



FELDAY WORLD WAR 1 PRISONER OF WAR CAMP

An archaeological survey

County: Surrey

Districts: Guildford and Mole Valley

Parishes: Shere and Ockley

NGR: TQ 107446

Surveyed: Spring 2011

Directors: Judie English, Rose Hooker

Report: Jenny Newell, Keith Winser

January 2013

Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Quarry Street, Guildford GU1 3SX

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Location.....	7
Iron Age Enclosure	8
Part 1	10
Site Survey.....	10
Kitchen.....	10
Generator.....	12
Ablution block.....	16
Carbide lights.....	18
Railway.....	19
Adjacent trench system.....	22
Part 2	
Iron Age enclosure.....	23
Appendices	
Appendix A The National Archives.....	26
Appendix B Swiss Federal Archive reports.....	35
Appendix C The Royal Defence Corps.....	40
Appendix D Beattie Ede’s Testimony and local parish magazine reports.....	41
Appendix E Extracts from the Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser.....	44
Conclusion	45
Acknowledgements	46

Frontispiece

Felday after the felling



Prisoners for the Land - 1916 Newspaper (internet source)

The Daily News says the War office is making arrangements for the employment of German prisoners on the land. It has assigned 75 men for each English County. They are to be located at some central position where they can be dealt with under barrack conditions, and will be at the disposal of the Executive Committees of The War Agricultural Committees which have been given powers under the board of Agriculture to use them to the best advantage. A certain block number of prisoners have also been assigned for Wales. German prisoners will also work on the land in Scotland. In this case men will be controlled by the Scottish Department which has also set up a food production branch.

1914-1918 invasionzone.com/forums Stuart Brown 03/12/02

**INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE SITE OF A FIRST WORLD WAR PRISONER OF WAR CAMP AT
FELDAY, HOLMBURY ST MARY, DORKING, SURREY (TQ 107446)**

Anecdotal evidence has reported on the existence of a prisoner of war camp within the Iron Age enclosure at Felday. The Iron Age enclosure was last surveyed in 1985 by D Field, when the existence of the prisoner of war camp was noted, though no written records have been evidenced at the time of survey.

Introduction

Surrey Archaeological Society were asked to conduct a survey of the enclosure, within which the camp stands, to record the last vestiges of the camp. We were greatly assisted by the clearance of invasive rhododendrons, by Hurtwood Control, which disclosed the landscape.

Taking full advantage of this we also decided to re survey the Iron Age enclosure, believed to be univallate, as another possible bank was exposed.

Historical and archaeological background

The WW1 POW camp at Felday is known locally and is noted on the Surrey HER (HER 15518) but does not appear to have been recorded on any of the known national lists. Very little is known of these camps and records are sparse, possibly the Defence of the Realm act encouraged secrecy to avoid retaliation by the population.

Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser May 4th 1918 – Holmbury St Mary

Prisoners of war. We would point out to our readers that under the Defence of the Realm Act it is an offence to speak to, hold any communication with, or make gifts of any kind to, prisoners of war in this country. We draw attention to this by way of caution to the public not because offences of this kind have been reported in this district, but to endeavour to avoid anything happening which might lead to inconvenience or annoyance.

Feelings were running high and knowledge of such camps might have precipitated some kind of violence. Feeling is evidenced by the post card over:



SECRET.

0103/9(581.

INTERIM REPORT. (*extract*)

PRISONERS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE.

1. This Committee was set up at the end of 1916, in succession to a former committee, established in September, 1916, which acted in an advisory capacity to the War Office. The earlier committee was formed originally with a view to the employment of prisoners of war upon the reclamation of land, but it also forwarded recommendations to the War Office regarding various other proposals for the employment of this labour.

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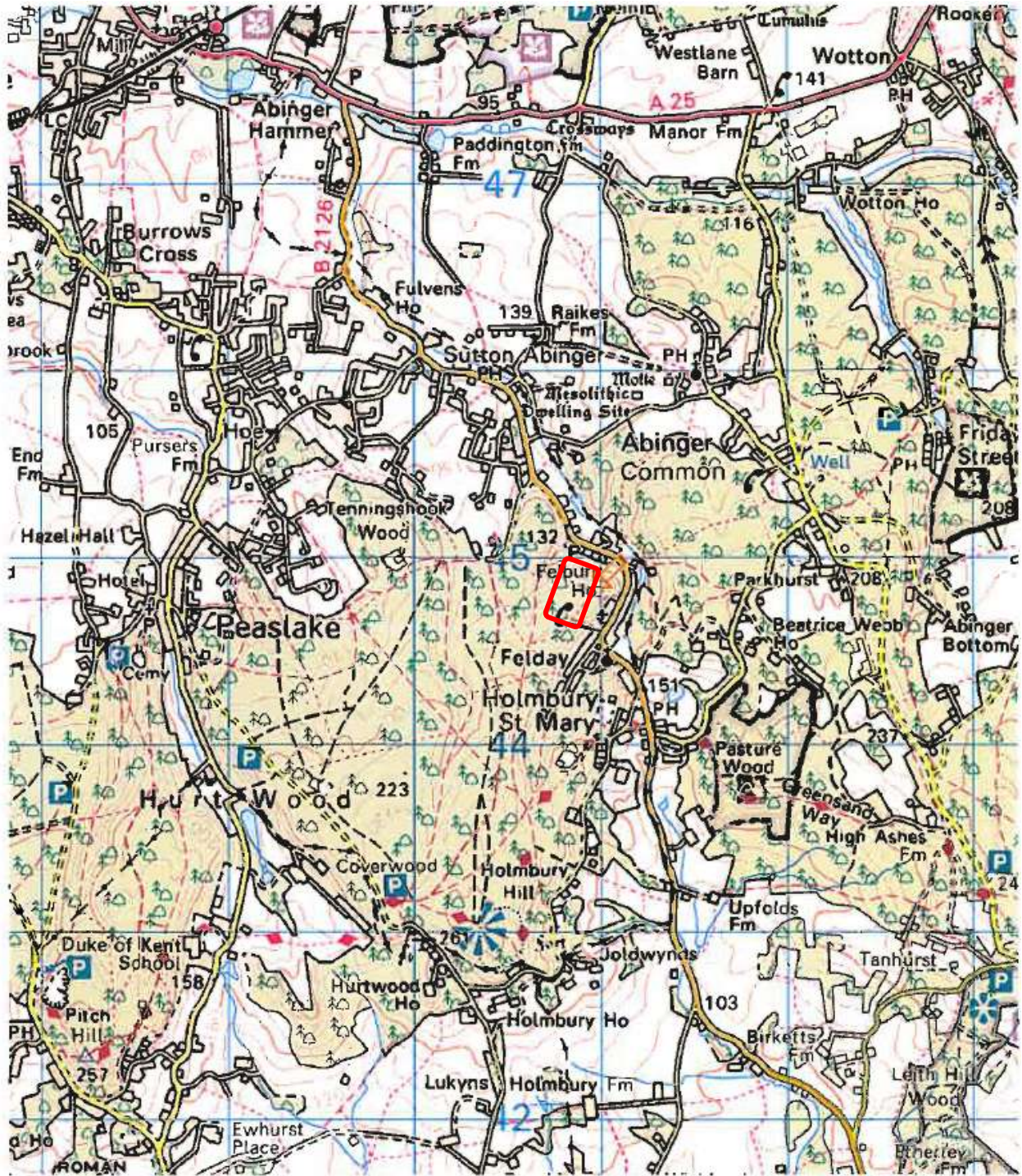
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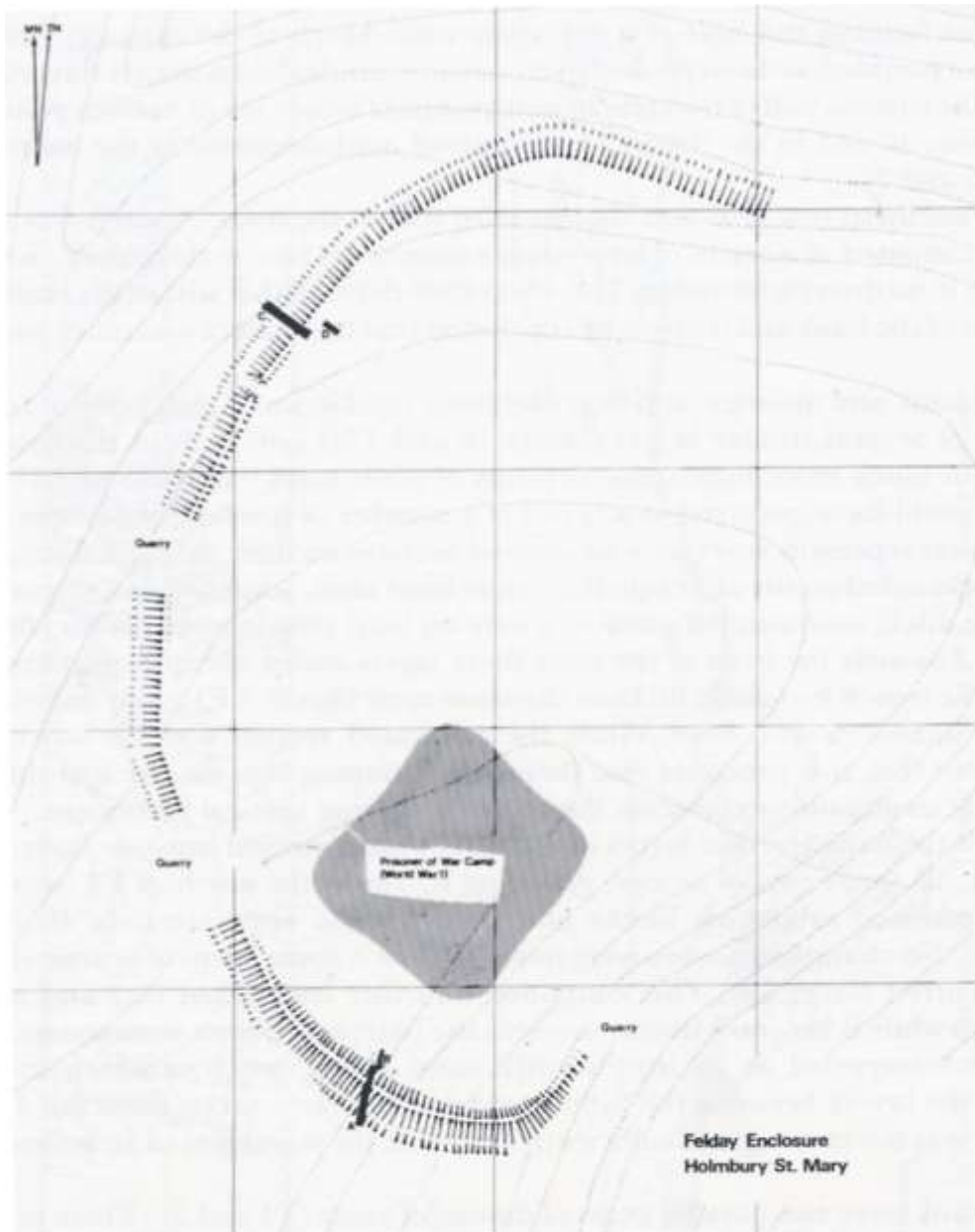
It has been described, by local historian Margaret Bird, as a civilian internment camp for prisoners, thought locally to have been Italian (although this seems unlikely), who were employed in the local timber industry. The identification as either a POW camp or an internment camp required clarification. Post-holes, timber slots, concrete foundations for a kitchen block, floors and drains are mentioned and the site is also described in a recent survey of part of the Hurtwood (Bannister 2003). The camp lay within a univallate enclosure (Scheduled Monument Number 23014; HER 2970), first noted by a local flint collector, the late Bert Keeble (brother of Beattie Ede mentioned in appendix A), and then investigated (Elmore 1983). After excavation it was recognised to be Late Iron Age in date (Field 1989) although the presence of Middle Iron Age pottery within the small assemblage indicates earlier activity on the site (Mike Seager Thomas pers comm.).

Keith Winser undertook a search through the Holmbury parish magazines where it was discovered the construction was completed in 1917 by the Royal Defence Corps for the internment of German prisoners of war.

A great assistance to our researches was supplied by the Swiss Federal Archive. Attaches from Switzerland visited prisoner of war camps during the First World war, inspecting the welfare of the prisoners and reporting to the Swiss Minister, Berlin and the Red Cross. *See appendix B*

Location





Location of World War 1 prisoner of war camp within the prehistoric enclosure at Felday, Holmbury St Mary. Grids are set at 100 metres

After Field 1989 fig.1c

The Site

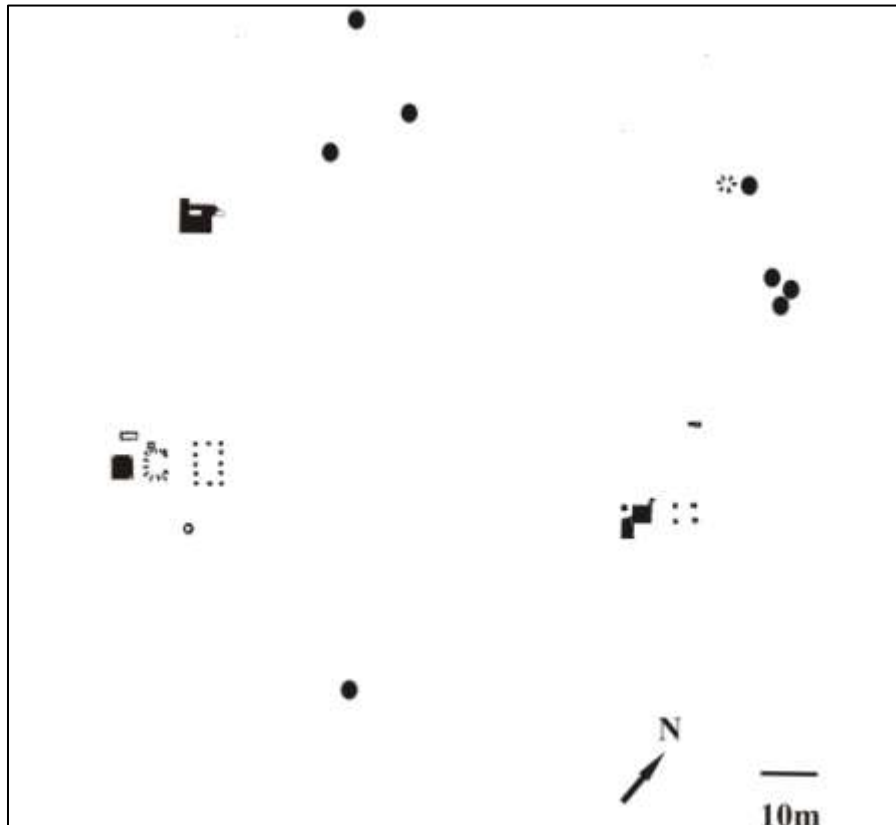
Led by Keith Winser and Ken Water's early researches in the district we identified an area of approximately 100 metres square where the camp was situated. The eastern edge appears to have respected the main north south track through the camp, overlooking the hamlet of Felday. This track has been used as the base line for the divorced survey.

Four obvious locations of interest were disclosed:

1. A concrete building base, to the north of the site, with a possible lean to and a sump like structure, together with four associated concrete squares containing post holes.
2. A generator mounting block to the south west with a concrete floor containing post holes.
3. A small square building base made of stone with no interior floor.
4. Square sump feature similar to building base one.

Also found were an alignment of post holes in the natural soil with no obvious lining, and several dumps of calcium carbonate, the product of burning carbide for the acetylene lamps that may denote the site limits.

Attempts were also made to follow the path of the railway track used for moving the timber.

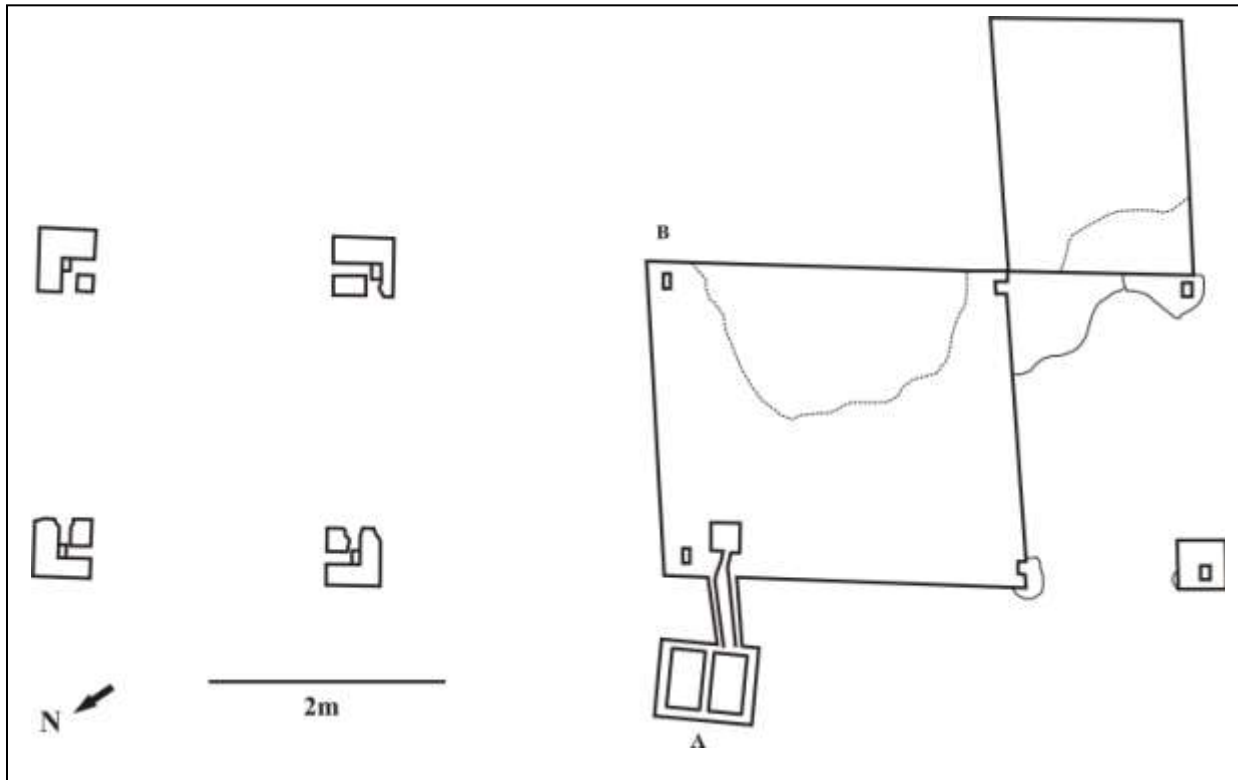


Camp as found

Part 1

The survey

1. The building base-assumed to be the kitchen area



This building has a concrete base formed with a mix of cement, sand and broken local sandstone (in lieu of ballast) and was of presumed wooden construction. The larger area measures 3.14 by 2.71 metres and to the south an attached base 1.57 x 2.14 metres. Four post holes on the southern side of the main base indicate that there may have been an extended roof or lean to.

In the north east corner of the base a drain was formed approximately 250mm square, which could have been a catchment to a waste pipe or pipes. From this a gully has been formed in the same material, through the outer wall for 1.1 metres, and into a double catchment pit set into the ground, once again formed of local concrete with a smooth rendered interior.

Near the top of the larger catchment a gully has been formed in the same material, through the outer wall for 1.1 metres, and into a double catchment pit set into the ground, once again formed of local concrete with a smooth rendered interior.

The catchment pit, or sump, which measures 1000mm x 800mm and 560mm deep, with a solid base, is fed on one side by the gully. The off centre divide running east west is 25mm lower than the outer rim. A central archway cuts through the base of the divide 240 mm wide and 375mm at the highest point, linking both sections.

In the pit, to the north, is an outlet pipe 65 mm internal diameter and 75mm from the top rim. This probably would have run into a soak away, and a sunken area local to this feature may well have been such.

The outer edge of the pit, which is beveled inwards, could have supported a lid or cover.



Concrete base showing catchment pit



Post hole in edge of base



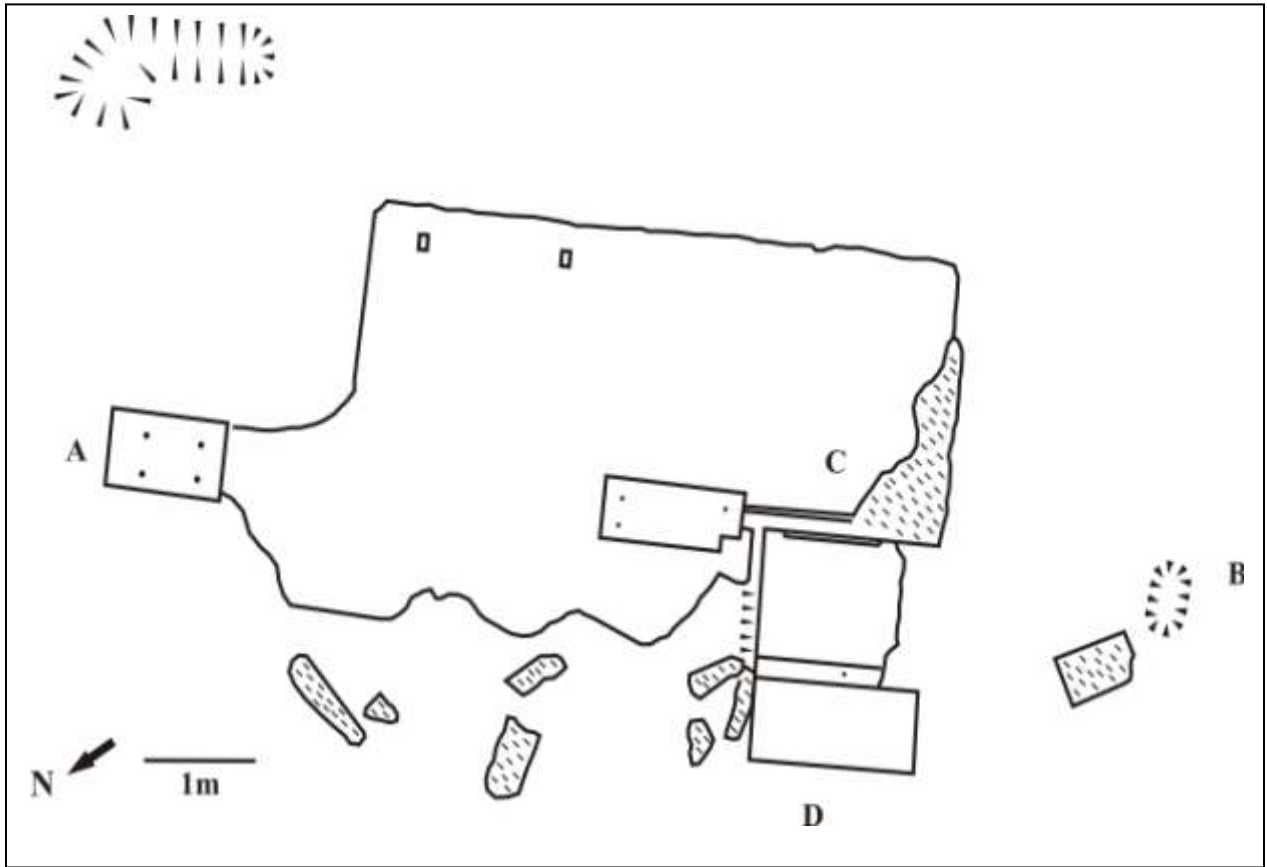
Detail of drain feature

Behind the base, to the north east there was disclosed four concrete blocks enclosing an area of 3 metres square. These blocks, varying between 570mm and 430 mm square. have L shaped gullies. It is presumed these gullies would have taken wooden beams to support a timber building. As the Swiss report describes a store room behind the kitchen this would fit the bill. Alternatively it could have served as the glass house, as described by Beattie Ede.

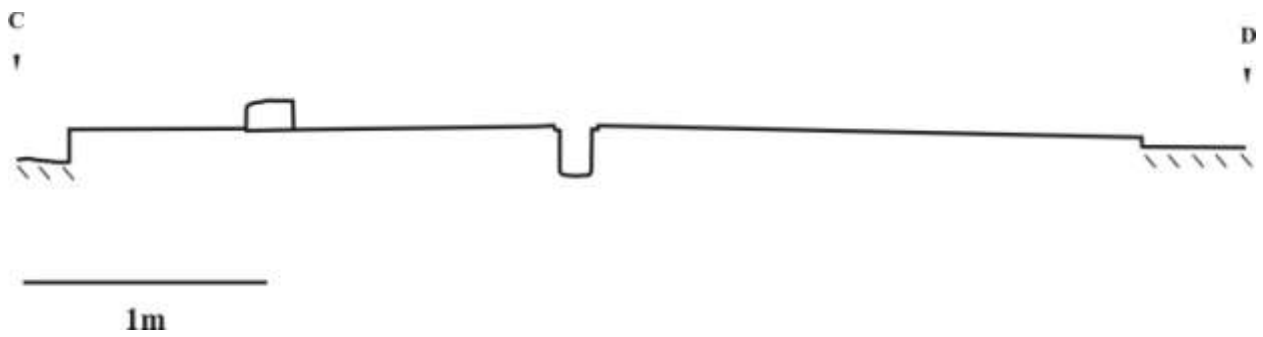
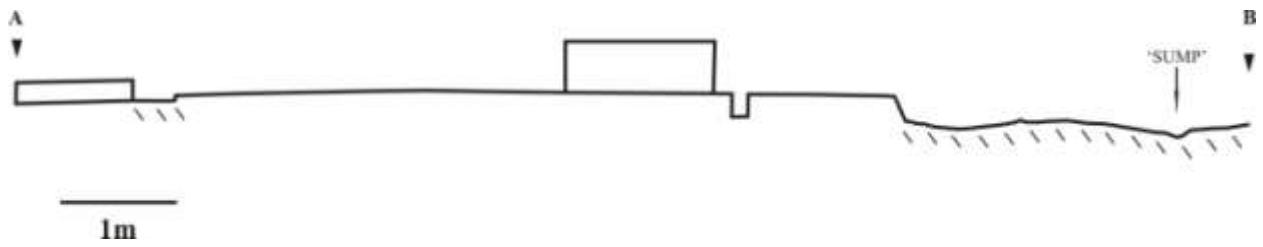
2. The generator base

In the north west corner of the camp there are two oblong concrete plinths standing above the ground. They are 3.6 metres apart and have four metal bolts in top of each. The block to the east measures 1.1 metres x 700mm. The westerly block 1.3 metres x 600mm. Local knowledge tells us that this was the location of a generator unit.

Probing around the area revealed a base under the ground cover, which was cleared. Other features became visible including duct ways, two post holes 1.2 metres apart, and a small shallow gully within a large flat concrete floor area measuring 3.6 x 5.6 metres



Generator base and sections





Base of the generator area.

Tony Harcombe, a leading member of various historical interest groups, was invited to the site and straight away was able to see how the set up worked. In fact had a similar set up in his private collection. The generator would have been belt driven from a single cylinder, horizontal bore open crank oil engine run on kerosene. It would have provided a supply to a control panel, which then charged banks of batteries to provide a direct current for lighting etc.

One of the ducts in the base would have carried the exhaust pipe outside to a silencer, let into the ground to dampen the noise. The other duct would have carried the fuel supply pipe from a tank set outside on a platform. A small gully in the main floor may have been for and spillage caused while servicing the batteries. The two post holes to the south east may have supported a control panel as illustrated



One of the two gullies



Second gully

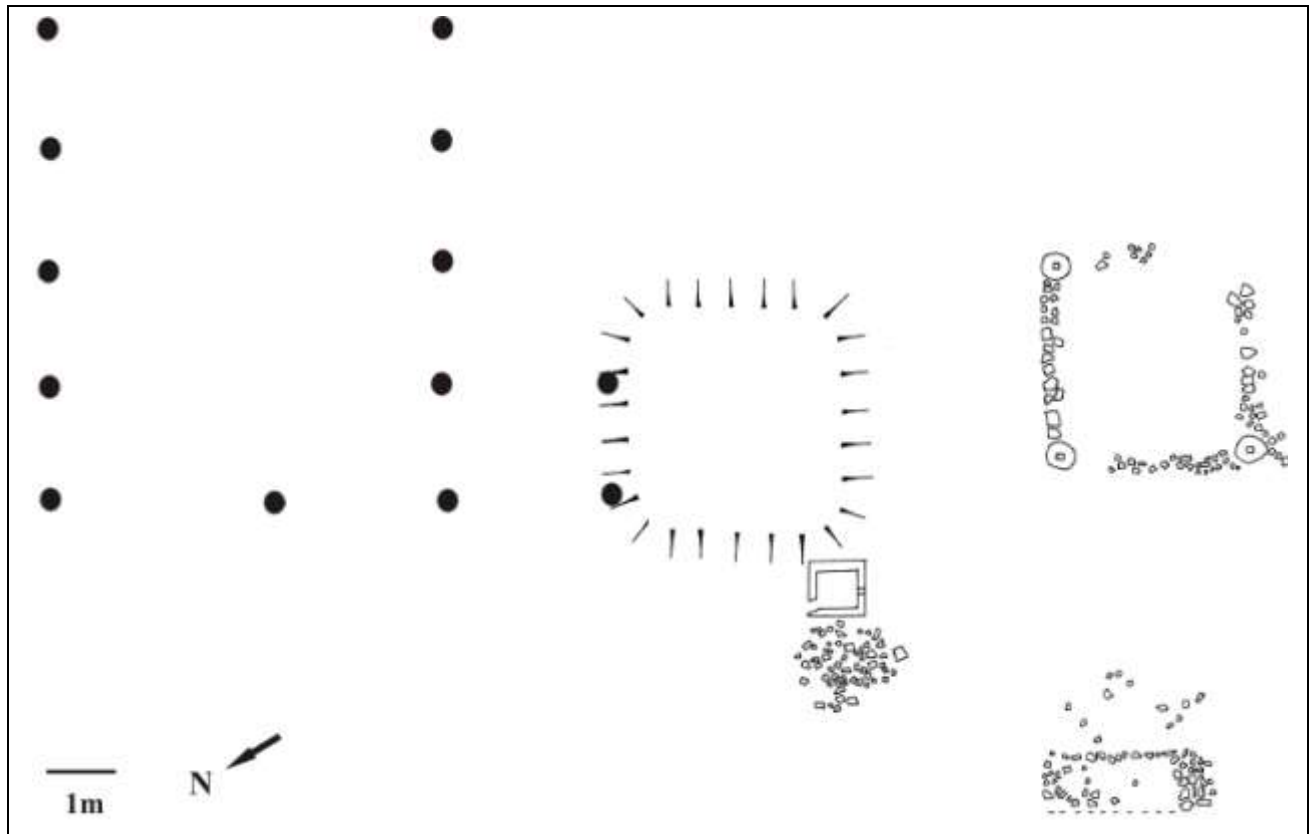


Post holes



Example of control board

3. The ablutions area



Plan of ablution area

To the south east of the camp exists a series of features. Representing a series of temporary structures we were led to believe this could be the site of the ablutions area.

There are a series of post holes delineating a possible building of wooden construction, approximately 6 x7 metres. Adjacent to this is a raised platform three metres square bordering a significant sump around 80cms. square.

To the south the remains of stone foundations were found. At three corners were concrete pads 2.5 metres apart with central holes, presumably for timber uprights. Scatterings of stones suggested smaller outlying buildings



The mound



The sump



Example of one of the post holes

4. Carbide waste

Around the perimeter of the site we found four small banks of a white powdery substance which proved to be slaked lime or calcium carbonate. This is a by product of the burning of acetylene therefore it can be assumed that the perimeter was lit by such lamps. Referring again to the sketch by Beattie Ede (appendix C) it can be seen that she has indicated floodlights in similar locations.



Carbide waste deposit

5. The railway

Anecdotal tales of the railway from Beattie Ede's recollections told us that a railway was used to transfer the timber from the hill to the sawmills, one of which was located in The Glade in the village.

As Beattie's father owned the stables she told us that the horses were used to pull the empty wagons back up the hill, and controlled by a chain mechanism on the descent.



Decauville rail with horse power - Voiede60

Further information from The Swiss Federal Archive tell us that the prisoners, as well as felling timber, assembled a Decauville rail system.

Decauville

Information from Wikipedia

The Decauville manufacturing company was founded by Paul Decauville (1846–1922), a French pioneer in industrial railways. Decauville's major innovation was the use of ready-made sections of light, narrow gauge track fastened to steel sleepers; this track was portable and could be disassembled and transported very easily. The first Decauville railway used 400 mm (15 3/4 in) gauge; Decauville later refined his invention and switched to 500 mm (19 3/4 in) and 600 mm (1 ft 11 5/8 in) gauge.

Starting in 1875, his company produced track elements, engines and cars. Those were exported to many countries, in particular to the colonial possessions of European powers.[1] The French military became interested in the Decauville system as early as 1888 and chose the 600 mm (1 ft 11 5/8 in) gauge track to equip its strongholds and to

carry artillery pieces and ammunition during military campaigns. Decauville track was used during the French military expeditions to Madagascar and Morocco.

By the First World War, the Decauville system had become a military standard and the French and British eventually built thousands of miles of trench railway track. The Germans had a similar system, with normalized engines.[2]

[2] Taylorson, Keith (1996). *Narrow gauge at war, 2*. East Harling, UK: Plantway press. ISBN 1-871980-55-0

In 1916/7 engines were designed in France to operate on the rail but it is unlikely they were available in the UK at the time of the camp.

To identify the supposed route of the railway GPS readings were taken along the line. The plots on the maps below indicate its location running into the village sawmill that was located at the Felday car park.



There also came to light in the village a section of rail, comparison with a standard rail shows how much smaller it is.

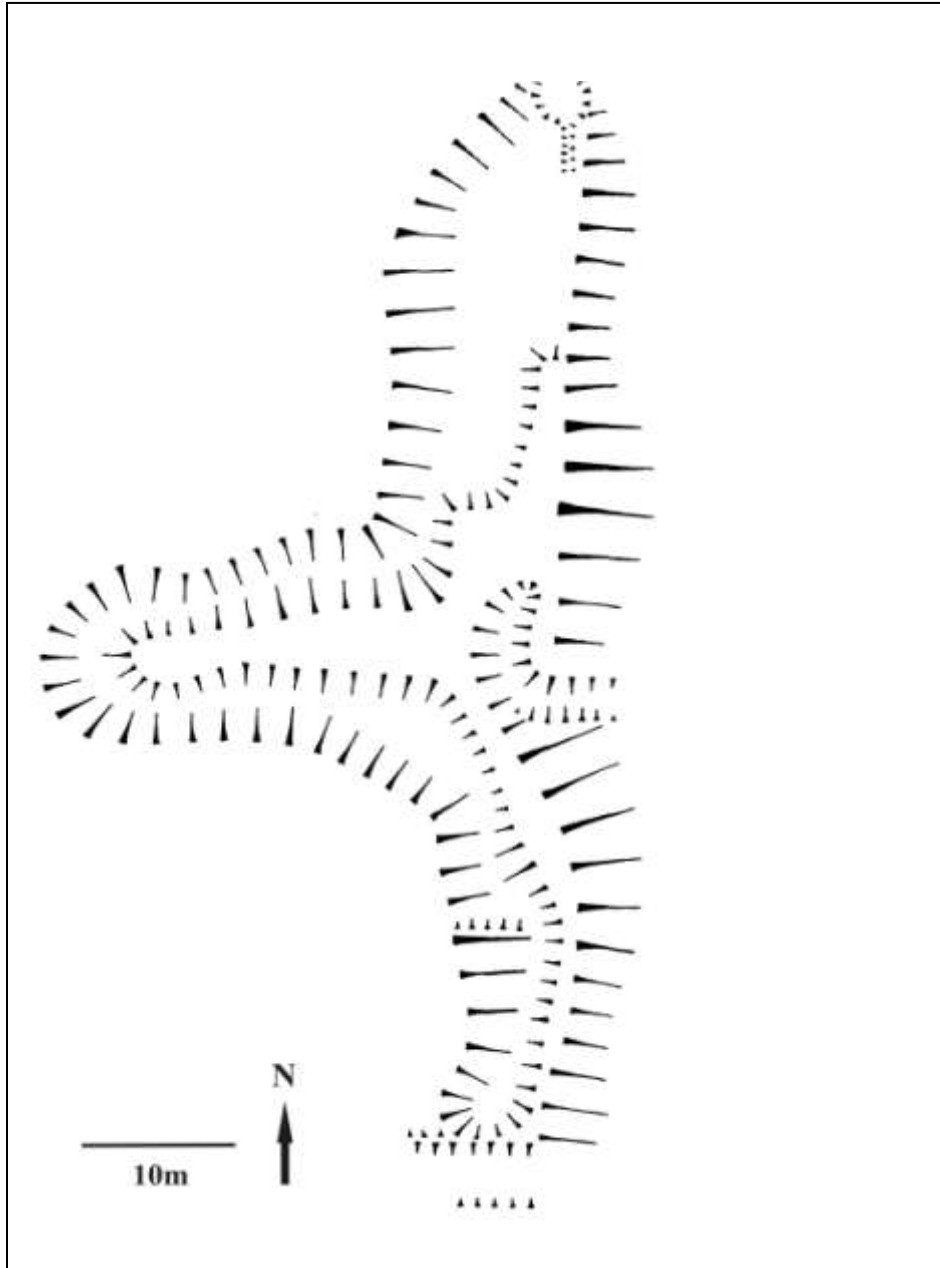


Example of rail, collected at Holmbury, against standard gauge on the left

Evidence of a well worn path alongside the track would suggest the horses were led up the hill by persons.

6. Trench system

The Great War Forum reports that that Holmbury was used as a training ground for recruits. This may be an explanation for the trench system which was disclosed between Holmbury and Felday hillforts, TQ101433. Situated north of the Holmbury hill fort the complicated gully and bank plan is shown below.

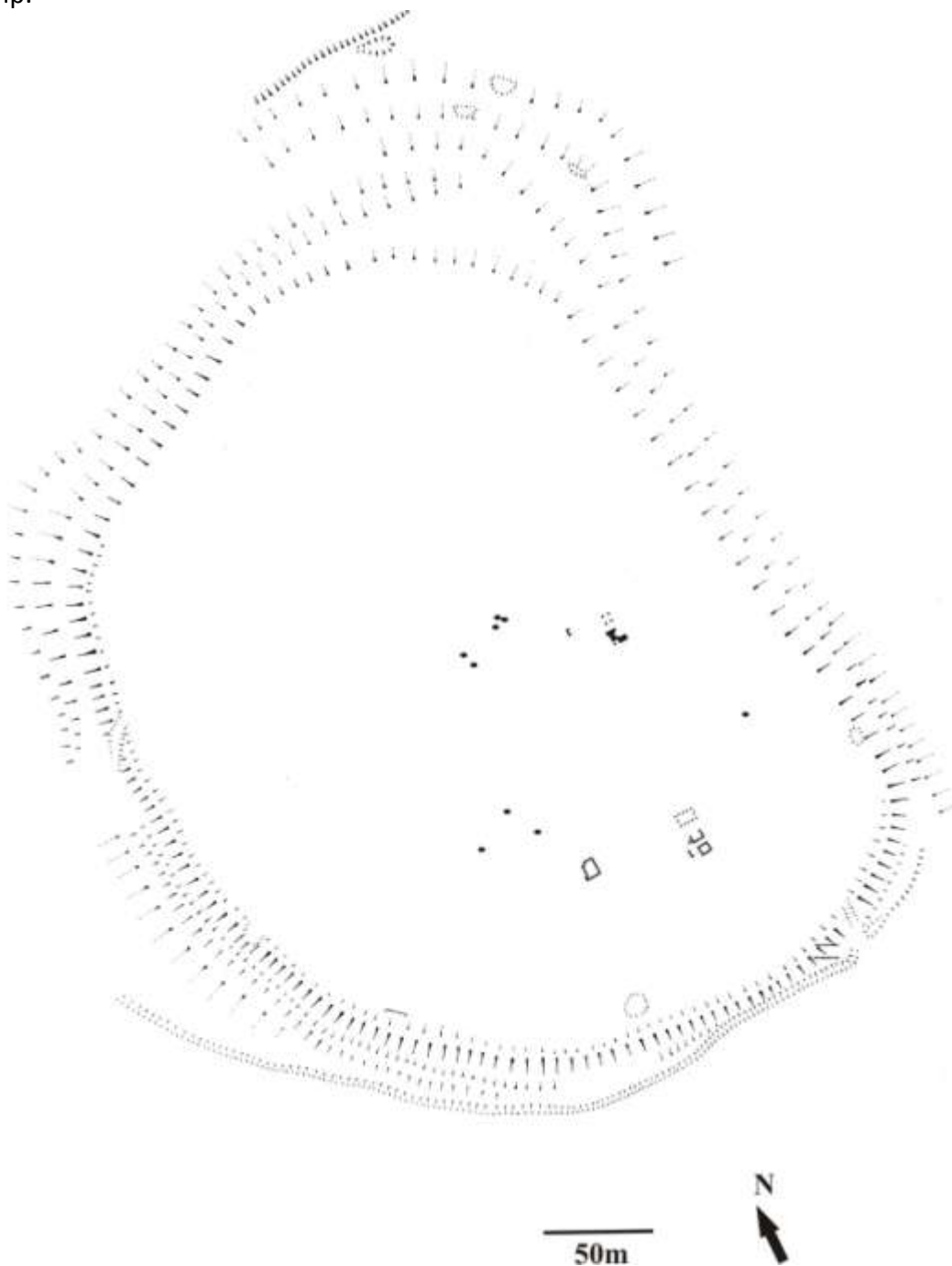


Part 2

Iron Age Enclosure survey

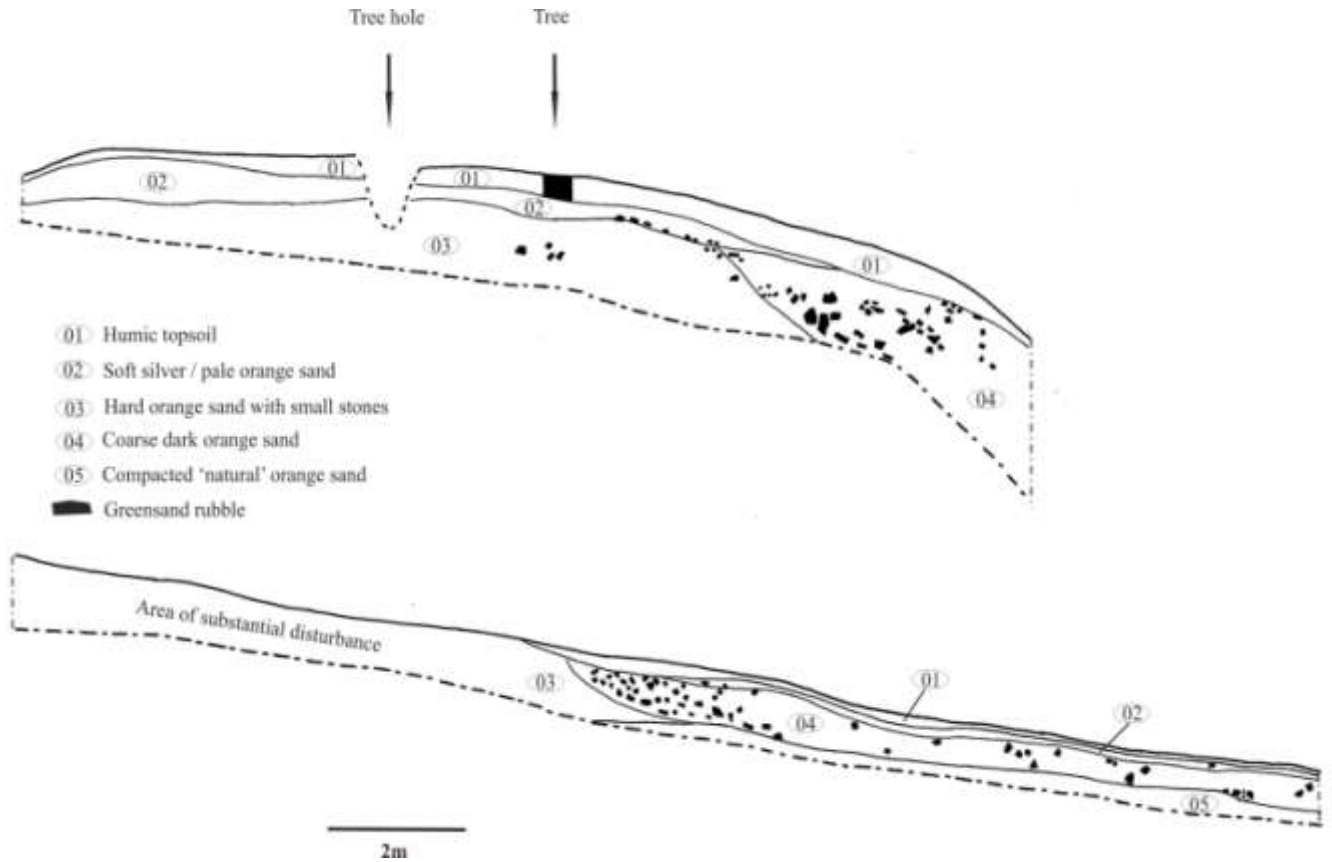
After the rhododendron clearance the hill fort was better exposed and seem to show additional banks and ditches to the survey by Dave Field 1989.

Originally assumed to be univalate it is in fact trivalate in places, with external terraces. Our new survey was able to record this, together with the accurate position of the World War 1 camp.

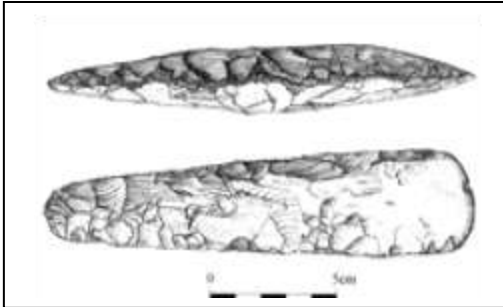


The cutting on the main path into the enclosure gave us the opportunity to draw a section of the bank and ditch feature 33 metres long.

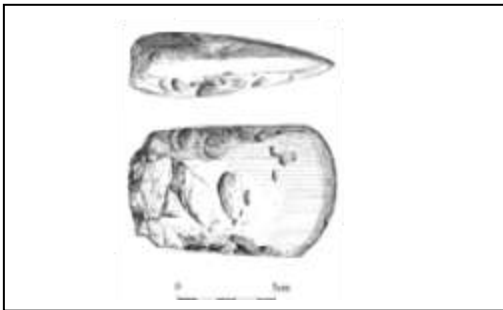
Although somewhat disturbed in the centre the drawing clearly shows the two slumps of greensand stone which would have revetted the two original banks, a useful indication of the method of construction.



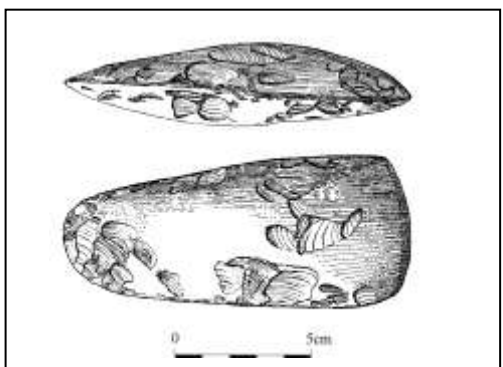
This re survey gives us the opportunity to include illustrations of three Neolithic axes recorded in the area, these predate the enclosure being around 5,000 years old. We are grateful to Chris Taylor, who drew the axes and David Williams, who photographed them.



Felday enclosure



Holmbury cricket ground



Pasture Wood North

Appendices

Appendix A Extracts from the National Archive



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Catalogue Reference:CAB/24/46

Image Reference:0092

39

Col Jones

245



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_____ and of those Officers under him whose duties it affects. He is personally responsible for its safe custody, and that its contents are disclosed to those Officers and to them only.

**PRISONERS OF WAR EMPLOYMENT
COMMITTEE.**

FIRST INTERIM REPORT.

WAR OFFICE PAPER No. 0103/9681.

[A 2103]

(0103/9681) 75 3/18 HAN 5008wo

TERMS OF REFERENCE.

“To consider all applications for the Employment of Prisoners of War, and to decide whether they should be adopted.”

LIST OF MEMBERS:

Mr. JAMES F. HOPE, M.P., *Chairman.*

Sir HOWARD FRANK, *Vice-Chairman.*

Mr. S. MAGER, Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Mr. E. SEBAG MONTEFIORE, Home Office.

Lieut.-Colonel R. J. B. MAIR, War Office.

Sir H. E. MORGAN, K.B.E., Ministry of National Service.

Mr. T. M. TAYLOR, Ministry of Munitions.

Mr. G. D. ROSEWAY, *Secretary.*

Committee appointed, December, 1916

War Office Reg. Paper No. 0103/9681.

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(b.) *Interned Civilian Prisoners of War.*—These men cannot be compelled to work, and considerable difficulty has been experienced regarding their employment, especially in view of the recent note verbale of the German Government forbidding civilians to work outside their internment camps.

All questions relating to the employment of these men inside their camps and the release of individuals to approved work are still dealt with by the Home Office, but various suggestions have been put forward by the Committee for consideration for employment of these civilians on basket making, manufacture of artificial eyes and optical lenses, &c.

At the present time, 1,847 civilians are employed outside their parent camps.

4. Two difficulties have been found to interfere with the speedy employment of prisoners once they are allocated, viz., the provision of guards and accommodation.

The first difficulty has been in part overcome by restricting the size of the working camps, except those for agricultural purposes, to a minimum of 100 men, the number being increased wherever possible. After consultation with the military authorities concerned, and in view of the experience gained in the larger camps, the Committee have recommended to the War Office the abolition of guards for small parties of men employed in the neighbourhood of their working camps and returning to such camps at night. The suggested practice, which chiefly affects the small agricultural camps, has been approved and is now being carried out.

As regards accommodation, the Committee have found that some delay is almost unavoidable in this respect between the date of allocation and the date of actual commencement of work, owing to the difficulty in providing the material and labour needed for construction of the camps which have to be hatted, unless the men are only required in the summer months or available premises can be adapted. The Committee have represented to the authorities concerned the importance of providing accommodation for the prisoners directly they are allocated, in view of the resulting gain in work done, and considerable improvement has been effected, while an improved method of inspection and administration, recently suggested, should result in speedier employment.

5. Returns are furnished to the Committee at each meeting showing the total number of prisoners employed, the number allocated and awaiting employment (with any reasons for delays), and the number available for distribution. Applications for prisoners are then considered in view of the balance available and the relative importance of the work involved, special regard being given to those classes of work which have been given priority by decision of the War Cabinet. It has, however, been noted that although particular demands have often been represented as of peculiar urgency, no special steps have been correspondingly taken to secure rapidity of employment once the prisoners were allocated.

6. Owing to the delay which occurs in the provision of accommodation, arrangements have been made whereby prisoners may be employed temporarily in the vicinity of the parent camps upon approved work, chiefly of an agricultural character. This scheme has met with considerable success and has effectively bridged over the period of waiting for the completion of working camps. On 9th February, 1918, 2,876 men were so employed. At the suggestion of the Committee the War Office have issued instructions to the Camp Commandants regarding the voluntary employment of non-commissioned officers, but it has not been possible to make any great progress in this respect. On 9th February, 1918, 918 non-commissioned officers were employed.

7. Appendix B (i) attached to this report gives details of the present employment of the prisoners now working.

In addition, prisoners have been employed on various schemes now completed, details of which are given in Appendix B (ii).

8. The War Cabinet having decided that the allocation of prisoners of war should be transferred to the Ministry of National Service, the Committee ceased to function as a separate body from Friday, 8th February, 1918, and now acts as a sub-committee of the National Labour Priority Committee.

9. We desire to express our sincere appreciation of the great services of the representatives of the Home Office and War Office who have attended in an advisory capacity and on whom a mass of statistical work and many laborious enquiries are necessarily thrown. To the ability and assiduity of our Secretary, Mr. Roseway, our warm thanks are also due.

(Signed) JAMES F. HOPE, *Chairman.*
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APPENDIX A.

DETAILS OF PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM RETURNS DATED WEEK ENDING 9TH FEBRUARY, 1918.

Total number of prisoners of war in the United Kingdom (less officers, servants, sick in hospitals, &c.) ...	44,755	Employed permanently from parent camps—	
N.C.Os. and unfits ...	9,825	Agriculture—	
Total in working camps... ..	23,749	Blandford	115
Allocated and waiting accommodation	6,168	Dorchester	42
Employed on camp duties in parent camps	1,006	Pattishall	30
		Stobs	50
			— 237
		Miscellaneous—	
		Dorchester	82
		Leigh	515
		Shrewsbury	150
			— 747
Employed in Royal Engineer Services from parent camps—		Special "Friendly" Camp at Feltham, employed on miscellaneous work, including agriculture, aerodromes, &c.	849
Blandford	141	Balance	529
Brocton	500		— 984
Catterick	500		
Dorchester	400		
Pattishall	12		
Stobs	92		
	— 1,645		

APPENDIX A (ii).

PRISONERS ALLOTTED, BUT NOT YET EMPLOYED.

MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS.		ADMIRALTY.	
Birmingham.—Sorting brass and other metals ...	150	Peterhead.—Seaplane Station	100
Lincoln.—Brick making	75		
Frampton-on-Severn.—Manufacture of concrete slabs for Admiralty and Office of Works... ..	500		
Lancaster.—Road construction to National Steel Projectile Factory	30		
	— 755		
		WAR OFFICE.	
Various camps—		Easton-on-the-Hill.—Royal Flying Corps Training Depot	400
Farming work (18)... ..	942	Orfordness.—Aerodrome work	200
Ploughing	3,771		— 600
	— 4,713	Total	6,168

APPENDIX B (1.)

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.		Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com-batants.	Civilians.			Com-batants.	Civilians.
ADMIRALTY.							
Glendevon ...	Waterworks for Rosyth	187	...	Burbage ...	Quarry, iron ore	209	...
Inverkeithing ...	Brick and tile making for the Admiralty.	53	...	Harperley ...	" ganister	230	...
Beachley... ..	Shipyard construction	1,998	...	Newlandside ...	" iron ore	565	...
	Total	2,238	...	Peakdale... ..	" "	200	...
				Rowley	" "	111	...
				Uppingham ...	" ironstone	170	...
				Bowthwick ...	Wolfram ore quarry	120	...
					Carried forward ...	1,605	...

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Con- victs	Civilians.

Ministry of Munitions—continued.

Brought forward		1,905	...
Pert Talbot	Steel works extension	515	...
Eastgate	Limestone quarry	310	...
Rowrah	"	211	...
Stainton Siding	"	148	...
Corby	Ironstone quarry	...	133
Wakerley	Quarry, iron ore	199	...
Kinlochleven	Works for British Alu- minium Corporation.	891	...
Raasey	Quarry, iron ore	287	...
Banbury	Railway to iron ore field.	249	...
Burton	Aerogun factory	500	...
Chelmsford	Hoffman & Co. (ball- bearings).	151	...
Oswestry	Quarry	50	...
Stainby	"	...	90
Total		5,117	283
Total		5,340	

CONTROLLER OF TIMBER SUPPLIER.

Sproxtton Moor	Timber felling	106	...
Kerry	"	150	...
Crickhowell	"	150	...
Hersotage	"	100	...
Lynford, West Tofta.	"	166	...
Paushanger	"	221*	...
Shere, Holmbury St. Mary.	"	141	...
Standon	"	300	...
Southill	"	214	...
Woburn	"	144†	...
Beaulieu	"	218	...
Dawcyck	"	90	...
Seafield	"	170	...
Warren Wood, Thetford.	"	294	...
Marshmoor Sid- ing.	"	115	...
Haxhamshire, Slaley.	"	160	...
Langley Park	"	159	...
Agriculture		2,781	...
Agriculture		50	...
Total		2,731	...

* 20 employed on agriculture.
† 30 employed on agriculture.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Crawford (Leamarkshire).	County Council Water Scheme.	220	...
Hairmyres	Excavation work for Tuberculosis Sana- torium.	170	...
Total		390	...

ROAD BOARD.

Bilston	...	100	...
Port Clarence	Road Board. Excava- tion of slag.	230	...
Pennamoor	Quarrying for roads	123	...
Total		453	...

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Con- victs	Civilians.

WAR OFFICE

AVIATION.

Castle Bromwich	Aerodrome	105	...
Yatesbury	"	359*	...
Coal Aston	"	398	...
S. Carlton, Monk's Abbey.	"	220	...
Cove	"	280	...
Radford	"	...	479
Martlesham	"	172	...
Heath.	"
Mill Hill	"	299	...
Dalmellington	"	385	...
Queensferry	Aircraft acceptance park.	...	235
Halton Park	Aerodrome	600	...
Northfield, Bir- mingham.	"	348	...
Total		3,086	714
Total		3,800	50
Total		3,750	

* 50 employed on agriculture.

ROYAL ENGINEER WORKS.

Mill Down	Royal Engineers, Bland- ford.	199	...
Bulford	Royal Engineers, Southern Command.	...	170
Codford	"	197	...
Fovant	"	138	...
Larkhill	"	1,248	...
Shirhampton, Perham Down.	"	138	...
Sutton Vany	"	...	131
Winchester	"	...	411
Orfordness	Eastern Command	229	...
Sandhill Park	Southern Command	26	...
Chisleton	"	183	...
Total		2,258	712
Total		3,070	

MISCELLANEOUS.

Bramley Army Ordnance De- partment.	Erection of Army Ordnance Department Stores.	2,881	...
Newark House, Gloucester.	Work on oil drum sheds	85	...
Denby, Kilburn Hall.	Work under the Road Board for Messrs. Tarmac and Co.	60	...
Total		3,026	...

FORAGE DEPÔTS.

Barry, Glamor- ganshire.	Forage	...	74
Boston Dock	"	...	126
Total		...	210

Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.		Name of camp.	Nature of work.	Number of prisoners of war.	
		Com- batants.	Civilians.			Com- batants.	Civilians.
AGRICULTURE.				Agriculture—continued.			
Eardiston ...	Agriculture (work on land).	70	...	Brought forward ...		3,103	38
Knightwick (Martley) ...	" "	49	...	Old Radnor ...	Agriculture ...	50	...
Peopleton ...	" "	80	...	Stratford-on-Avon ...	" ...	60	...
Shelsley Walsh ...	" "	64	...	Leigh, Worcester-shire ...	" ...	56	...
Wingland ...	Reclaiming land	251	...	Chipping Ongar, Essex ...	" ...	40	...
Evesham ...	Market gardening	108	...	Meldreth, Cam-bridge ...	" ...	45	...
Craycombe House ...	" "	100	...	Bygrave, near Baldock ...	" ...	70	...
Toddington ...	Fruit picking and orchard work.	74	...	Woburn, Bedford-shire ...	" ...	30	...
Dunmow ...	Agriculture	105	...	Yatesbury, Wilts ...	" ...	50	...
Foxborrow ...	" "	171	...	Woodham Fer-rers, Chelms-ford ...	" ...	37	...
Hatfield ...	" "	107	...	Panshanger ...	" ...	20	...
Hemel Hempstead ...	" "	65	...	Mayland ...	" ...	40	...
Huntingdon ...	" "	98	...	Halling ...	" ...	50	...
Kenninghall ...	Farm work	352	...	Halstead ...	" ...	100	...
Keddington ...	" "	94	...	Great Hampton House ...	" ...	100	...
Lewes ...	Agriculture	206	...	Rochford, Wor-cestershire ...	" ...	49	...
Linton ...	" "	102	...	Storrington ...	" ...	100	...
Rochford ...	Farm work, wood cut-ting.	70	...	Saffron Walden ...	" ...	40	...
Rothwell ...	Agriculture	214	...	Shouldham ...	" ...	40	...
Ross-on-Wye ...	" "	...	38	Southwick ...	Agriculture and Brighton Gas Company.	126	...
Burnham Norton, Norfolk ...	Marsh drainage	75	...	Tutnall and Cobley ...	Agriculture	35	...
Heacham (Snettisham) ...	" "	74	...			4,241	38
Bungay, Ship-meadow ...	Agriculture	102	...			Total ... 4,279	
South Ockenden, Essex ...	" "	211	...				
Leasowe Castle, Cheshire ...	Cleansing of River Birkett and mending sea wall. Breaking up and loading lime-stone and general work in quarries.	261	...				
	Carried forward ...	3,103	38				

APPENDIX B (ii.)

Construction of Army Ordnance Department stores at Altrincham ...	1,400	Aerodrome excavation work and construction in various parts of Great Britain ...	1,500
Branch railway from main line to Royal Aircraft Factory, Farnborough ...	330	Erection of storage huts at Port Richborough ...	1,500
		Reservoir at Beecraigs, water supply to Port Edgar ...	200

Appendix B – Swiss Federal Archive reports

Swiss Federal Archives - SFA

The Federal Archives are the Swiss Confederation's service centre and centre of expertise for sustainable information management. They evaluate, safeguard, catalogue and make available to the public the Confederation's documents. It would need a bookshelf 48 kilometres long to hold the entire inventory. It includes original documents such as the constitution, deeds, photos, films, recordings and databases. The archiving of such records is essential in a democratic constitutional state for continuity and transparency and enables citizens to exercise democratic control over government and administration activities. The main focus for the coming years will be to support the Federal Administration's services by ensuring a smooth transition to the e-Archive and to provide continuous training in the workings of the archiving process.

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Extract of report dated 16th October 1917

16th October, 1917.

Monsieur le Ministre,

I have the honour to submit a report covering a visit of inspection to the Prisoners of War Working Camp at HOLMBURY ST. MARY, nr. Dorking, Surrey, on October 11th, 1917. This Camp was opened on August 24th, 1917.

DIRECTION. The Commandant is Lieut K.H.Thorneycroft. Dr. Cory, a medical practitioner at Shere, about 5 miles distant, is camp physician.

PRISONERS. There are at present 147 German military prisoners in the camp, including the Camp Leader Feldwebel Meerbute and 4 Unteroffiziere.

DESCRIPTION OF CAMP The Camp is healthily situated on high ground, and is surrounded by pine woods. The prisoners have, until lately, been under canvas, but they have now built huts, into which the last batch of men were moving on the day of my visit. The huts are of the regulation army type - length 18 metres, width 4.75 metres, height at the side 2.35 metres, height at the gable 3.65 metres. The roofs are of wood, covered with rubberised felt.

Each hut is capable of holding 30 men. Stoves for heating are now being put in, and the Commandant informed me that the lighting will be supplied from an acetylene plant. Each man has the usual bed-board and trestle bed and four blankets. Two dining huts are in course of construction. In the meantime the prisoners take their meals in a marquee tent.

SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS The water is good and sufficient. The sewage is drained into a pit at some distance from the camp, and the garbage is incinerated. The latrines are on the pail system. There is an ablution shed with 10 taps.

NUTRITION. The kitchen is in a shed and is fitted with one boiler and a roaster. There is a good storeroom. All the men receive the increased ration for working prisoners of war. No canteen has been installed as yet, but the men are able to buy through the camp authorities certain articles from the local shops.

MEDICAL INFORMATION. Dr. Cory calls twice a week at the camp, and when required. A marquee is kept in readiness for erection as a hospital should it be needed. So far no cases of serious illness have occurred. There has been one minor accident in which a man had the last phalanx of his thumb cut off. He is now being treated at the Belmont Military Hospital. The prisoners are allowed to visit a local dentist if necessary.

WORK. The work consists of timber felling and the construction of a Decauville railway. I inspected one of the working parties and found the physical condition of the men satisfactory. They are paid 1d. an hour, and the foremen 1.5d - 2d. an hour. The tailor and shoemaker are paid 1.5d and the clerk 1d. an hour from Government funds. The 2 cooks are paid out of the Canteen Fund.

RESUME. No definite opinion of the camp arrangements can yet be formed, as the men are hardly settled in their new winter quarters. The chief needs are proper lighting in the huts, some bathing accommodations (a shower bath if possible), and an additional boiler in the kitchen. I brought these matters to the notice of the Commandant.

The mentality of the men seems satisfactory which may be attributed in a large measure to the fine situation of the Camp, and the healthy work in which they are engaged.

I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Ministre,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

Special Attache.
His Excellency,
Monsieur Gaston Carlin,
Swiss Minister,
LONDON.

Extract of report dated 29th May 1918

SWISS LEGATION.
GERMAN DIVISION
9 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
LONDON SW 1.

May 29th, 1918.

Monsieur le President,

I have the honour to transmit herewith enclosed, copies of reports covering visits of inspection which have been made by Dr. A. de Sturler, of the Staff of this Legation, to the following Working Camps for Combatant Prisoners of War on the following dates:-

HOLMBURY ST. MARY,

GUILDFORD (Langton Priory) and

REDHILL, Surrey, on May 21st and May 23rd, 1918.

PENSHURST, Kent,

EAST GRIMSTEAD (sic) and

ROBERTSBRIDGE, Sussex, on May 23rd and May 25. 1918.

A second copy of each report is enclosed for favour of transmission to Berlin and 9 third for favour of transmission to the Comite International de la Croix Rouge, in accordance with the request conveyed in Y. de Pury's communication No. D.F. 19, O.F. 7/8, dated November 26th, 1917.

I have the honour to be,

Monsieur le President,

With the highest consideration,
Your most obedient humble Servant,

Departement Politique Suisse,

Division pour la representation des Interets etrangers et pour l'internement,

BERNE.

SWISS LEGATION,
GERMAN DIVISION
9, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,
LONDON. S.W. 1.

May 28th, 1918.

Monsieur le Ministre,

I have the honour to submit a report covering visits of inspection to the Working Camps for Combatant Prisoners of War at HOLMBURY ST. MARY, GUILDFORD (Langton Priory) and REDHILL, Surrey, on May 21st and May 23rd, 1918.

HOLMBURY ST. MARY.

PREVIOUS VISITS. This Camp has been previously visited by Dr. A.L. Vischer, of the Staff of this Legation, on October 11th, 1917, and a report was addressed to you under date of October 16th, 1917.

DIRECTION. Captain K.H. Thorneycroft is still Commandant of Holmbury St. Mary Camp, and when the camps at Guildford and Redhill were opened in February 1918, he took over command of them also. Lieut. Richards is adjutant, Second Lieut. Paterson interpreter and Dr. Corby, a civilian practitioner from Shere, about 5 miles distant, camp physician.

PRISONERS. There are at present 208 German prisoners of war at this camp. Vizefeldwebel Karl Meerbote, (153. Inf. Reg.) is camp leader.

DESCRIPTION OF CAMP. The housing, sanitary arrangements and nutrition at Holmbury St. Mary have been fully described in Dr. Vischer's report referred to above, and I have little to add concerning these points. The eight huts serving as dormitories are clean and well-kept and the dining room, which is now completed, offers ample accommodation. An additional boiler has been installed in the kitchen, but boilers of a larger size would have served the purpose better.

MEDICAL INFORMATION. A special hospital hut, with an R.A.M.C. orderly in attendance, is now in use. Dr. Corby visits the camp twice weekly and when required. Serious cases of illness would be sent to Belmont War Hospital. The general health of the prisoners is good and they looked well and fit.

WORK. The work performed and wages received are the same as specified in the previous report.

REQUESTS. Although the prisoners' quarters are good, and, on the whole, adequate, no bathing accommodation has as yet been provided - a serious inconvenience now that the hot weather has set in. The installation of shower baths, in this camp of over 200 prisoners would be a most welcome addition. The commandant assured me that orders had been given for the construction of the bathing hut, and that the work would soon be taken in hand.

The conditions prevalent at this group of three working camps are, on the whole, very satisfactory.

I have the honour to be,

Monsieur le Ministre,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

Special Attache.

His Excellency,

Monsieur Gaston Carlin,
Swiss Minister,

London.

Appendix C – Royal Defence Corps photo

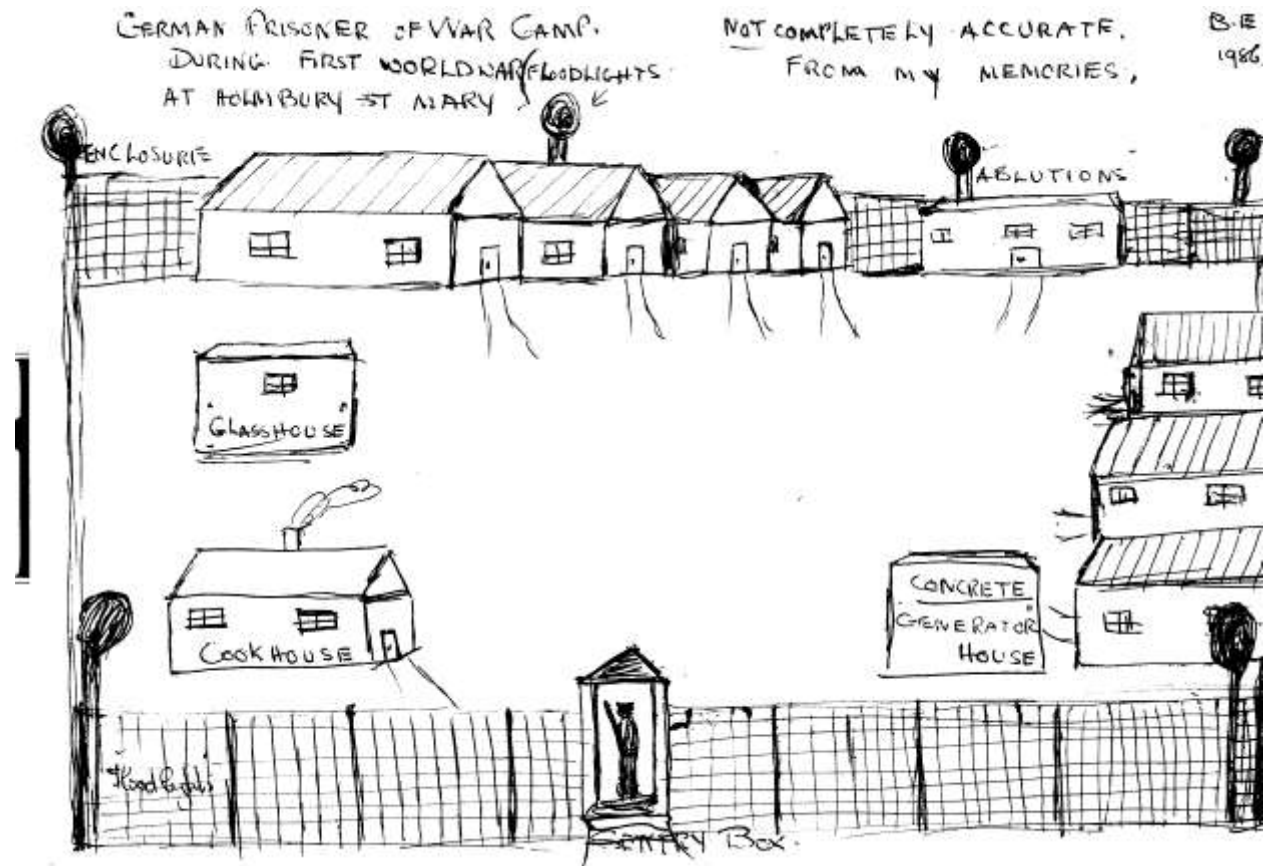


This photo is of the 60th Royal Defence Corps., outside the rear of the Royal Oak in Holmbury St Mary, who were responsible for preparing the camp. In the middle row, 4th from the right, is Regimental Sergeant Major Cushing. The wife of his grandson, Mrs Cushing, tells us that RSM Cushing was presented with a walking stick by NCO's, men and friends at the prisoner of war camp at Christmas 1917. She has kindly provided us with a photo of the inscription on the head of the cane as below.



Appendix D – Beattie Ede other reminiscences and Parish magazine extracts

Beattie Ede testimony taken by Pat Nicolaysen 1986



The arrival of the German prisoners during the First World War

This statement was taken by Pat Nicholaysen from Beattie Ede circa 1986

“One dark night during the year **1916 (?)**, myself, who was 6 years old, and my sister Elsie who was 2 years, woke up to hear the tramp of marching feet. This was the arrival of the German prisoners of war, who would spend about 2 years in Holmbury, at the camp on the hill. We heard them silently climb the hill. Later on there were steps from top to bottom, this was one of their first tasks.

Their main job of work was to fell the fir trees for timber. A saw mill was worked at the top of the Glade (on the bonfire site) and another beyond the old village school. A source of delight for us children was playing in the huge mounds of sawdust, after the prisoners had returned to camp. To us they were quiet and inoffensive, and were clever “woodworkers”. A small piece of wood would become an opening fan. They were dressed in grey uniforms, which included the

small, round, soft fatigue cap. They slept on straw paliasses. This straw, when finished with, was bought to my Father's stables, at the foot of the hill and used as bedding for the horses. My sister and I would stand and watch them, but we were not allowed to speak to them.

After about 2 years they went as silently as they had arrived. I never heard of any escaping. I know their food was exceptionally good, and I never heard of anyone returning to see their old camp. Primrose Cottage, bought after the war ceased, is one of the original huts. The resinous smell of newly cut fir will remain with me always.

Mrs Nicolaysen, of Surrey Archaeological Society, has persuaded me to get these memories written down. Archie King and my brother Bert Keeble, so recently gone, has made me more responsive to her request.

"The only time I really saw the camp was when a balloon came down and landed on the Cookhouse. Nothing and no one would have stopped the local, very excited, children from ascending that hill, in double quick time."

Beattie Ede, 1986

Beattie Ede's memories from Rosemary Bullen's archives

"I was 4 years old when the War started and before it ended we had a German Prisoner of War camp on the common. Their main work was to cut the pine trees which were pulled by huge shire horses. They stayed for 2 years."

Extracts from Holmbury St Mary Parish News

September 1917

Soldiers' smoking concert (August 15th 1917)

"The concert was made the occasion for a farewell to the soldiers who for the past few weeks have been preparing the Camp for German prisoners. Unfortunately a certain proportion of those who would have been present were on duty at the time, and could not come."

From this we can deduce the camp was not opened until late 1917, confirmed by the Swiss Federal Archive report which confirms the opening as 24th August 1917.

November 27th 1917

Working Men's Club whist drive.

"The guard from the camp was well represented"

September 1984**Bubble – Archie King, written by Connie Bird**

Bubble's father was a great winemaker, a speciality being white elderberry. The tree he planted still grows in the garden. Potato and wheat was another favourite. Birch trees were sometimes tapped and the sap fermented – potent to say the least. When the apples were abundant they would load them into Bert Keeble's father's trap and trundle them down to a farmer in Forest Green, who would press them. The pressed juice was bought back to Holmbury and turned into cider.

His father was the Bandmaster of "Holmbury 0.9" the village brass band. They would play at village functions on the green or at The King's Head, and their practice room was Ivy Cottage woodshed. His father would walk to Ranmore, cutting trees, and then back again – a thirsty business- and when the soldiers were billeted here during the First World War the public houses would run out of beer. He would take his cornet (he could play any instrument) and play at the prisoner of war camp where they would reward him with beer. Incidentally Bubble remembers clearly the guard room being dragged down from the Camp on toboggans to its present site where it became what is now known as Primrose Cottage, next to Lavender Cottage.

Bubble's mother came from Peaslake. Her maiden name was Plaw and you probably know or have heard of Plaw's Hill.

As a small boy he was always out for a lark! Lady Bowman would ride down to Church from Joldwyns on a tricycle which she had named "Phyllis". She would park it at the lych-gate, telling "Phyllis" to "stop there". Somehow "Phyllis" always strayed across the road and landed in the ditch! When Lady Bowman returned certain small boys would always be there to help get "Phyllis" out of the ditch and receive a penny for doing so!

A happy memory is riding behind Tim Fuller when he took the timber wagons from the stables by the school down to the station – he was only 9 years old. The timber was fetched down from Holmbury Hill by the prisoners of war, who used a little railway. There was another sawmill at the top of the Glade (opposite Lane End) as well as the one by the school. The timber was mainly used for pit props and shoring up the trenches.

Another memory was of a German prisoner of war who came down to the fence at the back of the school and gave Bubble 2 shillings, asking him to get a loaf of bread. Bubble pocketed the 2 shillings but did not fetch the loaf of bread! Later an Army officer came down to enquire about it and, much to Bubble's delight, gave him another 2 shillings not to do it again.

Appendix E – Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser

Holmbury St Mary prisoner of war camp in the Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser

February 3rd 1917 – Dorking Rural District War Agricultural sub-Committee

The question of employing German prisoners was also considered by the Committee. A letter was read from the County Committee stating that not less than 75 prisoners would be sent to any locality. They must be housed in one place, together with a guard of 35, and employed within a radius of 3 miles for not less than two months at the rate of wages current in the district. Under these conditions the Committee came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to utilise the services of German prisoners in the Dorking district at present.

September 1st 1917 – Holmbury St Mary

About 150 German prisoners are now employed in this neighbourhood in tree felling. They are encamped in a very secluded spot behind Felday Chapel; the public are rigidly excluded from the neighbourhood, and every precaution has been taken regarding the possibility of escape.

February 16th 1918 – Agricultural News

German prisoners

In most progressive farming districts the proposal to provide German prisoner ploughmen from convenient depots in the counties has been welcomed by agriculturalists. There is no real ground for any fear as to the safeguarding of the prisoners employed in agriculture in this country; and it is in this connection it is interesting to note that Mr Colin Campbell told the Kesteven Committee this week that during his recent visit to France he saw small units of German prisoners working on the farms without any guard whatsoever.

May 4th 1918 – Holmbury St Mary

Prisoners of war. We would point out to our readers that under the Defence of the Realm Act it is an offence to speak to, hold any communication with, or make gifts of any kind to, prisoners of war in this country. We draw attention to this by way of caution to the public not because offences of this kind have been reported in this district, but to endeavour to avoid anything happening which might lead to inconvenience or annoyance.

May 10th 1919 – Details of the Versailles Treaty (signed 28th June 1919)

A Commission of Germans and Allies will carry out without delay the repatriation of German prisoners and civilian internees at Germany's expense. Until the German criminals are surrendered we can retain selected German officer prisoners. We can use our discretion as to Germans who do not wish to go back.

September 20th 1919 – Prisoner of war camp

Recognised as one of the most successful of the prisoners of war camps, and followed as a model for many others, that at Holmbury St Mary which has been carried on under the Timber Supplies Department of the Board of Trade, and has supplied large quantities of timber of great value to the country, was dispersed under the hammer of Messrs Crowe, auctioneers, Dorking on Wednesday September 10th, a very satisfactory result being obtained. There were 32 huts, 24ft x 15ft, which realised from £30 to £37 10s; non-sectional huts of larger size fetched about the same figures, and smaller ones in proportion, but some were under the jurisdiction of the Disposals Board, and on several of these an unobtainable reserve had been placed; the auctioneers expect, however, to receive instructions enabling them to deal with these at reasonable figures privately. The sale was greatly assisted by the fact that Government haulage was available, and portable coppers, hut stoves and similar small items made full value. The electric light plant was sold as a whole for £230. The 100 lots of sawn timber made from £3 5s to £11 10s per lot, attracting many timber merchants and builders beside private buyers.

To conclude

As we found during our searches very little documentation of First World War prisoner camps exists. Probably, as mentioned, due to the Defence of the Realm act discouraging knowledge of such sites. Prisoners seem to have been taken in the latter stages of the war, after the carnage in the trenches, and the government of the day was wary of public feeling against Germany, and concerned over possible retaliation.

Despite this the prisoners were reported as being kept in humane conditions and treated fairly in terms of welfare and remuneration.

There is also very little recording of sites. This may be due to the temporary nature as many were under canvas, leaving very little trace. The Felday site is recorded as “Recognised as one of the most successful of the prisoners of war camps, and followed as a model for many others.” , and we are pleased to have been able to have found a vestige of its existence to record for future researchers.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the Hurtwood Control Committee for allowing the survey to take place. Amongst those completing the survey Keith Winser and Ken Waters have been invaluable in sourcing local information from the village of Holmbury St Mary, Malcom Covey and Ned Potter for providing a folder of photos and anecdotal evidence, and Tony Harcombe for sharing his knowledge of generators. Thanks also for flint illustrations by Chris Taylor and photographs by David Williams.

Thanks to the indefatigable enthusiasm of our surveyors Keith Winser and Ken Waters, Jan Blatchford, Judie English, Mike Edwards, Rose Hooker, Pauline Hulse, Nicky Humphrey, John Jennings and Seb Fry.

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Dave Field, Authors, Participants on request.