



German and Italian Prisoners of War in Tiverton

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Towards the end of the Second World War, the former US Army barracks off Bolham Road at Tiverton were turned into to a Prisoner of War (PoW) working camp. It was first used to house Italian prisoners and was later occupied by German prisoners. There was another camp near Cruwys Morchard for Italian prisoners of war. The Bolham Road site survived well into the post-war years but by 1966 it had been cleared completely. The site is now occupied by Tiverton High School and Petroc College.

Prisoners in the camps were employed on local farms but also carried out road repairs, building and other tasks such as clearing ice and snow during the winter of 1947.

Repatriation of prisoners began in September 1946, by which time there were 402,200 German prisoners of war were still being held in camps across Britain. Most of the prisoners had been returned to Germany by the latter half of 1948. However, a significant number were reluctant to return to Germany. Reasons for this included being in a relationship with a British woman, their home now being in the Soviet sector, or adverse reactions to wartime atrocities. German prisoners could apply to stay on as civilian workers, and just under 25,000 were accepted.

Bruno Schnur was one of the prisoners that remained in Britain. He was unable to return to his native town of Waren in northern Germany because it was now under Soviet control. Bruno found employment and later married a local woman. They had four children and members of the family still live near to Tiverton.