



<p>Project: Pennylands Camp 22 - WW2 POW Camp.          Respondent: David Gibson.          Year of Birth: 1934.          Age: 83.          Connection to project: There at the beginning and end.          Date of Interview: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017.          Interviewer: Roberta McGee.          Recording Agreement: Yes.          Information &amp; Content: Yes.          Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 2).          Length of Interview: 10:15.          Location of Interview: Auchinleck, Ayrshire.          Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro.</p>		
Time (from: mins/secs)	Time Coded Full Transcript	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0:00	<b>Introduction, welcome and information about respondent.</b>	0:00-0:29
	<b>Q1. What is your connection to Pennylands Camp?</b>	
	A1. Well I was here at the beginning and I was here at the end more or less. When the camp was being built it was built with labourers from Glasgow who were too old to join the forces and we actually had two of these joiners as lodgers so they were at the very beginning building the camp which must have been about 1940 and I continued visiting the camp until the prisoners came then I demolished a couple of the huts which I bought from Ayr County Council for £5 each to build a garage of the asbestos that was on them. Now the huts themselves I believe came from Canada. They were prefabricated from Canada and shipped across here just the same as what Ballochmyle Hospital was. It was the same construction. As I say, at that time most of the camp was empty. It was 1957 because in 1957 was the Suez crisis when you were allowed to drive a lorry or a car with L plates up and nobody beside you so I had borrowed the lorry so I know definitely it was 1957 and borrowed the lorry to carry the slabs and the asbestos over the weekend that we demolished the two huts. The rest of the huts as far as I can gather were Nissen huts made of corrugated iron and they just disappeared, I don't know if the local scrapmen would get them or not but they just disappeared from sight.	0:30-2:07
	<b>Q2. How long did they take to demolish?</b>	
	A2. Just the weekend. We saved the asbestos off the roof and by that time there was very little cladding left on the sides of the buildings because the buildings were made out of, if I can	2:09-2:50

	remember correctly, about 5x2 timbers covered with boards and then covered with chicken wire and some plaster. A cheap way of building them and because everybody in the camp at the time, the people that had come to live in the camp, they were actually burning any timber they could get, to keep warm I suppose. The only heating in the hut was a couple of pot-bellied stoves.	
	<b>Q3. Did you ever find anything belonging to the previous residents?</b>	
	A3. Possibly we did but it never registered. It's a thing I wasn't really interested in just interested in getting the asbestos and getting the lorry home.	2:54-3:06
	<b>Q4. Who authorised the demolition?</b>	
	A4. You could actually buy the huts from Ayr County Council. Ayr County Council had actually taken it over it seems as because they were actually charging rent for some of the Nissen huts. I think it was about 50p a week at that time. They were charging the rent. There were no houses being built at the time or getting built but any newly married that were looking for or staying in rooms I suppose, they could just move into the camp. It became quite popular. There were people from all over Ayrshire were actually staying here.	3:07-3:46
	<b>Q5. Can you tell me about the Temple?</b>	
	A5. The Temple was built as gatehouses actually for the road which was supposed to come from the main big house, Dumfries House, up and onto the Barony Road but after they had completed building the Temple the owner of the ground, the Boswells, they wouldn't sell them the piece of ground to make the road from the Temple up to the Barony Road so it was used, just, they did actually make a road along the side of the wood which they used instead to connect up to what was called The Avenue or the Moss Road which is the main road into the camp at the moment. So, they used that instead but there was quite a fall out because of that.	3:48-4:38
	<b>Q6. Was there any houses attached to the Temple?</b>	
	A6. There were two gatehouses, people stayed there. One of the people in it was a Mr Hamilton he was the, he drove the horse and cart for the estate and I knew his son Wullie, he used to work at the Highhouse Pit and his son Bert, I used to run about with Bert. That was the one side, I don't know who was on the other side of the Temple but there were two families.	4:40-5:08
	<b>Q7. When Pennylands was built, what state was the Temple in?</b>	

	A7. Oh, I don't know that, never paid much attention to that. I was young enough then that it just didn't entertain me. Maybe the Grey Lady could tell you!	5:15-5:26
	<b>Q8. Tell me the story about the Grey Lady</b>	
	A8. The Grey Lady that was a thing from the 1950s it was in the Daily Express and the Evening Times about the Grey Lady, a ghost was supposed to be there and people had seen it and whatnot in the early 50s and she was supposed to be resident at the Temple. So, I would expect in the 50s it would be a ruin then.	5:28-5:55
	<b>Q9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about Pennylands Camp?</b>	
	A9. Where do you start? Pennylands Camp was a transit camp originally. They brought the regiments in gave them a bit of training. There was a firing range down at the bottom and they used to take them up onto Airds Moss in fact there were a couple of boys from Auchinleck were actually killed by a hand grenade they'd found up on Airds Moss. I can actually relate back to it. I was only about 200 yards off it when they pulled the pin. Two of them got killed actually. We used to come about Pennylands Camp when we were more or less children, my brother was 12 and I would be 8 at the time we were coming about Pennylands Camp. (summer 1942, the Kavanagh brothers) Nobody ever bothered you, really. We used to go, mainly we were looking for birds' eggs but on one occasion coming up the side of the river we were there when the Frenchmen were there at the time, they blew up a tree with a landmine, demonstrating this to the soldiers and we were there at the time it happened. On another occasion, they actually threw a hand-grenade in to kill the fish, we saw it happen. They didn't get many fish but they did try it anyway! As far as the firing range goes I believe it's still there but covered over now. On the firing range, you could pick up empty shell cases when they were finished because it's outwith the camp boundaries. You could pick up the shell cases and exchange them at school for something or other, a sort of barter system!	5:59-7:47
	<b>Q10. Did you speak to any of the soldiers?</b>	
	A10. Not really, you were just accepted down there really. On one occasion, they built a Breeches Buoy across the river, more like a stretcher, with ropes and they pulled it across the river and we took turns going across the river on this stretcher and that's the type of things that happened.	7:50-8:25
	<b>Q11. Did you ever get chased by the gamekeeper?</b>	
	A11. No, we stayed out his road. Mr Christison wasn't bad really. The other gamekeeper Mr Graham he was different, you had to	8:26-9:57

	<p>keep out his way but Mr Christison was alright. He stayed in the gamekeeper's cottage as you came into the camp from the Barony Road, that's the wee cottage on the left-hand side, he stayed in there. As you go down through that road on the left-hand side where the engineering thing is now (The Tamar Manoukian Outdoor Residential Centre) there was a hospital and a church there plus there was numerous Nissen huts. On the other side of the road where the agricultural place is going to be (Valentin's Education Farm) there was a parade ground and all the officer's accommodation up there, they had the better type huts, the ones that I pulled down was the type they used. They were much warmer in the winter than the Nissen huts. At the very bottom of that road just where the cattle pens are at the moment that was where they repaired the lorries and such like. If you bear left up and go up the road, the back route to Auchinleck church that's where the tanks were kept. There were tanks up there and that's where they were repaired. Mainly it was workshops at the bottom of the road where the cattle pens are at the moment mainly workshops there.</p>	
	<p><b>Closing statement and end of interview.</b></p>	<p>10:15</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div data-bbox="204 1055 502 1115">  <p>Supported by <b>The National Lottery</b><sup>®</sup> through the Heritage Lottery Fund</p> </div> <div data-bbox="539 1055 794 1115"> <p>Le taic bhon <b>Chrannchur Nàiseanta</b> tro Mhaoin-Dualchais a' Chrannchuir</p> </div> </div>		