* Fritz Saalbach was reinterred at the Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery – it records date of death as 17 June 1946.

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| 30.5.45.  Tel. No. Conon Bridge 211  A/21/34/45 Subject: P.W. Labour 30 May '45  To: All employers of PW Labour:  It has been brought to the notice of the Commandant of this Camp, that Employers of Italian Prisoner of War Billetees, both Co-operator and Non-Co-operator, are not complying with the instructions re the behaviour of Italian P.W. Billetees.  Co-operator Billetees - Church: if within 5 miles.  Are permitted to go to cinema if within the radius of 5 miles from their Billet. They are NOT permitted to enter Dance Halls or Public Houses.  If an employer of Billetees permits the Italian P.W. employed by him to break these rules - labour will be withdrawn immediately.  TAIN is out of Bounds to all P.Ws on Saturday evenings.  Daily Workers. It has come to the notice of the Commandant that Daily Workers are being fed by some employers. This is not permitted and furthermore is not fair to your neighbouring farmers who are unable to afford to do this, with lowered scale of rationing. It encourages the P.Ws to be discontented with their employment.  I would remind you that:-  All P.Ws get their full scale of rations in camp.  All P.Ws. bring out with them daily haversack rations - these are often thrown away because of meals given as already mentioned.  The Commandant asks that you help yourselves by helping each other.  Would you please give the attached slip printed in Italian to your billetee, it has full instructions to him regarding the above.  (Signed) Thornton Smith, Capt.  Acting Commandant. | **< 30 May 1945** - Transcript of a letter regarding billetees held by Dingwall Museum.  **25 July 1946** – From ‘The Banffshire Advertiser;’ “*German POW escapees - Two German POW’s who escaped from Brahan Castle, Ross-shire on Monday 15 July were recaptured in a small hut on the railway line between Portgordon and Spey Bay. Mr Newlands, Surfaceman had noticed smoke coming from the chimney and had advised the stationmaster who informed the police. The two men offered no resistance when the police arrived*.”  **July 1947** – recorded that RC padre, Nitsch, from this camp, visited Sandyhillock Camp 67.  **14 November 1947** - Camp number included in an ‘Urgent Memorandum’ (FO 939/270) regarding inspection of food parcels.  There was a camp magazine – *Heimpfad* (Home Path).  Known Camp Commandants;  1943 Major Lawrie.  1947 Lt Col K G O’Morchoe, from the Gordon Highlanders.  1947 Lt Col Elliot – mentioned in June magazine.  **After the camp:** The site was used to house displaced persons. Then a storage site. Castle demolished early 1950’s.  **Further Information:**  Excellent local history page -[Prisoner Of War Camp ⋆ Ross and Cromarty Heritage](https://www.rossandcromartyheritage.org/home/mid-ross-communities/maryburgh/maryburgh-history/prisoner-of-war-camp/)  [http://canmore.org.uk/event/696291](https://canmore.org.uk/event/696291)  \* My Story, My Journey; From Silesia to Scotland – Paul Lippock, 2015, Xlibris. The book gives further details of his life as a pow at Viewfield Farm, near Tain. |

Camp Magazine – 31 August 1946 & 28 June 1947 - [Heimpfad : Brahan Castle / Dingwall POW Camp No 109 - The Wiener Holocaust Library](https://www.whlcollections.org/image/99743/)

IWM have copies of the magazine dated October/November 1946. Ref E.J. 5632.

Royal Air Force aerial photographs taken in 1946 (106G/Scot/UK 114: 3076, 3077).

**POW NUMBERS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  | Open |  |  | With other camps |  |  | Unknown |  |  | Not open |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Main |  |  |  |  |
| Drumdevan |  |  |  |  |
| Fearn |  |  |  | With C67 1/1948 = 466 |
| Munlochy |  |  |  |  |
| Boblainy |  | Cap.50 |  |  |
| Nigg |  |  | With C 75 | |
| Belladrum |  |  |  |  |
| Bruiach |  |  |  |  |
| Clunevackie |  |  |  |  |
| Dell |  |  |  |  |
| Kildary |  |  |  |  |
| Teanacoil |  |  |  |  |
| Billets |  |  |  |  |
| TOTALS |  |  |  |  |

**Hostels**

**Belladrum** near Kiltarlity. On the Belladrum Estate. Aka Foxhole and Torranerrick. Formerly a Canadian Forestry Corps Camp. NGR NH 5244 3909.

Notes from ‘Boblainy Forest Community Archaeology Project;’ - an account about a POW who transferred from Brahan POW camp to this one, and remarked how well treated he was (account on Ross & Cromarty Wayfarers Website) - reports that POWs helped at Glen Convinth School.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Belladrum |  |  |  |  |

**Boblainy.**

Notes from ‘Boblainy Forest Community Archaeology Project;’ – NGR NH 4873 3791 - Question raised whether this is the same site as Clunevackie - family history remembers Major Trevor Thomas in charge. [It would not have been a major if there were only 50 pows].

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Boblainy |  | Cap.50 |  |  |

**Bruiach**. Site also used as WW1 camp. NGR for the farm - NH 5014 4118. Bruiach by Kiltarlity - NH 50239 41084.

Notes from ‘Boblainy Forest Community Archaeology Project;’ - The camp is said to have been built by the Germans (WW1) - The exact site is not known - WM remembers it in use in WWII as well, first with Lovat Scouts at the start of the war (at Bruiach Steading), then Italian POWs – probably worked at Bruiach farm - Unlike the Germans, who were able to move around fairly freely and work on surrounding farms, the Italians were well guarded. [This last comment is usually the reverse at most sites].

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Bruiach |  |  |  |  |

**Clunevackie**. See note under Boblainy.

Notes from ‘Boblainy Forest Community Archaeology Project;’ - This was a WWI POW camp. The camp was reused in WWII as well. It was a Canadian camp first and they moved away in the 1940s - Germans arriving c. 1945-6 - POWs worked on the farms; TM remembers them walking without guards. A number of people remember that they made toys for local children. TM had a wooden crocodile which was fully articulated, with scales carved on painted green, with white teeth; it pulled on wheels, and snapped its jaws open and shut when pulled along. POWs also made cigarette lighters from 303 cases. They also repaired clocks. The only remnants of the camp are concrete bases and pipework.

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Clunevackie |  |  |  |  |

**Dell** –.Probably near to Dell Lodge near to Whitebridge – NGR NH 4868 1638.

**16 May 1947** - There was also a fatal accident: Inverness Sheriff Court - Records of Fatal Accident Inquiries (National Records of Scotland – Reference SC29/27/12/35).

*“Fritz Endres, German prisoner of war under detention, No. 109 German Prisoner of War Camp, Brahan, Dingwall, motor tractor driver, residing at Dell Camp, Whitebridge, Inverness-shire, died on 16 May 1947 after being run over by the half-track tractor and trailer he was driving.*

*Petition, minute of proceedings, and notes of evidence. The deceased was the son of Joseph Endres, farmer in Germany. He was employed by James Armstrong, timber merchant, Station Square, Inverness and the accident occurred on the A862 Whitebridge to Fort Augustus road. He was buried in Mitchell Hill Cemetery, Dingwall.”*

Friedrich Endres was later reinterred at Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery.

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Dell |  |  |  |  |

**Drumdevan**, Inverness. NGR NH 6526 4116 (Possibly on site of what became the ‘Radio research Sub Station’ just behind Drumdevan house.

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Drumdevan |  |  |  |  |

**Fearn** (Tain) –

**1943 -** hostel for Italian pows.

**June 1947** – mentioned in camp magazine.

**Late 1947 / early 1948** - transferred to Sandyhillock Camp 67.

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Fearn |  |  |  | With C67 1/1948 = 466 |

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| **Kildary.** Aka Birch Wood. NGR NH 7508 7631.  About 50 pows*.* Minimal security, a low wire fence. *“Two Barracks provided our living accommodation. They were prefabricated concrete buildings, which should be warmer. There was one toilet in each barrack. The main washroom was next to the kitchen and the guardhouse. Our cook inspected his new domain, indicating that both kitchen and mess-room were satisfactory. Two solid-wood stoves for each barrack provided heating. We discovered that Italian POWs had been billeted here before us, and had left a concrete Mussolini emblem on the gable of the kitchen.*” (\* ref above).  “*A site visit was undertaken by HCAU staff in response to a planning application to demolish the ex-Prisoner of War camp. Four substantially intact buildings associated with the camp would be impacted by the proposed development… The site is comprised of two parallel north-south aligned barracks of standard WWII type and construction, 5-bays in length and a mixture of brick and prefabricated concrete construction. The majority of original windows survive. Roofs are of corrugated asbestos sheets. Internally, much of the original lining survives, as does the paintwork and some ducting. A smaller building of similar construction sits adjacent to these. The fourth, and probably best preserved building is T-shaped with a brick-built water tower forming the intersection between the two sections of the 'T'. Presumably the building functioned as a mess hall, cook and wash house. Internally, a star motif can be seen on the gable wall which is supposedly a relic from the building's use as part of a PoW camp. Externally the star motif is replicated (and surmounted by a crescent) on the north-east facing elevation of the water tower.”*  <https://her.highland.gov.uk/Monument/MHG54231> |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1959 |

With the mention of Italian pows, the hostel must have been opened before this entry:

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|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Kildary |  |  |  |  |

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| **Munlochy.** “*in the field beside the church… it housed Italian then German pows*…. “  Probably under the administration of a different main camp after this entry.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 | | Munlochy |  |  |  |  | |  |
| Ordnance Survey 1959 |

**Nigg,** Aberdeen. Aka Peterseat, Tullos Hill. NGR NJ 9545 0342

*"Later in the war another gun battery was built on part of the golf course. Known as Nigg Camp it never appeared to serve much useful purpose and latterly was used for Italian and German prisoners of war working on the land, as well as being manned by Norwegians at some point."*

<https://www.rossandcromartyheritage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Nigg-A-Changing-Parish.pdf>

**December 1945** – record for Northhill Camp 75 stated the hostel had recently been “*taken over.”*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Nigg |  |  | With C 75 | |

**Teanacoil.** Aka Pole’s Camp after being a pow camp. NGR NH 493 405. (A sawmill was set up after the war by a Pole who took the name Paterson).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1943 | 1945 | c. 1946/7 | 1947/48 |
| Teanacoil |  |  |  |  |