Prisoner of War Camp on Farndon Road

Known as Harrington Camp (Camp 49), the Prisoner of War camp was situated at 49 Farndon Road, Market Harborough. Built on farm land, it is thought to have been an Italian working camp/labour battalion to 1945, then a German working camp. It was a purpose-built, standard type camp. Common buildings and facilities at standard type camps included water towers, offices, officer's mess, a canteen, guard rooms, barrack huts, ablution blocks, cell blocks, a camp reception station (medical facility/hospital), a cookhouse, dining rooms, recreation rooms and living huts or tents.

Below is an aerial shot, showing the exact location:



Camp 49 - Farndon Road Camp (Harrington Camp), Farndon Fields Farm, Market Harborough, Leicestershire

Included in the 1945 ICRC camp list – Labour Camp. 49. Farndon Road Camp, Market Harborough, Leics.

	1947 Camp List												
2	19(G.W.C.	Farndon	E	Priswar,	Market	Market	Lt.Col.J.J.Jolliffe	v/1453/					
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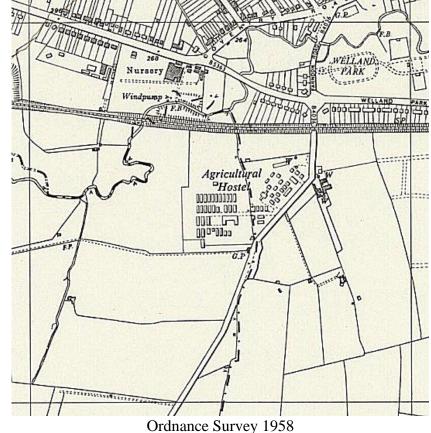
Prisoner of War Camps (1939 – 1948) - Project report by Roger J.C. Thomas - English														
	Heritage 2003													
OS	Sh	N	Name & Location	County	Con	Type 1945	Comments							
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SP	14	49	Farndon Road Camp (Harrington	Leicesters	3	German	STANDARD							
725	1		Camp), Farndon Fields Farm,	hire		Working	type. Caravan							
864			Market Harborough			Camp	site							

Location: On the SW edge of Market Harborough marked on the map as 'Agricultural Hostel'. The boundary line on the map shows that it was half-half in the counties of Leicestershire Northamptonshire. The little village Harrington is about 8km SE of the camp.

Before the camp: Farmland.

Pow Camp: Listed as an Italian working camp / labour battalion to 1945, then German working camp.

Incidental information from a German theatre



group journal held by the Deutsches Historisches Museum. The group toured pow camps around England during 1946. It recorded its visit to Harrington Camp, 49 on 6th – 9th November 1946 (2 performances).

Camp commandant Lieutenant Colonel John James Jolliffe, M.B.E. M.C. M.M. from the Manchester Regiment.

After the camp: The camp was used for European Volunteer workers. Now part residential / industrial area.

Further information:

National Archives FO 939/131 49 Working Camp, Farm Road camp, Market Harborough, Leicestershire. Dated 1946-1947

The following is an excerpt taken from the WW2 memoirs of local resident Marjorie Houlston (nee Read). The full transcript is on the village website:

The prisoner of war camp was built at the bottom of the road; and when we used to cycle to work, first the Italians then the Germans used to shout at us as we pedalled fast to get by. Although we didn't have any bombs dropped near us, there was an odd one in the area and we could hear the banging of distant bombing, especially the time that Coventry was bombed so badly. The Americans were stationed in various areas and two planes crashed into each other while they were flying close together. And it was said that a plane landed in Marston Lake but the pilot parachuted out. I think it was an English plane but can't be sure. Men and women from the village joined the forces and we saw them home on leave, in their uniforms.

On 6th September 1946 the Harborough Advertiser and Mail reported that German prisoners of war had attended services at St John the Baptist church, East Farndon.



This is a transcript of the article:

CHURCH PACKED WITH GERMAN P.O.Ws

Services Translated at East Farndon

Eager to take part in English church services, German prisoners of war from the camp in Farndon Road, near Market Harborough, are crowding into the old-world church of St John the Baptist at East Farndon at evensong on Sundays.

It is only a month since the prisoners arrived at the Farndon-road camp, but they quickly expressed their desire to attend the local church services, and they have visited Farndon Parish Church for the last three Sundays. Their attendance is entirely voluntary and they are marched up to the church.

The service is interpreted to them in German and they follow the proceedings with a keenness which has surprised the local Rector, the Rev T F Merriman, and local members of the congregation.

Last Sunday, despite heavy rain, nearly 100 prisoners attended evensong, and the first Sunday saw the church, which holds about 180, packed to capacity. For the sermon the Rector says a sentence, it is repeated to the Germans by an interpreter, and so on. The lessons are given in English and then translated by the interpreter.

"There has been no complaint at all from my congregation," the Rector told the "Advertiser". "I am not at all pro-German, but there is an opportunity of letting them become normal German Christians and they seem very anxious to play their part. I try to make them feel they are wanted and they are responding most nobly. The Colonel in charge of the camp asked me if I would allow them to come to my evensong if they had requested permission to attend and I agreed. They follow the service most attentively."

On 5th August 1954, the Harborough Advertiser and Mail reported the visit of a former prisoner of war.



This is a transcript of the article:

Ludwig brought his family to Farndon.

A sentimental journey by ex-prisoner

There is a strong possibility that a number of families from East Farndon will have a holiday in Germany next year. That is the happy outcome of the visit to the village of Ludwig Grezesiack, a German prisoner-of-war at East Farndon Road Camp for 19 months, who with his family has just completed a fortnight's stay at the Bell Inn.

During the time he was a POW Ludwig came to know and like the people and the area, and always vowed he would travel back to England once he was repatriated.

A fortnight ago, almost seven years after leaving the Harborough area, he brought his wife and 16-year-old daughter to the Bell Inn, where they stayed as guests of Mr and Mrs George Dimbleby.

Mr Grezesiack's friendship with many of the villagers of East Farndon began when he was allowed out of camp and used to visit the home of the Dimblebys.

A carpenter by profession – he now works as a joiner in a large car works at Wolfsburg, his home town, he did many little jobs in and about the village for people who befriended him.

Ludwig wrote to his wife and told her of the friends he had made and how well he was being looked after.

This led to his wife also wishing to visit England to see for herself the people and places her husband had written about so often.

So a year ago they started saving up for a holiday and had little trouble arranging the trip. Mr Grezesiack could see little change in the area or its people, and was content to sit back and enjoy his holiday – with an occasional break for gardening and also for looking up his friends.

Ursula, his daughter, was introduced to the Tate family of Clack Hill, Market Harborough. Ludwig knew them from his prisoner days and they had corresponded regularly.

Until Tuesday there was a minor League of Nations at the Tate's home, for 17-year-old Elisabeth Tate had staying with her a 16-year-old French friend, Jeanne-Andre Marquigny.

One would have thought that the language difficulty would have produced some worrying moments in the holiday of the Grezesiacks, for while Mr and Mrs Grezesiack understand English fairly well, they speak very little. Ursula speaks none at all.

However, a few words and actions here and there and they were all able to pass the time of day with their friends.

In an interview with the "Harborough Mail" Mr Grezesiack spoke of his warm feeling for English people as a whole.

He pointed out that during his time as a prisoner-of-war he got to understand the English character and greatly appreciated all the kindness which had been shown him by people in the Harborough area.

They had welcomed him back again and several of the families had told him that next year they would like to visit his home in Germany.

The following article was written by Len Bale and published in the Market Harborough Historical Society:

A Wartime Memory of Christmas in Market Harborough by Len Bale

It was Christmas, 1944 and it had been snowing – but we must go back in time for twelve to fifteen months for the start of this story. On Farndon Road, about where the business blocks, AVP and the mobile home park are situated, there was a prisoner-of-war camp. Originally it was tented and with Italian POWs held there. The tents were later replaced by wooden huts and the Italians by Germans. By 1943, with the influx of American troops, it became clear that there would be no German invasion of England and no hope of Germans escaping back to the continent and so they were allowed out into the town unescorted. They wore distinctive 'uniforms' with big coloured patches on the back. They worked on farms during the day for which they were paid. How much, I don't know. They were allowed to go to the cinemas (we had two then - the Ritz and the Oriental) and to dances. It was during this time that my parents met and befriended Leo. Leo Weisslammlë would come to our house at 41, Newcombe Street in the evenings. He had a fair knowledge of the English language, so it was not difficult to talk with him. He told us about his family and his wife, Bertha, and how none of the ordinary working-class Germans wanted to go to war, but he, along with thousands of others, was conscripted into the army. He enjoyed his time with us and could not understand how and 'enemy family' could be so kind. When it was time for him to return to camp (there was a curfew for POWs) my father would walk back along Welland Park Road with him, taking the dog for a walk at the same time. In early December, 1944, we invited him to come to us on Christmas Day but a few days later the German camp was moved to somewhere near Syston and we did not expect to see Leo again. However, on Christmas Day, around midday, who should turn up but Leo. He had managed to get a lift into Leicester and had walked most of the way from there in order to join us for our Christmas meal. Around four o'clock he said it was time for him to be getting back. My folks wondered if it would be possible for him to stay overnight. The only way to find out was to telephone the camp. There weren't many telephones around in those days the nearest to us being the telephone box on Northampton Road. Leo and Dad went off to make the call which was a bit nerve-racking because we didn't know how to use a telephone! Anyway, they got through but sadly Leo was refused permission to stay. By now time was passing and the light fading so it was decided to get him on a train, at least to Leicester. Remember this was Christmas Day! But in those days the LMS (London, Midland and Scottish Railway) ran trains - good old steam trains - even on Christmas Day. After the war, Leo was repatriated and later invited us to Germany to visit him and his family.

Unfortunately, I was unable to go, but my mother, father and sister went. They were met by Leo and Bertha who was crying tears of joy to be able to meet the English family that had befriended an 'enemy soldier.' They had been told that we were torturing prisoners of war.

And so began a long and lasting friendship, until sadly, both of them passed away.

The following documents are copies of a Camp Report from an inspection in 1947:

COMPIDENTIAL. Camp address Date of Visit.
30 Jan/ 1 Feb. Type of Camp. Fardon, 49 G.P. W. W. C. Market Hafborough Leicestershira Name of Visitor. W.G.W. Aston Report handed in 5th February. Tel. No. Market Harboro' 2421 Object of Visit.
Re-educational Survey No. of Visits. T.A. 3. Strength.....Offs: 1 O.R.'s 878 TOTAL: 879 of which main camp 451 in hostels: Harrington 322 8 miles ral Yelvertoft 39 15 miles Naseby 25 10 miles у. in billets 42 Screening figures: A 20 755 B C No. of appeals pending 84 How many P/W's have been repatriated to date 416. No. of appeals heard by T.A. Nil. Personnel: Lt.Col. J. Jolliffe MBE MC MM Interpreter: NIL Camp leader: Gefr. Mueller Wilhelm (B+) W/M SCHAAKE Willy (B+) Oberarzt Dr. LCEBEL (B) Deputy Camp leader: German M.O. Hostel leaders; Harrington: Uscha LEUSCHNER Adolf Yelvertoft: Uffz. HEYMANN (B+) Naseby: F/W ZIEMER (B+) 1. RECEPTION In the absence of the Commandant who was away on leave, I was assisted in my duties by the 2nd in Command and the adjutant who are not unsympathetic towards re-education. There is no British Interpreter. Gefr. MUELLER Wilhelm (B+) Camp leader 35 years of age, master painter (art) is a sympathetic type who is aware of his duties in respect of re-education and who despite the discrepancy of rank between himself and his deputy, maintains cordial relations which ensured the smooth running og camp activities. W/M SCHARTE (B+) deputy camp leader, although not so impressive a personality as the camp leader, nevertheless exhibits a democratic attitude in deputizing his Gefr. Camp leader realising that the better man is fulfilling the Uffz. SCHEIJBERGER Norbert (C) study leader, 34 years of age, is a silent closed character, teacher in civil life; though bearded, is unimpressive. He is also the camp magazine editor and attends to the daily press review. Many of his duties are subject to the activity and influence of:

F/W PRESSIDIT (D) the librarian, who was able to give me more information than
the study leader was inclined to give and is actually the greater influence in Uffz. Leuschner Adolf (B-) Harrington hostel leader, 25 years of age; despite re-educational matters. his youth is a capable youngster who has shown signs of mending his ideas and political outlook. He is the 'teachable' type.

3. MOFALE.

This is not high. The main contributary factors for a 'middling' morals are: length of captivity, many P/W in Russian zone and bad news from families. The P/W are satisfied with conditions in the camp but I had the impression that they were not making their life brighter by keeping their recreasional huts so drab and cheerless. The information room is however

The camp was entirely screened in December 1946. In spite of there being 104 'C' PSW in the camp, no leading P/W would admit that there are still many Nazi-tainted comrades. If this is the case, and there are none, then there must have been a sudden change of heart recently. The British Staff was unable to give me any further information on this subject and in the adsence of a staff to give me any further accordance concluded with the impression that the P/W are interpreter my observations concluded with the impression that the P/W are undergoing a francitional period but that their thoughts were loo linked up with repatriation prospects, and that any disappointment in this respect may effect their attitude to democratic sims.

5. YOUTH

Although somewhat recalcitrant the youth are taking part in reeducational activities. The proportion of youth was not known, There is no programme for the youth nor has anyone come forward to take a leading part in theatre education. However, they are being influenced by the older P/W and encouraged to take a greater interest in world affairs, though my impression is that they are more concerned with German interests.

6, <u>HE_HDUC.TION_L_ACTIVITIES</u>.

All aspects of re-education are being attended to by the leading PsW but from my observations the activities are confined only to those PsW who are actually interested. Upon reference to the responsible PsW about this state of sectional interest, I was informed that the confidence of the PsW especially the youth must first be gained, after which more interest and co-operation can be expected. A flagging of interest has been occasioned by the repatriation of the best influences in the camp. However, I impressed on the leading PsW that in order to produce not only good Germans but enlightened world citizens, the continuity must be maintained in re-education by preparing suitable successors willing to carry on the good work.

There is no lack of room nor of materials (the Oxford Pamphlets have disappeared, however) but a little more carnestness in the responsible PsW is wanted to banish apathy from the generality. I suggested to the 2nd in command that the present study leader be replaced by an active volunteer and he concurred.

The British staff is not interested in re-education but there is no

British interpeter to give encouragement.

Wochenport & Ausblick. 460 of the former and 130 of the latter (see appendix B)

Newspapers: 4 copies of each of the following are distributed throughout the camp: Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Daily Herald. 2 copies each of the Illustrated London News and Si here. German 6/8 averaging 14 days interval. Swass: some sent to PsW direct.

Library F/W PRESSELT (B) in charge. There are 750 wolumes including 50 GOS. Fiction (397 books) and General subjects (280) form the bulk with: 26 biogra hical 11 historical, 96 classical and 38 political books. These latter categories are not in great demand and PsW requirements place emphasis on oriminal, love and detective stories thereby indicating their frame of mind and trend of thought.

Although the lecture 'His Majesty's Opposition' was well attended and found interesting, the PsW were too cold to indulge in discussion after delivery and waited until they returned to their heated buts to discuss the subject amongst themselves. Lectures are attended only by the same PsW thereby redealing tire apathy of the generality.

Discussion Groups.

There is a democratische Arbeitsgemeinschaft but at the moment it is not functioning owing to the leader having been repatriated and no suitable successor coming forward. I was given assurance that this activity would be restarted by the leading PsW in turn. Although I was informed that the general level of mentality was fairly high, it is no more than average. At Harrington Hostel the discussion group will intensify it's activities on the lines I indicated to the H/L, discussion group leader and the teacher of English.

Films: Y.M.C.4. and G.B. fortmightly. PsW ask for more German films otherwise they consider that 6d. per head for G.B. films an imposition and the 12/- per performance a drain on their welfare fund. The last G.B. film was 'The Lion's Den' without German text. All hostels are served with films.

<u>Wireless:</u>The set is in the haircutting saloon with 4 loudspeakers in the camp. Reception is not always good. B.B.C. PsW programmes are tuned in. There is a set at each hostel. There are no reactions.

Camp Magazine. The Study leader Uffz. SCHELLBERGER (C) is the editor of 'Wir gegen mit' (with the new times! so the title was explained). This publication I found was entirely froe from politics and the explanation given was that the confidence or the Psi/ must first be gained before political articles could be attempted. The Camp magazine is open to all contributions and is circulated to the hostels.

Press Review. This activity is represented by translations fixed to a newspanel daily by UTFS. SCHELLERGER (C) and is mainly concerned with news of German affairs.

English Instructions Some 50 pupils in three grades under 3 teachers. The camp leader says that the best results have been obtained with Lunguaphone gramophone records but that at the moment the gramophone is out of order and being attended to. He also reiterates the 'English for All' is not received in sufficient quantities. (see appendix 'A')

Information Room: This is the only bright room for the PsW and is comfortably installed and heated. At the time of my visit there was a display of maps around the walls. This room is occasionally used by the Commandant for talks to cadets. This room is also used as reading and writing room by the PsW.

7. OTHER CAMP ACTIVITIES.

Religion . Ithough there is a chapel in the compound the PsW prefer to attend a service given by the PSW Evangelical padre in the parish church of Market Harborough. Many of the PsW attend the Methodist services and have been greatly influenced by the genuineness of religious observance by the local population and the preachers' streightforward approach to life, such as was not experienced by the PsW in their own country. One PsW told me that he was very grateful for this opportunity and experience and stated that this was as good re-education as was of the Paw who are R.C. a priest from Market Harborough visits the camp regularly.

Education At the moment there are only 10 pupils studying book-keeping as all the other classes have disintegrated with the PSW to Germany. The study leader stated that education interest declined when the repatriation scheme became known.

Entertainment. Theatre group of 8 PsW has just been formed and so Bar have indulged In cabaret shows. There is a choir of 20 and a trio which plays light music. Physical entertainment consists of football and table tennis.

8. CONCLUSIONS.

Re-education had made some progress since last visit, but owing to repatriation of the former influential PsW there has been slackening of effort and a flagging of interest especially after the repa riation scheme had been amnounced. I reminded the responsible IsW that repatriation was something to be earned and that an approach to the main body of PsW on the lines I suggested would shake them out of their apathy and cause them to take a broader view of life for world

- 4 oitizenship. There is sufficient talent left and while the British staff is not unsympathetic towards re-education, there is no British interpreter to foster the goodvill of the PsW. There are ample space and materials. One of the chief re-educational factors at this camp is the opportunity of PsW to come into contact with various institutions at Market Harborough, where the PsW feel the friendly atmosphere.

Owing to there being no such attraction at Harrington hostel there is in consequence a livelier interest in the camp activities.

The present attributed on a comparative editor who is graded 'C' will The present study leader and camp magazine editor who is graded 'C' will be replaced by an active volunteer. 9. PACOMMENDATIONS.
(a) Some additional books on civics, history, sociology.
(b) P/W wish to see more German films (English films without German text have disampointed the P/W)
(c) A Training Centre P/W be posted to take over the duties of the present camp magazine editor, who is graded 'C' and who is also study leader and press review.