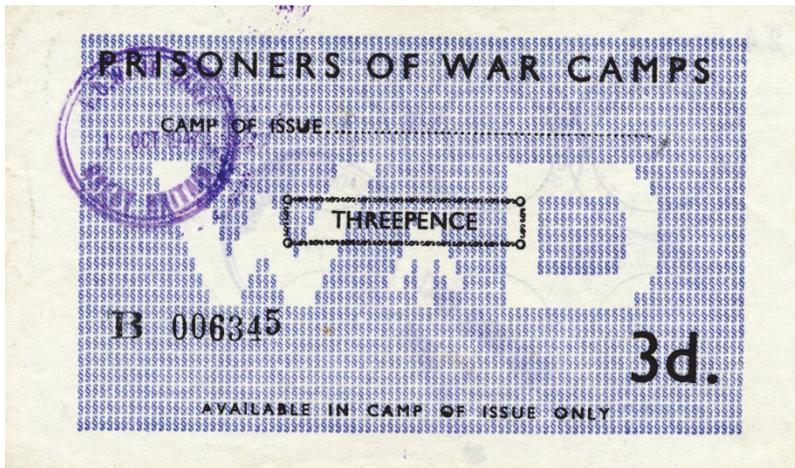


BRITISH POW AND INTERNEE CAMP MONEY

by Steve Feller



3-pence British POW note

Introduction

World War II had tens of thousand of camps that served a myriad of purposes. This included prisoners-of-war (POW) camps, civilian internee camps, relocation centers, concentration camps, ghettos, industrial labor camps and more. There were thousands of POW camps on both sides. Britain itself had hundreds of POW camps as well as additional civilian internee camps. The POW camps were run by the British War Department whereas the civilian internee camps were run by its Home Office.

This article will survey a few of the British camps and include details of the money as well as camp information. The website <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/nov/08/prisoner-of-war-camps-uk#data> lists every WWII POW camp in Great Britain. About 400,000 POWs were housed in at least many hundreds of camps. The camps were numbered and the final number listed is 1026. However, it is not known if all numbers were utilized. Insufficient research has been done to date. However, it is known from the notes themselves that unused camp numbers were used for camps run by the British army in France.

In comparison, the United States had around 500 POW camps that housed roughly 1,000 POWs each. US camps have scrip as well as can be seen here from Algona, Iowa.

The British and American scrip were issued under the terms of the Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929. These were signed that day by many nations including the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, France, Germany, and Italy. Articles 27 to 34 covered labor by prisoners of war. They are reproduced here with the bolded parts specifically relating to payment of wages; the POW money was a direct result of these provisions:



1-cent Algona, Iowa POW scrip

SECTION III

WORK OF PRISONERS OF WAR

CHAPTER I

General

Art. 27. Belligerents may employ as workmen prisoners of war who are physically fit, other than officers and persons of equivalent statue, according to their rink and their ability.

Nevertheless, if officers or persons of equivalent status ask for suitable work, this shall be found for them as far as possible.

Non-commissioned officers who are prisoners of war may be compelled to undertake only supervisory work, unless they expressly request remunerative occupation.

During the whole period of captivity, belligerents are required to admit prisoners of war who are victims of accidents at work to the benefit of provisions applicable to workmen of the same category under the legislation of the detaining Power. As regards prisoners of war to whom these legal provisions could not be applied by reason of the legislation of that Power, the latter undertakes to recommend to its legislative body all proper measures for the equitable compensation of the victims.

CHAPTER 2

Organization of work

Art. 28. The detaining Power shall assume entire responsibility for the maintenance, care, treatment and **the payment of the wages of prisoners of war working for private individuals.**

Art. 29. No prisoner of war may be employed on work for which he is physically unsuited.

Art. 30. The duration of the daily work of prisoners of war, including the time of the journey to and from work, shall not be excessive and shall in no case exceed that permitted for civil workers of the locality employed on the same work. Each prisoner shall be allowed a rest of twenty-four consecutive hours each week, preferably on Sunday.

CHAPTER 3

Prohibited work

Art. 31. Work done by prisoners of war shall have no direct connection with the operations of the war. In particular, it is forbidden to employ prisoners in the manufacture or transport of arms or munitions of any kind, or on the transport of material destined for combatant units.

In the event of violation of the provisions of the preceding paragraph, prisoners are at liberty, after performing or commencing to perform the order, to have their complaints presented through the intermediary of the prisoners' representatives whose functions are described in Articles 43 and 44, or, in the absence of a prisoners' representative, through the intermediary of the representatives of the protecting Power.

Art. 32. It is forbidden to employ prisoners of war on unhealthy or dangerous work. Conditions of work shall not be rendered more arduous by disciplinary measures.

CHAPTER 4

Labour detachments

Art. 33. Conditions governing labour detachments shall be similar to those of prisoners-of-war camps, particularly as concerns hygienic conditions, food, care in case of accidents or sickness, correspondence, and the reception of parcels.

Every labour detachment shall be attached to a prisoners' camp. The commander of this camp shall be responsible for the observance in the labour detachment of the provisions of the present Convention.

CHAPTER 5

Pay

Art. 34. Prisoners of war shall not receive pay for work in connection with the administration, internal arrangement and maintenance of camps.

Prisoners employed on other work shall be entitled to a rate of pay, to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents.

These agreements shall also specify the portion which may be retained by the camp administration, the amount which shall belong to the prisoner of war and the manner in which this amount shall be placed at his disposal during the period of his captivity.

Pending the conclusion of the said agreements, remuneration of the work of prisoners shall be fixed according to the following standards:

(a) Work done for the State shall be paid for according to the rates in force for soldiers of the national forces doing the same work, or, if no such rates exist, according to a tariff corresponding to the work executed.

(b) When the work is done for other public administrations or for private individuals, the conditions shall be

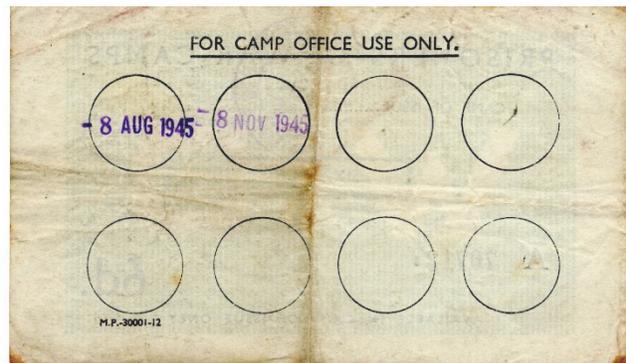
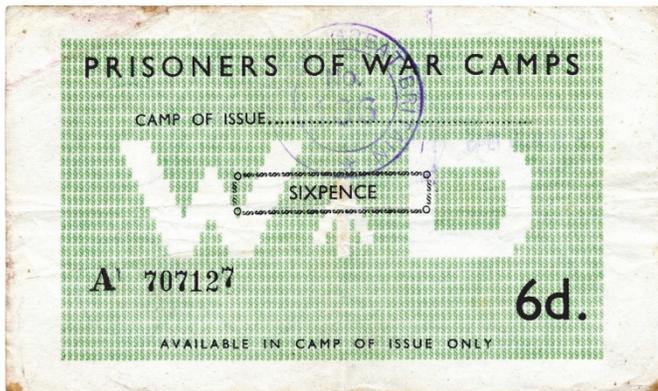
settled in agreement with the military authorities.

The pay which remains to the credit of a prisoner shall be remitted to him on the termination of his captivity. In case of death, it shall be remitted through the diplomatic channel to the heirs of the deceased.

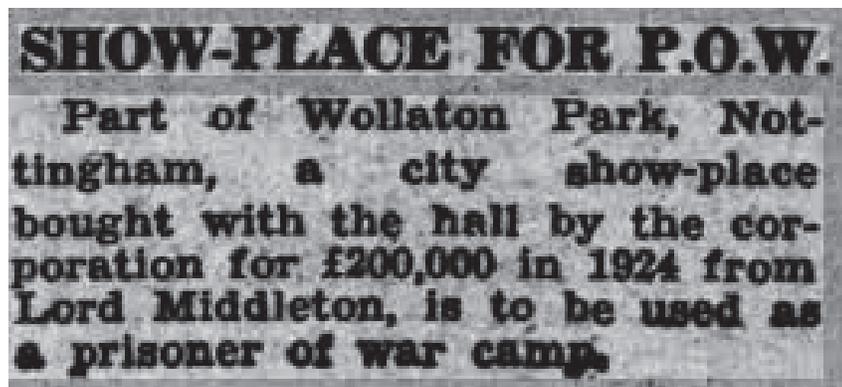
British WD Notes

The British notes are larger and more ornate than the American scrip; the dimensions of the British notes are about 140 mm x 84 mm whereas the US POW scrip was about 51mm x 24mm with more variations in size than the British notes. Shown below are the face and back of a British POW note from Nottingham, England. The camp is identified with number 166 stamped on the face of the note which in the master list of camps provided earlier was Camp 166 at Wollaton Park, not far from the present University of Nottingham. Each POW note has a large WD on the face, as well, which stands for the War Department. The notes are serial numbered.

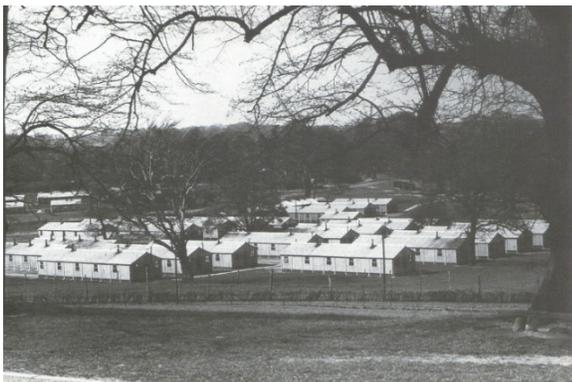
The back of the note has eight validation circles where the note would be stamped every three months. There is a plethora of stampings.



Face and back of 6-pence note from POW Camp 166. This camp was located in Nottingham, England.



Newspaper announcement of the formation of the Wollaton Park POW camp in Nottingham, England.



Here is a photo of the camp in its heyday: Wollaton Park POW camp circa 1945.



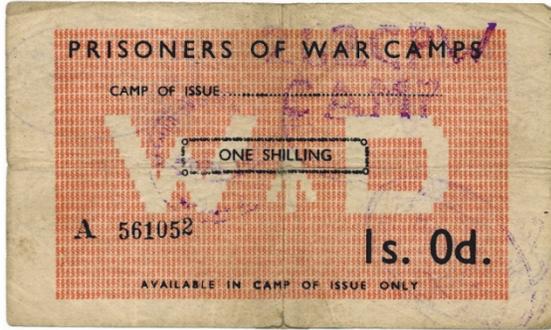
Today Camp 166, Wollaton Park, Nottingham has one last barracks building.

After bloodhounds had been used by Nottingham police, three German prisoners of war who escaped from Wollaton Park camp on Tuesday were found yesterday in a disused farm shed at Heanor, 18 miles away.

In 1946 three prisoners escaped but were captured shortly after, though they made it 18 miles from Wollaton Park.

Wollaton Park POW camp in the local newspaper.

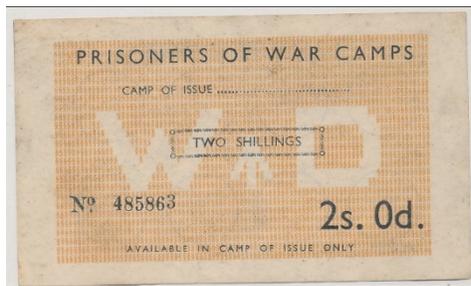
Another Nottinghamshire POW camp issued currency. This was the one at RAF Langer, just a few miles from Nottingham. Note the back of the note with a wonderful array of purple stampings.



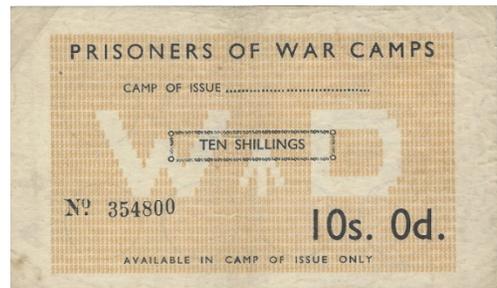
Face and back of one-shilling note from POW camp 262 near Langar, Nottinghamshire. This was part of RAF Langer.

The notes, first issued in 1943, have been known since the war. An early description of them was given in 1965 and 1966 (second edition) by Arlie Slabaugh in his classic *Prisoner of War Monies and Medals*. In that slim volume the British POW notes are listed as rare. Although detailed listings are absent the essential listings are correct. Beginning in 1989 Lance Campbell listed the notes in his *Prisoner of War and Concentration Camp Money of the 20th Century*. For camps in England the listings are:

Denomination	Color (Slabaugh/Campbell)	Recently Observed
3 pence	Blue	Blue
6 pence	Green	Green
1 shilling	Pink	Pink
2 shillings	Orange	Orange
2 shillings 6 pence	Purple	Purple
5 shillings	Brown	Brown
10 shillings	Yellow	Yellow



Face and back of the unissued 10-shilling British POW note. This and the two-shilling note are the rarest notes of the series. Courtesy of Harold Kroll.



In addition, earlier in 1941, three white tokens with black lettering were issued in ½, 1, and 6 pence denomination.



Half-pence British POW token



1-pence British POW tokens

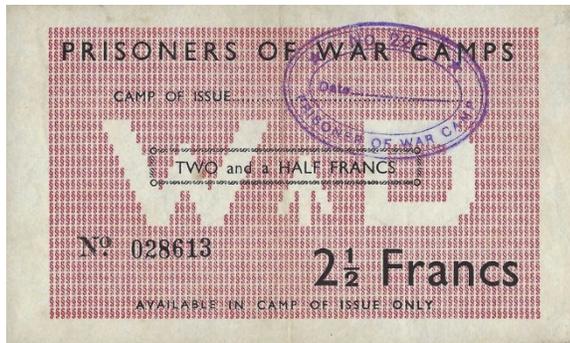
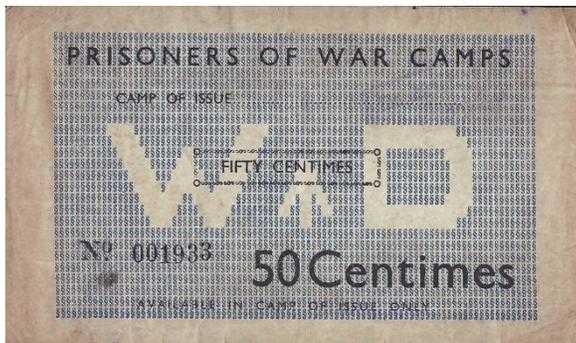
In France, similar notes were issued by the British forces for their POW camps but they were denominated in francs:

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Color from Slabaugh/Campbell</u>	<u>Actual observation</u>
50 centimes or ½-franc	Blue	Blue
1 franc	Green	Green
2 ½ francs	Pink	Pink
5 francs	Lilac (Sl) or Orange (Ca)	Lilac
10 francs	Brown	Brown
50 francs	Yellow	Yellow
100 francs	unknown	Orange

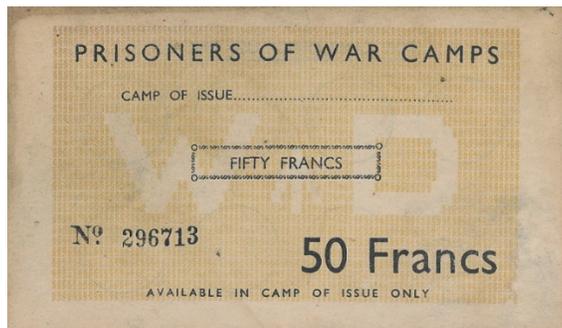
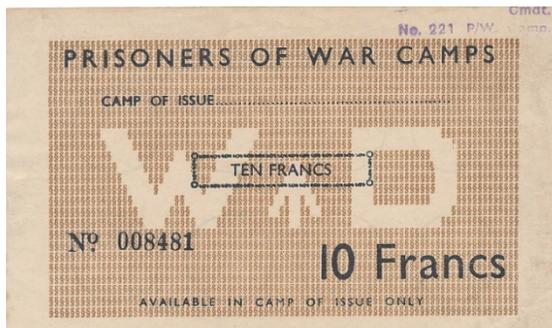
Apparently, the camp numbering used in France were part of the list also used in England and the numbers were intermixed.

In 1945 the exchange rate between the pound and the franc was 480 francs to the pound. This was a time when the pound was about \$4.00. By 1949 it was 980 francs whereas the pound itself had fallen to \$2.80.

With 240 pence to the pound, the lowest franc issue, ½ franc was worth ¼ pence. The largest franc issue of 100 francs was worth 50 pence or a bit more than 4 shillings since 12 pence was a shilling. Thus, the French issues were roughly half the face value of their British counterparts. As mentioned, over the next few years the French POW issues further devalued against the British issues.



French denominated notes for a British POW camp located in France.
10 francs note courtesy of Dave Frank.



50 and 100 francs notes for a British POW camp in France (courtesy of Dave Frank).
The 100 francs note is the rarest note of the franc series.



Face and back of 3 pence note from Camp 18, Featherstone, Northumberland

Another camp issue was for Camp 18 in Featherstone, Northumberland and it is shown below along with some images of what's left at the camp today:



From the entryway to Featherstone Park POW Camp. Note the plaque on the left embedded into the column on the right.



Camp 18 ruins.

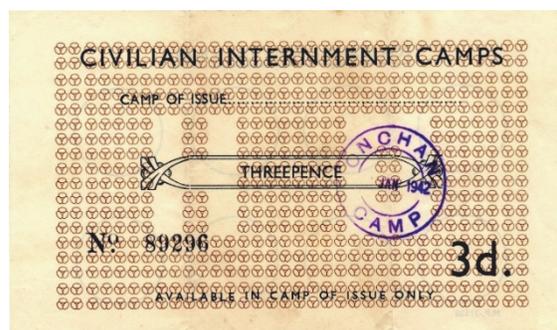
British HO Notes

The Isle of Man had ten WWII Civilian Internment/POW Camps. During their run as internment camps first local paper scrip and some metal tokens were issued. Later on, Home Office (HO) notes and the POW tokens were issued of a common design for many of the camps. These designs are extremely similar to the British POW notes and it is believed served as the model for the WD notes. The first one shown below was used at the Palace Camp in Douglas. This particular note came from an original wallet made in the camp purchased on E-Bay by the author. The second note was issued in the Onchan Camp. In most cases, the HO notes are rarer than the WD notes.

Isle of Man Paper Money informs us that the Hutchinson, Metropole, Mooragh, Onchan, Palace, and Peveril camps used HO notes. Unissued notes exist as well. In this book Pam West and Alan Kelly suggest that the WD notes were used on the Isle of Man after the civilian camps closed and became POW camps



1-shilling HO note from the Palace Camp-Isle of Man.



3-pence HO note from the Onchan Camp--Isle of Man.

What follows is a full listing of the HO notes (with assistance from *Isle of Man Paper Money* by Pam West and Alan Kelly)

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Color</u>
3 pence	Brown	2 shillings 6 pence	Green
6 pence	Red	5 shillings	Light Brown
1 shilling	Blue		

Other POW Notes

There were many other POW issues in WWII. A few notes from French and German camps are shown here for comparison purposes.



One-franc POW note from France



10-mark POW note from Germany

Conclusions

In terms of POW notes from the Second World War this is a large area of interesting notes. This article but scratched the surface. There is still much research that needs to take place in this somewhat neglected series.

Acknowledgements

Dave Frank and Harold Kroll are thanked for the use of scans of their notes.

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For note images:

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- Colin Narbeth and Son Ltd. website: <https://colin-narbeth.com/>
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