



FALLAGO ENVIRONMENT FUND

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## Stobs Camp Project Final Report August 2019 to end March 2020

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## **Executive Summary**

During the final months of the project the team and volunteers were still giving their time and energy to uncovering more about Stobs Camp and the people who lived there during the First World War. Activities included further excavation, lots of research and more walks and talks.

## **Introduction & Background**

Stobs Camp was a military training camp prior to the First World War but then became an internment camp for German civilians and military and naval prisoners. It is internationally important as so much of it remains upstanding or visible. The local community and other stakeholders are keen to see the site properly recorded and receive adequate recognition.

The Stobs Camp Project is a community project being led by Archaeology Scotland (AS) co-operating with Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Service, Live Borders Museums and Archives, Hawick Archaeological Society, Hawick Callants Club, Project Hawick, Borders Family History Society, University of Aston, Edinburgh Napier University, landowners and other organisations (including Youth Borders and Voice Of My Own), individual volunteers and local schools.



## Aims & Objectives

The aims of the **Stobs Camp Project** are to encourage both local people and the global online community to:

- Better understand Stobs Camp and the role it played in the First World War
- To value, share and commemorate Stobs and the people connected to it
- To protect Stobs Camp for future generations

## Progress towards aims:

### **Objective 1 – to better understand Stobs Camp and the role it played in the First World War**

#### **Postcard and photograph annotation**

Work continued on annotating the vast collection of images of Stobs. One volunteer purchased new material by auction and we held a workshop so these images were added to our catalogue and the CALM archive at the Heritage Hub in Hawick. The catalogue now contains over 1600 images and searchable references to Stobs Camp.



#### **Recording**

In September we undertook a metal-detection survey of the processional route we know prisoners took when committing a body to the cemetery. Unfortunately this did not uncover any significant finds. Over a few days in November we cleared vegetation and rubble to uncover the footings of a building we had been told might have been the former tea-house for the station at Stobs. We could not confirm this from the remains and existing photographs as doorways seemed to be in different places. There seemed to be an unusual amount of drains within the building and on the outside which led us to surmise that this may have been the

butcher's shop and we did have one photograph that would support that theory.

We had a reconnoitre of Penchrise firing range with the intention of returning with the volunteers to record the remains but Covid-19 put that beyond the reach of the project. Two volunteers did, however, manage to survey the remains of observation huts at Barns Moss firing range in October.

The hut search team continued tracking down the remains of former MOD buildings including one as far afield as South Lanarkshire. They also found some Nissen hut remains at Cauldmill just outside Hawick. These had deteriorated quickly over the last year when a shelter belt of trees had been removed and the wind took its toll.



### **Objective 2 – to value, share and commemorate Stobs and the people connected to it**

#### **Updates to the Project website**

The website continued to be updated with new information as it became available and many stories were added to the timeline.

#### **Research**

Research into who the internees were took a huge step forward as we learned how to access the records of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. Our volunteers took part in two research workshops and we were joined by volunteers from the magazine and TV programme *Who Do You Think You Are?* on two further occasions. Volunteers continue to delve into this resource and it has resulted in discovering the names of some 5000+ German nationals, soldiers and sailors who were brought to the camp. Some records also showed their home addresses and next of kin. To further publicise this and hope for contact from some descendants we published an article in the magazine of the Anglo-German History Society as well. All this information will be held in the Internment Research Centre through the Hawick Heritage Hub who will continue to maintain this resource beyond the end of the project.

One volunteer continued with newspaper research too. Another volunteer had researched the music of Stobs using the theatre programmes and copies of *Stobsiade* and submitted her findings.





### **Project Book**

The book about the Stobs Camp Project was completed and published in the autumn. Copies were made available to all contributors to the project and are for sale at the Heritage Hub and Borders Textile Towerhouse. They will soon be added to the online shop as part of updates to Archaeology Scotland's website.

### **Talks**

Andy led a tour around the camp as part of Doors Open Days in September. He also met with a family from Germany who were descendants of an internee and showed them around the site.

Our filming with *Antiques Road Trip* was broadcast in February and we were delighted with the contribution one of our volunteers made to *Walking Britain's Lost Railways* which aired in April.



Andy also delivered a session using artefact handling to children at Drumlanrig Primary School.

We commemorated Armistice Sunday with members of the community and our volunteers with a short service led by Mr John Mackay and laid wreaths.

Archaeology Scotland had an event at Callendar House, Falkirk, at the end of August where Andy gave a talk about Stobs. We also attended Parkaeology, an event run by Historic Environment Scotland in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh where we were again able to promote the Stobs Project.



The interpretation panels and directional signs have been delivered but due to the Corona Virus pandemic we have been unable to install these as yet. These will be erected as soon as 'lockdown' restrictions are lifted.

The brown Heritage sign at the entrance road to Stobs has been installed.



Members of the wider public have been sharing their connections with Stobs with us including a lady who had a painting by one of the prisoners. We were able to locate some information about the artist from the ICRC records. A family from Southampton had come across a wooden jewellery box, made by a prisoner and were delighted to donate it to the project. Other people have been making enquiries about relatives they think were held at Stobs and where possible we have added to their knowledge from the research we hold at the Internment Research Centre.

#### **Social media**

The Stobs Camp Project Twitter account now has over 800 followers.





### **Objective 3 – to protect Stobs Camp for future generations**

#### **Cemetery area**

In December we were delighted to see the protective fencing around the memorial erected by local blacksmith, Kevin Watson. This will keep the sheep off the stonework for many years to come.

#### **General**

As a community project this has exceeded our expectations with hours recorded for volunteering exceeding 5000, people connected in ways they would not have otherwise, skills learned and heritage cared for.



One young volunteer has stood out throughout the project for her work with us and with the Borders Young Archaeologist Club. We are very proud that she won Young Archaeologist of the Year 2019 at an award ceremony in London late last year. Archaeology Scotland has also honoured her with a Heritage Hero Gold Award at a Parliamentary Reception early this year. She has also gained an unconditional entry to UHI to study History when she leaves school later in 2020.

All finds and artefacts are being submitted to Hawick Museum War Room.



## **Stobs Camp Project Team**

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## **Links**

Website  
Internment Research Centre  
Twitter

[www.stobscamp.org](http://www.stobscamp.org)  
<http://www.stobscamp.org/irc/>  
@StobsCamp