


Project: Pennylands Camp 22 - WW2 POW Camp Respondent: Ian McConnell. Year of Birth: 1943. Age: 73. Connection to project: Lived in Pennylands Camp. Date of Interview: 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2017. Interviewer: Roberta McGee. Recording Agreement: Yes. Information & Content: Yes. Photographic Images: Yes (Number of: 1). Length of Interview: 32:18. Location of Interview: Tarbolton, Ayrshire. Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro.		
Time (from: mins/secs)	Time Coded Summary/Transcript	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
0:00	<b>Introduction, welcome and information about respondent.</b>	0:00-0:31
	<b>Q1. What is your connection to Pennylands Camp?</b>	
	A1. I lived there from when I was 5 until I was 10.	0:32-0:38
	<b>Q2. When you arrived, there was the camp still called Camp 22?</b>	
	A2. No, it was Pennylands Camp.	0:43-0:45
	<b>Q3. Where did you come from?</b>	
	A3. I came from Invergordon.	0:47-0:49
	<b>Q4. Where were your parents born?</b>	
	A4. My dad was born in Auchinleck and my mum was born in Invergordon and they met because my dad went up there to work and then when the work run out they came back down and we were housed in Pennylands until we got a house in Auchinleck.	0:52-1:07
	<b>Q5. Where were you born?</b>	
	A5. Invergordon.	1:09-1:10
	<b>Q5. How did your family find out about the housing at Pennylands?</b>	

	A6. Well my dad's mother lived in Auchinleck and she must have done it for her son.	1:15-1:24
	<b>Q7. How did you feel the first day you arrived at the Camp and saw your house?</b>	
	A7. I didn't think nothing, I was just a wee nipper.	1:29-1:35
	<b>Q8. How long did your parents expect to stay there?</b>	
	A8. Oh, I couldn't tell you. Just until they got allocated a council house in Auchinleck or Netherthird where a lot of the folk were going to.	1:38-1:48
	<b>Q9. Do you remember who your parents paid the rent to?</b>	
	A9. I think a rent-man came around.	1:51-1:54
	<b>Q10. From the Council?</b>	
	A10. I think so. Yes, I'm quite sure. I could be wrong.	1:56-2:00
	<b>Q11. What was your father's job in Auchinleck?</b>	
	A11. He was a fitter and he drove bulldozers and that in between doing jobs as a fitter.	2:06-2:20
	<b>Q12. How many brother and sisters did you have?</b>	
	A12. In Pennylands Camp it was only my older brother and my younger brother the rest were born outside Pennylands Camp, so there was only the three of us.	2:24-2:34
	<b>Q13. When you arrived how many families lived there?</b>	
	A13. Oh, a lot. It was a busy place at the time. I couldn't hazard a guess at how many but there was a lot of huts and they were all occupied.	2:38-2:48
	<b>Q14. What was the main employment for the men in the Camp?</b>	
	A14. Coal miners.	2:53-2:54
	<b>Q15. At what pits?</b>	
	A15. It was the Highouse or the Barony.	2:57-3:00
	<b>Q16. Were any of the women in employment or did they stay at home?</b>	

	A16. I don't remember any of them working.	3.:04-3.07
	<b>Q17. How many huts did you live in when you stayed there?</b>	
	A17. Three.	3:11-3:12
	<b>Q18. Do you remember the numbers?</b>	
	A18. I think the last one was 157, but I don't remember. There was one at the top, one in the middle and the one in the middle where we stayed was right next to the road and they were taking a tree down and when they took the tree down the branch fell through the roof of the hut. They had to move us out of it, fortunately there was one empty and moved us into it and that was our last one, and that was a bonus because the running water tap was just outside it. We didn't have running water or nothing and we could just go out the door and get the water and take it in a pail.	3:16-3:57
	<b>Q19. So, there was no running water?</b>	
	A19. No running water, no electricity and I remember the old radios was a big square battery and, what was the name of the thing? The accumulator! It got plugged into it and we used to, my mum and dad used to send us up to, it was Tommy Tanner's shop in Auchinleck. It was down where the Eagle Inn was, down below that and you got it charged up and we were threatened within an inch of our life not to drop it because it was made of glass - ha ha - and you needed to get that charged up so you could get a wireless.	3:59-4:38
	<b>Q20. What was the sanitation like?</b>	
	A20. None, not where we stayed anyway. It was a pail	4:43-4:46
	<b>Q21. Where did your mum do her laundry, her washing?</b>	
	A21. She must have took water and did it in a basin or something and don't ask me how I got a bath or a shower because I can't tell you that either! I don't know that. We were running about stinking, ha ha ha, because there was nothing like that!	4:52-5:07
	<b>Q22. Did she have a drying green to hang her clothes out to dry?</b>	
	A22. No, there were just spaces and my dad used to hammer poles in, that's what everyone did, they were just spaces.	5:12-5:24

	<b>Q23. Did you grow your own vegetables?</b>	
	A23. No.	5:27-5:28
	<b>Q24. Where did you get your vegetables and food from?</b>	
	A24. I think the vans came down.	5:32-5:34
	<b>Q25. Do you remember what vans they were?</b>	
	A25. No, I couldn't tell you that but the vans came down and we used to walk up. There were 2 roads into Pennylands, one came in from the Runnels side and one went up and took you out at the Barony Church in Auchinleck and we used to go up that way and when you got there we were quite close to the shops that way. So, we used to go up with my mum and help her to carry the messages back down the road into the camp.	5:39-6:08
	<b>Q26. Did the Estate ever supply the residents in the camp with food?</b>	
	A26. I couldn't tell you that, no.	6:14-6:17
	<b>Q27. How long did you occupy the first hut?</b>	
	A27. Oh, I don't know, I was only a nipper then. I just couldn't tell you that.	6:21-6:27
	<b>Q28. You moved into the second hut because the first one was destroyed?</b>	
	A28. No, we moved out the first one because it was falling to bits. The camp was really starting to fall to bits then, we moved from that because it was a better hut. I don't know how you got permission to do that but you must have got permission from somebody and that's when we moved into the second one. It was the second one that the branch fell through because it was only an asbestos roof. I mean you could have done that (mimics a kick) and kicked your foot through the wall of the hut because it was only, you know, that chalky stuff you get. That's what they were made of. Just with felt on them you see. We never... some of them lived in brick huts. We didn't. It wasn't a brick hut we stayed in. It was Gyproc I think they call it with asbestos roofs and in the winter, they moved about. I don't know how we survived because there was no heating, no nothing. We must have been hardy wee bits of stuff to put up with the cold.	6:32-7:35
	<b>Q29. What was the way out of the hut? Did you have a hut to yourself?</b>	

	<p>A29. No, no some of them were long and there was one at one side, two, and you went in the gable ends of them. The last one we were in there were two in that, that's the only one we stayed in with two. When you went in the door it was just a big square thing and you made up your mind, well my parents made up their mind what would be used as a living room or a sitting room and then the bedrooms. It was only huts with different compartments in them. You couldn't turn around and say, 'that's a bedroom' because all the places looked the same. I can remember that. As far as accommodation that's all I really remember. But the folk that stayed in the brick ones, they were far more comfortable than us because There were draughts and everything in ours especially when it was windy – they shook.</p>	7:38-8:41
	<p><b>Q30. How were they heated?</b></p>	
	<p>A30. See they wee round stoves you see? You still see them, that's what we had and some of them had, what do you call the big thing? An oven built onto it, there's a name for it but I forget – a big stove with an oven but it was only worked with the fire. The fire was built next to it and that's how it heated. It's a wee bit beyond me, I can't remember exactly. I remember some of them had that. The one we were in it was just a wee round stove and my mum used to put the tatties on top of it and don't ask me how she made anything else because I don't know. She must have done it but I don't know how she done it .</p>	8:44-9:36
	<p><b>Q31. How did she like the hut?</b></p>	
	<p>A31. My mum hated it, absolutely hated it. She couldn't get out it quick enough. I remember It was just starting to break up the place. It was, see, before we left when somebody moved out the huts were getting demolished right? And when they knocked the huts down we used to go down to see all the wood that was lying. It came out the frames of them all. We used to take it up the road or where we were and it was used for firewood. See when you see all this nowadays, asbestos does this asbestos does that, I don't know, when we were in the camp we used to run about with the broken asbestos and make wee sheds to sit in, all this asbestos and it never did us any harm. And nowadays they won't touch it hardly. Every roof on the place was asbestos.</p>	9:41-10:36
	<p><b>Q32. How did you light the place up? What type of lamps did you use?</b></p>	
	<p>A32. A paraffin lamp. Paraffin lamps.</p>	10:40-10:42
	<p><b>Q33. Did the paraffin get delivered to you?</b></p>	

	A33. No, we had to go and get paraffin at the same shop we got the accumulator charged. Tommy Tanner's and bring the paraffin down.	10:45-10:55
	<b>Q34. When you moved to the third hut, what kind of hut was that?</b>	
	A34. It was a longer one and it had an extra room in it but it wasn't better the only advantage was you didn't have to carry the water as far because it was outside.	11:02-11:20
	<b>Q35. Did they ever improve the sanitation?</b>	
	A35. No, no, no. That was it. When you see round about, you'll see it in Cumnock, the Council comes around and doing repairs that didn't happen. They were just left to fall down about you. There was nothing ever done.	11:24-11:42
	<b>Q36. What happened to household rubbish, was that uplifted?</b>	
	A36. Now that's one thing I don't know. I really don't know. Before we left the vermin was something horrible in it. There was a fella, Joe Smith who just stayed up from us and at that time guns were legal, folk used to go shooting and he got a gun and used to shoot rats nearly every day. It was infested with rats. Obviously, the rubbish had been getting flung out and that was causing it, but there was no sanitation, no nothing.	11:47-12:25
	<b>Q37. Can you describe the general layout of the Camp, how many shops were there?</b>	
	A37. Only one I can remember. That's the only shop I ever remember, that was Muir Nisbet that had that. He came and stayed next to us in Auchinleck and then he moved to Australia, when the deal came out when you could go to Australia to stay and do something for 2 year, well he moved out with his family there. That's the only shop I ever remember.	12:29-12:53
	<b>Q38. What kind of shop was it?</b>	
	A38. It was just like a wee grocer. He worked in it when he wasn't working in the pit and when he was at the pit his wife worked in it. That's the only shop. I always remember the Gamekeeper we used to, well you weren't supposed to go down where you can go down now to Dumfries House. That was all private land, boys being boys, we used to go way down the bottom of the camp out and into the estate we called it and across the river Lugar and down next to Dumfries House we used to play in the woods down there. When the Gamekeeper used to come, he used to chase us. We called him old Christie. Some of the boys were feared of him. We always went. I don't know if that caused a lot of bother or not. Where he stayed at	12:56-14:27

	<p>the top of the camp, as far as I'm led to believe that house is still there, there's a wood out the back of his house, right? And there was a big tree in the middle of it and see when he shot any things the like of rats or anything he nailed them to this tree and the smell would have knocked you down. We used to go out and if he seen us in there he used to chase us too. We just did it for devilment so we would get a chase from him.</p>	
	<p><b>Q39. Was rationing still about at that time?</b></p>	
	<p>A39. The ration book was still there because, wait till I think and get this right, where Liddell's Garage is just now in Auchinleck and Josephine's the café was just across the road from it, I remember my mum sending us up to the Cooperative there with the ration book. I remember that. It was still on the go. That was still on the go when we moved into Auchinleck if I remember right.</p>	14:31-15:0
	<p><b>Q40. Was there any evidence to show it had been a POW camp, when you were playing?</b></p>	
	<p>A40. No, I don't know how ... when I heard the stories that in those (water) tanks they found guns, but they had that much rubbish in them then, maybe they were getting cleaned out and they were in amongst the rubbish we never seen. There was a lot of Poles when we were there and they couldn't have been any nicer, the Poles. They were quite nice.</p>	15:06-15:38
	<p><b>Q41. Where the huts used for anything else other than housing?</b></p>	
	<p>Q41. No. Just that one for the shop that I remember.</p>	15:42-15:47
	<p><b>Q42. What were the state of the roads and pavement in the camp?</b></p>	
	<p>A42. There were no pavements and just a rough road. Another thing I remember and when we're talking about roads, when I said, there was a bottom road going out it takes you out the back of the Barony Church. When you walked up that road so far there was a cutting – there was a gate going out the camp. The gates weren't there but where the posts were still there. You went out there. You walked up a wee bit and you went in and there was this great big wide concrete place and it went for I would say maybe half a mile or something and then it narrowed down so maybe a car could just drive through and then it opened up again and it came up till it came to the wood and then it shut down again and we never ever could work out what this was. Did anybody mention that? it was a big concrete place on the right-hand side heading for Auchinleck because we used to play football and everything on it because it was smooth.</p>	16:49-16:51

	<b>Q43. When it rained, and snowed what was the conditions in the camp like?</b>	
	A43. It was horrendous, terrible so they were.	16:56-17:01
	<b>Q44. Do you remember any of the names of the families who also lived there?</b>	
	A44. Aye, I ran about with a boy called Alex Parker, Mr and Mrs Parker. They moved to Auchinleck to School Road. The Murdochs they stayed up the top. Joe Smith, Jim Stirling, Walter Krone. Do you know the Wards from Cumnock? Bobby Ward, he's got a son. His dad worked with my dad and they stayed at the back of us in the first house we were in. I think it's the same Bobby Ward, he's ages with me. I knew Tom Callaghan, I used to run about with him, we were always playing together. Sam Paul. It's that long you forget the names and there was that many of them.	17:07-18:07
	<b>Q45. Was there a place or building where the residents gathered to socialise?</b>	
	A45. Not that I remember.	18:10-18:13
	<b>Q46. Did you have a football team?</b>	
	A46. No, no,	18:17-18:20
	<b>Q47. So, what games did you play?</b>	
	A47. We just played at football. All the boys gathered together maybe 15 on one team and 10 in another team. Never even pick the teams we just played at football and rounders and hide and seek, games you don't see folk playing now. And we used to go up into the (water) tanks and play for ages. What we did do a lot was down at the bottom of the camp, heading into the estate there was a great big huge chestnut tree and we used to climb this and get chestnuts and pass the time playing chestnuts. You don't see that nowadays either. That's what we passed our time doing.	18:21-19:03
	<b>Q48. Describe your game in the water tank.</b>	
	A48. We played with a ball and used to header it to each other, keepy-upy. On the ledge, not in the tank. The tank was still above us, it was a ledge and near the height of a ceiling. You went up a ladder, it was a great big high thing. That's where we used to play the likes of that. I've seen us all sitting down and telling silly stories. There was a crowd of us in it, not just 2 or 3, a lot. All children from the camp nobody ever came down to the	19:07-20:13




	camp to play with us, not that I remember. You had the notion that because you stayed there you were kind of looked down upon especially when you got to the age before we left. Maybe at first it wasn't like that but when you got a bit older you could see the rest of the folk and you felt that you were getting looked down on.	
	<b>Q49. What did they call you?</b>	
	A49. The Wee Campies	20:16-20:18
	<b>Q50. Tell me how people celebrated New Year at the Camp?</b>	
	A50. Well, I suppose they brought the New Year in but we were sent to bed. My dad, Joe Smith and Jim Stirling they stayed just across from us but don't remember anyone else coming in with their wives.	20:31-21:00
	<b>Q51. On the news of the death of King George VI in 1952. What was the reaction in the camp?</b>	
	A51. I don't really remember. We were too young to think about that and we didn't have any television or anything like that. We had wirelasses but that didn't interest us. We were too busy playing.	21:06-21:29
	<b>Q52. How did the residents celebrate the coronation?</b>	
	A52. I don't think they did. It was just a talk about the Queen having the coronation today and that was it.	21:34-21:45
	<b>Q53. Were relations between camp residents' cordial?</b>	
	A53. Oh aye, if anything happened, just say something happened to me, say I'd fell and hurt myself they would have took me home. Everybody's parents looked after everybody's weans. No problems that way.	21:51-22:13
	<b>Q54. Do you remember any incidents?</b>	
	A54. Bad incidents? No. That's one thing I don't remember, no.	22:16-22:19
	<b>Q55. Do you remember being told any stories about when it was a POW Camp?</b>	
	A55. No. The folk in the camp, I don't think any of them were there when the POWs were there or anything like that.	22:24-2:40
	<b>Q56. Where did you go to school?</b>	

	A56. Auchinleck. We got a bus. A bus came down from Auchinleck and took us up to school it was the SMT (Scottish Motor Transport) they came down and I think it was a penny to go on the bus and we had to walk home.	20:42-23:01
	<b>Q57. Did all the children in the camp go to the same school?</b>	
	A57. No, they couldn't have because there must have been Catholic and Protestant schools at that time so we went to Auchinleck school. Maybe there weren't Catholics, I don't know. When you're young, you don't know, do you?	12:03-23:22
	<b>Q58. So, was it mixed religion? Was there a church in the camp?</b>	
	A58. No, no there was no church when I was there and I don't remember where a church could have been.	23:26-23:32
	<b>Q59. Did you have any special friends that you're still in touch with?</b>	
	A59. No, not really. The only one I remember being at school with as I say is Tom Callaghan and his brother who was at Auchinleck too that day (of the seminar), Clarke Callaghan and that other boy I ran about with, the boy who stayed down the foot Ronald Smith he went away to Fife to stay and Alex Parker. I don't know where he went obviously, he got married and moved out the district because I never ever seen him, some other ... two or three time but never seen him.	23:36-24:18
	<b>Q60. Was there a song that reminded you of your days in the camp?</b>	
	A60. No. Is there a song? Maybe jog my memory?	24:23-24:30
	<b>Q61. Songs that were popular at the time that reminded you were at Pennylands Camp at the time?</b>	
	A61. No.	24:33-24:40
	<b>Q62. Did you have access to a television?</b>	
	A62. No. Only the Café in Auchinleck, that's the only television we seen.	24:42-24:49
	<b>Q63. Where did you go to see films?</b>	
	A63. We didn't. Oh, I know we could go to the Picture House in Auchinleck.	24:52-24:57
	<b>Q64. Did you have any street parties?</b>	

	A64. No.	24:59-25:00
	<b>Q65. How did the creation of the National Health Service affect your family in 1948?</b>	
	A65. No, I don't remember but I'll tell you what I do remember I had the whooping cough when I was at home but I don't ever remember seeing a doctor because I've seen me running about the floor on my hands and knees but I don't ever remember seeing a doctor until I got to Auchinleck. I'm not saying there wasn't a doctor there. I was never not well and I don't remember my parents being not well either.	25:08-25:43
	<b>Q66. When were you allocated a house outside the camp?</b>	
	A66. That would be 1952 or 53. It was when the timber houses were built in Barbieston Road, they were brand new when we moved in to them. We knew it was happening. We were told we were getting a house and waiting on the houses getting finished. And there was a post came, my mum used to say, "There's that post bye again and there's no word yet." And she was desperate to move and when we got word she was absolutely over the moon. I'll always remember in those days when you had a house there was a boiler for boiling your clothes. I said to my mum, what's that? Do you know what she told me, she said that's a big chip-pan for making chips! She was winding me up!	25:51-26:53
	<b>Q67. You moved to Barbieston Road. Describe how you felt when you left Pennylands Camp for the last time.</b>	
	A67. I actually felt brilliant, as I said I felt that everybody looked down on us at that time. My brother and I, I think we had a bath twice a day because we had never been used to it. It was just a different life, you got your bed, a nice warm bed, you can imagine if you're in a hut all day - like sleeping in the back garden. It was cold, I can tell you. Bitter in winter. You couldn't go and turn the tap on and wash your dishes in hot water, it had to be heated in a pan before you could wash dishes. It was a hard life. Don't get me wrong, we had a lot of fun but we were kids, but the parents, it must have been hard work for them. I wouldn't like to have done it, and brought my family up in it.	27:00-28:08
	<b>Q68. How many families were left when you moved?</b>	
	A68. Very few, because at that particular time when folk were moving out the huts were getting demolished. It didn't take much to demolish them, two or three blows with a hammer and they were down, bar the brick one I say. Is there anything left down there? Have you been down seeing? Nothing left. Is it a private road into it now, I was going to take my wife down but I don't know.	28:11-28:46

	<b>Q69. What did they do with huts when they demolished them?</b>	
	A69. They left them lying and everybody went down and see there was two layers of Gyproc and there was wood in between then they used to go down with their hammers and everything and knocked all the Gyproc away and took the wood away to burn them in the stoves. That's how I don't understand to this day why the asbestos didn't affect folk down there because we used to break it up and everything. See the founds (foundations) of the hut, they were that height and we got asbestos and put it all down there and we used to sit on it. Played and laughed, we made fun out of nothing.	28:53-29:34
	<b>Q70. When you left the camp did you take any souvenirs?</b>	
	A70. No, we didn't.	29:37-29:42
	<b>Q71. Can you sum up what was the worst about Pennylands?</b>	
	A71. The fact that there was no running water, no heating, the cold huts, that was the worst of it. As I said I'm only talking as a wee boy because we did things that our parents would have broken our necks if they had seen us doing it. What we used to do was go and steal the apples down at the orchard, I think we were hungered, folk didn't have anything in those days. We used to walk right up to where the minister's house was at the back of Allardyce's garage, don't think there's a minister in it now, we used to even steal the minister's apples. Mr McCutcheon that was the name of the minister. It was just devilment.	29:49-30:55
	<b>Q72. Can you sum up the best things about Pennylands?</b>	
	A72. The folk. I've got to say there was nobody you could have run down. Everybody, all the parents looked after other folk's kids, if there was anything wrong. There was another couple that stayed up from us, Mr and Mrs Marshall, they had two boys, Alex and Peter. I still see Peter in Ayr. To save my mother money Mrs Marshall used to walk up the back way with her two boys to school, and she used to say, "Send the boys with me." And we used to walk up to school and that saved my mum 2 pence a day!	31:00-31:51
	<b>Q73. Have I missed anything?</b>	
	A73. No, that's been good as I say I suppose other things come into your mind but not in this moment in time. I've got to say the folk in it were brilliant.	31:52-32:11

	<b>Closing statement and end of interview.</b>	32:18
 <p>Supported by <b>The National Lottery</b><sup>®</sup> through the Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p>Le faic bhon <b>Chrannchur Nàiseanta</b> tro Mhaoin-Dualchais a' Chrannchuir</p>		