

Library and Archives

Internment during World War One: The Isle of Man's Role

This guide illustrates the type of resources available at MNH to those researching the British Government's use of the Island to detain people considered 'aliens' during and shortly after the First World War.

The two alien detention camps were located at the requisitioned Cunningham's holiday camp in Douglas and at a purpose built camp on agricultural land at Knockaloe near the town of Peel; the latter was divided into four large compounds using pre-fabricated huts for accommodation and it had its own railway link. Numbers at Knockaloe peaked in July 1916 at 22,769 men while the smaller Douglas camp held around 5,000. Probably around 30,000 men were interned, almost equal to the resident civilian population (allowing for those absent on military service).

Unfortunately for researchers, many of the primary records were destroyed in the 1950s. Some survive in the Isle of Man Constabulary archives including an admissions and discharge register for internees held at Douglas Alien Detention Camp; the equivalent registers for Knockaloe are no longer available.

Gow soylley jeh feddyn magh tooilley mychione dty skeel Manninagh
Enjoy finding out more about your Manx story

Searching for Individuals

Men held in the Douglas Camp may be searched by name using the 'people' search option on our website www.imuseum.im. This index is made up of information collated from various sources, including the administrations register (part of Constabulary archives ref MS 09310) and indexes compiled by the Anglo-German family History Society from German archives held at Koblenz (Archive ref MS 09395).

We hold a list of staff in both camps in July 1917. Reference copies are available at Archives ref: MS 11062.

Occasionally individuals may be identified in the digitised camp newspapers and regular Manx press: also in over 3,000 digitised photographs documenting life in both camps, all available through www.imuseum.im

Access to newspapers after an initial free search is via a subscription (one day to one year long).

Academic Research

The library catalogue of printed material is searchable using the turquoise Library tab on the iMuseums home page. The following selected items provide an idea of the range of printed and archival resources for research. The years shown are those during which the camp operated.

If you plan to visit and would like a list of manuscript sources, please email us at Library@MNH.gov.im



Primary Sources

Baily, James T

Papers of the Society of Friends (Quaker) Industrial Superintendent at Knockaloe including scrapbooks, photographs, loose leaf ephemera, 1915-1920.
Archive Ref: MS 10417

Catering records of Knockaloe Alien Detention Camp,

Patrick, 1915-1919
Archive Ref: MS 09377

Douglas Camp journals 1914-1919; register of documents received & notes of action taken, 1915-1917
Archive Ref: MS 06465; MD 15028/1-3

Hartmann, Rudolf, Pastor

Papers in German and English of this Knockaloe internee, 1915-1919
Archive Ref: MS 12779

Jeger, Maurice. 22 Monate in englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft [22 months in English war captivity]: von Maurice Jeger; aus den Internierungs-Lagern: Shrewsbury, Handforth, Knockaloe, Douglas (Insel Man). 1917.

First World War internment memoir in German. The German word 'Kriegsgefangenschaft' in the title translates as 'captivity as a prisoner of war'. Maurice Jeger (anglicised as Morris Hunter) was a Austrian Jewish internee during the First World War.
Library ref B.115/JEG

Kahn, Benno

Douglas Alien Detention Camp School papers belonging to this internee, 1914-1918
Archives ref: MS 09379

Knox, Archibald

Correspondence regarding his work as a postal censor at Knockaloe, 1919
Archive ref: MS 09954

Photographs:

Prisoners of War- Douglas and Knockaloe Camps. Over 3,000 glass plate negatives have been digitised (ref PG/7870) as well as a selection of other prints. These are free to view through www.imuseum.im

Secondary Sources

Baily, Leslie - Craftsman and Quaker:

The Story of James T. Baily 1876-1957
London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959.
Includes his work as Industrial Superintendent at Knockaloe.
Library Ref B. 115/BAI

British Treatment of Enemy prisoners:

Journalists visit Manx Camps.

In Manx Quarterly No.17 Vol.3 October 1916 pp. 71-74
Brief account with details of prisoners' rations.
Library Ref L.6/MQ

Bernard, Roy - My German family in England

Anglo German Family History Society 1991
ISBN 0-9514133-5-X
This pamphlet, with Knockaloe diary extracts, helps explain German migration to England and the causes of anti-German sentiment.
Library Ref B115/BER

Cohen-Portheim, Paul - Time Stood Still, my Internment in England 1914-18

London: Duckworth, 1931
Chapter 2, 3 and 4 on Knockaloe.
Library Ref B115/COH

Cresswell, Yvonne - Living with the Wire: Civilian Internment in the Isle of Man during the two World Wars

Douglas: Manx National Heritage, 2010
ISBN 978-0901106636
Library Ref B115/CRE
<https://manxnationalheritage.im/shop/product/living-with-the-wire/>

Cresswell, Yvonne - Behind the wire: the material culture of civilian internment on the Isle of Man during the First World War,

in *Totally Un-English? Britain's Internment of Enemy Aliens in Two World Wars*: Ed. Dove, R. The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies Vol. 7.
ISBN 90-420-1658-2
Library Ref B.115/RES

Draskau, Jennifer Kewley - Prisoners in petticoats: Drag Performances in Great War Internment camps

Proceedings of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Vol. XII, no.2, April 2007-March 2009.
Library Ref L.6/PRO
Library Ref B115/1x and /2x



Drower, Jill - Good Clean Fun - A Social History of Britain's First Holiday Camp.

London: Scrudge Books, 2018.

ISBN 978-0-9927775-1-7

'Holiday camp to Internment Camp'- pp.97-109.

Library Ref B.226/69q

Dunbar - Kalckreuth, Frederic Lewis - Die Mannerinsel

Leipzig: Paul List Verlag, 1940.

Library Ref B115/DUN

Francis, Paul- Isle of Man 20th Century Military Archaeology Part 1: Island Defence and Part 5: Sources

Douglas: Manx Heritage Foundation 2006

Chapter 3 pp. 49-62 Alien & POW camps, Cunningham's Camp & Knockaloe; Appendix pp. 169-172 List of Internment Camp Deaths 1914 to 1918.

Library Ref B. 114/77q

Internment Camps 1914-1917

Internment scrapbooks: printed material produced for concerts and plays at both camps together with postcards, cartoons, propoganda material and miscellaneous items (1914-18) 2 volumes.

Library Ref B115/1x and /2x

Isle of Man Government Circulars relating to Aliens, Internees or Detainees 1914-1919

Useful series including camp rules and regulations.

Library Ref B. 115/GOVq

Kny, WEC (Camp IV Secretary) – Knockaloe Camp Internal administration of the Prisoners of War Camp No IV,

1915-1919

Official report by an internee to the Isle of Man Government Secretary detailing camp life.

Library Ref B115/KNYq

Also Archive ref MS 08879 (MD 1178/1-4)

Mark, Graham - Prisoners of War in British hands during World War 1: A study of their history, the camps and their mails.

Wiveliscombe: The Postal History Society 2007.

Douglas pp. 78-82 and Knockaloe pp. 121-129 with a list from the National Archives of all UK camps, principle camps have brief notes, (Knockaloe was the largest) minor sites are listed in an appendix.

Library Ref B.115/MARq

Newton, Gerald - Wie lange noch? Germans at Knockaloe, 1914-18

Frankfurt: Peter Lang

Offprint from Mutual Exchanges Sheffield-Munster Colloquium II, Sonderdruck 1999, pp. 103-116

Includes references to and extracts from the two main contemporary accounts of internment camp life by F.L Dunbar-Kalckreuth and P. Cohen-Portheim.

Library Ref B115/NEW

Norris, Samuel - Manx Memories and Movements

3rd ed. Douglas: Manx Heritage Foundation, 1994

ISBN 0-9524019-1-6. A reprint of the memoirs of a prominent Manx politician recording the social and economic effects of the war.

Library Ref G88/NOR

Osborne, Bernard - IOM Postal History of 20th century Internment mail.

IOM Postal History Society. 2015

ISBN 978-0-9934052-0-4

Information and maps of the camps, postal codes, transit marks and postcards

B.115/OSBq

Richardson, Matthew. This Terrible Ordeal: Manx letters, diaries and memories of the Great War.

Manx National Heritage. 2013

ISBN 978-0-901106-67-4

F.64/RIC

<https://manxnationalheritage.im/shop/product/this-terrible-ordeal/>

Sargeant, B.E - The Isle of Man & the Great War

Douglas: Brown and Sons, 1920

Chapter 3, The Prisoner of war Camps pp 58-86

Chapter 4, Some Official Visitors pp 87-94

Written by the wartime Government Secretary and Treasurer.

Library Ref B114/SAR

Stoffa, Paul - Round the World to Freedom

London: Bodley Head, 1933

Chapters 12 to 14 deal with life as a prisoner at Knockaloe Camp, pp 227-275

The author was an Austro Hungarian army officer.

Library Ref B115/STO

Thomas, Anna Braithwaite - St Stephen's: Friends Emergency Committee work in England 1914-1920 c. 1926

This recalls the work of the Society of Friends with internees and their families.

Chapter 6 pp 66-81 on Knockaloe.

Library Ref B115/THO

West, Margery - Island at War

Laxey: Western Books, 1986

ISBN 0-9511512-0-7

Part III pp. 81-107

Library Ref B114/WES



Some other useful resources:

Knockaloe Visitors Centre, Patrick

<http://www.knockaloe.im/>

This registered charity opened its centre in spring 2019. Volunteers do not charge for providing research for off island enquirers seeking specific information regarding an internee, guard or camp staff member during the Great War, irrespective of which Manx camp is involved.

For internees who died during either war and whose bodies were subsequently moved to the German Military cemetery at Cannock Chase, contact: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Broadhurst Green, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire. www.cwc.org and /or Imperial War Museum, London www.iwm.org.uk/research/research-facilities

The National Archives at Kew, London has an online guide to its records (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk), see particularly FP 383 for the First World War. A list of researchers who act for enquirers is available at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/irlist

The Anglo-German Family History Society

www.agfhs.org.uk

International Committee of the Red Cross

<https://grandeguerre.icrc.org/>

Access to digitised ICRC records of First World War prisoners' index files and lists.

