



<p>Project: Pennylands Camp 22 - WW2 POW Camp. Respondent: Helen Blythe. Year of Birth: 1935. Age: 81. Connection to the project: Her father had a farm near Dumfries House Estate. Date of Interview: 6th June 2017. Interviewer: Anne Griffiths. Recording Agreement: Yes. Information & Content: Yes. Photographic Images: Yes (Number: 2). Length of Interview: 11:36. Location of Interview: Ayr, Ayrshire. Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro.</p>	
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Time (from: mins/secs)	Time Coded Full Transcript	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0.00	Introduction, welcome and information about respondent.	0:00-0:37
	Q1. What is your connection to Pennylands Camp?	
	A1. I grew up on a farm between Ochiltree and Cumnock and my father, during and towards the end of the war had prisoners of war come to work, to help with certain parts of the harvest and I know that we had Italian prisoners of war come from Pennylands but I cannot confirm what the date actually was.	0:41-1:08
	Q2. What was the name of the farm?	
	A2. The name of the farm was Cooperhill, Cooperhill Cumnock.	1:09-1:15
	Q3. What were your parents' names?	
	A3. My father was Hugh Sloan and his wife was May, originally May Brown of Ochiltree Mains, the farm next door.	1:16-1:26
	Q4. What kind of farm was it?	
	A4. It was a dairy farm in fact but we grew crops, obviously and I can remember there being potatoes and turnips because we fed the cows swedes and we also grew some crops but the biggest crop was grass. Ayrshire farms grow grass.	1:28-1:52
	Q5. How did you communicate with the Italian POWs?	

	<p>A5. Well to be honest I don't quite remember. I do know that the Italian prisoners were brought in a vehicle and each group of prisoners left at the farm were guarded by a guard with a gun, which we all felt... and I was not allowed to go out and about when they were around. What I do remember was that one shocking incident when one of the prisoners came up to my mother in the yard and threw a plate of food down on the ground and said that they did not eat pig-food and that dinner was the same dinner that we were having in the kitchen. The main meal was cooked at mid-day on the farms then because we were up early and had breakfast early so the main meal was at lunchtime and it would probably be something like soup and then tatties and meat and vegetables and it was served, the soup came then the meat and vegetables probably onto the same plate but it was exactly the same as we served to the prisoners of war that were working</p>	1:59-3:20
	<p>Q6. Did they come on a daily basis?</p>	
	<p>A6. Yes, on a daily basis and then went back to camp every night.</p>	3:22-3:27
	<p>Q7. Did you have any Germans?</p>	
	<p>A7. Yes, the Italians didn't come for a long period as I recall and they were followed by German prisoners of war, now I don't remember much about the group of Germans but as we neared the end of the war the German prisoners were obviously chosen and we had an older Austrian and a young German who came and lived on the farm. Now that must have been through the spring planting in 1945. I remember them very well because... I still can't recall the name of the older one but he carved wood and made these pecking chickens on a round bat. He had obviously worked with wood in Austria and he made toys and jointed them with bits of rubber that he found around the farm and they went to the village children and what not. He was very friendly. Rudi, the young man very superior, I don't think he was an officer or anything but he was very German and kept himself apart, but they lived in what we called the bothy. Now this was a room which had a fire in it and two bunk beds and I've never forgotten that they decorated it and they used the left-over paint from the farm gates and fences. So, there was a really strong dark green and a silver paint and they had a double line around the top of the wall and they stippled the walls with green and silver with a sponge. And after or just at the end of the war they must have gone because the Ayrshire farms were asked to have Australian servicemen waiting for troopships home and I do recall my mother had said yes and we had two Australians and they must have come. They came actually in July and August and September 1945 so the Germans had actually gone by</p>	3:30-6:16

	then. My mother had said, yes, we can have two but they'll need to sleep in the bothy. When they arrived, young officers looking very smart and only 21 she thought, "Can't put them in that awful bothy" and they slept in the house.	
	Q8. The Italians came on a daily basis?	
	A8. Yes, and the Germans to begin with and certain prisoners were obviously selected and came to live and they were permanently and I do not know how long. It was probably months because as I say I remember him carving these toys. I came and went in the Bothy and they talked to me, he was like a grandfather figure.	6:22-6:50
	Q9. They had freedom to roam?	
	A9. They obviously had but don't think they had freedom to go off the farm but they were not guarded in any way while they were with us like the original groups were.	6:53-7:05
	Q10. Did the authorities decide they should come to the farm?	
	A10. Yes, I think obviously, the farm had no help, we had had Land Army girls who came from the village in Ochiltree and came to the farm every day and I think maybe they had been withdrawn and were replaced by, because we had no workers, we had no staff at all so there was only my mother and father trying to run a farm which was 230 acres.	7:09-7:43
	Q11. Would the prisoners be recompensed?	
	A11. That I just do not know. I don't believe that my father had to contribute anything to the authorities and I think it was probably organised from the local agricultural system because the farm was required to produce a certain amount of crops because my father wasn't called up because he had to produce. I know the farm next door which was my grandfather's farm, and my grandfather died during the war, and his elder son was brought back from service to run the farm to produce the required crops.	7:51-8:33
	Q12. Would your parents be recompensed financially?	
	A12. I don't think so.	8:37-8:42
	Q13. They were supplying meals and things for them?	
	A13. Yes, but it was a middle of the day meal that was all. As far as I understand that was it, that was given by the farmer in recompense for the labour.	8:46-8:58

	Q14. How long were they at the farm?	
	A14. Unfortunately, I just do not know.	9:00-9:03
	Q15. Did you keep in contact with any of the POWs after the war?	
	A15. In our case no. I know that in some cases that did happen but in our case, it didn't.	9:11-19:20
	Q16. Do you have any photographs of the period?	
	A16. Not that I remember at all. A lot of things had happened during the war because in fact there were British army service personnel were billeted on the farm prior to them going to North Africa and I recall as a child lining the road because the King came to inspect the troops on Dumfries House Estate opposite the end of our farm road. It was a flat field and they were inspected by the King on that field and my mother always wondered where they were going and of course later it became obvious that this was in preparation for them going to serve in North Africa and sadly although the friendships had developed there she was never able to find out whether they came back or not and she believed that the two officers who had lived in the house not in the tents in the stackyard didn't come back.	9:24-10:31
	Q17. There is a photo of the King and we aren't sure where that was taken.	
	A17. Well that taken in the flat field opposite Cooperhill road-end. Well my mother was aware of that.	10:40-10:45
	Q18. Is there anything else?	
	A18. The only other thing and I don't know the details but a plane did land on Cooperhill and obviously, it was full of fuel and within 48 hours there wasn't a drop of petrol left in that plane! All these milk churns and old buckets and everything from all the farms around that were there syphoning it out!	10:50-11:27
	Closing statement and end of interview.	11:36
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