

The Basque Children's Camp

By Stuart Allen



Using the relatively new feature in Adobe Lightroom called 'Super Resolution' I have been able to enhance the aerial photograph of the Basque children Camp of almost 4000 children on Chestnut Avenue. It allows you to enhance any photograph so it will have 2x the width and 2x the height of the original image, or 4x the total pixel count. I also undertook retouching to remove dust marks and blemishes from the original copy I had.

This has enabled the building on the right hand side of the photograph, which is partly in shadow to be seen more clearly. Comparing the layout of the buildings of that location with several maps of the period it is now possible to identify it as Common Barn Farm on Chestnut Avenue. This means the three fields opposite the farm were used for the camp even though those fields were used by a different farmer, a Mr Brown who was a tenant of the Flemming Estate.

The fields used are today occupied by Chestnut Avenue Retail Park, Tollgate Business Park, The Hexagon Centre (Adult Social Care) and the very lower part of Velmore Estate. This means the camp location that was described in Barbara Hillier's 'The Chandler's Ford Story' book (published 2005 page 93) and in an article written in the Hampshire Chronicle many years ago as being where Asda is today was incorrect. Unfortunately I only discovered this shortly after sending an article to Discover magazine and despite them trying it was too late to update it with the new location for the camp.

[Here is a link to a website](#) that allows you to view a 1892 to 1914 map on the left side of your screen and a present day map on the right hand side. I choose this map as it is the clearest to view.

Its worth looking at the 1888 to 1913 map too as that shows the same layout for the farm. As well as the farm layout being identical you can see the gravel pit area matches perfectly what is visible on the photograph.

It is also possible to see that part of the gravel pit area that was used for the camp is still there today. It is located between Cambridge Drive and Suffolk Drive and includes Suffolk Drive Playground and the wooded area next to it. All the large Oak trees that are in that area today were there in 1937. This also possibly includes the tallest birch trees there. I have marked this area in the aerial photo with a red circle.

If you move your computer cursor around the edges of the three fields for the camp on the old map you can see precisely where that is today on the current map.

Interestingly part of the Basque Children's camp land was later to be used for a German Prisoner of War Camp and then a Polish Dependents Camp. This area was the very right hand side of the children's camp.

If you change the map view to 1945 to 1966, you will see some of the buildings used for those two camps marked on the map.