

Prisoner of War Camp



During World War 2, a prisoner of war camp was set up in the Lowercroft Road area – just down the road from Ainsworth Village. The British Officers and Guards were housed on the left-hand side of the road near the bottom of Whitehead Lodge. The Italian prisoners of war were housed in Nissan Huts (long rows of wooden huts) on the right hand side of the road with sentries posted at the gates.

Towards the end of the war the Guards used to march the prisoners down to the railway sidings (off Bolton Street Bury) to unload the wagons. They worked side by side with local women who were doing the work because the men were away fighting in the war. The prisoners would trade little toys they had made in the camps for 5 ‘Woodbines’ and the women would take the toys home for their children.

After the war, while the Italians were still at the camp, they were allowed out to visit local families and to have Christmas lunch with some of them. One can only imagine the joy this brought them at such a special time as not having seen their families for years must have been heartache. Local children were regularly allowed to visit the camp and many befriended the prisoners who often gave them tea – without milk or sugar – and a slab cake made by the prisoners or one of the little toys they had made.

After the Italians were repatriated, Bury Council used the Officer and Guards quarters to house council tenants until they could be housed in official council houses. The Officer’s house was a brick detached house on a slightly higher level and the Guards quarters were smaller wooden semidetached houses situated down a slight slope surrounding a central area. This little estate, consisting of about 20 dwellings, was a very pleasant place to live and a thriving friendly community. Eventually the houses were demolished and the residents housed in purpose built

council houses and the new private housing estate which we see today was built.