

Alderney Holocaust and Slave Labour Trail

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Map showing the main Slave Labour Camps and sites on Alderney

Introduction

When the Nazis first occupied Alderney with a small force, it could not have been anticipated at the time that the island would effectively become one giant slave labour camp with many thousands of captives culled from countries across three continents, nor that the island would be host to the western-most SS concentration camp in Europe, Camp Syll. Furthermore, the island witnessed great human suffering and death, on a large scale (as perhaps as many as 50% of all the prisoners died on, or off, the island), with the island also becoming a staging post of the Holocaust. Many hundreds of Jewish captives were on the islands working and suffering in the most abject conditions of all. Some died on the island and many were then sent on to other camps, or for extermination in Auschwitz. The historical record shows that the commandants, such as SS man List, specifically sent worked-out prisoners to be exterminated and knew the purpose of their transportation and sometimes commissioned the murder of larger groups of prisoners on the island.¹ While

the camps on the island were not intended to be extermination camps, nor were designed for the mass killing of prisoners, it seems clear that most of the workers and prisoners were regarded as entirely inferior and expendable in the Nazi's master plan for Europe and that they would find only death at the end of their labours, at a time and place of the Reich's choosing, either on, or off, the island.

The story of slave labour and concentration camps on Alderney and in the Channel Islands, begins in 1940 when the Islanders on Alderney evacuated the island, leaving a handful of islanders behind, who had decided to stay-on. In June 1940 British demilitarise Alderney and on 2 July 1940 Germans occupy Alderney with a small occupying force. From early on in their occupation they decided to turn Alderney into a strong point, and October and December 1941 Hitler called for Alderney to be made into an impregnable fortress. Despite subsequent claims to the contrary, the fortification of the island made good strategic sense as it controlled the sea channel around Cherbourg, provided anti-aircraft cover and could have otherwise become a staging point for an Allied invasion of the main land and became part of the Atlantic Wall fortification.

The importance of the island intensified in November, when in Fuhrer Directive 51, (3 November, 1943) Adolf Hitler stated, '...All signs point to an offensive against the Western Front of Europe no later than spring and perhaps earlier. For that reason, I can no longer justify the further weakening of the West in favour of other theatres of war. I have therefore decided to strengthen the defences in the West particularly at place from which we shall launch our long-range war [with V. Rockets] against England...'

In practical consequence, in December 1941 Hitler called for the construction of the Atlantic Wall and Alderney was incorporated in the plan.

The Alderney slave labour camps were constructed from January 1942 onwards and 'volunteer' and slave workers were culled from all across Europe, North Africa as well as a few prisoners from Indo-China, as part of desperate attempts to get enough workers for the Atlantic Wall and the construction of the Block Houses in the Nord Pas de Calais. A cohort of 10,000 men was

considered to be the absolute minimum for any single major construction project, such as a block house.

Some six camps were established on Alderney, four major and two minor. These were Helgoland, Borkum, Norderney, Sylt and with the minor camps of New Town and Citadella. The Helgoland Camp was ran by the OT with a camp capacity of 1,500 forced labours. Borkum was another OT Labour Camp, with mostly skilled workers including Germans and volunteers from occupied countries.

Norderney Camp was a forced labour camp, with a capacity of 1,500, with inmates including, Jews, Russian, French, Czech, Dutch and Spanish and some German volunteers. There was a separate Jewish section in the camp. All of the men in the camp were threatened with death in case of Allied invasion and preparations were made in the Arch Bay Tunnel for this eventuality and even included two rehearsals with the prisoners.

Sylt was the most notorious camp. It was initially an OT camp, which was subsequently placed under control of the SS Baubrigade and became a sub-camp of Neuengamme, from 1 March 1943. Its inmates included, Jews, Russians, Poles, Dutch, French, and political prisoners, etc. Along with Camp Sylt, it was the centre of the worst abuses and deaths of prisoners. The gates of the camps were infamous as an execution site – starving Russian POWs were crucified on the gates for alleged theft of food.

The Russians were numerically the most numerous prisoner group the first Russians arrived in Alderney in June/July 1942, some being sent to Norderney, others to Helgoland.² Some of these prisoners were erstwhile volunteers dubbed, 'voluntary workers from the East' (*Freiwillige Ostarbeiter*) and included both the old and young, who one German witness stated had been ostensibly hired as agricultural labour in Germany, but found that they were in fact prisoners and starved and beaten while at hard labour.³ Some of the volunteers might in fact have been brutally press-ganged as part of the Nazi campaign of forced recruitment of 1942-3 in Russia and Ukraine rather than hired in Germany. This campaign saw villages burnt for resisting 'volunteering' and children seized and taken away to unknown destinations. Officially the youngest volunteers were 16, but some may well have been as young as 14

years old, as Germans often took those who merely appeared to be of the right age and we know that 14 year old Russian boys were present at Dannes across the Channel.⁴

Most came from specific regions in Nazi occupied Russia and Ukraine, which had been brutalised by the Germans and subject to terrible atrocities. There were Russian workers from Pskov, Orlov and Smolensk in particular - some 16,000 were brought to Alderney between April and August 1942.⁵ Some also came from Symy.⁶ Also, Russian males aged between 16 and 30 were seized and some 6,000 sent to work for OT from Orel and Tula regions and part of Ukraine sent as labourers to Channel Island.⁷ Pantcheff also noted that in July 1942 a group of about 1,000 Russian, Pole and Ukrainian forced workers were transported to Alderney followed by a further two groups totalling 1,800 in August 1942.⁸

The Russian volunteer workers were a distinct group to the Russian POWs were also introduced to the island with the letter 'SU' on their back by which to identify them.⁹

Many of the Jews were included in the French contingent and had been spared immediate deportation from France, to death in East, because they were married to 'Aryans' and were designated 'Conjoint Aryenne', or were half Jewish and designated 'demi- Aryenne' which gave them a degree of protection.¹⁰ A group of 700 Jews had been sent from Drancy camp to the Cherbourg area on 10 July 1943, to participate in building the Atlantic wall and about half of these were sent on to Alderney to build 'Fortress Alderney' in August, though many were later returned to the French mainland to French camps.

In November 1943, a contingent of French Jewish prisoners from Alderney (Aigny) were transferred to Dannes and the same happened on 7 May, 1944, when 650 Jewish prisoners were evacuated from Alderney (Aurigny) by boat to Cherbourg and 500 of that group were sent to Dannes.

It is estimated that there were around 1,000 Jews deported to Alderney and that many were French (perhaps around 900 of the total), though other came from across Europe (from Poland, Russia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and from North Africa). Many of the Jews were middle-class professionals before the

war and many of the French Jews were transported from Drancy via Cherbourg to Alderney. There were some Jews whose Jewish identity was not known to the German, for example there were Jews among the Russian and Ukrainian inmates, some of whom were betrayed to the Germans.¹¹ It may be observed that Jews were 54% of all those deported from France, but of all the 75,721 Jews deported from France, only 3% returned at the end of the war.¹²

There were also Black Africans part of a group called ZKZ. This was a group of North Africans and Indo-Chinese arrested in Marseille – they were in Norderney and were in the camp with 700 Jews. There were also three Chinese and one Italian. Some of these foreigners may have been rounded up and arrested in France on the basis of having inadequate registration papers.¹³ A witness also said that the island was over-run with French men, Berbers and Spanish reds'¹⁴

New Town was a small, probably temporary camp of which little is known, though the camp is marked on a British intelligence map created at the end of the occupation and its buildings can be seen in photographs. Citadella is significant as it was a camp for Moroccan forced labourers, former of a group of billets in the centre of St Anne's, but little is known of it and it seems to have only had a short existence.

The camps on Alderney (and in the rest of the Channel Islands) were very multi-national, with inmates drawn from across Europe and perhaps further – these included Dutch, French, Spaniards, Poles, Ukrainians, Germans and Russians (POWs), Jews from across Europe (round 1,000 Jews were on Alderney and many were French).

The Colonial contingent in the forced labour groups on Alderney are often over-looked, as the labourers included, Indo-Chinese (Annamites, Siamese: that is to say from modern-day Thailand and region) North Africans (the Moroccans, Algerians were often referred to as 'Arabs' and 'Berbers' and many of the North African group were Berbers) There were also Black Africans on the Island as well from Senegal, West Africa who were all employed through-out the French Atlantic Coast and the Channel Islands and were employed as labour on Alderney. Some of these were captured components of the French Free Army, taken at the Fall of Dunkirk in 1940.

The proceedings of the Nuremberg War Trials also noted the following in regard to North African forced labour: 'North African labour: Between 17 August and 6 November 1942 the home country received two contingents of workers from North Africa; one composed of 5,560 Algerians, the other of 1,825 Moroccans. These workers were immediately compelled to do direct forced labour, which brought the number of North African workers enrolled in the Todt Organization to 17,582.'¹⁵

Perhaps as many as 16,000 prisoners¹⁶ were brought on to Alderney in total, and it must be recalled that prisoners were being constantly moved on and off the island. Probably at least 800 died, as a very conservative estimate died, but probably more. Mortality rates were claimed to be in excess of 50%, in some prisoner groups. However, what must be kept firmly in mind is that the majority of prisoners who were moved off the island were almost certainly killed elsewhere by the Germans and never went back home at the end of the war.

While the treatment of prisoners in the camps were broadly similar with conditions obtaining just across the Channel in other slave labour camps, conditions were worsened due to the isolation of the prisoners which meant they could receive little help and escape was impossible, but also large-scale scams by the SS and others, with food intended for feeding prisoners being diverted for profit, meant that the starvation of prisoners was even worse than elsewhere.

History

Forced labour was a central component of the Nazi camp archipelago and the notion of 'labour' itself has ideological importance for the Nazis as both liberating force, but also as redemptive and purifying force for perceived degenerates.

The use of forced labour was also intended as a way of weakening occupied countries and to deliberately exterminate perceived enemies of the Reich and almost anyone could become a victim of the Nazi state and there were many forced labourers whose descent into the hell of the labour camp system was caused solely by making a joke about Hitler or questioning his judgement in

public. The wholesale destruction of both Jews and Gypsies was an important objective.

As the Reich conquered and occupied Europe, a formal system of pressed and forced labour was created to supply the labour needs of the Reich and to ensure continuing industrial production. The Germans created a complex hierarchy of workers based on Nazi racial laws and categorization. At the top there was the minority of volunteers or, 'guest workers' who were largely free and properly paid. The rest worked under compulsion, with the 'Forced Workers', or slaves being at the bottom of the pile experiencing the very worst conditions and treatment. The Jews were the lowest of the low, closely followed by the Russians.

In practice, a great many of the slave labourers, were officially employed by Hitler's civil works super-contractor, the Todt Organization, which was a militarised construction organisation, employing civilians as well as the military. The OT then leased the slave labourers to civilian sub-contractor firms carrying out parts of their projects who could then profit from the almost free labour.

On Alderney these companies included: Deubau, Fuchs, Kniffler, Sager & Wernerstrabag, Westfahlishche Steinindustrie, Wolfer & Goebel, Colignon (France) Philippi (an electrical company)¹⁷

The Germans also employed other convict labour groups on Alderney, including SS Baubrigade, 1, which comprised a formation of German political and other convicts from German concentration camps, formed into labour details and loaned to the Army, Air Force and OT and administered by one of the concentration camps. The second formation was a Komando of mostly German prisoners, from the German Army who were routinely sent as a short term punishment detail to Alderney, or as part of a prison sentence.¹⁸

One third of all of the OT work was on the construction of the Atlantic Wall in the west which was latterly intended to hold off an anticipated Allied invasion of Europe. The work on Alderney was essentially an extension of the work on the Atlantic Wall to create 'Fortress Alderney'. Since Alderney was only 8 miles out from Cherbourg, Hitler saw that failing to hold Alderney could create a

major head-ache, as the Allies could use it to exert wide control on shipping lanes and even as a bridgehead for an invasion force.

It is no accident that the camps in Alderney and in the Nord Pas de Calais were linked as staff often served and led at camps both on the main land and on Alderney.¹⁹ It should also be emphasised that the character and organisation of the camps here were essentially similar to those in much of Western Europe. In particular a study of the other linked camps in the Nord Pas de Calais and the Emsland Group of camps (for special prisoners, both military and civilian, who were incarcerated for a variety of reasons both political and criminal, or were detainees awaiting trial) by the author point clearly to the similarities.

All prisoners in these camps were subject to a regime of beatings, cruelty, torture, sporadic acts of murder and sometimes mass murder, over-work, dangerous work conditions, inadequate clothing, shelter, starvation, and lack of basic health care, which will be discussed in more detail later. Anyone who did not fit into the Nazi regime, racial system, or was perceived to be in opposition to the Third Reich, in which ever manner, could potentially end up in these camps.

The camps themselves were not fixed in their form or usage, but were dynamic and changing. There were very short lived camps, or Komandos, attached to specific work-sites using temporary or make-shift accommodation, there were also central camps with the lesser satellite camps. There were regularly shifting prisoner populations and cohorts of prisoners, as prisoners were moved in, died, or moved out and even the administration and designation of the camps could change, so that a camp could start as an OT camp and then become an SS camp. The camps expanded and contracted in size as required, as the pre-fabricated huts could be put up or taken down rapidly (in three hours) and they could be rapidly shut-down or merged.

These camps were primarily for forced labour, but secondarily the death of the inmates designated as racially inferior, or undeserving of life, over a period of weeks, or months, for which-ever cause, be it, starvation, over-work, lack of medical care, accidents, beatings or out-right murder, was clearly regarded as desirable and the prisoners were doubtlessly regarded as expendable and their

murder in smaller numbers was frequently officially encouraged on site, though most of worked out, or undesirable prisoners ear-marked for death were transported and killed elsewhere. These camps should not be confused with the extermination or death camps in the East, whose main purpose was the *rapid killing* and *efficient disposal* of large numbers of victims, a smaller number of whom might be selected to give a final few weeks of labour before being killed, or dying of starvation, or disease.

However, it must be qualified that there were some incidents of mass murder, on Alderney, as Dalmau recounts how when there had been particularly heavy bombings of German towns, 50 Jews or political prisoners would be gathered made to 'dance' through a hail of bullets, with anyone falling being shot through the head, until all lay dead on the ground.²⁰

Conditions in the Camps

These concentration camps in both Alderney and the Nord Pas de Calais were primarily for forced labour, but secondarily the death of the inmates designated as racially inferior, or undeserving of life, over a period of weeks, or months, for which-ever cause be it, starvation, over-work, lack of medical care, accidents, beatings or out-right murder, was clearly regarded as desirable and the prisoners were regarded as expendable and were told that they would not survive their labours.

The regime and treatment of prisoners was essentially similar in the Alderney Camps to those nearby on the main land, at the Pas de Calais, but the evidence is that the death-rate among the prisoners was very much higher than on the main-land.

What made the camps on Alderney different and more deadly was due to a number of factors that together exerted strong attrition on the weakened prisoners. The principle factors were rampant starvation and dehydration. In terms of food and drink the prisoners had restricted access to other supplies of food, in terms of extra food or official rations or cigarettes, as it was a small highly controlled island, with few civilians and no local resistance who could help, though the prisoners did find many ingenious or stomach-turning ways to supplement their starvation rations (such as the Russians digging up intestines buried behind the slaughter house with their bare hands to satisfy their

hunger) and some of the other higher-status prisoners, or German Army, were prepared to give food, even despite severe threats of punishment if they did so.²¹

The prisoners were in many cases allowed to roam the island to forage food, as it gave the German excuse to feed the prisoners less, though many suffered food poisoning from hedgerow plants, if they had not been brought up in the countryside and did not know what was safe to eat.²² Other prisoners foraged on the shore-line where access was not denied by mine-fields and ate seaweed or shell-fish. One worker once even managed to catch a shark which he exchanged for bread. Workers at the harbour were sometimes able to catch and eat raw octopus and conger eels, whose large size was probably due to their diet of dead Russians thrown off the end of the harbour break-water.²³ However, slave workers of the SS Bau Brigade were often shot if seen looking for food and others could be randomly punished.²⁴

The already starvation rations for most of the slave worker was diminished even more as the result of serious and systematic scams. Members of the SS Bau Brigade stole and sold the prisoners rations of food for a considerable profit, significantly reducing the already tiny rations.²⁵ It may be that some of the proceeds were used to create the SS still to make Schnapps and probably potatoes intended for the prisoners were diverted for making alcohol.²⁶ A similar scam was also operated by the OT canteen and stores until the perpetrators were caught and severely punished.²⁷ Also members of the French Petain Battalions swindled Jews out of food parcels that they had been commissioned to collect while on leave to France every three months.²⁸ One German was told that in fact the rations for the German Company and the Russians was supposed to be the same and given the starvation he saw among the Russians and the well-fed OT personalities indulging in specially imported prostitutes, he concluded that this indicated the scale of the profits and the scam.²⁹

There was also a gross shortage of water on the island and most drinking water had to be shipped in, thus the prisoners were often significantly dehydrated. This caused a widespread fever (Spirochetosis) with severe boils that killed many prisoners.³⁰ At Sylt there was a chronic lack of water and in the early stages of the SS camp prisoners had to wash their faces in their coffee before

drinking it, or use their own urine.³¹ There was a small spring near the camp used by prisoners to relieve their thirst, but one day vomiting among the prisoners led the SS to discover an unnoticed dead body submerged into the churned-up swamp around the spring when they sought to bring things into order.³²

The difficulties of arranging boats (as opposed to trains) to ship-out sick prisoners, to die or be exterminated elsewhere, meant that more worked-out prisoners died on the island.

Many of the prisoners suffered from constant exposure to the elements as the island was very wet and windy with little natural shelter and the weakened prisoners had to deal with greater exposure from the elements than on the main-land.

Finally, it was almost impossible to escape from Alderney, whereas on the Nord Pas de Calais escapes were common and many escapees were helped by local farmers, resistance or French railway men. The only feasible escape plan was to stow-away on board ship and the only known successful escape occurred when a prisoner, Ted Misiewicz, managed to take the place of a deceased worker on a transport to Cherbourg.³³

An informative and direct comparison of reported conditions can be made directly between the related OT camps in the Pas de Calais, as well as the Emsland group of camps and those on Alderney. A pattern of beatings, starvation, robbery, over-work, inadequate medical care, especially brutalisation by certain camp personnel and outright murder, are reported. A favoured method of murder, common to all concentration camps and used at Sylt, was to force prisoners across the camp boundary with dogs and SS threats, when they would be shot. In terms of mortality, a reading of the evidence suggests that perhaps 7-10 prisoners died each week in the SS run camps, sometimes more. One SS NCO was heard to comment that between March 1943 and November 1943, 140 prisoners died in Sylt alone, which accords with this estimate.³⁴

Two commissions were apparently conducted to investigate prisoner's conditions. One commission was sent out at the end of 1942, or early 1943, from Guernsey, by the island commander Zuske to inspect Helgoland and

Norderney, though the result of this commission is not clear, except that it was very limited and may simply have been an oral report the following day.³⁵

Another medical commission was sent in May or June 1943 to Alderney to investigate complaints about inhumane treatment of Russian prisoners. The commission found that of the 16,000 men brought to the island only 800 were left and these were ordered to be brought back to France. Some 450 were sent to hospital and the other given light duties in view of their condition.³⁶ There were some also slight ameliorations of conditions for prisoners.

In terms of disposal of victims, prisoners were often taken to burial in a special double coffin with a hinged base, which is suggestive of numbers, though there are also reports of more novel methods of disposal with larger numbers of prisoners being buried in pits on the beach at low-tide, others were dumped into the sea, off the breakwater, or off cliffs. Also, there are reports of dead prisoners being buried in trenches or found dumped or abandoned on the island. However, sick prisoners were often entirely removed from the island before they died (one group of up to 200 is reported), or were killed, which means actual mortality rates could have been higher and far greater than the suggested by actual burials found in 1945.

It may be that the temporary alleviation of conditions could have been linked to the work of a special relief organisation for Russian workers (ran by White Russians and a Madam Krylatova) who took an interest in the prisoners in Alderney and the Cherbourg area and that the organisation made some attempts to persuade the Russian workers to better their lot by joining in fighting in German units, such as General Vlassov Russian liberation Army from the end of 1942.

This was though the medium of sending entertainment troupes to entertain them and then talk to them informally and bringing food and clothing and to assign all whom were interested with a sponsor / 'Godmother' in Paris, the later whom claimed not be Nazi sympathisers, but who independence from the Nazis was in many cases doubtful.³⁷

One of the other figures important in this movement was a Mark Issachar Tzadek, who had been born in China, but has lived in Belgium before the war and went to Paris after the German occupation, where he supported the White

Russian cause and was appointed to support prisoners in camps around Cherbourg. It seems quite possible that he was of Jewish origins on the basis of his name, though he was not identified as such by the Germans.

The Russian Liberation Army, which conducted guard and anti-partisan duties on the Eastern Front were not found to be reliable (often defecting to the partisans side with their equipment) so they were sent to Cherbourg where most were happy to surrender to the Allies at the first opportunity. Some 70 Russians in German uniform were on Alderney. They were unarmed and used as ammunition carriers and fatigue troops. There were also some Russians specially trained in Paris used as camp guards.³⁸

The guards used special whips made of a rubber rod covered with a steel spiral with a plastic coating, again covered with a leather sock.³⁹

The Russians were largely withdrawn from Alderney by February 1944, but 900 multi-national political prisoners left and some 600 Jews and the political lived in Sylt Camp ⁴⁰.

In March 1944 Helgoland camp was disbanded and prisoners were transferred to Norderney. On the 6 – 7 May 1944, a major transportation of c. 800 Jews from Norderney, left Alderney, towards Neuengamme concentration camp. Some escaped en route, the remaining 500 are eventually diverted to Lager Tibor, at Dannes, and to Lager Braunek in Boulogne, due to bombing.

In June 1944, other Jews, Moroccans and Frenchmen were deported after D Day, some being sent to Lager Tibor, at Dannes, in the Pas de Calais.

On 26/27 June, 1944, immediately after liberation of Cherbourg, the last deportees left Alderney and were sent to Guernsey Jersey and thence to St Malo. Many deportees were killed in bombing raids or drowned.

On 4 September 1944 a fresh attempt was made to transport the Jews from the original transport of 6-7 May, to Neuengamme, but their train was stopped and liberated at Diksmuide in Belgium by the Resistance and this was effectively the end of the war-time history of the camps on Alderney.

Little justice was to be experienced by the former inmates of the camps. The former Russian inmates who survived and returned to their homeland were

not given a hero's welcome, but were treated with suspicion and were regarded as unpatriotic and felt unable to discuss their wartime experiences except with fellow former prisoners. Many of the 10% of the Russian cohort who had collaborated with the Germans were tried and sent to the Gulags in Siberia.

The only camp personnel ever to be tried were the camp leaders of the Jewish section of Lager Norderney, Adler and Evers, who were both tried and convicted, in France, in September 1949, on a charge of subjecting Jews to 'superhuman work' and 'systematic ill-treatment' and sentenced to ten and seven years in prison. However, List, while slated to be tried for war crimes, was never tried, and died at comfort in his home in Germany in the 1980s.

Key Dates

1940 – June, the British demilitarise Alderney and the Alderney islanders are mostly evacuated before invasion with only a small number remaining.

1940 - On 2 July a small force of Germans occupy Alderney.

1941 – In October and December, Hitler calls for the construction of the Atlantic Wall and for Alderney to be made into an impregnable fortress.

1942 – The Alderney concentration camps are constructed from January 1942. There were four main camps and two other smaller camps or komandos.

1942 – From early in this year a small camp, or komando, operates at Newtown, when Jewish forced labour and German political prisoners worked in the docks and in making the Lower Road.

1942 – In June/July the first Russians men and boys arrive in Alderney. Some were ostensible 'volunteers, other were violently press-ganged in Russia, some were POWs. Some are sent to Helgoland and Norderney Camps.

1942 – 1943 - Fortifications on Alderney are carried out, under the supervision of Organisation Todt and fortress engineers, using slave labour. As many as 16,000 prisoners pass through Alderney.

1942 – From the end of this year, a special relief organisation for Russian workers operates on the island, ran by White Russians and a Madam Krylatova.

They attempt to recruit Russians to join special German units for Russians. The desire to recruit Russians may account for slight ameliorations in conditions for Russians.

1942 – 1943 – A report sent to Guernsey, that a Russian had died of ‘under-nourishment’ at Helgoland Camp at the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, leads to the Wehrmacht inspecting both Heligoland and Norderney camps and led to some sick prisoners being sent for genuine medical treatment. In December 1942, 68 Russian patients are sent for medical treatment in Cherbourg. The medical commission sent in May or June 1943 to Alderney to investigate complaints about inhumane treatment of Russian prisoners finds that of the 16,000 men brought to the island only 800 were left and these were ordered to be brought back to France and a large transport of Russian prisoners are sent for medical treatment in Cherbourg, or reassignment to lighter duties, as the result of this medical commission.

1943 - In January 1943, 300 Russians are embarked to be transported to Cherbourg by the s/s ‘Xaver Dosch’, but severe storms kept the ship in port with the Russians kept in terrible conditions for three days packed below decks and 8-10 Russians die while in the hold. The Russians continued to be held without food or water for a total of 14 day and there was a great storm from 13-14 January and the ship was wrecked in the port killing many of the Russians locked in the holds. The remainder were then taken off to France in the ‘Francke’.

1943 – From 1 March, Lager Sylt (originally an OT camp for both Jewish and Russian prisoners) is placed under control of the SS Baubrigade and becomes a sub-camp of Neuengamme and the concentration camp prisoners arrived in the middle of 1943. This is the most westerly concentration camp in Europe and the only one on British territory.

1943 - In June 1943 SS Hauptstrumfuhrer Maximilian List becomes Commandant of Sylt Concentration Camp in Alderney. List is an architect by training and has a special chalet constructed at the camp as his residence.

1943 – On 10 July a group of 700 Jews are sent from Drancy camp to the Cherbourg area to work on the Atlantic wall and about half of these are sent on to Alderney to build ‘Fortress Alderney’, in August.

1943 - In November, some French Jewish prisoners are sent from Alderney to Lager Tibor at Dannes. It is estimated that c. 1,000 Jews are deported to Alderney and that c. 900 were French.

1942 – 1944 - Between June 1943 and June 1944, SS Hauptsturmführer Maximilian List and Lagerführer Puhr, order two special mass reprisal shootings of many political prisoners and Jews, after Allied raids on German towns. At least 50 – 100 prisoners are murdered in total.⁴¹

1944 – When most of the fortification work on Alderney is completed most slave labourers are deported to work on the Atlantic wall in France, and other locations, or sent to concentration camps, including Auschwitz.

1944 - The Russians are largely withdrawn from Alderney by February 1944, but 900 multi-national political prisoners left and some 650 Jews.

1944 - In March Helgoland camp is disbanded and prisoners are transferred to Norderney.

1944 – A major transportation of c. 800 Jews from Norderney leaves Alderney on 6-7 May, towards Neuengamme concentration camp. Some escaped *en route*, the remaining 500 are eventually diverted to Lager Tibor, at Dannes, and to Lager Braunek in Boulogne, due to bombing.

1944 – In June 1944, other Jews, Moroccans and Frenchmen are deported after D Day, some being sent to Lager Tibor, at Dannes, in the Pas de Calais.

1944 – On 26/27 June, immediately after liberation of Cherbourg, the last deportees leave Alderney and were sent to Guernsey Jersey and thence to St Malo. Many deportees were killed in bombing raids or drowned.

1944 - On 4 September 1944 a fresh attempt was made to transport the Jews from the original transport of 6-7 May, to Neuengamme, but their train was stopped and liberated at Diksmuide in Belgium by the Resistance.

1949 - The camp leaders of the Jewish section of Lager Norderney, Adler and Evers, are both tried and convicted, in France, in September 1949, on a charge of subjecting Jews to 'superhuman work' and 'systematic ill-treatment' and sentenced to ten and seven years in prison. List, while slated to be tried for war crimes, is never tried, and dies at his home in Germany in the 1980s.

Touring the Area

The Island of Alderney is of great World War II heritage importance because of its incredible amount and range of surviving Nazi physical heritage in a tiny area. In general it may well be the one place in Europe where the most forceful impression of life under Nazi occupation may be gained and in particular the experience of slave labour under the Third Reich. A number of the sites of slave labour camps and concentration camps are well preserved and have largely avoided re-development and there are a few significant physical remnants of the camps including huts and buildings and other structures and a plethora of the original work-sites also remain. By contrast the physical sites and remains of the linked OT and concentration camps, just across the Channel in Nord Pas de Calais, are nearly invisible, though the slave labour work-sites and works in concrete are still clearly visible.

All of these sites can readily be seen and explored by walking or cycling a circuit of the island and most of the sites have completely open access as one roams across the island. This heritage trail follows an anti-clockwise route around the island starting at St Annes.

St Anne's



The Luftwaffe Tower at St Annes; one of the most visible reminders of German occupation in St Annes.

The principal settlement and 'capital' of the island is St Anne's and while here there are few visible reminders of the German Occupation one of the most obvious is the Luftwaffe Tower, at Les Mouriaux. However, St Annes's was also the site of one of the minor camps, Citadella Camp.

Citadella Camp / Komando - Moroccan POW Billets / Camp

Remarkably, there is also a reference to many 'Arabs' being present on Alderney, many of whom were Moroccans and Berbers and were Muslims. One of the 'Arabs' was in fact a North African Jew.

Early on in the history of the occupation of Alderney, there was a camp, or perhaps komando, at St Annes, the Citadella Camp, though at some point the North Africans were distributed among the other camps.⁴² Citadella appears to have been a short-lived camp or Komando and the Moroccans were kept in a group of billets in St Anne's, bounded on the west by Hauteville, to the South by La Venelle Jeanette, to the east, by Marie Jean Bott, though little seems to be known about the camp.⁴³

New Town Camp

The camp, or what may perhaps be typified initially as a komando, at Newtown was used from early 1942, when Jewish forced labour and German political prisoners worked in the docks and in making the Lower Road. Cohen states, 'These workers were housed in vacated Islanders' homes in a wired off section of New Town', a similar arrangement to that at the Citidella camp.⁴⁴

A camp at Newtown can be seen in at least two of the historical photographs in the museum and show at least two rows of barracks huts, larger ancillary buildings and an adjacent compound surrounded by wire and its location as a 'Camp' is given on the British Map of Alderney showing military features.⁴⁵ It may well be a later version of the original camp, though further information is lacking. The camp site was on the block of land on the north side of the New Town Road, just west of Le Banquage.

Helgoland Camp, Camp no. 1. - Route de Picaterre, Platte Saline Bay



Helgoland Camp from the air showing hut bases and internal roads, after it had been dismantled. The beach depot can be seen to the north. (1949)

Helgoland was an OT Camp with a capacity for c. 1,500 labourers and came to house a significant number of Russian forced labourers. Some of the labourers were 'volunteers' (ostarbeiter) who came to earn extra money and were both in Helgoland and Norderney camps, though in reality the Germans has removed most other options from them. It was erected in the centre of the Platte Saline Bay south of the Route de Picaterre. Both Helgoland and Norderney Camp are understood to have been completed by mid-1942 and before this the prisoners were temporarily accommodated in empty houses.⁴⁶

The camp was surrounded with wire on concrete posts and contained plank huts paved around with grey slag, some of which were partly sunken in the ground for shelter. The huts contained two storey plank bed in pairs with a

narrow passage between each pair and had mattresses and pillows made of twisted paper. Prisoners had to use fern which grew between the huts, to fill the mattresses and pillows. The huts were only heated, by a stove during the day when the prisoners were at work!

The prisoners wore their own cloths, and these mostly went to rags and prisoner mostly had to improvise clothing using blankets and cement sacks, rope and pieces of wire and their hair was long, and un-cut, tangled and matted with concrete.

Prisoners were assigned to a number of companies, including, Stassenbau A.G. (or 'Strabag') and Debau, Westdeutsche, Kniffer, Deutchebau, A. G. Sager and Werner. Work-sites for the prisoners included the Battery Quarry and the stone plant near the harbour. Kondakov and other prisoners also constructed a new road from what Kondakov relays as 'Wattegates' (= Whitegates), to Fort Albert. Whitegates is the road junction on the railway 0.5km SE of Fort Albert, so this construction was the main road up to the fort.

The prisoners were encouraged to work with beatings with sticks and pick-axe handles and some would be kicked in the face for minor infringements. Running the gauntlet while being struck on the head was another punishment and prisoners were frequently killed if they failed to make the end of the corridor. Some were beaten to death as a result of these chastisements. For worse infractions prisoners would be sent to prison for shorter periods, usually 2-3 days. At the end of the working day prisoners were issued with a piece of coloured card with their name and number on which was exchanged for the meagre rations. At supper time they would receive a half loaf of bread every third or fourth day and be issued to with an inferior Soup'. At lunch they would also be given a very thin Bunker Soup at the work-site, which was often issued by the Black African employed at Norderney and who succeeded in terrifying both prisoners and SS men alike, with his temper and violence.

Many of the prisoners died of starvation and the sign of impending death was usually swelling of the body. Most suffered from vermin, particularly lice and fleas. Sometimes the prisoners would lie under blankets to lure the fleas, which would then 'jump over the blankets like rain beats against a roof'. The prisoners would then spring up and crumple the blankets and take them for

disposal out-side. At Christmas 1942, Zyklon B gas was used to fumigate the huts.

At one point in 1942, the island was swarming with rats which over-ran the barracks to the point that prisoners were rewarded with cigarettes for catching or killing the rats and since ration of bread could be purchased with a single cigarette, prisoners became keen rat catchers. The camp was policed in part by trained Russians guards collaborating with the Germans, and like so many of the *Kapo* class elsewhere, often exceeded the Germans in violence towards the prisoners.

Survival depended on prisoners co-operating with each other, particularly by making small friendship groups, often with compatriots from the same region, or even town or village.⁴⁷

Initially, Helgoland Camp was used for Dutch and French workers and some women, prior to June / July 1942, as well as some German prisoners and when the first Russians arrived in Alderney, the Russians were sent to Helgoland as well as Norderney. The cohort is also understood to have contained a number of Red Spaniard (Spanish Republicans). At the end of 1942 German prisoners were also transferred to Borkum.⁴⁸

Some Jewish prisoners were also held at Helgoland. Witnesses including three Russian OT workers, stated that Jews were held at Helgoland before being transferred to Norderney in Feb. 1944.⁴⁹

Kondakov also states that some of the 'Arabs' were housed at Helgoland, occupying half of Hut no. 6, and comprised approximately 80 men.

The Russians were in one half of Hut no. 6 (about 80 men), in Hut 7 (288 men), Hut 8, (320 men). Kondakov states that 1,000 Russians were at Helgoland.

One half of Hut 9, was a sick-bay and the other half a dead-hut for the dead (and sometimes not quite dead), before they were taken away for burial. One prisoner recalls narrowly avoiding being buried alive when he was severely ill. The only lavatory was near to Hut 9 and long queues of prisoners with diarrhoea caused by starvation or disease, would form out-side the door in the morning.⁵⁰

Prisoners were sometimes sent from Helgoland to Sylt for punishment. Johann Hoffmann, OT Commandant of Helgoland camp, stated that in early 1943, 70-75 'Russian' prisoners were transferred to Sylt. When released in December they were in a 'terribly emaciated' state and 10 to 15 died.⁵¹

However, the survival rate for Russian prisoners was the highest in Helgoland partly due to the fact that some of the Russians worked in the Harbour and were able to steal and forage food from vessels being discharged.⁵² However, it was the report which went to Guernsey, that a Russian had died of 'under-nourishment' at the Camp at the end of 1942, beginning of 1943, which led to the Wehrmacht inspecting both Heligoland and Norderney camps and led to some sick prisoners being sent for genuine medical treatment on the mainland, though some died in transit.⁵³

The conditions at Helgoland and Norderney Camps were also described in a report by Basilov and Pantcheff:

'Breakfast was half a litre of [ersatz] coffee without milk or sugar, lunch was half a litre of watery cabbage soup plus 1 kg of bread between 5-6 people. Two or three times a week 25gr of butter was distributed, very rarely, if at all, sausage, cheese or fresh vegetables, meat and sugar never ... foreign workers were not given any additional clothing in winter. Foreign workers worked 12 hours a day hard construction work. At midday there was a short break of 10-30 minutes. This regime continued 7 days a week ... only 1 Sunday a month they had a half day.'⁵⁴

It may be added to this account that the construction of bunkers would often require the prisoners to work non-stop for 36 hours or more while the concrete was being poured. The prisoners called this type of work a 'wedding party', perhaps due to the long preparations needed to get all the materials into place and the intensive all-consuming work to complete it. During one bunker construction 6 men out of 150 were 'lost' during the work, though no-one knew where. It may be that they fell into the mouldings? Prisoners were then allowed to sleep for 2 days after a 'wedding party'.

OT Haupttruppführer Johann Hoffmann stated that 'between September/October 1943 and January 1944, all the Russians except about 20

were evacuated from Helgoland Camp ... In March 1944, Helgoland camp was disbanded and transferred to Norderney'.⁵⁵

OT Haupttruppführer Johann Hoffmann escaped punishment at the end of the War for his part in the suffering of prisoners on Alderney.⁵⁶

Little remains of the camp today, excepting the gate posts of the camp entrance which form the entry to modern-day suburban bungalows! The gates originally had the name of the camp in Gothic letters affixed upon them.⁵⁷ These can be seen opposite Platte Saline Bay on the Route de Picaterre and can be recognised by the distinctive moulded concrete bases (for example outside Bungalow 'Quatrieme').⁵⁸



The remains of a gate post of Lager Helgoland one of the few remains of the camp which was dismantled before the end of the War by the Germans.

Borkum Camp

Borkum was an OT Labour Camp which Davenport states was largely for skilled workers, including Germans and volunteers from occupied countries and conditions here were better than the other camps with workers avoiding mistreatment. The camp accommodated around 500 – 1,000 workers.⁵⁹

The camp was sited either side of a road leading SSE of the Longis Road, just 150m east of the junction of the Longis Road with Val Longis.

It is stated by witnesses, that Norderney and Helgoland were both completed by mid-1942. The prisoner cohort initially included Spanish Republicans. At the end of 1942 German workers were transferred to Borkum and Pantcheff stated in his 1946 report, that in 1943, Borkum was used primarily for German conscripted OT workers. Borkum also some held Dutch workers. Some women came to Borkum in 1944.⁶⁰ The women employed officially as cooks and washerwomen, were often brought in by the OT to work in reality as prostitutes, and charged for their services and there were at least 100 employed by the OT, though venereal disease was rife on the island.⁶¹

At the end of the War the British took over the camp and called it Camp Minerva.⁶²

The camp has some important visible remains. The concrete gate posts still survive on either side of the road to the 'improt' recycling centre and many of the concrete hut bases survive at the core of the camp, just SE of the gate, as well as other incidental concrete structures and bunkers around what may well have been the Appel Platz.



The surviving gates of Lager Borkum

OT Camp and Lazarette – East of Borkum

The British situation map⁶³ shows an additional OT camp at a location the Germans called 'Borkumhauser' around 400 NE of Lager Borkum, and further east along the Longis Road, south of its fork with the Route de Carrieres, and set around Barrackmaster's Lane, which is partly continuous with Lager Borkum. The nature of its occupants and use are not clear, though the camp was close to the house occupied by the superintendent of all of the OT works who was lodged at Essex House (now Devereux House) and there were additional huts and associated houses nearby as well as the OT Lazarette.

OT Lazarette Hospital – Longis Villas / Barrackmaster's Lane



The former German hut and Lazarette next to no. 1 & 2. Longis Villas

The map also shows the OT Lazarette or hospital, adjoining and to the east of this camp. Overlay work suggests that as many as four buildings survive from the camp, or modern buildings occupy their foot print. A local guide also told us on our fieldwork visit that his home is the former OT hospital on the Longis Road and also two of the OT convalescent huts survive, but much altered on the Barrack Master's Lane. A concrete slab of an OT hut also survives next to (West) of nos. 1-2 Longis Villas.⁶⁴

One of the more remarkable stories attaches itself to the OT hospital. Madame Krylatova, who led a white Russian attempt to recruit Russian prisoners to fight for the Germans, came to Alderney with an entertainment troupe. She was also, 'accompanied by a Greek Orthodox Priest in full regalia. They also visited the hospital where the informant (g) was sick bay attendant. He states that they called all the patients together to hold a service for the dead. The Russian prisoners, most of who have rarely, if ever, seen a religious service, were laughing whilst the incense was being burned and when the priest in conclusion invited them to kiss the cross, none would come up. This rather upset Madam Krylatova'.⁶⁵

Sylt Camp



Outside of the gates of Camp Sylt, the most western SS concentration camp and the only concentration camp on British territory. The gates were frequently used for the execution of prisoners.

This camp was situated at what now the end of the runway of Alderney airport and all passengers flying into the island fly over the remains of the camp, just before touch-down.

Lager Sylt was initially an OT camp set up for both Jewish and Russian prisoners, between 1942 – 1944. It became an SS camp in 1943 – it was a sub-camp of Hamburg - Neuengamme concentration camp and the concentration camp prisoners arrived in the middle of 1943 and many were classed as political prisoners. The Jews were segregated in a special section of the camp. It has the notoriety of being both the only SS concentration camp on British soil and the most westerly concentration camp in Nazi Europe and has the most notorious reputation of all the camps on Alderney.

Kondakov felt that the camp was 'gloomy and ill-provided'. The prisoners mainly worked in West Batterie area for Company Neumauer, for 12 – 14 hours each day.⁶⁶ The prisoners rose at 5.30am and had to wash in troughs in the open, collected their soup ration and were ready to work by 6.am.⁶⁷ This work-site was very exposed and well-guarded with wire and mines and only a single entrance, which meant that prisoners could not readily forage other

food. Kondakov, after the War only managed to find three survivors of this camp.⁶⁸

They also worked on road building and repair near a location Kondakov calls 'Turgy Fort' (probably Fort Tourgis, or 'Turkenburg' a strong point in a Victorian fort on the NW corner of the island, just west of Plat Saline Bay⁶⁹), as well as cable laying. The latter task was one of the most difficult and heavy work as they had to fulfil massive quotas of excavation. It was also dangerous as in one incident 7 men were buried and killed under a collapse of 10m of sand at Braye Square. They also worked in the Quarry excavating granite, which was turned into road metal at the stone processing plant near the harbour and they also worked on the breakwater in the harbour.⁷⁰

German witnesses state also that there were Russians, Spaniards, Frenchmen, women and OT personnel as well as Russian Policemen at the camp. The Russian Policemen were hand-picked villains sent to Paris for special training as warders. Many of the Russians had been sent to the camp as a punishment from other camps. Prisoners were as elsewhere regularly beaten with rubber hoses.⁷¹

The camp was notorious for its starvation of prisoners, more so than the other camps and they persisted for longer than the other camps in giving bread once a week.⁷²

The gates are infamous as an execution site – starving Russian POWs were crucified on the gates for alleged theft of food, or attempting to escape.⁷³ In another case one of the 'Arabs' called Abdulla, attempted to escape for a second time. He had been sent to Sylt as a punishment from one of the other camps for violence, as it had been arranged by the OT to use Sylt as a correctional facility for its own reactionaries, and some 60 prisoners had suffered this fate. On his first escape he had violently resisted the guards; on his second escape he was found sitting on the stones at the sea-shore and was taken with no resistance. He was crucified on the camp gate as his punishment and it may be noted that Abdulla was in all probability a Muslim victim of the Nazis.

Prisoners were often forced by dogs across the wire by the SS, and shot by the sentries, if they disliked them. One German stated that in the two months he visited the camp there were 10 such cases.⁷⁴

The camp was placed under control of SS Baubrigade and sub-camp of Neuengamme, from 1 March 1943 and transportations to extermination camps commenced in July. '1,000 prisoners were initially transferred to Sylt from Sachsenhausen concentration camp including 500 Russians, 130 Poles, 60 Dutch, 20-30 Czechs, 20 French, and 180 German 'work-shy', criminals and political prisoners.'⁷⁵

The arrival of this group of prisoners made a powerful impression on the other prisoners. The Baubrigade arrived at the harbour and it seemed to the other prisoners that the slaves of the Baubrigade has been chosen for their stature and strength and looked at that point well-fed and all were in their striped grey KZ pyjamas with different coloured insignia – strips, triangles, numbers attached to indicate their prisoner status. They filed in a great column, two by two, flanked by their guards and SS men, to occupied Sylt Camp.⁷⁶

At this point 300 OT slaves remained in the camp and were segregated into three separate huts from the SS prisoners, but were moved out by May to Helgoland, once the SS prisoners had cleaned and restored the camp and added barbed wire and watchtowers.⁷⁷

The discipline in the SS camp was severe. Prisoners could be heavily beaten for a lost button or torn jacket, or killed for having a louse found on them and public executions took place regularly in the camp.

Prisoners were paradoxically obliged to have baths and it maybe that the underground ablutions block dates from the SS period of the camp and could well have been used by the prisoners. They were also it is claimed, better fed, being given half a loaf of bread a day, though their labour was even more extreme than for the OT workers.⁷⁸

Sylt, with Norderney Camp, was the centre of the worst abuses and deaths of prisoners. The death rate at Sylt has been asserted as being around 70%.⁷⁹

Most of the Russians were withdrawn from the camp by February 1944 and this left some 900 political prisoners at Sylt.⁸⁰

The site of the camp is almost impossible to miss because it is just off the end of the runway for the island's airport and you have to fly over it just before you touch-down! From the ground the camp is approached from the west by a track or road skirting around and behind the airport which is left off the road just before the Telegraph Tower.

It has some dramatic remains which makes this exposed and windy site of considerable and international heritage importance.

Most notably the three gate pillars of the SS Concentration Camp survive intact and were the site of crucifixions of Russians and at least one Muslim North African.

A plaque was attached to one of the gates in 2008 at a ceremony attended by two of the only survivors of the camp and their families.

The plaque reads:

‘THESE GATE POSTS MARK
THE ENTRANCE TO THE FORMER
GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP
‘S.S. LAGER SYLT’
SOME 100 PRISONERS DIED HERE
BETWEEN
MARCH 1943 AND JUNE 1944
THIS PLAQUE WAS PLACE BY
EX PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES
2008

There are several concrete hut platforms surviving, though they are increasingly grown over, though one is in good condition next to the track leading to the gate. This appears to be one of the former SS huts in the SS compound just west of the main gates (with an SS concrete shelter surviving close by) and were with the Commandant's Villa, the only surviving buildings on the site at the end of the War. Some of the huts were sunken 1.5m into the ground for protection from the wind as well as blast protection. Some huts in Pas de Calais were also sunken in identical fashion.

There are two conical sentry posts, one set in dense undergrowth, though one is more easily accessible next to one of the out-laying airport buildings. The one in the dense undergrowth, I was informed, has one of the few physical evidences of the Jewish prisoner presence on the island, as there is a small Star of David moulded into the concrete. However, this is probably only accessible in the winter when the encroaching vegetation has died down. There are two small personnel bunkers also still on site.

One of the most dramatic remains is a tunnel which connects the site of the Commandant's House and its terrace, with the main body of the camp via an under-ground room with a large basin in it, thought by some to be an ablutions block and one rises up by some concrete steps through vegetation to the main camp area. The commandant villa is set a little lower than the main camp shelter in a small chine (the Val Emauve) directly over-looking the sea, a pleasant location, close to, but out of sight of the camp. The foundations and terrace for the commandant's villa can still be seen, albeit very over-grown next to the entrance of the tunnel. The commandant's villa itself actually survives and was moved just post-war for islander accommodation at the end of the war down towards Longis Common.⁸¹



The Sylt tunnel looking back towards its exit to List's Chalet.

It is said that the Villa was designed for, or by, the Commandant, Maximilian List, who was an architect in Berlin before he joined the SS and was in charge of several camps and moved to Sylt direct from Neuengamme concentration

camp. It is asserted that List had the chalet built in imitation of Adolf Hitler's Berghof. List later took control of Lager Norderney. In June 1943, workers being deported back to Neuengamme escaped, and he was subject to a disciplinary enquiry in September 1943. List left the island in March 1944 and at the end of the War escaped justice even though a case citing Alderney had been prepared against him. It is thought that he died near his home near Hamburg in the 1980s.⁸²

Norderney Camp (Camp no. 2) – Saye Bay



Norderney Camp in an Allied aerial photograph from World War II

Norderney Camp was just inland of Saye Bay and beach and was a camp for slave labourers, mainly Russians, French, Czech, Dutch and Spanish, as well as some German volunteers. It had a maximum capacity of 1,500 housed in wooden huts built by a Belgium company and workers.⁸³ It also had Jews as well as 'Arabs' from Algeria and Morocco working for the OT.⁸⁴ Some or all of these had arrived in a convoy from Compiègne, on September 9, 1943.⁸⁵ There were also women in the camp in separate barracks.⁸⁶ There were as many as

27 different nationalities represented in the camp, a common-wealth of suffering.⁸⁷

The French Jews according to the witness statement of T. Misiewicz, arrived in mid-1943, when he and other prisoners had been moved from Norderney to Helgoland to make room for the French. The testimony of Reuven Freidman, suggests that there may have been 800 Jews in the camp.⁸⁸

The Jews were, as was normally the case, segregated in a camp within the camp, with its own gates, with its own canteen (and the Jews received the least food) which was mostly ran by SS man Truppfu. Ewertz and also SS Untersurnführer/OT Haupttruppführer Adam Adler.⁸⁹ Ewertz (or Evas) is identified in intelligence documents as one of the chief torturers of the Jews when they were moved into Norderney Camp and frequently beat Jews to death.⁹⁰ Adler was a Nazi stalwart, as he was number 33 in the Nazi party – many camp leaders were Nazi diehards, and other staff tended to be those who were too old for active service, or were disabled by wounds, or were defectives'. The mortality rate of the Jewish cohort in this and other camps means that there are few testimonies of Jewish inmates of these camps.

Albert Eblagon recalls his terrifying arrival at Norderney from France, before entering the verminous barracks assigned to them: 'We arrived at night and disembarked on 15 August 1943, at three o'clock in the morning. In the darkness we were forced to run the two kilometres to Camp Norderney, while the German guards continuously stabbed into our backs with their bayonets while also kicking us all the time'.⁹¹

Eblagon also recalls that the Jews and other prisoners were subject to the most exacting conditions mainly working in concrete: 'There were many men among us over seventy years of age but nobody was spared. Work, hard physical work for twelve and fourteen hours a day, every day, building the fortifications. Every day there were beatings and people's bones were broken, their arms or their legs. People died from overwork. We were starved and worked to death, so many died from total exhaustion.' From time to time prisoners who fell into the concrete castings as they were being poured, would not be rescued as the Germans did not want to stop the machinery and would become part of the

fortification.⁹² These conditions were replicated in the Jewish camps in the Nord Pas de Calais.

Remarkably some of the older Jewish prisoners managed to pray in secret and managed to conceal *kippot* (skull caps), prayer-shawls, and candles for Friday night (*Shabbat*).⁹³ It may be noted that Jews often sought to carry-out prayer and ritual in many of the concentration camps and obtained the materials to do so.

The Jewish prisoners here (and across the Channel in France) wore civilian clothing, with the Jewish Star painted on their back, and a white stripe painted down the side of each trouser leg, a marking renewed each day from barrels of paint at the camp gate.⁹⁴

The Russians arrived in June / July 1942 and were distributed among Norderney and Helgoland camps.

Some of the prisoners were overseen by Russian Police who were cruel to the prisoners. In one case a father and son were in the camp and the son joined the police and would show no mercy to his own father and would beat him severely.⁹⁵ One Russian Policeman, Toli Kosoi, specialised in kicking prisoners in the face and would sometimes stand on a chair to do this. He also joined in the 'hunting party' seeking out prisoners to attack, if they delayed getting back to camp.

One of personalities who stood out at Norderney (and was part of the notorious hunting party) and had a notorious reputation was a black French man or Black African employed and trained to work at the camp by SS men Karl Dietz and Eberts (the camp leaders). Dietz trained him to carry out the camp floggings and he would also go with Dietz (nick-named 'Raus' by the inmates because he regularly shouted this order) and a Russian Policeman in the camp to 'hunt' prisoners lagging behind on the way back to camp foraging for food (or begging it from the German soldiers) and Kondakov relates, 'those who fell in sight of these three usually became disfigured corpses in a few minutes' and Shuller relates that late returnees to the camp would be beaten with rubber hoses. There are a number of accounts about him, such was the impression he made on both prisoners and SS as he terrified both and was one of the cruellest men in the camp. He was a man of great stature and strength,

employed to work at the kitchen and as a butcher and to distribute Bunker Soup at the work-place. He could pick up one of the great urns filled with 35l of soup with one hand, with no visible effort. On one occasion a prisoner came back for Bunker Soup a second time at the work-place and incurred his wrath and he killed him with a single blow to the head with the soup ladle – the man died in two hours.⁹⁶ He would also habitually beat prisoners for any infringements in the vicinity of the kitchen. One prisoner who was caught trying to get waste peas out of a barrel, was drawn over to the African by a German and given a beating that he considered to be the worst experience of his life and the beatings that day, of him and a Ukrainian, left blood all over the kitchen. Another prisoner reported barely surviving being hit in the chest by a plank. Even the SS were frightened of him and he would even argue with them. However, when his SS mentor and employer Dietz was removed for theft of food, and black-marketeering of cigarettes and 'illegal purchases' of watches, etc., from the Dutch prisoners, and was sentenced to one and a half years of penal servitude, he became vulnerable and a group of SS attempted to punish him in an isolated room. A great fracas broke out and he was only subdued, shot and killed, after killing one SS and crippling several others. His story shows how the line between the oppressed and the oppressor was often a fine one.⁹⁷

The prisoners worked for 10 – 12 hours a day on a diet of thin soup a small portion of bread and butter and ersatz coffee. Prisoners had to resort to begging, stealing, or forging their daily food coupon to get additional food, particularly as some prisoners at the end of the line for food in the canteen would get nothing.⁹⁸

The Russian prisoners were mostly poorly clothed and many were in rags with concrete sacks wrapped around their legs as all of their clothes were worn out and the OT companies only rarely provided new clothing for inmates, which in any case was completely inferior in quality.⁹⁹

The main work-sites were the Battery Quarry (for Company Westdeutsche). Battery Quarry (the Granite Quarry) over-looks Braye Bay and is next to the railway.¹⁰⁰

The camp had a barrack with 20-30 beds used as a 'hospital', though in reality it was an ante-chamber for death as it was mostly filled with dying prisoners.¹⁰¹ At the height of the deaths in the camp, some 12 prisoners were dying each day.¹⁰²

The men were threatened with death in case of Allied invasion in the Arch Bay Tunnel as the island commanders and List had been instructed to kill KZ prisoners in this event. The tunnel in Norderney has a most sinister significance as it was intended that in the case of invasion the prisoners would be walled-in to exterminate them and there was rehearsals where prisoners were herded in to test its potential at the point of a machine-gun.¹⁰³ It has been noted that Zyklon B gas was on the island and used as a fumigant anti-vermicide, though it is not clear if it was on hand for more sinister purposes.

In March 1944 the camp received the remaining labourers from Helgoland Camp when the latter was destroyed.¹⁰⁴

The Russians were deported in September to October 1943 and January 1944. The Red Cross also recorded that two groups of Jews and North Africans, each of around 200 men were, 'transferred from Norderney Camp to an unknown destination because they were unable to work' in January and March 1944

Other Jews, Moroccans and Frenchmen were deported in June 1944, after D Day, some were sent to Lager Tibor, at Dannes, near Boulogne in the Pas de Calais. The major transportation of some 800 Jews from Norderney left Alderney on 6-7 May 1944, they disembarked at Cherbourg and were entrained via Boulogne towards Neuengamme concentration camp, though some managed to escape near Boulogne with the help of French railway workers and other escapes were made along the line. The remaining prisoners found themselves diverted by Allied bombing to Hazebrouck, where the youngest prisoners were taken to Lager Tibor, at Dannes, to work repairing bomb damage and the oldest to Lager Braunek at the Lycee Mariette in Boulogne. On 4 September 1944 a fresh attempt was made to transport the Jews to Neuengamme concentration camp and they were entrained in a transport that was stopped at Diksmuide in Belgium by the resistance and the Jews rescued and helped until the Canadian liberation just days after.¹⁰⁵

At the end of war, some of the only camp personnel to be successfully tried for their crimes in the camps were the camp leaders of the Jewish camp, Adler and Evers. They were both tried at the Tribunal Militaire Permanent de Paris at Caserne de Reuilly in September 1949, on a charge of subjecting Jews to 'superhuman work' and 'systematic ill-treatment'. And were respectively sentenced to ten and seven years in prison.¹⁰⁶

Remains of the camp



The site and remains of Norderney Camp today (part of the original kitchen block and the Commandant's house remains) – now in use as a recreational camp site.

The site of the camp and its perimeter remains intact and is today used as a recreational camp site and campers now pitch their tents on the sites of the former barrack huts! The kitchen block for the modern campers apparently incorporates the German camp kitchen and Davenport has seen the German shuttering marks on the walls.¹⁰⁷ It will be recalled that the kitchen was the site of murder and beatings.

The pre-war farm house from which the modern recreational camp site is run and which was the Commandant's House, for Dietz and the others, is still extant.

The infamous tunnel to the beach on Arch Bay survives, where the inmates were threatened with mass death in case of an Allied invasion.



The infamous tunnel to the beach on Arch Bay survives, where the inmates were forced to rehearse their deaths on two occasions in the case of an Allied invasion.

The Battery Quarry and Stone Plant – off New Town Road



The Battery Quarry was one of the toughest work-sites for the prisoners of the SS. The stone was an important resource for the fortification works on the island.

The Battery Quarry, close to West Batterie, is south of the New Town Road, where it crosses the railway-line and was the major work-sites for the prisoners from Norderney and Helgoland, including Jewish prisoners and was regarded as one of the toughest worksites. Kondakov notes that the SS prisoners were employed to quarry the blue granite or on the breakwater. Prisoners also worked at the stone plant near the harbour and parts of the concrete structure of what appears to be the stone plant stand either side of the railway line close to the quarry. Contemporary photographs reveal the significant industrial scale of the stone plant and a large cable-way going up into the quarry. Kondakov recalls seeing the slaves in their striped uniforms being lined up before taking the narrow path to the deep quarry, '... as if it were their way to Hell'. The quarry stone was used for the construction of the breakwater and the stone processed at the stone plant was for road metal and the employing company was Westdeutsche.¹⁰⁸ The construction leaders in Alderney were able to report to Himmler that the island was self-sufficient in stones, coarse gravel, and split from the produce of the quarry by 1943.¹⁰⁹

West Batterie

West Batterie was ran by the OT firm Neumauer and employed men from Sylt. This was the site with the highest death rate of about 70%, though its precise location is not clear.¹¹⁰

Anti-Tank Wall - Longis Common



The massive Anti-tank wall at Longis Common, consumed 20,000 tons of concrete and cost the lives of many slave labourers – it was one of the worst work sites on the island.

This concrete defensive wall was the main labour of the Jewish forced labour contingent on Alderney and they were employed by the firm of Wolfer and Goebel. The wall consumed 20,000 tons of concrete and cost hundreds of Jewish lives. The anti-tank wall was one of the worst places to work and was called by the Russians 'Volnaya Gibel' 'Inevitable Death', or 'Free-Will Suicide', as the name of the OT firm at the site, 'Wolf and Goebbel' sound like free-will suicide in Russian and due to the severity and mortality of the work there.¹¹¹

The wall was 1.2m thick and 600m in length and extended by a line of tetroids across the promontory as far as the track.¹¹²

The site of the Jewish cemetery is nearby, though our research has shown that the Nazis deliberately destroyed much of the cemetery to hide the true mortality among Jewish prisoners.

At one end of the wall is a concrete decoration showing a copy of the Edelweiss, the National Flower of Austria and is the adopted symbol of the Austrian Mountain Divisions, as well as German Mountain Divisions. The concrete decoration is almost certainly copied from the Edelweiss cap badge, though it differs with the addition of one additional leaf. It is possible that the presence of an Austrian construction battalion on the island, engaged in the fortification works, could account for the emblem.

German Cemetery



The German Cemetery depicted during or at the end of the war. The cemetery has now been largely dismantled.

During the war German soldiers were buried with some pomp and ceremony and a guard of honour before a tall wooden cross.¹¹³

At the end of the War the German cemetery was the best kept of the war-cemeteries on the island, largely because post-war 13 Germans POW remained for a period renovating property and tending their comrade's graves.¹¹⁴ Now virtually all traces of the cemetery have gone apart from a grave stone and the main memorial plaque.

These prisoners appear to have erected the memorial reading:

'I live and you shall live too - John, 19-20

Our dead comrades

German Prisoners of War, in Alderney'

Commandant List's Chalet – Longis Common



The Chalet of SS Commandant, Maximilian List still survives and was moved to its present location at Longis Common at the end of the War. The chalet has been extended at either end. (Please note this is a private residence)

Remarkably the chalet built for Commandant, Maximilian List still survives. At the end of war when housing was in short supply islanders were able to buy old huts for housing. Harry Griffiths brought List's Chalet and moved it away from original site at Sylt, down the Longis Road, where it was re-erected. At some point the property was extended, but List's Chalet still forms the centre of the house and can be seen from the Longis Road north of Longis Bay.

Site of Russian Cemetery - Longis Common



The Russian Cemetery at Longis Common photographed after the War and before the exhumation and repatriation of the Russian remains. (Ph. Alderney Museum)

While we may never know how many slave labourers died on Alderney, there was undoubtedly a very high mortality rate among the starved and abused prisoners. However, since the slave labour camps were not extermination camps as such, a significant proportion of the worked out prisoners in the final stage of their lives, were sent back to the continent to die, or to be explicitly exterminated, at other locations, or camps.

The Germans evidently struggled to keep up with the constant flow of the dead from the camps and how to dispose of them and the dead were treated with utter disrespect by the NSKK group who were responsible for the disposals. There are multiple witness accounts that the Germans, at the beginning, just threw the dead into the sea off the end of the breakwater, or buried them in the beaches at the low water-mark and then let the tide take them away, though this meant in fact a lot of bodies were floating around the island, or submerged around the breakwater as observed by a number of independent witnesses.¹¹⁵ They also increasingly buried prisoners in opportunistic burial sites, such as trenches,¹¹⁶ before latterly adopting more

formal burial grounds, the main one of which was at Longis Common and a smaller one at St Anne's Church. Accounts also relate that two mass graves of 83 and 48 bodies were found by British forces at the liberation, the victims of mass shootings. A German, Prekshatt, who worked for Commandant Zuske stated 'a truck collected the naked corpses which were taken off the truck with pitchforks and thrown into a general grave'.¹¹⁷ Therefore the identified grave sites only represent a proportion and not the totality of the actual slave worker mortalities on and off Alderney, and the number of bodies disinterred from the identified cemeteries at the end of the war only represent an absolute minimum figure.

Georgi Kondakov, prisoner reported:

'Lack of elementary living conditions, over-crowding, cold and starvation, brutal treatment and unbearable work for 12-14 hours a day - all this resulted in mass destruction of Russians. Ukrainians and Poles. Every morning a number of motionless bodies could be found in their beds and those who were still alive had to go away to killing work...'

While the rest of the workers were at their work injured prisoners would help dispose of the bodies. 'When all the prisoners were led away to work, those, who like me had damaged hands, pulled bodies out of the plank beds and then carried them to the huts which stood in the fern. Those huts were empty, only corpses lay there. Usually a lorry arrived to take them away, but sometimes it did not come for several days. Crowds of rats which occupied the huts gnawed ears, noses and so on. A constant squealing could be heard there. When the tip lorry arrived we loaded it with 20-25 bodies.'¹¹⁸

The Russian Cemetery was reputed to have been created in late 1942, because the newly arriving Frontfuhrer was not pleased to see Russian Corpses floating in the sea. Kondakov, and the other prisoners were told at Christmas 1942 that hence forth they would receive burial in coffins and have crosses, by the order of the new Frontfuhrer, though in reality only a single reusable coffin with a trap-door at the bottom and the prisoner went to what was probably a trench with no grave marker.¹¹⁹

The mortality rates in the camps is a matter of dispute, but the figure was certainly in the many hundreds and Partridge gives the total number of Russian

deaths as 687 (based on numbers of actual located burials), though an MI5 report of February 1944 states that an informant had told them that 843 Russians died out of 2000 and some 500/600 buried at Longis Common.¹²⁰ One MI 19 report of 6 July 1944, states that in one period of 12 months 700 Russians died on Alderney.¹²¹

Pantchef found 389 burials of forced labourers and prisoners, corresponding to the cemeteries at Longis Common and St Annes, but this does not take into account other opportunistic burial sites, such as in trenches, or in the beaches, and disposal at sea, etc.¹²² However, it is known that there was substantially covered-up by false accounting of deaths by camp officers, to avoid getting into trouble with superiors on the continent for having too high death rates.¹²³ Also, in many cases more than one prisoners was interred in each grave. Towards the end of the war the Germans attempted to cover up the extent of Russian deaths by tearing up the crosses and levelling the ground at the Russian cemetery and there was also widespread failure to properly record deaths.¹²⁴ However, there seems to be some consensus among eye-witnesses and researchers that the mortality rate among the Russians was around 50% and might have even amounted to several thousands, across all prisoner and nationality groups, though because of the fog or war and deliberate Nazi attempts to cover-up the true mortality rate, we will never know.

After the war, in 1962, the Russian cemetery was exhumed and the remains sent for reburial in Cherbourg in France. However, remote survey work carried out by M. Roberts and C. Sturdy Colls in 2007, using aerial imagery suggests that the desecration of the cemetery and its boundaries by the Germans may have meant that some of Russian remains could still be in situ and initial survey results on the ground were suggestive of additional burials.¹²⁵

Site of Jewish Cemetery Longis Common



The Jewish Cemetery and graves at Longis Common, in a photograph taken at the end of the war and before the exhumation and removal of the Jewish remains. The marker board was provided by the Allies.

At the end of War eight Jewish burials were identified at the NW edge of the Russian burial ground and marked with a sign by the British forces. Eye-witness testimony makes it clear that more than 8 Jews died on Alderney. Some of this number may have been subject to irregular disposal, on, or just off, Alderney, though many may also have met their end at extermination camps in Eastern Europe, particularly as the Nazis were keen to make sure that they made up their transportation quotas, which was the reason for the premature transportation of many of the Jews originally deported from Belgium, being sent on to Auschwitz, from the camps in NW France, only weeks after their arrival and commencing work on the Atlantic Wall in 1942. This is to say that the Nazis may well have been under pressure *not* to have a

high mortality of Jews on Alderney itself and which is why the number of official Jewish graves here, as well as at the camps in NW France, are small.

The OT on Alderney had their own transportation office in the harbour for the shipment of OT workers, so the machinery for mass-transportation of worked out prisoners and Jews was in place and will be described more fully later.¹²⁶ It may be noted that among the linked Jewish concentration camps in the region of Boulogne that 6 graves survive, but nearly 97% of the Jewish labourers on the Atlantic Wall died on, or soon after their deportation to Auschwitz, just 3-4 months into their labours, in 1942.

Three sets of remains were exhumed and reburied by their families before 1961. Then the remaining bodies were removed and interred by the German War Graves Commission and reburied at Mont de Huisnes German Military Cemetery at La Manche, France in 1961, since an international agreement deemed the remains of forced labourers were to be 'counted to the German war dead'. This irregular conclusion was challenged by the 'Les Amicales des Anciens Deportees' which led to the remains being finally removed to a vault in the Cimatiere de Saint Ouen, Seine-St Denis, on 19 May 1963.¹²⁷

The general location of the centre of the site of the Russian and Jewish Cemetery, is readily identifiable, as contemporary records and maps and more OS modern maps, agree as to the location of the site, if not all of its exact boundaries and its physical extent. Also, there are physical traces on the ground in the form of ditches around portions of the cemetery. For those with GPS the centre of the location is 49°43'23.31"N, 2°10'31.04"W and can be found using a mobile phone (if there is a phone signal) or GPS device. The small Jewish section is approximately at 49°43'22.27"N, 2°10'29.61"W

In terms of the physical evidence from the air, World War II aerial imagery from April 1945 and the Royal Engineers Map of 6 March 1945, show a main rectangular burial site with disturbed ground in 7 main burial rows which show up as dark and light strips (with unmarked graves), running roughly N – S, where the bulk of the interments were to be found. The regular burial earthworks suggests that the graves were formed of long, 50m trenches, into which the burials were introduced, rather than perhaps individually constructed graves. This would accord with the eye-witness statement of

Petro Zadko, a Ukrainian prisoner, who stated in a letter to the Alderney Society, 'the dead people were thrown into a dug ditch. There are a lot of people buried there.'¹²⁸

There is additional aerial evidence that might support a conjecture that the Germans were in fact using re-using an area that had already been trenched, or otherwise used to extract sand or building materials. This can be seen in an aerial photograph of 1943, which shows the later main burial area as a high-contrast white area, suggesting exposed sand, or other materials and interestingly, the area that was also used for the 43 'unknown Soviet burials' along the diagonal east boundary of the cemetery, also shows as a pure white strip and so also is the area of Jewish burials and yet by 1945 are largely obscured and dark, by in-fill and vegetation.¹²⁹ This gives some rationale for the groupings of the burials in the burial site and also supports observations from elsewhere that the Germans would use opportunistic burial opportunities and that perhaps to add further indignity upon the dead, they were effectively back-fill for the construction works.

The aerial photography shows that the burial area was the west side of a much larger irregular shaped plot extending eastwards, which is shown on both the official plan of the Russian Cemetery at the Alderney Museum and the Ordinance Survey Map which show the larger site.¹³⁰ The eight Jewish graves are shown on the official burial plan as being on the southern boundary, east of the main burial area. Furthermore the official plan also records a further 43 'unknown Soviet burials' along the diagonal east boundary of the cemetery and the aerial photography again shows evidence of trench along the boundary. An examination of the aerial material also suggests a possible extension of the cemetery site further south of the recorded area, though without an archaeological geophysical survey of the ground (which is planned to take place), it would be difficult to ascertain if this is part of a pre-war or war-time feature, or could provide evidence of the claim that the Germans bulldozed part of the cemetery.

The cemetery can be readily located by the use of local landmarks by the visitor. The very south-western corner of the Russian section of the cemetery is virtually 210m, due north of the gate of the 'Nunnery' a prominent landmark. If you do not have a compass and you turn around at 210m north

from the Nunnery and then look back towards the gate of the Nunnery, the corner of the cemetery is then on an absolutely direct sight-line with the gate of the Nunnery and the most northerly end of the wall of the prominent English Fort Essex, and the Jewish cemetery location is 50m SEE of this point.



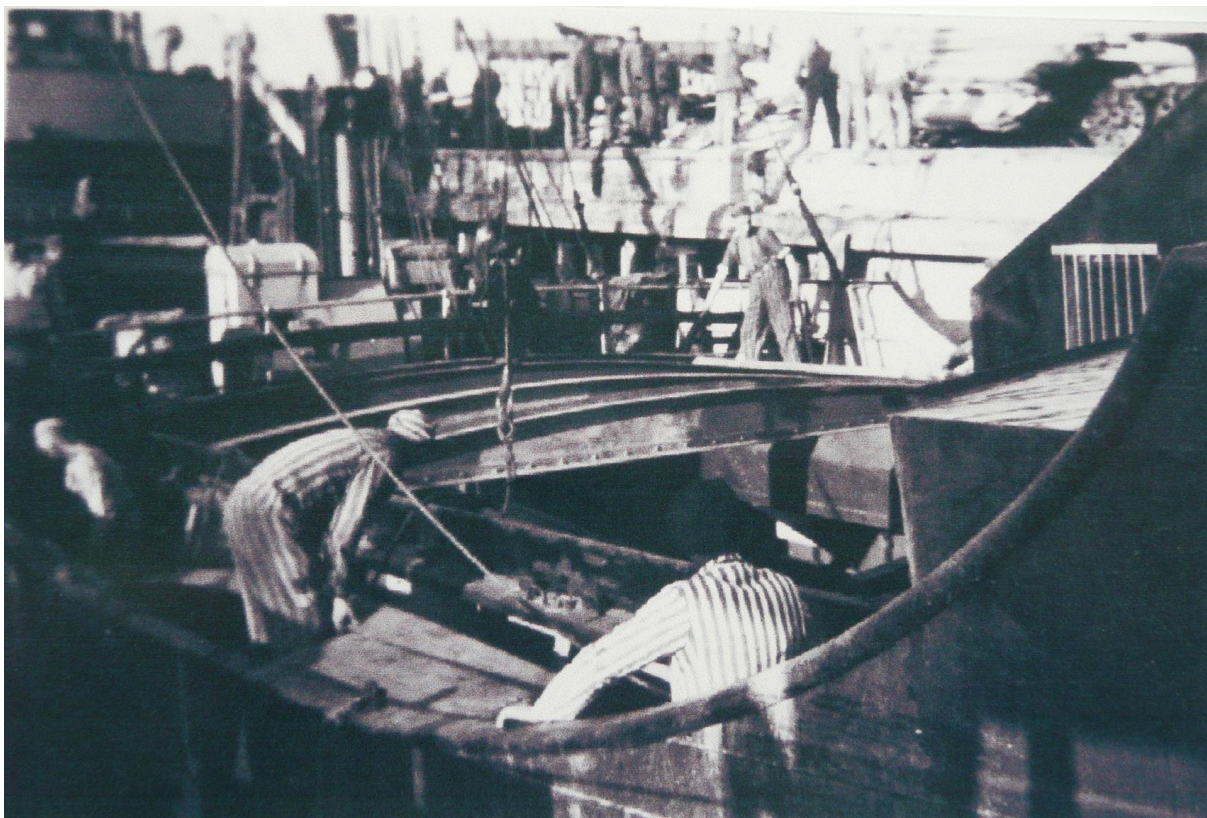
Comparative Photography showing the Jewish cemetery site past and present. A small earthwork can be seen in both photographs.

The Harbour and Breakwater St Anne's



The Harbour and Breakwater St Anne's was a major location for slave labour and many Jewish prisoners worked there. The extension of the Jetty and breakwater was a major project using slave labour and the end of the breakwater was alleged used for dumping bodies into the sea.

The breakwater and harbour was one of the major area of activity on Alderney and a major location for slave work. Slave workers were constantly engaged in loading and unloading boats and there are surviving photographs of SS prisoners their striped pyjama uniforms also at work in the harbour. Many of the workers were Russians and they were frequently beaten and ill-treated and hit with clubs. One of the port commanders frequently said of the Russian OT workers, 'kick them in the arse when they come' and 'these are not humans but animals'.¹³¹ Moreover, the extension of the breakwater itself was a major construction project using slave labour. The original harbour and jetty were very small and crowded; utterly ill-suited to the volume of shipping needed to fulfil the construction projects on Alderney and according slave labour was used to extend the jetty and also the breakwater.¹³²



SS prisoners, who included many Jews, working at the Harbour in their striped camp uniform (Ph. Alderney Museum)

Jews were also working at the harbour and may well in the prisoners seen in the photographs, 'here we came in contact with the Jews for the first time.

They were involved in up-loading boats, and had reached such a degree of starvation that it was a pastime for the Germans to throw them pieces of carrot and see the pitiful wrecks fight for it ... Cases of cannibalism were mentioned to me by an elderly Rumanian Jew, who gave all sorts of hair-raising details ... I had no reason to doubt these reports.¹³³

The harbour was the site of the OT transport office (*'Schiffsleitstelle'*) and the point of embarkation and disembarkation for prisoner transports. Prisoners were transported off the island to go to other labour projects, where their labour was needed, occasionally for onward medical treatment and often for onward transportation for extermination at other camps or facilities and finally for evacuation towards the end of the war.

It appears that in December 1942, 68 Russian patients were sent for medical treatment in Cherbourg, though the informant was at a loss to understand why he had not been sent away to be killed instead. Also, in May or June 1943, a large transport of Russian prisoners was sent for medical treatment in Cherbourg, or reassignment to lighter duties, as the result of a medical commission into the mistreatment of prisoners.¹³⁴

In November 1943, a contingent of French Jewish prisoners from Alderney (Aiguiny) were transferred to Dannes in the Nord Pas de Calais and the same happened on 7 May, 1944, when 650 Jewish prisoners were evacuated from Alderney by boat to Cherbourg and 500 of that group were sent to Dannes with the older men being sent to Camp Brauneck in Boulogne.¹³⁵

One group of Russians were transported to Kortemark in July – August, 1944, to work on the VI sites there. They were confined to sealed railway waggons for 3 weeks and suffered horrific privation, abuse, torture and murder, during the journey and the conditions led to prisoners attempting to escape. On the Kortemark journey, 19 prisoners were killed and 28 injured in a goods truck near Verdun, by SS-mann, Peter Bittenrinder.¹³⁶

In January 1943 some 300 Russians were due to be transported to Cherbourg by the s/s 'Xaver Dosch'. The Russians kept for three days packed below decks in terrible conditions and 8-10 Russians died while in the hold. Then, as the prisoners continued to be held without food or water for 14 days, there was a great storm from 13-14 January and the ship was wrecked in the port killing

many of the Russians locked in the holds. The remainder were then taken off to France in the 'Francke'.

Evidence shows that the end of the harbour breakwater was, in the earlier phase of the German occupation of Alderney, the major point of disposal for the dead slave workers from the camps. V.I. Rosslova stated, 'A lorry loaded with corpses would go to the end of the breakwater which stuck out 500 meters into the bay, dumped its horrible load and came back.' John Dalmau dived in a diving helmet near the end of Braye Harbour breakwater, to repair an anti-submarine net and saw 'among the rocks and seaweed there were skeletons all over the place. Crabs and Lobster were having a feast on the bodies that remained intact... horribly fascinated I watched the blown up bodies [i.e. with gases of decomposition] moving with the tide like a dance macabre'.¹³⁷ Some have cast doubt on these witness statements as evidence of human remains were not seen shortly after the war, though marine archaeology shows that human remains, for example in ship-wreck war-grave sites, do not persist for long periods and the activity of scavenging sea-life and powerful currents around the break-water may also be pertinent factors.

Russian Cemetery – St Anne's Church Yard



The Russian Cemetery at St Anne's Church after the war. The site is now cleared of graves.

At St Anne's church (off Victoria Street) is of significant interest because of it is the only readily identifiable Russian POW and slave worker cemetery site. A smaller portion of the Russian POWs, who died during their severe servitude on the island were buried in the church yard. The locations of their graves was originally marked by simple black or white wooden crosses, with simple inscriptions, with some in the Russian Orthodox style with an additional cross piece. The grave makers are now gone and the grave sites have been unbefittingly covered over with a tarmac car-parking area. The locations of the graves are opposite a bronze plaque on the church wall and under the car parking area. The plaque reads:

1941 - 1945

NEAR TO THIS PLACE

ARE BURIED 45 SOVIET CITIZENS

WHO DIED IN ALDERNEY

THEIR NAMES ARE RECORDED

IN THE STATES OFFICE

Fort Albert



Fort Albert was a site of heavy labour for SS prisoners. Some were allegedly murdered in acts of mass murder by throwing them off the cliffs.

Fort Albert was heavily refortified under the supervision of an Austrian construction battalion from c. June 1941. The work cohort at Fort Albert included SS prisoners who were used for the heaviest tasks including road making and construction of tunnels.

During the excavation works at Fort Albert weakened political prisoners were thrown off the cliff into the sea. Dalmau states, 'During the morning two of the political prisoners collapsed where they stood, and to my horror they were thrown over the cliff into the sea. In the afternoon seven more went the same way. Throwing men over the cliff became the standard way of getting rid of exhausted workers.'

Dalmau also witnessed other acts of mass murder on the site – on one occasion he saw 50 prisoners shot and thrown over the cliff and this was repeated in total seven times before work on the observation post was finished.

Earlier we noted that Kondakov related that a new road was constructed from Whitegates, to the fort, which is the road junction on the railway line 0.5km SE of Fort Albert.

Strong Point 'Biberkopf' – Bibette Head



Part of the Strong Point Biberkopf, at Bibette Head constructed by Concentration Camp prisoners from Lager Sylt.

Another site of labour for SS Baubrigade prisoners was the construction of the strong-point at Bibette Head. This strong point is very well preserved indeed and includes infantry and gun positions connected by concrete passages and tunnels and covered with cemented rocks as camouflage up to 1m thick.

Hammond Memorial - Rue de Beaumont



The Hammond Memorial is a memorial created by the Hammond family, which stands at one end of the Island and is one of the main focus points for acts of individual and corporate acts of commemoration for the prisoners on Alderney.

The Hammond Memorial is a privately constructed memorial created by the Hammond family, which stands at one end of the Island and is one of the main focus points for acts of individual and corporate acts of commemoration for all of the main prisoner groups on Alderney. There are memorial plaques representing the main victim groups and memorials to Russians, Ukrainians Poles, Algerians, Moroccans, Belgians, Spanish, French, Two Chinese, Jews of many nationalities, some Channel Islander and even some Germans who did not agree with Hitler's regime can all be found at the Memorial.¹³⁸ The main plaque at the memorial reads:

'IN MEMORY
OF ALL FORIEGN LABOUR
WHO DIED IN ALDERNEY
BETWEEN THE YEARS
1940 – 1945
THEY ALSO SERVED'

The memorial is east along the Rue de Beaumont, and then 0.4 km NE along the road from Whitegates (the junction to Fort Albert).

Raz Island – Causeway and Burials



Raz Island and Causeway. The Germans refortified the island and constructed the causeway using slave labour. The beach next to the causeway was also used for burials of prisoners.

Raz island was refortified by the Germans and a narrow gauge railway was laid alongside the causeway. A small railway truck lies on its back close to the end of the causeway today.¹³⁹

The beach adjacent to the cause way to Raz Island, was one site of beach burials, when batches of 1-15 prisoners would be dumped into holes dug by prisoners from a truck at low-tide. One prisoner witnessed this on 2-3 occasions.¹⁴⁰

Notes on Research and Sources

Research on slave labour camps and slave labour sites is beset with difficulties because while a variety of primary and secondary sources are available, gaining a consistent and comprehensive view and understanding of the history and sites is nearly impossible. The fog of war is particularly pervasive as sources can be fragmentary, the understanding and view point of witnesses is often limited and Nazi secrecy and the high-mortality rate of potential Jewish witnesses all cause difficulty.

It is also of considerable importance to understand the exact natures of the camps and their place in the Nazi regime, particularly how they relate to Holocaust history. Local people have had considerable concerns about claims that the camps on the islands were either concentration camps, or extermination camps, or if there were ever 'mass-graves' on the island. Hopefully this research, along with the work of other researchers, makes this complex picture clearer.

This research has been based as far as possible on primary sources and on field-work on Alderney as well as comparative work with linked sites in Nord Pas de Calais. The disparate archives and the collection of the Alderney Museum, of maps, photographs, testimonies and other materials, are an invaluable research resource. These have also been supplemented by use of the important contemporary testimonies of victim and perpetrators, gathered by the interrogators at the London Cage held at Kew, as well as other contemporary intelligence assessments by the Intelligence services. The key publications and reports at the end of the War, particularly by Pantcheff and key eye-witness testimonies such as by Kondakov and others, remain important. More recent secondary sources assimilate as much of the available material as possible and correct some of the earlier inaccuracies. Davenport's recent survey of the German defences of the island are also an important consideration of the remaining physical evidence.

End Notes

¹ F. Cohen, *The Jews in the Channel Islands during the German Occupation 1940 – 1945*, (2000 Jersey Heritage Trust), p. 130.

² F. Cohen, p. 130.

³ Statement made by O/Gefr. Johann Feldmuller, 3/Bau Pi Btl 158, at Kempton Park Camp, on 1 Jul 45 (PRO).

⁴ Report: German Atrocities in Eastern Europe WO 199/2090B

⁵ PRO WO 199/2090 information in MI5 report 'as at June 1944'.

⁶ In Georgi Kondakov MS, 5 Jan, 1990. This MS in the Alderney Museum is that for the published Kondakov testimony, Georgi Kondakov, **The Island of Dread in the Channel**, (Stroud, 1991)

⁷ PRO WO 199/2090B

⁸ PRO WO 208/3629

⁹ PRO, WO 311/12, Statements re Ursula Camp personnel, 1945.

¹⁰ Aurigny Camp De Deporation Nazi Dans L'Ille Anglo-Normande D'Aurigny – Alderney Occupee – Le Tunnel'.

¹¹ F. Cohen, p. 133-4

¹² Jean-Pierre Gueno, **Paroles De L'Ombre - Lettres et Carnets des Francais sous l'Occupation (1939-1945)**, 2009, P.104

¹³ F. Cohen, p. 135.

¹⁴ Aurigny Camp De Deporation Nazi Dans L'Ille Anglo-Normande D'Aurigny ...

¹⁵ <http://avalon.law.yale.edu>

¹⁶ F. Cohen, p. 150.

¹⁷ interrogation reports PWIS(H) LDC 463-525, Nov 1944

¹⁸ 'In the Northern Hesperides - Diary of the Year 1943', from an MS translation of a German publication in the Alderney Historical Society collection.

¹⁹ Obertruppen Paul Orgis, was both the Lagerfuhrer of Norderney Camp on the Island of Alderney, in 1942, and of Camp Brauneck, at the Lycee Mariette in Boulogne - both notorious for their treatment of Jewish and other prisoners (WO 208/3629).

²⁰ John Dalmau, Slave Worker in the Channel Islands.

²¹ Statement made by O/Gefr. Johann Feldmuller 3/Bau Pi Btl 158, at Kempton Park Camp, on 1 Jul 45 (PRO).

²² John Dalmau.

²³ John Dalmau.

²⁴ John Dalmau.

²⁵ U'Schagu Hartwig and Gessner worked together and stole inmates rations and sold them in France, as well as confiscating Red Cross parcels to inmates. See Interrogation Reports PRO PWIS(H) LDC 463-525, Nov 1944. Another report states that in Lager Sylt, food from the KZ kitchen was passed on to the SS canteen and all of the SS men were in on the profits of the scam. The profits of the SS canteen were so large that all of some 100 SS men received RM100 bonus each month, see, Statement by O/Bootsmannsmaat Docter, Franz, of Hako Alderney, made on 7 July 45, in PRO, 'Periodic Reports on the Atrocities in Alderney with Statements Attached'.

²⁶ PRO, WO 311/12, statement of Franz Docter, July 7, 1945.

²⁷ In this case in 1943, OT O/Truppfu Standop and Helling, drew rations for 600 more workers than were actually on the work sites. As the result of an investigation, both were arrested and Helling is said to have died in prison. Periodic Report on Alderney Atrocities No. 2 (PRO WO 208/3629).

²⁸ John Dalmau, Slave Worker in the Channel Islands.

²⁹ Statement made by O/Gefr. Johann Feldmuller, 3/Bau Pi Btl 158, at Kempton Park Camp, on 1 Jul 45 (PRO).

³⁰ C. Partridge, 'Historical facts on Alderney (Channel Islands) – information sheet'.

³¹ Alderney Museum MS, 07/057 2/3, 'Establishment at the 'Atlantikwall' - The SS-Baubrigade I at Alderney'

³² In Kondakov.

³³ Paul Sanders, 'OT Camps in Alderney' from draft MS for USHMM 'Camps and Ghettos Encyclopaedia'.

³⁴ Periodical Report on Alderney Atrocities No. 2, 1945 (PRO WO 208/3629).

³⁵ Alderney Atrocities No. 2, 1945 (PRO WO 208/3629).

³⁶ PRO WO 199/2090 information in MI5 report 'as at June 1944'.

³⁷ PRO WO 199/2090 information in MI5 report 'as at June 1944'.

³⁸ PRO WO 199/2090B.

³⁹ PRO WO 199/2090 information in MI5 report 'as at June 1944'.

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- ⁴⁰ PRO WO 199/2090B.
- ⁴¹ F.Cohen p.150
- ⁴² F. Cohen, and WO 208/3629
- ⁴³ Solomon Steckoll, **The Alderney Death Camp**, p.27. Also, T. Davenport, **Festung Alderney – The German Defences of Alderney**, (2003).
- ⁴⁴ F. Cohen, p. 130.
- ⁴⁵ See photograph, 'bottom of Braye Road looking to Newtown' (PRO 96/265.9/18) also, in a British map 'SHOWING ENEMY DEFENCES CAMPS AND NEW ROADS', 6 March 1945, Drawing No. C.R.E. 20. This map was based on intelligence sources garnered in 1944 and 1945. The latter map can be over-laid using GIS to establish the camp location in the modern landscape and correlated with the photographs mentioned previously and may be accurately located at 49°43'10.49"N 2°11'51.73"W.
- ⁴⁶ T. Davenport, p26-27. Also, PRO WO 208/3629: Statement by Grenadier Walter Schuller.
- ⁴⁷ In Kondakov.
- ⁴⁸ F. Cohen, p. 130. Also PRO WO 208/3629: Statement of Grenadier Walter Schuller.
- ⁴⁹ F. Cohen, p. 132.
- ⁵⁰ Kondakov.
- ⁵¹ F. Cohen, p. 131.
- ⁵² Kondakov.
- ⁵³ PRO WO 208/3629: Statement of St. Feldw. Kurt Busse.
- ⁵⁴ F. Cohen, p. 139.
- ⁵⁵ F. Cohen, p. 132.
- ⁵⁶ F. Cohen, p. 154.
- ⁵⁷ Kondakov.
- ⁵⁸ Pers. Comm. Trevor Davenport.
- ⁵⁹ Davenport, p. 67. Also, Paul Sanders, 'OT Camps in Alderney' from draft MS for USHMM Camps and Ghettos Encyclopaedia.
- ⁶⁰ Translation of Statement by St. Feldw. Kurt Bussee in PRO. WO 208/3629 and F. Cohen, *The Jews in the Channel Islands during the German Occupation 1940 – 1945*, (2000 Jersey Heritage Trust), p. 130.
- ⁶¹ 'In the Northern Hesperides - Diary of the Year 1943', from an MS translation of a German publication in the Alderney Historical Society collection.
- ⁶² Davenport, p. 67.
- ⁶³ Royal Engineers Map of 6 March 1945.
- ⁶⁴ Davenport, p. 71.
- ⁶⁵ PRO WO 199/2090 information in MI5 report 'as at June 1944'.
- ⁶⁶ Kondakov.
- ⁶⁷ Guernsey Press, 'Imprisoned in Alderney', Herbert Winterflood, re the story of Sylvester Kekula.
- ⁶⁸ Kondakov
- ⁶⁹ German Transcription of Alderney Place Names. From Information obtained from Mr. Ralph Duplain. MS in Alderney Museum. See also Davenport, p. 34-5.
- ⁷⁰ Kondakov, letter 8.
- ⁷¹ 'TRANSLATION OF A STATEMENT by pw kp/256658 Gefr. Johann BURBACH Kl. Kraftwagenkol. See, Report Channel Islands Alderney: MI 19 (RPS)/2253. 5 July, 1944, in PRO
- ⁷² TRANSLATION OF A STATEMENT by pw kp/256658 Gefr. Johann BURBACH Kl. Kraftwagenkol. See also Kondakov.
- ⁷³ See, Report Channel Islands Alderney: MI 19 (RPS)/2253. 5 July, 1944, in PRO
- ⁷⁴ See statement by O/Bootsmannsmaat Docter, Franz, of Hako Alderney, made on 7 July 45, in PRO, 'Periodic Reports on the Atrocities in Alderney with Statements Attached'.
- ⁷⁵ F. Cohen, *The Jews in the Channel Islands during the German Occupation 1940 - 1945* (2000 Jersey Heritage Trust), p. 130-1.
- ⁷⁶ Letter 8, in Kondakov.
- ⁷⁷ Letter 8, in Kondakov.
- ⁷⁸ Letter 8, in Kondakov.
- ⁷⁹ Kondakov.
- ⁸⁰ See, Report Channel Islands Alderney: MI 19 (RPS)/2253. 5 July, 1944, in PRO.
- ⁸¹ Pers. Comm. Trevor Davenport, and Davenport, p. 51
- ⁸² http://www.fold3.com/page/286061310_alderney_concentration_camps/stories/
- ⁸³ Davenport, p. 107. F. Cohen, p. 134.

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- ⁸⁴ Translation of Statement by PW KP 256520 Grenadier Walter Schuller, in PRO WO 208/3629.
- ⁸⁵ Paul Sanders MS.
- ⁸⁶ Translation of Statement by St. Feldw. Kurt Bussee, in PRO. WO 208/3629
- ⁸⁷ Paul Sanders MS.
- ⁸⁸ F. Cohen, p. 132 and 134.
- ⁸⁹ Translation of Statement by St. Feldw. Kurt Bussee in PRO. See also, Paul Sanders MS.
- ⁹⁰ See, Report Channel Islands Alderney: MI 19 (RPS)/2253. 5 July, 1944; PRO WO 208/3629: and see also PRO WO 106/5248B (2253), MI 19 Intelligence Reports.
- ⁹¹ F. Cohen, p. 134.
- ⁹² F. Cohen, p. 137 and 140.
- ⁹³ Solomon Steckoll, **The Alderney Death Camp**, p.87.
- ⁹⁴ F. Cohen, p. 135-6.
- ⁹⁵ Kondakov.
- ⁹⁶ Kondakov.
- ⁹⁷ Kondakov, and see, Translation of Statement by PW KP 256520 Grenadier Walter Schuller; Translation of Statement by St. Feldw. Kurt Bussee in PRO. WO 208/3629
- ⁹⁸ Translation of Statement by PW KP 256520 Grenadier Walter Schuller, in PRO WO 208/3629.
- ⁹⁹ Translation of Statement by St. Feldw. Kurt Bussee in PRO. WO 208/3629
- ¹⁰⁰ The location is 49°43'8.09"N 2°11'24.23"W
- ¹⁰¹ Translation of Statement by St. Feldw. Kurt Bussee in PRO. WO 208/3629
- ¹⁰² Testimony of Kirill Nevrov, in Kondakov.
- ¹⁰³ C. Partridge, Historical facts on Alderney (Channel Islands) – information sheet.
- ¹⁰⁴ Davenport, p.107.
- ¹⁰⁵ F. Cohen, p. 144.
- ¹⁰⁶ F. Cohen, p. 138.
- ¹⁰⁷ Davenport, p.107.
- ¹⁰⁸ Kondakov and also photographs of Herzog
- ¹⁰⁹ Alderney Museum MS, 07/057 2/3, 'Establishment at the 'Atlantikwall' - The SS-Baubrigade I at Alderney'
- ¹¹⁰ Kondakov.
- ¹¹¹ Kondakov.
- ¹¹² See description of German defences in Alderney, in Report dated Mar 42 - Jun 44 Report No. PWIS (H) / LDC/429
- ¹¹³ See Ph. 08/069 (front and notes reverse).
- ¹¹⁴ See reverse of Ph. 74/346.32
- ¹¹⁵ F. Cohen, p. 148-9.
- ¹¹⁶ In a letter from Peter Zadko , Ukrainian former prisoner, see Cat No. 06/143 Alderney Museum.
- ¹¹⁷ F. Cohen, p. 150.
- ¹¹⁸ Pjanov Alexei quoted in Kondakov.
- ¹¹⁹ Kondakov.
- ¹²⁰ C. Partridge, Historical facts on Alderney (Channel Islands) – information sheet. See also PRO WO 199/2090.
- ¹²¹ 'Report German Atrocities in Eastern Europe', MS in PRO, WO 199/2090B
- ¹²² F. Cohen, p.148-9.
- ¹²³ 'Alderney and Sylt Camp', copy of correspondence with Alderney Society, by Jolanta Boot. Pantchef asserted that about 10% of all foreign labour and forced labour died (based strictly on the empirical numbers of actual located burials on Alderney), but there is evidence that actual death rates were much higher - perhaps as much as 50-70% in Sylt.
- ¹²⁴ PRO PW KP/256658 and see, F. Cohen, p. 148-9. See also a 'TRANSLATION OF A STATEMENT by pw kp/256658 Gefr. Johann BURBACK Kl. Kraftwagenkol. 319, who had been told that a Richter from the OT Farm had, '...in some burial place he had the crosses removed, burned and had the ground levelled'.
- ¹²⁵ Pers. Comm. Caroline Sturdy-Colls. These initial observation remain to be verified.
- ¹²⁶ Periodic Reports on Alderney Atrocities (No. 2) PRO WO 208/3629
- ¹²⁷ F. Cohen, p. 153.
- ¹²⁸ Letter 06/143, Alderney Museum.
- ¹²⁹ Aerial Reconnaissance Photo 4038 - 2 Aug 1943 (Alderney Museum).
- ¹³⁰ Photograph: 4166 106.G.5368.18 APR.54., 'Russian Cemetery Longy Common', Alderney Museum.

¹³¹ Statement by Bootsmann PAELICKER, WILLI, of Hako Aldereny, Taken On 6 JUL 45. See also, Statement of Funk o/Gefr HOHNE, Werner, of Hako ALDERENEY, taken on 5 Jul 45. In PRO, 'Periodic Reports on the Atrocities in Alderney with Statements Attached'.

¹³² Note on reverse of photograph 77/109/10 102.46 Alderney Museum and caption in photograph album of Sdf Hans Herzog a German soldier who was on the island during the war, until 1942 (Alderney Museum, 02/007).

¹³³ Dalmau.

¹³⁴ PRO WO 199/2090, information in MI5 report 'as at June 1944'.

¹³⁵ M. Roberts, Nord Pas de Calais Holocaust Heritage Trail, 2014.

¹³⁶ See PRO in PWIS(H) LDC 463-525

¹³⁷ F. Cohen, p. 148-9.

¹³⁸ MS of 'Address by Brian Bonnard, Hammond Memorial, 7.7.91 (Alderney Museum).

¹³⁹ See PRO WO 199/2090B, July 1944.

¹⁴⁰ Kondakov.