

POW Camp 22 | 1943 - 1946

Sometime in 1943 the camp was converted to a POW camp, surrounded by 10-foot-high barbed-wire fencing. The first prisoners were Italians, swiftly followed by German POWs when the Italians were moved elsewhere or repatriated.

Many of the Italian and German prisoners were sent to work on farms in the surrounding countryside. All POWs were paid between 2/6 and 5/6 per week for their work, in accordance with the Geneva Convention. By November 1945 the Red Cross had produced a report on the conditions in Pennylands which confirmed that the capacity was 4,000 but the actual number of prisoners was 2,431.

The camp provided a bakery, infirmary, library, canteen, football pitch and offered religious services, a choir, theatre group and several educational courses.

By mid 1946 the German POWs were being repatriated and the camp started to empty. For a few months the camp remained under the care of resident caretakers to give time to prepare the camp for Polish repatriates.

Polish Repatriation Camp | 1946 - 1948

Two trainloads containing 800 members of the Polish Resettlement Corps arrived at Auchinleck station en route for the camp at the beginning of November 1946. Although these troops were not prisoners as such, discipline was kept in the camp and the surrounding area by military police, British and Polish soldiers and the local police force.

Polish soldiers were a familiar sight about the local towns and villages and friendly, but sometimes boisterous relationships quickly formed. They built up very strong friendships with the local community. By the end of 1947 the Polish troops were either repatriated, married to local women or settled within Britain.

Many Polish soldiers found themselves torn between facing persecution in their homeland or remaining in the west.

Housing Camp | 1948 - 1959

Sometime in 1948 the Ministry of War had no further use for the camp and by mid-1949 Ayr County Council took over the rental of housing in the camp. In the 1949/50 valuation roll there were now 123 huts rented, each at £9.5s per annum.

In the 1951 Third Statistical Account for Scotland it was reported that there was a population of 380, 122 men, 115 women and 143 children. Housing conditions were not ideal. The huts were cold, draughty and most had no running water, toilets, gas or electricity but the tenants were well organised with a camp committee, shop and recreational hut.

As new council houses became available locally, the residents slowly moved out. By 1957 the empty and derelict huts were being sold by Ayr County Council and only a few huts were occupied by 1959. The camp closed soon after the remaining families were re-housed and the site abandoned and left to ruin.

Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding and to everyone who contributed to this important social history project which preserves the heritage of Pennylands Camp.



Addyman Archaeology
Archaeology Heritage Consultancy Architecture



Website and Pop-Up Exhibition

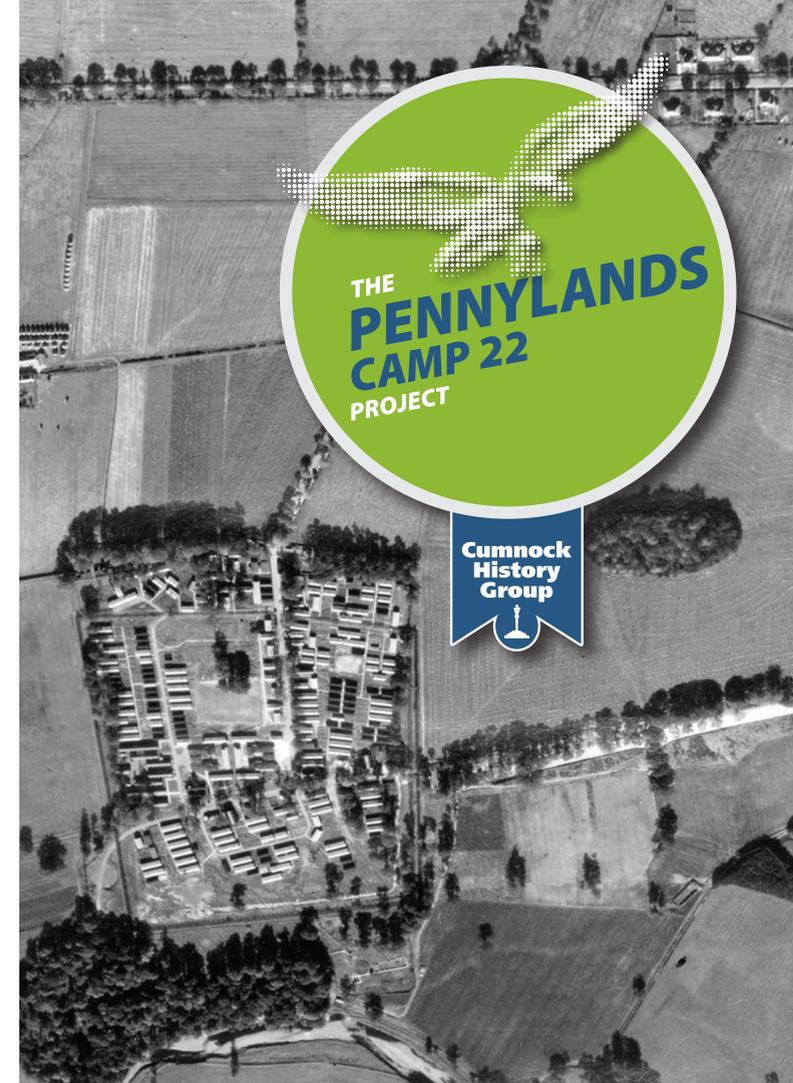
You can view the full story, articles, photos, documents, films, archaeological finds and listen to the interviews online on our website here:

Web: www.cumnockhistorygroup.org

Facebook: [PennylandsPOWCamp](https://www.facebook.com/PennylandsPOWCamp)

We have a pop-up exhibition that can be loaned out to any group or organisation that is interested.

Email: info@cumnockhistorygroup.org



**The story of a WW2 Military Facility
on the grounds of Dumfries House
Estate near Cumnock and Auchinleck**



The Dumfries House Estate housed a military facility which served a variety of purposes during and immediately after World War II.

Due to recent plans for the erection of new buildings on the 12-acre site, archaeologists were called in to examine and record the physical layout, various uses of the camp and its numerous buildings.

Cumnock History Group came together with Addyman Archaeology and Dr Sue Morrison from the Oral History Research & Training Consultancy in early 2016 and developed a three-strand Heritage Lottery funded project that would generate archival research, a public archaeology excavation and record oral history testimonies from people who had lived or worked at Pennylands during its twenty-year history - from 1939 to 1959.

The project has gone on to achieve some wonderful results – a host of factual information, artifacts, photographs, and personal stories and memories.

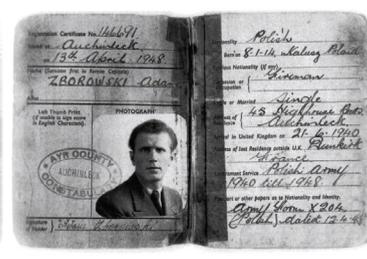
People's Memories and Research | 2017

Several History Champions undertook intensive training in oral history interview techniques and sound editing, then went on to interview 18 local women and men who had first-hand memories of the camp.

Their recollections were a mixture of informative, funny, sad and very poignant stories including suicides, daily camp life, weddings, births, shootings, friendships, hardships, poisonings, explosions and getting chased by the gamekeeper!

The Pennylands Archive now contains over 1,000 research documents, reports, articles, films, photographs and interviews from each of the camp's four phases - some made public for the first time.

This introductory leaflet can only give a glimpse of the full story of Pennylands Camp.



Archaeology | 2016

In early 2016, archaeologists returned to the site of the camp as the now overgrown field was to be developed for the Dumfries House Farm Education Centre. Over five months, the remains of the hut bases, walls, concrete paths and roads, were revealed as the field was stripped, and their locations carefully recorded to reconstruct the camp for the first time since the last families left in the late 1950s.

Community Excavation | March 2017

Addyman Archaeology undertook a two-day community excavations at Pennylands. This focused on the last surviving section of the camp, located in the south-east corner. Nine buildings were surveyed and recorded, comprising five accommodation blocks, two possible stores, a shower/washing block and a probable toilet block. The 30 volunteers were able to learn more about the various skills involved in archaeological excavation, ranging from drawing and photography to the excavation of specific areas with a hand-tool.

Training Camp | 1939 - 1943

The Ministry of War was granted permission by the 4th Marquess of Bute around 1939 to accommodate British and Allied troops under canvas in the fields around the Estate. By 1942 the Ministry of War had requisitioned the 12-acre Pennylands field, about 1/3 of a mile to the north of Dumfries House.

Accommodation for around 750 was built and consisted of a mixture of Nissen huts and Ministry of Works and Planning Standard Huts (MOWP huts), pre-fabricated pitched-roof buildings of different sizes and purposes.

British, Irish, Canadian and Free French SAS were among the troops who trained in and around Pennylands before being sent to the front line. King George VI inspected some of these troops when he visited the Camp in 1942.