

# Internment archaeology: Gerhard and Maria Bersu's collaborative efforts to live and research on wartime Isle of Man

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## Introduction

The excavations that the Bersus undertook on the Isle of Man from 1941 were highly significant for Manx archaeology, but also comprised a significant phase in Gerhard Bersu's (1889–1964) professional career. A by-product of the rise of Nazism and World War II, how this came about, and how resources were made available for excavation during such a protracted internment has never been explored. Here, the results based on a number of archive searches provide some answers, though further sources are still being investigated<sup>1</sup>. Those interned for most of the war were considered significant security threats, yet the Bersus were allowed to leave their camp and carry out fieldwork in the countryside, albeit under nominal guard. Moreover, resources were found to support these endeavours, which remain some of the most extensive excavations ever carried out on the Isle of Man. This was only possible because of G. Bersu's reputation amongst many significant British archaeologists, reinforced by his pre-internment activity in Britain. The relationships that Bersu had built up were sufficient to allow him a professionally productive internment life, but not sufficient to enable fieldwork as a free person. This paper considers what the internment experience was like for both of the Bersus, what excavations took place and how, and why earlier release did not take place.

G. Bersu was an archaeologist with a European reputation, and in Britain he was most influential because of his style of excavation and methods of graphical recording. He was known to a number of prominent archaeologists in Britain, particularly prehistorians and Romanists. His excavations at the Goldberg in Southern Germany from 1911 until 1929, together with appearance at various international gatherings, meant that he was known to leading British scholars including Grahame Clarke (1907–1995) at Cambridge University, Vere Gordon Childe (1892–1957) at Edinburgh University, and Christopher Hawkes (1905–1992) and Thomas D. Kendrick (1895–1979) at the British Museum in London. Whilst the Director of the *Römisch-Germanische Kommission* (RGK), he developed a strong friendship with the Ordnance Survey archaeologist and founder of the journal *Antiquity*, Osbert G. S. Crawford (1886–1957)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Sadly, the effects of the covid-19 pandemic have prevented visits to additional archives that are now known to be relevant to the Bersu biographies. Sufficient has been consulted, however, to provide a firm outline of the overall biographical narrative,

the conditions endured, and opportunities seized by the Bersus during their residence on the Isle of Man.

<sup>2</sup> CRAWFORD 1955 ; cf. in this volume the contribution by Andreas Külzer.

Bersu was sufficiently well-connected and acknowledged for his expertise to be elected Honorary Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1933, but with demotion from Director of the RGK to become Officer for excavations, Berlin, in 1935 because of his Jewish ancestry, his position was diminished. However, even after enforced retirement in 1937, he was still active in German archaeology in March 1938 when at a conference in Berlin he assisted Crawford on his visit. Bersu was attempting to maintain his German archaeological position, but at every turn this was being curtailed, reduced in status, or even cut off, and overseas support seemed ever more important. Crawford, who was a major figure in the Prehistoric Society (and was then President in 1939), proposed that it should fund excavations that Gerhard could direct in England<sup>3</sup>. The Prehistoric Society was a body with a substantial British focus, but with European and indeed global concerns which it maintains to this day. This project was important at a methodological level in terms of exposing British fieldworkers to the Continental style of area excavation by gradually excavating trenches to reveal the complete site plan, and also for the styles of recording. These were not unique to Bersu, but he was a competent and articulate exponent of these. It was also significant as it was to explore a non-hillfort enclosed settlement with the intention of searching for domestic structures, a feature of Iron Age archaeology that had been largely unrecognised in the record to this point<sup>4</sup>. Crawford and Bersu together selected the site, Little Woodbury in Wiltshire, in 1938 from potential cropmark settlements photographed and identified by Crawford, one of the pioneers of aerial photography of archaeological sites<sup>5</sup>. This was an important technique increasingly applied after World War I for not only prehistoric settlement but also the Roman frontier<sup>6</sup>.

The excavations took place over the diplomatically tense summers of 1938 and 1939 when Maria and Gerhard would come by ferry with their car and drive to Wiltshire to conduct the fieldwork<sup>7</sup>. The excavations at Little Woodbury had an influence on British excavation and recording methods, and also had a profound effect on the British understanding of their Iron Age<sup>8</sup>. Excavation methods affect what data we collect, and in what form it can be represented and analysed. Bersu had different priorities in excavation than did British archaeologists of the time and did not use either the long-established narrow trenching method or the more recent grid system with substantial balks, as espoused by Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1890–1976) in his classic excavation method textbook *Archaeology From the Earth*<sup>9</sup>. Rather, Gerhard excavated by a series of parallel trenches that accumulated to create a full plan (*fig. 1*), or one interrupted by only narrow balks. The methods he applied at Little Woodbury were generally those he applied on the Isle of Man. He demonstrated the efficiency of these techniques in Wiltshire such that his supporters were able to argue for funding to enable his Manx campaigns to proceed, even during the war.

The other methodological issue also confronted the Wheeler practices, this time in recording. Wheeler had successfully introduced a clear understanding of stratigraphic excavation and recording, but the latter he wished for in clear, monochrome schematically represented layers. In contrast, Bersu appears to have excavated in the Continental style of spits, and then drawn his sections in a naturalistic and coloured format. Spits were hardly needed at Little Woodbury, where once the plough soil had been removed the archaeological features were cut into the chalk subsoil, and there were no intact archaeological

<sup>3</sup> CRAWFORD 1955.

<sup>4</sup> EVANS 1989.

<sup>5</sup> CRAWFORD 1955; cf. in this volume the contribution by Christopher Evans.

<sup>6</sup> CRAWFORD 1928; CRAWFORD / KEILLER 1928; HAUSER 2008.

<sup>7</sup> EVANS 1989.

<sup>8</sup> EVANS 1989.

<sup>9</sup> WHEELER 1954.

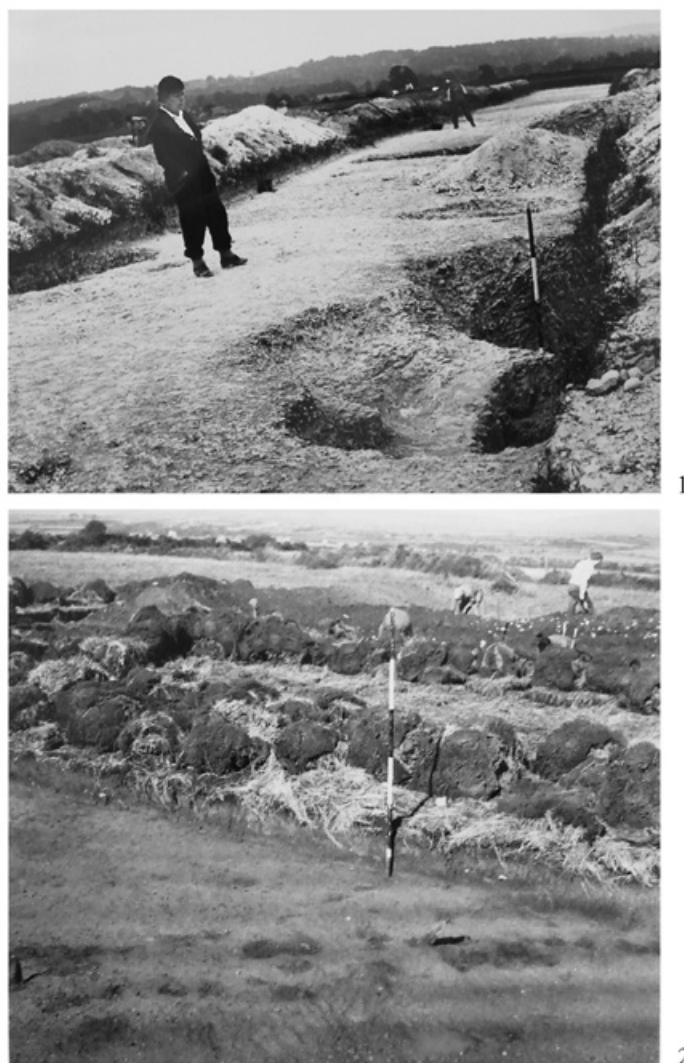


Fig. 1. 1: Little Woodbury, 1938. Trench style excavation. Note workmen clearing in the background and Maria looking at an excavated pit in the foreground (photo: G. Bersu; © Crown Copyright. Historic England Archive AA74/00679). 2: Ballacagen A. Trench with post hole stains, with internees working on a parallel trench in the background (Historic England).

layers outside clearly defined features. The spits would have been of little purpose at many of the Manx sites such as Ballacagen, but they would have been applied in the deeper stratigraphy of King Arthur's Round Table and Ballanorris, though the photographs and other records do not demonstrate this method in action (*fig. 2*). Wheeler had a relationship with his deposits that was fixed and certain, determined in the trench as the recorder faced the deposits head-on. Bersu had a more subtle and nuanced relationship, though at a final interpretive level he was in fact just as fixed as Wheeler's – the archives indicate that he was open to suggestions where he was uncertain but where he had made up his mind,

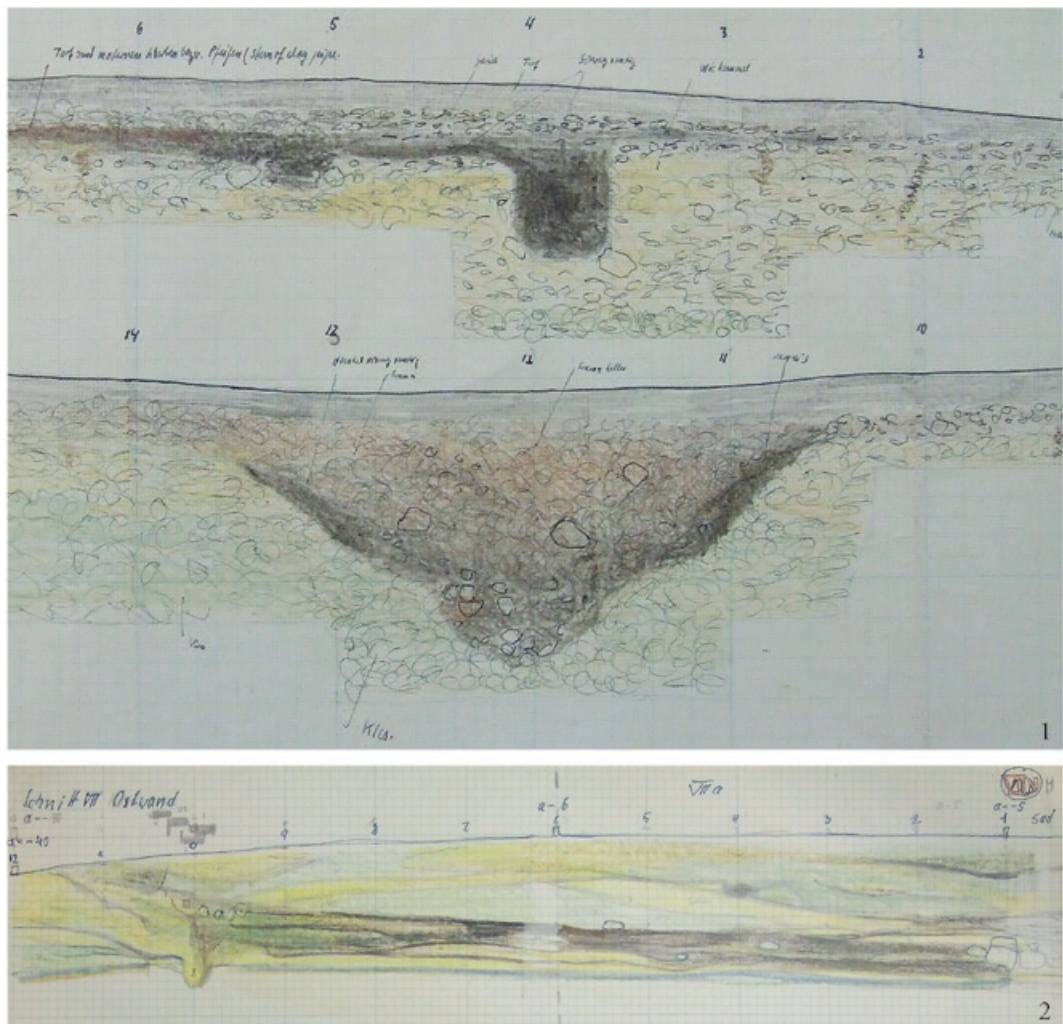


Fig. 2. 1: King Arthur's Round Table section (drawing: G. Bersu; Historic England). 2: Part of a long section across Ballanorris (drawing: G. Bersu; Manx National Heritage).

persuading Gerhard to take a different interpretation was clearly difficult, at least through communication between distant scholars.

Examination of British reports from the 1940s and 1950s indicates that Wheeler's methodologies dominated, but there are some notable examples of excavators where it can be argued that the Bersu approaches were absorbed and adapted. William F. Grimes (1905–1988), a conscientious objector, was sent to excavate war time archaeological sites in advance of destruction, for example at aerodromes which were often laid out on flat arable land on which cropmark sites had been identified. The decision to excavate by wide trenches set side by side or in the grid system was often unnecessary because the topsoil was all bulldozed away to expose the surface of the subsoil, but this created a plan that more emphasised horizontal relationships, and Grimes adopted a style of recording that, with its fuzzy realistic shading, had much more in common with Bersu's recording methods than

it did with Wheeler's<sup>10</sup>, as also noted by Christopher Evans in his paper<sup>11</sup>. Grimes attended the Little Woodbury excavations, and engaged with the Bersu excavations on the Isle of Man, corresponding with Gerhard on points of interpretation.

Area excavation only became widespread in Britain from the 1970s, and a more realistic style of recording (even if still built on defining clear lines between layers) became dominant<sup>12</sup>. For some, a more Bersu-like representational style was preferred – notably espoused by Philip Barker (1920–2000) in his style of stone-by-stone planning and use of crayon colouring<sup>13</sup>. Barker was a colleague at Birmingham University of Manxman Peter Gelling (1926–1983), who excavated on the Isle of Man for a number of years to increase understanding of the Manx Iron Age following on from Bersu's investigations, and who had been a schoolboy on the Island whilst the wartime fieldwork took place<sup>14</sup>. Gelling conducted area excavations in a similar manner to Bersu, with adjacent trenches excavated successively, but he only had the resources to carry this out over several summer seasons rather than one continuous project. The advantages of a genuinely area excavation on one of his partially excavated sites was demonstrated by more recent investigations at Port y Candas that involved excavating part of the site not previously investigated by Gelling<sup>15</sup>.

Unlike much of Continental Europe, the British domestic dwellings were round, not rectangular, and Bersu demonstrated that timber roundhouses could be identified through his style of excavation. He also argued that the large pits – often containing many artefacts – found on numerous sites in southern England were not dwellings, as many British archaeologists had inferred having failed to find other clear structural traces in their grid system or narrow trench excavations, but they were for storage. Bersu's awareness of eastern European parallels for grain storage in pits was a valuable contribution, and he was believed sufficiently that they were depicted in a film made in 1945 of a reconstruction of Little Woodbury, filled with grain and covered with basketry<sup>16</sup>. The effectiveness of such storage pits in British conditions was only conclusively demonstrated through experiment by Peter Reynolds (1939–2001) in the 1970s<sup>17</sup> and with environmental evidence from the Iron Age pits themselves in the 1980s. The methodologies and interpretations from Little Woodbury were rapidly disseminated; the excavations were visited by many British archaeologists, and many of the younger generation of the time came and participated at Little Woodbury, including Stuart Piggott (1910–1996) and C. A. Raleigh Radford (1900–1998). At least preliminary results at Little Woodbury were published<sup>18</sup>, which further consolidated the impact of the discoveries on British understanding of the Iron Age. The increased network of personal relations, and better appreciation of Bersu's talents beyond those scholars aware of his European work, would pay dividends in creating support for fieldwork amongst a wide range of British archaeologists at all stages of their career whilst he was interned, even though for many their practical effectiveness was hindered by the various roles they undertook in the war effort.

The Little Woodbury excavations met all expectations of their sponsors, but Bersu wished to maintain the appearance of compliance with the Nazi regime and even in early September 1939, when he knew he should not return, he and Maria made the pretence

<sup>10</sup> GRIMES 1968; GRIMES / CLOSE-BROOKS 1993.

<sup>11</sup> In this tome pp. 233–269.

<sup>12</sup> For example, WAINWRIGHT / LONGWORTH 1971.

<sup>13</sup> BARKER 2003.

<sup>14</sup> GELLING 1972; GELLING 1978 provide useful summaries and references to individual site reports.

<sup>15</sup> MYTUM 2014.

<sup>16</sup> HE Bersu archive Photograph by Crown Film Unit, negative BB69/1013; letter 10.7.1945 from Graham Wallace to G. Bersu.

<sup>17</sup> REYNOLDS 1974.

<sup>18</sup> BERSU 1938; BERSU 1940a.

of trying to get to the King's Lynn ferry but missed it, thereby giving himself the excuse that he tried to return, should the Germans win the war<sup>19</sup>. He was a refugee but an apparently unwilling one. This decision was one which was to haunt the Bersus for many years to come, and one which undermined much of the support for them amongst his British archaeological colleagues.

#### After the outbreak of war

Given the unplanned stay in Britain, the Bersus were fortunate to be then invited to excavate at King Arthur's Round Table, a massive earthwork, funded by the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society<sup>20</sup>. The investigations had been started by Robin George Collingwood (1889–1943), noted philosopher and Roman archaeologist, even though the site was a prehistoric henge monument. However, Collingwood had become ill and was not able to direct a second season of fieldwork, though his wife continued to assist. Bersu took his own approach to the site but could only undertake limited excavations in the one short season he had to investigate (*fig. 2*). Nevertheless, he managed to gain sufficient information to interpret the site in quite a different way to Collingwood and wrote to him to say he was sorry that he had a different opinion and it was a pity that ill health at the time of the dig prevented Collingwood's visit, and war time restrictions prevented his visiting the Collingwoods in Oxford<sup>21</sup>. Several subsequent letters from various colleagues congratulate Gerhard in passing on how he diplomatically dealt with both taking over and offering a different interpretation of the site.

Following the Arthur's Seat excavations, during which they stayed at the Crown Hotel, Eamont Bridge, adjacent to the site, the Bersus had to find somewhere to stay, and Childe helped with this and so they moved to Scotland. They took up residence at the Dalrulzian Garage, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, for the winter of 1939–40, before leaving there to stay for three weeks with Mrs Birley in early March, a connection no doubt developed through Gerhard's previous work on the Roman *Limes*<sup>22</sup>. It was during his time at Dalrulzian Garage that Gerhard wrote up first Little Woodbury and then Arthur's Seat, despite limited light in the evenings<sup>23</sup>. Although not his period specialism, Bersu was given advice through correspondence from others, including Childe and Piggott<sup>24</sup>. Given war time problems and challenges over translation of the report from German into English provided by Ian A. Richmond (another noted Roman archaeologist, 1902–1965) despite his ill health<sup>25</sup>, it was impressive that the final report was published in 1940<sup>26</sup>. Sadly, this was not to be the case for most of the Manx excavations which, though numerous and extensive, took many years to appear in print, and even then, only with the assistance of others after Gerhard's death<sup>27</sup>. Undoubtedly, if more of the reports had appeared in a timely manner, Bersu's influence in British archaeology would have been even greater.

Enemy Alien Tribunals had been established in 1939, and as aliens were identified they were assessed and classified into one of three categories: A, B, or C. Those considered a

<sup>19</sup> Crawford 1955.

<sup>20</sup> BERSU 1940b; BRADLEY 1994.

<sup>21</sup> HE Bersu archive copy of letter 26.2.1940 from G. Bersu to R. G. Collingwood.

<sup>22</sup> HE Bersu archive copy of letter 26.2.1940 from G. Bersu to R. G. Collingwood.

<sup>23</sup> HE Bersu archive postcard 28.6.1940 from G. Bersu

to C. A. Raleigh Radford.

<sup>24</sup> HE Bersu archive letter 13.4.1940 from G. Childe and letters 16.4. and 1.3.1940 from St. Piggott.

<sup>25</sup> HE Bersu archive letter 4.4.1940 from I. A. Richmond to G. Bersu.

<sup>26</sup> BERSU 1940b.

<sup>27</sup> RADFORD 1965; BERSU / WILSON 1966.

threat to security were A, those uncertain were B, and those of no risk were C. It was on the 19<sup>th</sup> December that the Bersus appeared before a Tribunal of Aliens<sup>28</sup>. Gerhard felt that the hearing had gone well, and he was classified as a B category alien. Movement restrictions were dropped, and Gerhard was allowed his cameras back<sup>29</sup>. At first, only the category A aliens were held, but the others were still regarded with suspicion and, despite Gerhard's optimism, constraints were soon limiting his prospects for work.

In February 1940, Childe wrote to the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL) to find out how to gain permission for Gerhard to excavate for 6 weeks on Scottish sites, using funds agreed by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland<sup>30</sup>. The grant of £ 10 per week was to be assigned at £ 5.10s. to the Bersus, with the remainder for other expenses including the employment of two labourers. Childe was informed that the local labour exchange could now give permission for 'friendly aliens' to be allowed employment, though there might need to be an advertisement to ensure that no British person could undertake the task<sup>31</sup>. It was from this correspondence that the SPSL discovered the existence of Gerhard and Maria Bersu in Britain, so they wrote to Gerhard, care of Childe, explaining that they assisted refugee academics, and could he fill in a questionnaire and provide a cv. This Bersu did, and these documents are in the SPSL file<sup>32</sup>. He states that he has a wife as dependent, 'who is able and accustomed to help me with all my work (was secretary at the *Archäologisches Institut* for 41/2 years, in charge of the library, has experience in editing, typewriting, art, archaeology and history of literature, Dr. phil.)' By the end of February, the SPSL acknowledged receipt of the documentation, and the Bersus were in the SPSL system<sup>33</sup>. Little did anyone realise at this time how long their case would be active, and how voluminous the correspondence would become.

Security concerns and increased xenophobia across Britain rapidly overtook the relatively relaxed arrangements in place over the winter of 1939/40, and official permission to undertake the work was refused<sup>34</sup>. Only category A aliens had been confined, but by early 1940, large numbers of category B were soon thought to need further assessment and in the interim they should be held securely so that further checks could be undertaken to ascertain whether they were Nazi supporters acting as infiltrators, or true refugees who could be released and used in the war effort.

The British government required somewhere away from any military areas to house relatively large numbers of alien civilians, and it asked the Manx government whether the Isle of Man would be prepared to take them. The Isle of Man had (and still has) its own independent government, Tynwald, but one also with the British monarch (then King George VI) as head of state. The Manx were willing to support Britain; they had interned over 30 000 civilians in the World War I, using two camps; one was in Douglas (an adapted holiday camp) and the other was a newly constructed extensive site at Knockaloe, near Peel<sup>35</sup>. In World War II, the Manx government decided to follow a different strategy and commandeered many of the hotels and guesthouses that catered for the summer tourist business from the industrial towns of northern England that would be disrupted by the

<sup>28</sup> HE Bersu archive letter 10.12.1939 from G. Bersu to C. A. Raleigh Radford.

<sup>29</sup> HE Bersu archive letter 20.12.1939 from G. Bersu to C. A. Raleigh Radford.

<sup>30</sup> SPSL 181/7 G Bersu file, letter 16.2.1940 from G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>31</sup> SPSL 181/18 G Bersu file, letter 24.8.1940 from G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>32</sup> SPSL 181/1-5 G Bersu file.

<sup>33</sup> SPSL 181/12 G Bersu file, 29.2.1940.

<sup>34</sup> SPSL 181/18 G Bersu file, letter 24.8.1940 from G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>35</sup> CRESSWELL 1994.

war<sup>36</sup>. By May 1940, the first camp was ready for occupation, Mooragh Camp in Ramsey in the north of the Island. Italy joined the war in June and at this point Italian civilians, and also the remaining Germans of whatever security category, were rounded up and placed in any secure premises that could be found across Britain<sup>37</sup>. The demand for Manx camps therefore grew rapidly and more were soon available, one in Peel and others in or close to Douglas. The main ones were Onchan, Central, Palace, Metropole, and Sefton, but the last only lasted a few months as already many civilians sent to the Island had been cleared for release and returned back to the British mainland. Indeed, by March 1941 not only Sefton but also Central had closed, and the remaining internees on the mainland at Lingfield and Huyton were transferred to Hutchinson; by July, Onchan was also closed. The women (including Maria) were from the start sent to the southern part of the Island, which was called Rushen camp (Camp Y).

The Bersus' freedom was short-lived as they were caught up in the rounding up of aliens and on 20<sup>th</sup> June, when they were back in Edinburgh, they were taken into custody. Maria was sent to H. M. Prison in the city, but she did not know where Gerhard had been placed<sup>38</sup>. Maria was able to send communications to Raleigh Radford and her husband on 28<sup>th</sup> June, but after that correspondence was difficult for some time. Bersu still did not know about his wife's whereabouts in mid-August, even though she was only miles away on the Island<sup>39</sup>.

### Separation on the Isle of Man

Gerhard and Maria Bersu were interned on the Isle of Man in 1940, but they travelled separately and in ignorance of the other's fate. Gerhard was assigned to Hutchinson Camp (Camp P) in Douglas, arriving on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. The camp comprised terraced multi-story guesthouses arranged in a rectangle surrounding a grass-covered area that was called Hutchinson Square (*fig. 3*). It was relatively easy for the authorities to make this secure with barbed wire fencing and with the landlords and landladies moved elsewhere, all of the accommodation could be devoted to the internees in housing which otherwise required no structural modification, with an exercise area provided in the centre. Internees were of mixed ages and backgrounds, but Hutchinson had a particularly large number from the academic and cultural professions. Nevertheless, conditions were spartan and there were few resources beyond the bare minimum to be shared by the inmates. Gerhard wrote to Raleigh Radford requesting many culinary items that were unavailable in camp – though many would soon become mere memories for all in Britain as supplies became limited<sup>40</sup>.

Many Jewish academics were interned, though often only briefly, as was the experience of Classical and Iron Age archaeologist Jacobsthal, whom Bersu used to visit till his release<sup>41</sup>. They must have subsequently maintained some level of contact as he let Gerhard know that Hawkes had been appointed to the Chair in European Archaeology at Oxford in 1946<sup>42</sup>. The internees were guarded and had daily roll calls, but they were largely left to

<sup>36</sup> MYTUM 2011.

<sup>37</sup> STENT 1980.

<sup>38</sup> HE Bersu archive postcard 28.6.1940 from M. Bersu to C. A. Raleigh Radford.

<sup>39</sup> SPSL 181/18 G Bersu file, letter 24.8.1940 from G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>40</sup> HE Bersu archive letter 1.8.1940 from G. Bersu to

C. A. Raleigh Radford. Items include Marmite, Oxo cubes, tinned tomatoes and sardines, corned beef, condensed milk, chocolate and spices.

<sup>41</sup> ULSCHNEIDER / CRAWFORD 2013; CRAWFORD et al. 2017.

<sup>42</sup> CFCH; letter 31.7.1946 from G. Bersu.





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Fig. 3. Hutchinson Square housing as used for the internment camp. 1: Around 1940–41 (photo: Major H. O. Daniel, © The estate of Hubert Daniel, Photo © Tate, CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 [Unported]) and 2: today (photo: H. Mytum).

manage themselves through various committees. A Cultural Department was established (popularly called the camp university), with many of the academics providing discussion groups and lectures across a wide range of disciplines. A vibrant artistic culture was also established, with exhibitions and meetings, and a variety of musical events<sup>43</sup>. Bersu would have been more at home than some of the professional and academic internees who had previously had little contact with less educated men, whereas Gerhard would have worked with labourers on excavations and discussed sites and landscapes with farmers and their employees.

<sup>43</sup> HINRICHSSEN 1993; DICKSON et al. 2012.

By August 1940, Denis William Brogan, a Fellow of Peterhouse and Professor of Political Science at the University of Cambridge, wrote to support the release of Bersu, having known him since 1932<sup>44</sup>. He mentioned other supporters by name: his wife, Hawkes (British Museum), Hawkes' wife Jaquetta (here styled Gowland-Hopkins), and Ronald Syme (Trinity College, Oxford). It is notable that Peterhouse Fellow G. Clarke was not on the list, though he may have by this stage have been elsewhere in the war effort. A second letter from Brogan the same day, but this time styled as coming from the Ministry of Information, American Division, adds that he and Professor Childe (Edinburgh University) could stand guarantors for the Bersus having some financial support<sup>45</sup>. This letter also explicitly mentions Maria, stating 'What is to be done about Dr. Bersu's wife, Maria? She is not a scholar but works along with her husband, helps him in his editorial work etc. and all that I have said about his character applies equally to her'. A reply notes that Maria would only be freed after her husband, and much of the rest of the correspondence over the coming years refers only to Bersu as he is perceived as being the one who would be employed, and his wife would be a dependent<sup>46</sup>. The result, sadly, is that Maria is rarely mentioned in the voluminous correspondence that revolves around the saga of unsuccessful attempts to provide Gerhard with paid employment as a freed field archaeologist in wartime mainland Britain.

Later in August 1940, Crawford attested that Gerhard and his wife had been financially backed by himself and two friends, but that their internment was because Gerhard could not support himself and his wife, though this was only because the Home Office refused to allow him to take the work that has been offered<sup>47</sup>. The issue that lay behind this reticence – beyond a widespread level of chaos and suspicion – was that the Bersus were not technically refugees – they had not fled Germany for fear of persecution but had just been unable to return to their homeland because of the outbreak of war<sup>48</sup>. Bersu's request for release – supported by a number of eminent scholars – was submitted by the British Academy in September but was refused by November 1940 because it was at that stage not possible to overturn the decision of the Regional Advisory Committee that had first recommended internment<sup>49</sup>. By February 1941, however, it was becoming possible for the Bersus to be released as long as they then resided outside the Aliens Protected Area. Whether there was work or not, provided they could be supported and housed, release was possible, but 'it would not be advisable for Dr. Bersu to "dig holes in lonely spots at the present time"<sup>50</sup>. The SPSL was tasked with locating suitable accommodation whilst their academic contacts attempted to find employment not involving fieldwork for Gerhard, and they wrote to several institutions for help<sup>51</sup>. By this stage, however, Gerhard was already well-advanced making other arrangements closer to his enforced home.

Bersu persuaded the Manx authorities to give permission for him and a few other internees to leave camp to explore the countryside and prospect for minerals such as manganese

<sup>44</sup> SPSL 181/13 G Bersu file, letter 16.8.1940 from D. W. Brogan to SPSL.

<sup>45</sup> SPSL 181/14 G Bersu file, letter 16.8.1940 from D. W. Brogan to SPSL.

<sup>46</sup> SPSL 181/14 G Bersu file, copy of letter 16.8.1940 from SPSL to D. W. Brogan.

<sup>47</sup> SPSL 181/144 G Bersu file, letter 10.6.1945 from O. G. S. Crawford to SPSL.

<sup>48</sup> SPSL 181/21 G Bersu file; copy of letter 27.8.1940 from SPSL to G. Childe.

<sup>49</sup> SPSL 181/23 G Bersu file; copy of letter 27.8.1940 from SPSL to Sir Frederick Kenyon; SPSL 181/23 G Bersu file; letter 20.2.1941 from Home Office (Aliens department) to SPSL.

<sup>50</sup> SPSL 181/23 G Bersu file; letter 20.2.1941 from Home Office (Aliens department) to SPSL.

<sup>51</sup> SPSL 181/26, 27, 28 G Bersu file; copy of letters 22.2.1941 from SPSL to D. W. Brogan, G. Childe, O. G. S. Crawford.

at Slieau Chiarn; this was a failure in terms of geological exploitation, but it indicated how Gerhard could mobilise the internees as a resource to benefit the Island. The Camp Commandant, Captain O. H. Daniel, allowed groups of internees out on walks, guarded at all times, and Bersu arranged one such excursion for camp internees and officials which was described in the December 1940 issue of *The Camp*, the Hutchinson newspaper<sup>52</sup>. The expedition headed to the prospection site but also featured a visit to what was described as a Viking site. Photographs survive that record this outing, showing that it was The Braaid site that was included in the tour, and the inclement weather mentioned in the newspaper is corroborated by the clothing of Bersu and the walkers. The prospection project failed to identify mineral sources suitable for exploitation, but this set a precedent for out-of-camp activities that Bersu set about arranging, and his archaeological expertise was made obvious at The Braaid, as well as in a lecture on prehistory within the camp<sup>53</sup>.

The idea of excavating archaeological sites could be broached following the mining explorations. Bersu was fortunate in that the Director of the Manx Museum was Basil Megaw, who also knew Childe and was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities of London. Megaw was an influential Manxman with archaeological interests who saw the potential of using such a well-regarded excavator on the Island's under-explored archaeological resource. Sadly, there is no publicly available early correspondence between Megaw and Bersu but, given that Hutchinson Camp was only a short walk from the museum, he may have visited him (and indeed the Camp Commandant) to consider what options might be possible. Bersu did not plan and then carry out excavation in complete professional isolation, and he used his contacts within the wider British archaeological community. The surviving correspondence from the 1940s indicates a wide network of acquaintances, and clearly some were close friends. These included Raleigh Radford, Crawford, Hawkes, and Childe, the last managing to visit the Ballacagen excavations<sup>54</sup>. Others were correspondents, including F. Kendrick and Grimes, and numerous specialists regarding finds from the excavations including C. Curwen, A. Oswald, W. Hemp and S. O'Riordain. Yet others, such as Clarke, were professional associates but were less supportive of his alien status<sup>55</sup>. Wheeler was in disagreement with Bersu on both field methods and recording methods, but his attitude to Bersu the man is thus far unknown. These scholars, together with others such as Glyn Daniel are not in the Bersu network identified to date, though he and Piggott (who had known Bersu) were abroad during much of the war and so could not have participated easily in discussions regarding the Isle of Man excavations. All were linked primarily through the Society of Antiquaries of London, though the Bersus had stayed with several during their visits, and some must have known Bersu well from pre-war international conferences.

The excavations required funding and given the success of Little Woodbury and his numerous contacts, a grant from the Society of Antiquaries of London was agreed early in 1941. The first excavation was arranged with considerable speed, taking place on a small fort at Garwick, north of Douglas, in the first part of May 1941<sup>56</sup>. Gerhard was therefore able to demonstrate the effectiveness of excavation with internees and the logistical viability of the activity in considerably less than a year after arriving on the Isle of Man.

Maria was sent to the Rushen Camp (Camp W) for women which had been set up in late May 1940, though it is not known whether she was at first billeted in Port Erin or

<sup>52</sup> *The Camp* No. 11, December 2 1940.

<sup>53</sup> ULMSCHNEIDER / CRAWFORD 2013; CRAWFORD et al. 2017.

<sup>54</sup> Letter 29.4.1942 from G. Childe to B. Megaw in the possession of Clare Alford.

<sup>55</sup> EVANS 1998, fn. 2.

<sup>56</sup> BERSU 1967; BERSU / CUBBON 1967.

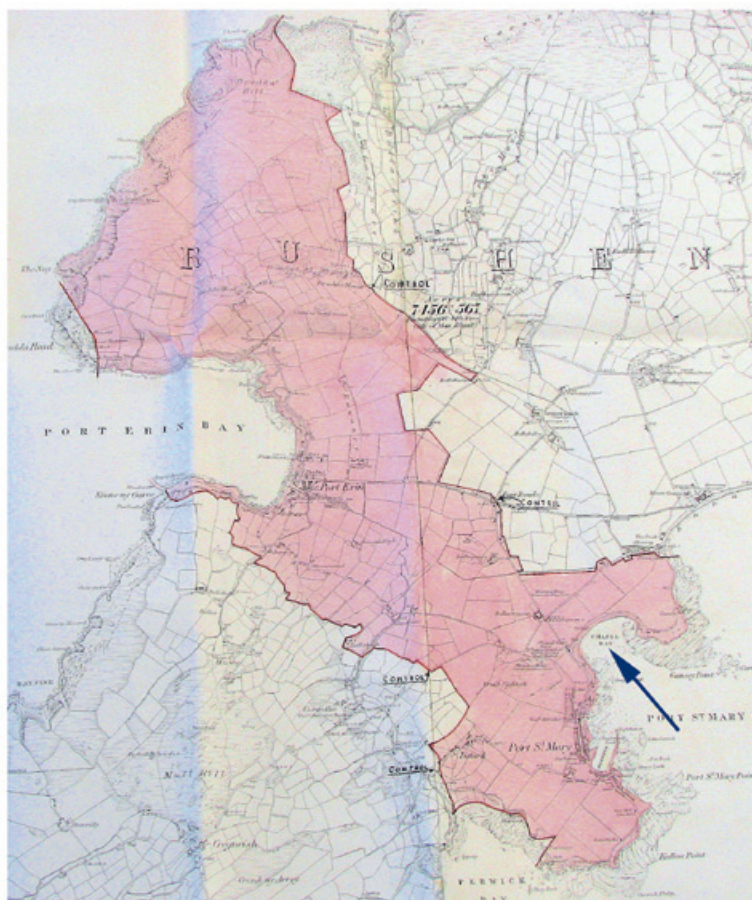


Fig. 4. Extent of Camp Rushen for Women, August 1940 with the two small towns of Port Erin and Port St. Mary. This is based on an O. S. map which does not show The Promenade and other expansion of Port St. Mary that existed by this date, but The Promenade runs round Chapel Bay marked with the blue arrow (map: Ordnance Survey, editing: H. Mytum; Manx National Heritage).

Port St. Mary, the two small towns that were used to house the female internees and their children, but by November 1940, Maria was staying at House Belvedere, Port St Mary<sup>57</sup>. In time there were 4,000 women interned, with only a quarter of them housed in Port Erin. A map of August 1940 (*fig. 4*) provides a detailed outline of the camp's extent<sup>58</sup>, which includes extensive areas of countryside not only between but around the two main settlements. Part was defined by the coastline, largely of low but not easily scaled cliffs, but the land barriers were at first controlled only with checkpoints on the roads. By October, the countryside areas had been reduced in the south and particularly in the north, but there was still a considerable area available for walking and visiting the coast<sup>59</sup>. At some point, the land boundaries to north-east and south-west were defined with high barbed wire fences.

<sup>57</sup> Letter 11.11.1940 from C. A. Raleigh Radford to Eleanor Megaw in the possession of C. Alford.

<sup>58</sup> MNH, O. S. map, coloured August 1940.

<sup>59</sup> MNH Plan 377, hand drawn map of Rushen Internment Area 11.10.1940.

The female internees comprised single and married women, including those with children and a number who were pregnant. The Camp Commandant Dame Joanna Cruickshank, attempted to run the system through co-operation, but this was challenged by the presence of not only refugees from Nazism but also between 500 and 600 who explicitly supported Germany and of whom a number were actively and outspokenly supporters of Nazism<sup>60</sup>. Gradually these were segregated into separate boarding houses, initially Windsor House and Ard Chreg.

*The Camp* (the male Hutchinson camp newspaper) reports in late October 1940, a meeting arranged in the Theatre Hall and other rooms of Derby Castle in Douglas where married internees could meet<sup>61</sup>, but Stent notes that monthly meetings between married couples commenced in August at a hotel in Port Erin<sup>62</sup>, so it is unclear when Maria and Gerhard first met up after their separation. It was only from April 1941 that the Married camp (Camp Y) began operation; Gerhard had joined Maria at Port St Mary by later June 1941<sup>63</sup>.

### Reunited at the Married camp and the excavations

The Rushen camp (Camp W) was restructured in 1941, with the single women concentrated in Port Erin, and Port St Mary (now renamed Camp Y) being redesignated for married couples only. A new management was put in place, with the Commandant being Chief Inspector C. R. Cuthbert who proved to be an enthusiastic supporter of the excavations and the use of internees. The Bersus at first stayed in Southlands<sup>64</sup>, a boarding house with ten guest rooms on the Promenade run by a widow, Mary Eslick. The property was one of a number facing onto the curved sandy Chapel Bay that made it a quieter and more select holiday destination than Douglas in the pre-war period (*fig. 5,1*). Such establishments had meals provided by the landlady, but all household chores had to be undertaken by the internees. Nevertheless, they had much unoccupied time, despite being able to go for country walks within the camp area and go swimming in the sea. Maria certainly availed herself of the bathing opportunities, at least in warmer weather. The only surviving physical evidence of the camp at Chapel Bay are some posts in the sea that supported the barbed wire which prevented the swimmers escaping from the camp confines by water (*fig. 5,2*)<sup>65</sup>. Gerhard also worked on an allotment, growing vegetables that would no doubt be much appreciated given wartime shortages, but it would seem that he was also required to assist with housework at the accommodation<sup>66</sup>. His field diary notes that he caught a rabbit on the first day of the Ballacagen dig<sup>67</sup>, which was presumably taken back to Southlands for the pot.

The Bersus also had networks for socializing and surviving within wartime conditions, within the constraints of internment; Gerhard even acted as Father Christmas for the children, and Maria made life-long friends with some who were also interned there<sup>68</sup>. The female and married camp management had encouraged a simple exchange system that

<sup>60</sup> BRINSON 2005, 114.

<sup>61</sup> *The Camp* No. 6, October 27 1940.

<sup>62</sup> STENT 1980, 197.

<sup>63</sup> Noted as 21.5.1941 in notes provided by C. Alford.

<sup>64</sup> As seen on the addresses of letters from Gerhard at this time, e. g letter 17.9.1941 from Gerhard to Hawkes.

<sup>65</sup> MNHB, Bersu correspondence, letter 28.7.1943 from G. Childe to G. Bersu.

<sup>66</sup> SPSL 181/69 Letter 22.1.1942 G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>67</sup> MNHB, Field Diary 26.8.1941.

<sup>68</sup> Mentioned in a 1965 Christmas card from M. Bersu to E. Megaw in the possession of C. Alford.



1



2

Fig. 5. The Promenade and Chapel Bay. 1: The Promenade properties are still externally much as they were in 1940 (photo: H. Mytum). 2: View of The Promenade from the south-east, with two of the posts for the barbed wire camp boundary across the bay in the foreground (photo: H. Mytum).

allowed skills and resources to be paid in camp coupons between internees, but this was discontinued in November 1941<sup>69</sup>; however, such activities were maintained after this but now for payment or barter exchange. Skills might include hairdressing or dressmaking, or actual products such as knitted clothing could be bartered or sold. Evidence of the Bersu's social involvement in camp life is indirect and unusual. A pink woollen cardigan in the Manx Museum<sup>70</sup> that was knitted by a female internee for her daughter has wooden buttons made from the bog oak wood excavated from the Iron Age settlement at Ballacagen. Bersu, or one of his workforce, took back suitable timber to be made into buttons, though by whom is unknown. Such resources would be of value within the exchange networks of internees, socially if not economically, and also as gifts to local people. This is emphasised by a letter from W. Cubbon (retired Director of the Manx Museum) who was providing

<sup>69</sup> STENT 1980, 194–195.

<sup>70</sup> Manx Museum 2008-0336.



Fig. 6. Artefacts made from bog oak excavated at Ballacagen. 1: Brooch. 2: Cufflinks with Masonic symbols (photo: H. Mytum; Manx National Heritage).

advice on Manx place names and history, stating “I thank you very kindly for the generous gift of the half a doz Buttons made from the ancient oak found at Ballacagen”<sup>71</sup>. The buttons, still on their presentation card, are now in the Manx Museum<sup>72</sup>.

Another item made from the bog oak is a brooch over 6 cm long vertically spelling out the name FRIEDA<sup>73</sup>, (*fig. 6,1*). Whether it was carved for an internee, to be sent to a relative, or was for a local woman, is unknown. The excavations and the discoveries of impressive buildings made an impact amongst news-starved internees, and Bersu was known as the director who made possible this work outside the camp, giving a different perspective on life, an activity to escape boredom, and indeed a small income. Pride in this endeavour is exemplified in a third item, a pair of expertly made cufflinks of bog oak with Masonic symbolism inlaid in silver-coloured metal (*fig. 6,2*). It has an accompanying note dated Autumn 1943 which proudly states that they were made by an internee in “P” Camp (Hutchinson) from “part of a pillar belonging to a Celtic Manor House, probably the habitation of a Celtic Chief ... excavated in 1942 ... by fellow internee Dr. G. Bersu, formerly ‘P’ Camp, at present ‘Y’ Camp to Lt. C. Standen with thanks and appreciation”, and signed by Camp Captain, H. L. Bender<sup>74</sup>. This shows that the bog oak was not only taken back to the Married camp, but also to Hutchinson to be crafted.

Internees were steadily being released, and the number of women and married couples declined to such an extent that the camp was reduced in size. In August 1942 the Bersus were suddenly transferred to different lodgings in Port Erin, and Gerhard had to transplant all his allotment crops to a new plot there from the one he had in Port St Mary, about which he was most distressed<sup>75</sup>. He was also displeased with the offer of a work room which was some distance from their new home, and refused it, stating it was

<sup>71</sup> MNHB, Bersu correspondence, letter 27.9.1942 from W. Cubbon to G. Bersu.

<sup>72</sup> Manx Museum accession no. 2005-0057.

<sup>73</sup> Manx Museum accession no. 1999-0036.

<sup>74</sup> Manx Museum.

<sup>75</sup> MNHB, Field Diary after 14.8.1942 entry states “Moving to P. Erin”; Bersu correspondence, letter 30.9.1942 from G. Childe to G. Bersu.



Fig. 7. Map of September 1944 showing the limited extent of the Port Erin Camp by this stage of the war (map unsigned; Manx National Heritage).

unsuitable, though Eleanor Megaw thought it was fit for purpose<sup>76</sup>. Coal shortages by October prevented him having any dedicated work room, though Childe notes he suffers from similar problems, and this was clearly not because of internment<sup>77</sup>. By November, better accommodation had been secured in Port Erin, and the small size of this camp by September 1944 (*fig. 7*) reveals how exceptional the Bersus' long internment was. At this time the Married and Women's camps were merged, and by February 1945 there were only 269 adults and 70 children remaining, of whom 85 and 26 were still supporting the German side<sup>78</sup>. The Bersus were part of the other 180 or so, a tiny remnant of the original large numbers interned in 1940.

After the Bersus were reunited and Gerhard moved to the south of the Island, a plan was drawn up to investigate one or more of the presumed late prehistoric enclosures, called raths by Bersu given their similarity with Irish sites of the same name. These were near Castletown, east of the married camp but in relatively easy access by public transport. The Bersus could now work together and gather a team of internee workers, some of whom could build up considerable experience over the years that followed. With the mindset of Little Woodbury settlement types and round buildings in mind, the excavations were to focus on the recovery of more or less complete internal site plans, with limited excavation of the encircling earthworks. The low-lying Ballacagen sites were the initial target, with site A examined first, from 26 August 1941 until 15 May 1942, the long duration being

<sup>76</sup> Letter 16.9.1942 from Eleanor to Basil Megaw in the possession of C. Alford.

<sup>77</sup> MNHB, Bersu correspondence, letter 31.10.1942 from G. Childe to G. Bersu.

<sup>78</sup> BRINSON 2005.



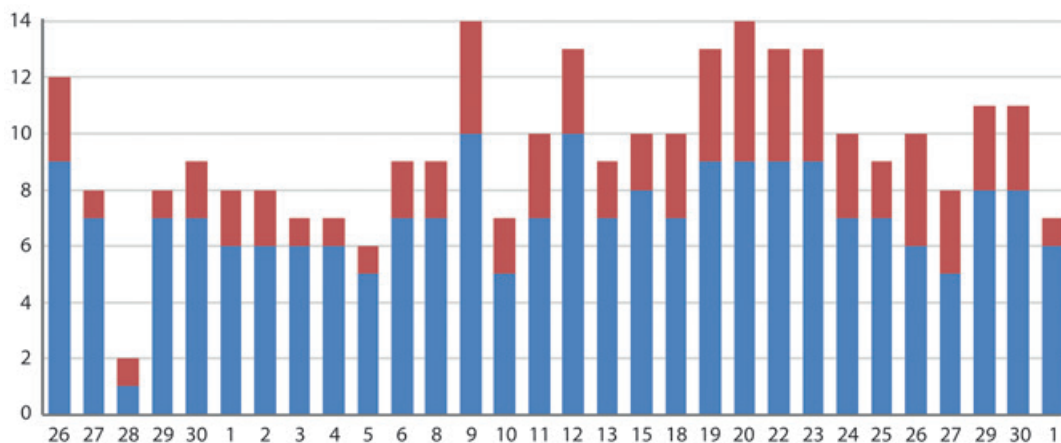


Fig. 8. Bar chart of workers as recorded in the Ballacagen daybook 26 August – 1 October 1941 (blue = men; red = women). Dates are missing when there was no excavation because of either bad weather or lack of guards (illustration: H. Mytum).

because of delays with inclement weather. Ballacagen B was started on 21 May, but further work was postponed on the 16 October because of flooding, and attention was turned to Ballanorris, also in a waterlogged location but forming a raised mound. Work on this site lasted from 22 October 1942 until 5 July 1943, with Ballacagen B being completed between 23 August and 16 February 1943<sup>79</sup>.

Once B. Megaw was drafted into the war effort in late 1941, his wife Eleanor became temporary director whilst he was away. She was also a great supporter of the Bersu excavations<sup>80</sup>; sometimes she was off-Island with her husband, but the local support from the Trustees of the Manx Museum and other influential supporters continued. No doubt receiving a visit from such a renowned archaeologist as Childe (who notes that he promoted the value of the excavations, with reasons that chimed with the various parties that he met)<sup>81</sup>, gave the local power brokers a Manx nationalistic gloss to their prehistoric past on an Island where modern excavation had been absent. From Port St Mary, the Bersus reached the excavation sites by train on the narrow-gauge railway that ran through Castletown and on to Douglas, or by road; how the internee workforce travelled to the sites is unclear. The internees had to be guarded at all times whilst outside the confines of camp, which led to interruptions in excavation when no one was available for this task<sup>82</sup>.

Bersu was used to employing labourers on the Continent and in his Little Woodbury excavations, so using untrained internees would not have been unusual, except that they may have been less fit or used to using digging tools. Both male and female internees worked on the site, and Gerhard notes that he has these “other ladies looking for finds in the earth”<sup>83</sup>. The field diary also records ladies turfing. The size and composition of the workforce was only recorded for a few weeks, but this provides an insight into both the rate or participation and the gender mix of the workforce (*fig. 8*). Internees were initially paid

<sup>79</sup> MNHB, Bersu archive site notebooks and other dated records.

<sup>80</sup> For example, a letter from Eleanor to Basil Megaw, dated in the possession of C. Alford.

<sup>81</sup> SPSL 181/64 Letter 22.1.1942 G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>82</sup> For example, SPSL 181/93 Note 20.7.1943 from G. Bersu to Sir F. Kenyon; MNHB, Bersu correspondence, letter 28.7.1943 from G. Childe to G. Bersu.

<sup>83</sup> CFCH; letter 17.9.1941 from G. Bersu.

“the usual 1/- a day and their extra ration”<sup>84</sup> which the married workers could spend in the Manx shops within the camp. By 1942 the pay was 1/7 a day, and Gerhard received the same amount as the other internees, however unskilled. If he had been free, he would have been paid more, on Government rates, but internee work was not assessed by skill because it would have been impossible to agree relative rates.

Maria assisted her husband with his fieldwork; she was certainly responsible for the pre-excavation mapping, but how much more she did is unclear from the extant documentation, though she seemed to excavate at Little Woodbury and was certainly responsible for the finds there<sup>85</sup>. It is unclear whether she may have done this on the Manx sites also, though as women were involved in searching for finds, this is possible. The Ballacagen pre-excavation contour survey was by Maria, interrupted by some unspecified medical condition that caused her to visit the Castletown doctors<sup>86</sup>. Unfortunately, her subsequent work on site work is not much recorded and is rarely mentioned in the surviving correspondence. However, Gerhard mentions to Hawkes that she helps with the measuring<sup>87</sup>, and the day book notes her helping to draw a trench profile (section) on one day<sup>88</sup>. Nevertheless, the contour survey (albeit redrawn by Gerhard for publication) survives and is an accomplished piece of work, and it attests to Maria’s technical skills and active role in fieldwork when able to take part (*fig. 9*). Maria was clearly not just a fair-weather field-worker as she was working with Gerhard and another internee at Balladoole despite the snow, before being visited by W. R. Hughes from the Germany Emergency Committee<sup>89</sup>. All the illustrations that survive are assumed to be created by Gerhard alone, though it is possible that Maria may have helped in measuring these, or by colouring in the sections. It has been assumed that all this was done by Gerhard alone, but there is no positive evidence to confirm this. The field diary notes much effort spent on cleaning sections, presumably to be studied by Gerhard and then drawn. A considerable number of photographs were taken of all three sites, and despite requests for film there is a surprising archive of images, but they reveal little of excavation practice as they are set-piece compositions, though some are revealing because of workers in the background.

The language on site was presumably German, and all the records are annotated in that language. However, English must have been spoken at Little Woodbury and King Arthur’s Round Table as the workforce at both sites was local. Unfortunately, the diary kept by Gerhard for his work at Ballacagen contains only brief daily entries regarding the weather and logistical difficulties, and for a while how many people were working on site. Which trenches were opened and closed, and notable features or finds are mentioned, but more attention is given to listing visitors. When they were on site, presumably Gerhard was busy explaining progress; regular visitors were those linked to the Museum – the Megaws and Deemster Reginald D. Farrant (1877–1952) the Chairman, and J. R. Bruce a member of the Manx Museum and Ancient Monuments Trustees. G. J. H. Neely, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the Isle of Man, also very frequently observed the excavations; he was also responsible for the investigations at Ronaldsway where the airfield was being developed and a substantial Bronze Age village as well as ritual and early medieval

<sup>84</sup> SPSL 181/36 G Bersu file letter 3.3.1941 from G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>85</sup> BERSU 1938, 313 where Maria was involved with surveying and finds; for the 1939 season, it was only the former that concerned her, BERSU 1940a, 111.

<sup>86</sup> MNHB, Ballacagen archive, Field Diary, entry for

26.8.1941.

<sup>87</sup> CFCH; letter 17.9.1941 from G. Bersu.

<sup>88</sup> MNHB, Ballacagen archive, Field Diary, entry for 10.9.1941.

<sup>89</sup> SPSL 181/ G Bersu file; letter 7.3.1945 from Lawrence Darton.

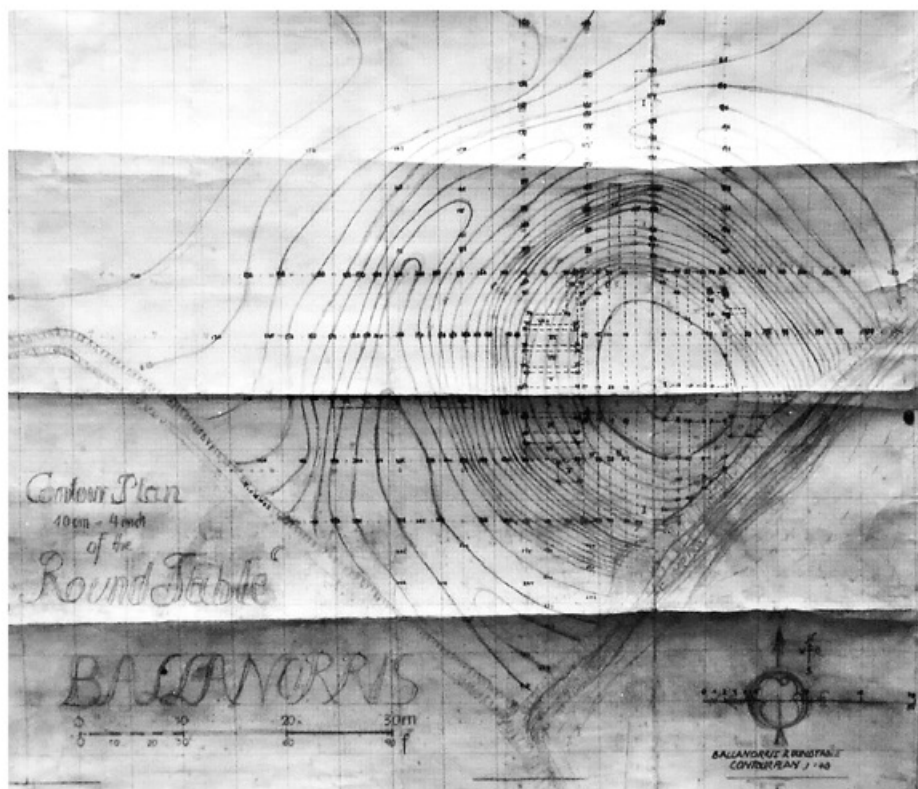
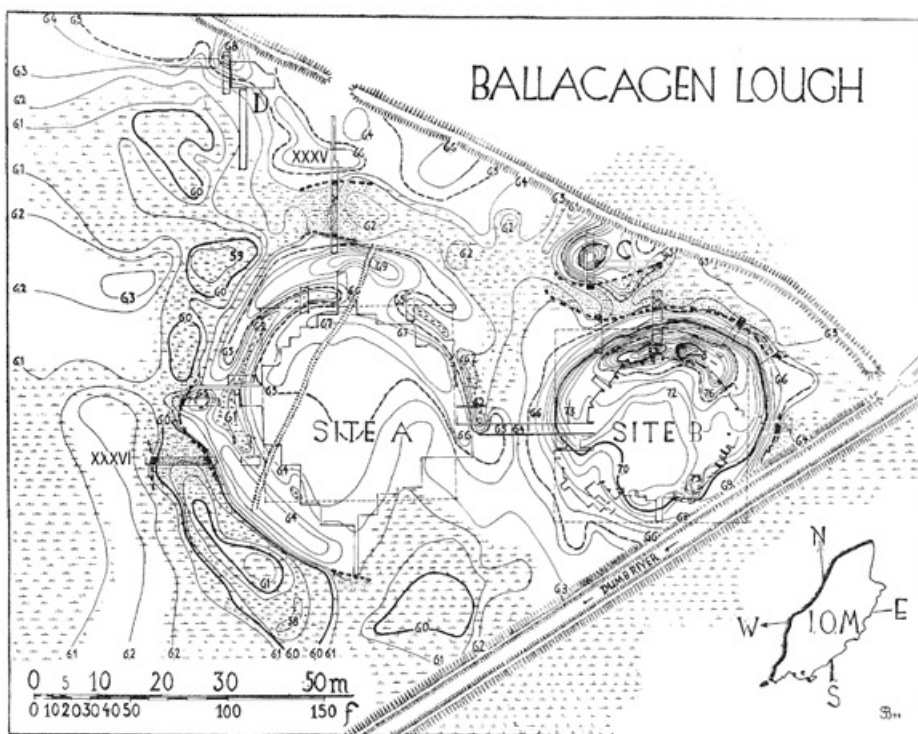


Fig. 9. Contour plans based on Maria's surveys. 1: Ballacagen A and B drawn up for publication by Gerhard based on Maria's survey. 2: Ballanorris contour plan, an early version drawn by Gerhard marking the points measured by Maria (both: Bersu Papers 9865, Manx National Heritage).

evidence was being uncovered<sup>90</sup>. Unfortunately, his experience of digging was limited, and he wished Bersu to visit or even carry out work there, but because of the military nature of the site and the security worries, this was not possible even though the site was only walking distance from Ballacagen where Bersu was excavating. Other dignitaries included the Speaker of the House of Keys and the Lieutenant of Castletown.

Bersu wrote a lecture for the Society of Antiquaries of London which was translated from the German and then delivered by Childe in 1942, illustrated with lantern slides made from plans and sections sent ahead by Bersu. It was therefore given before the excavations were completed, and indeed would have been devoted only to the first phase of excavations at Ballacagen A and B. The lecture was received with considerable enthusiasm, but there was disagreement regarding some of his interpretations. The surviving correspondence reveals who was challenging Gerhard's interpretation of the archaeological remains, revealing the sophistication of understanding of archaeological deposits that is omitted as a "taken for granted" in published excavation reports of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Britain. It also exposes the type of discussion that would have been face-to-face in normal circumstances, but it is preserved because it was conducted by letter as Bersu was isolated on the Isle of Man and unable to give his lecture in person and answer questions or discuss matters further afterwards. Here we have a fossilisation of discussions that might not otherwise have been identifiable. Bersu found some posts set at an angle but argued that they had shifted; this led to discussions at the Antiquaries' lecture to which he could not directly respond and is set out in subsequent correspondence from both Childe and Grimes<sup>91</sup>. This was crucial as the large buildings proposed by Bersu were greeted with scepticism by most British archaeologists, even though most accepted smaller roundhouses, as definitively shown by the Little Woodbury excavations. The suggestion of a turf roof at Ballacagen was accepted, and indeed was the design used for the Little Woodbury reconstruction<sup>92</sup>.

The three Iron Age settlements first examined by the Bersus once interned on the Isle of Man were re-examined in a campaign to reassess the Manx Long Iron Age by the Centre for Manx Studies, directed by the author. The Ballanorris mound studied by Bersu was investigated in 2011 together with a large open-area excavation close by which revealed late prehistoric structures unknown to Bersu. The enclosures of Ballacagen A and B were examined in tandem during 2012 and 2013, with the settlement interiors again being the major focus of attention. Through this work, it has been possible to re-examine and compare our perceptions of the build-up of layers in the sections with those of Gerhard and which are encapsulated in his drawings. We are also able to challenge his structural interpretations which indicated very large roundhouses not since paralleled in the British Iron Age, but there is not space here to discuss the conclusions drawn from our excavations beyond the ways in which they revealed some of Bersu's methods of excavation. Sadly, the excellent preservation of timber on the settlements was no longer present on re-excavation though wood, including fragments produced during woodworking, were encountered in the limited investigations of the ditches<sup>93</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> NEELY 1940; LAING / LAING 1987.

<sup>91</sup> MNHB, Bersu correspondence, letters 28.5.1942 from G. Childe to G. Bersu; 31.5.1942 from W. F. Grimes to G. Bersu.

<sup>92</sup> EVANS 1998.

<sup>93</sup> EVANS 1998 notes that Bersu did not excavate more extensively in the ditches where more artefacts might

have been expected, but water levels are still very high so it would have been logistically difficult in the 1940s. The recent campaign did not excavate more in the ditches as the potential conservation costs for Manx National Heritage were beyond budgets, so this bias in the data for the sites remains.



Fig. 10. Re-excavation of Bersu's trenches. 1: Ballanorris 2010 excavations; those Bersu trenches in the foreground run across the site interior, those in the rear right examined the earthwork (photo: H. Mytum). 2: Ballacagen A, 2013 excavations with edges of the Bersu trenches indicated by dark fill in the deeply-cut edges of the trenches to reveal the subsoil profile in the sections. In the background to the right is Ballacagen B, in the centre our site tent, very similar to that used by Bersu (photo: H. Mytum).

The pattern of excavation employed by Bersu varied slightly between Ballanorris and Ballacagen A and B. At Ballanorris, wider balks were left between many of the trenches, though some were removed following recording of the sections (*fig. 10,1*). Some of the original trenches were emptied and the section re-examined, and part of a balk excavated understand what features we could identify compared with those noted by Bersu. The



Fig. 11. The gas pipe (by the trowel of the excavator in the foreground), put in place by Gerhard Bersu at Ballacagen A in 1942. The deeply cut trench edges are here fully excavated and in the centre is a balk left by Bersu with one of the hearth sections visible (photo: H. Mytum).

trenches revealed the rounded corners presumably resulting from the types of shovels and spades used. At Ballacagen, more extensive clearance allowed a better image of the trench layout, with the edges of the trenches being dug significantly deeper into the soft subsoil to ensure that all cultural strata were identified and could be drawn on the section drawings (*fig. 10,2*). The 2012 Ballacagen A excavation trenches were in part selected because magnetometry survey revealed high readings in the centre of the site. At Ballacagen A this coincided with the location of prehistoric hearths but unfortunately these had been completely removed by Bersu, except in a narrow balk. The high reading was produced by a length of piping which must be one of the gas pipes noted by Bersu in the field notes that he put in place on the 16 February 1944<sup>94</sup>, “Tidied up, gaspipes buried as permanent

<sup>94</sup> Ballacagen archive, Field Diary, entry for 16.2.1944 (erroneously written as January but after 14.2. entry)

marking”. The pipe was located in the excavations of Ballacagen A (*fig. 11*), but the pipes for both A and B were located on the pre-excavation magnetometry survey. As the exposed Ballacagen pipe acts as a memorial to the Bersu’s collaborative efforts, with their internee workforce, it was left *in situ* at the end of the recent investigations as a continuing marker of all their efforts.

At all three sites, balks were sampled for environmental data and micromorphology, examining categories of data not available in the 1940s, and wet sieving recovered artefacts. Only small fragments of bone were recovered in the backfill, suggesting a thorough search for finds, and clearly those assigned to the task of recovering artefacts and larger ecofacts were thorough. The wet sieving, however, did produce a significant number of tiny glass beads which are not visible to the naked eye when digging, so they had been unsurprisingly missed in the Bersu excavations, but then neither did the recent fieldwork through traditional hand excavation.

#### Excavation or release without a role: Gerhard’s dilemma

Evans has considered that the security risk was the main reason for Gerhard Bersu’s detention for so long, and he asks did any support his release<sup>95</sup>. Apparently, some British archaeologists wrote against his freedom, but the archives of the SPSL reveal a complex pattern of support, doubt, suspicion, frustration and prevarication on the part of British colleagues, and a variety of responses from Gerhard<sup>96</sup>. This correspondence, combined with that in other archives, creates a rich texture of official and unofficial opinion regarding Gerhard from the outbreak of war through the 1940s. The SPSL file for the Bersus is unusually thick – most other academic refugees they assisted have slim files as the organization successfully placed them in British and, in most cases, American Universities. This was never an option for Bersu, and the various sources of correspondence shows how alternatives in Britain were never fulfilled and how the opportunities on the Isle of Man came about. The tone of the initial correspondence has been discussed above, and official interest in making progress towards release seems to have been in abeyance for all of 1941 after April.

In January 1942, the Home Office enquires whether any arrangements have been made for the Bersus<sup>97</sup>, but already there are suspicions that Gerhard is happy where he is, given the realistic options open to him. The Society of Friends (Quakers) sent their representative on the Island, William Hughes, to ascertain whether Bersu wished to leave the camp, given that the excavations were completed<sup>98</sup>. Anticipating this decision, the Germany Emergency Committee, SPSL could write to Childe “prepared to find suitable accommodation and maintenance for Dr. and Mrs. Bersu. In view of this fact it is very likely that the Home Office will release Dr. and Mrs. Bersu from internment”<sup>99</sup>. But that release was not to be.

The 1941 season of excavations that had commenced in August should have been completed and writing up in progress by the end of that year, though in fact because of bad weather they continued intermittently. In January 1942 Childe lobbied for the Bersus to be released but staying on the Isle of Man and continuing work “for the value of the work and his morale and that of the other internees”<sup>100</sup>. He had visited the excavations in the

<sup>95</sup> EVANS 1998, fn. 2 and 3.

<sup>96</sup> SPSL 181, though some of the critical documents may have been destroyed.

<sup>97</sup> SPSL 181/56 letter 13.1.1942 Home Office to SPSL.

<sup>98</sup> SPSL 181/56 letter 15.1.1942 Society of Friends Germany Emergency Committee to SPSL.

<sup>99</sup> SPSL 181/63 letter 20.1.1942 SPSL to G. Childe.

<sup>100</sup> SPSL 181/69 letter 22.1.1942 G. Childe to SPSL.

previous year, and he may have sensed the positive value of the activity in not only academic terms. Efforts were made by the Germany Emergency Committee to find accommodation on-Island, but release did not materialise – and it seems that it was Bersu who refused to move. Childe reported that Gerhard “deliberately decided that it is better to remain in the Camp at least since excellent employment for his peculiar gifts is available than to live on charity without equally useful employment”, though he also notes “objections to an enemy alien being left at liberty on the Island are greater than I had anticipated”<sup>101</sup>. Nevertheless, Bersu’s well-placed supporters on-island were able to suppress any xenophobic tendencies and work proceeded.

For most of the time of his internment, Gerhard was only interested in excavation, not an academic teaching or a museum curation post. There are numerous letters in the SPSL files where efforts at arranging release and accommodation on the mainland start but then founder, and in places this is clearly because Gerhard refused to leave without certain paid employment – and that the employment had to be archaeological fieldwork. This was despite many of his British archaeological colleagues putting their archaeological careers on hold as they took up roles in the civil service and armed services. As the SPSL noted in October 1944, “he was interned along with all the others and instead of accepting his release nearly three years ago, decided to remain on the island in the married camp (his wife is with him) in order to take part in excavations there”<sup>102</sup>. By this stage, the authorities were becoming increasingly frustrated, and the Home Office was refusing Gerhard permission to publish his findings whilst an internee as an incentive for him to leave the camp<sup>103</sup>.

Sir Frederick Kenyon considered the situation absurd by October 1944 since “for ... years he could have been released, yet the government was still maintaining the Bersus in camp”<sup>104</sup>.

Crawford, one of Bersus’ great friends and supporters, was also supposedly of the opinion that he may “have chosen wisely from his own scholarly point of view, and that it may well be better to be quietly interned than to live suspected on a pittance”, though this was communicated via Charles Stringer, a person with a clearly stated low opinion of Gerhard<sup>105</sup>. This suspicious opinion of Gerhard’s character and political inclination may be one which represents a wider alternative view than the one largely portrayed by his supporters such as Childe and Hawkes which is mainly represented in the SPSL files and other surviving correspondence.

The Manx Trustees continued to support Bersu in his excavation plans, and so the Chapel Hill, Balladoole work commenced in the Autumn of 1944. This provided a new challenge to follow on from the three rath excavations, and despite their dwindling internee labour force the Bersus managed to achieve significant results, particularly with the excavation of a Viking burial. This prehistoric fort with an early medieval phase was located even closer to the camp than the previous sites, and would produce important prehistoric, early medieval and Viking finds that would further extend the Bersus’ project plans. A visitor from the Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens paid a call on the Bersus in March 1945, visiting him at home after he and Maria (together with one other helper) had been working on at Balladoole despite the snow. By this point Bersu had recognised that paid

<sup>101</sup> SPSL 181/84 letter 7.2.1942 G. Childe to SPSL.

<sup>102</sup> SPSL 181/105 letter 23.10.1944 from SPSL to Charles Singer.

<sup>103</sup> SPSL 181/107 letter 13.10.1944 William F. Hughes to Friends Committee for Refugees and

Aliens.

<sup>104</sup> SPSL 181/93 Letter 2.10.1944 from Sir F. Kenyon to SPSL.

<sup>105</sup> SPSL 181/ 110 letter 25.10.1944 Ch. Singer to SPSL.



excavation work outside the camp was impossible, but he hoped that indoor archaeological employment might be attainable<sup>106</sup>. Even so nothing could be found; the challenge, as was the case previously, was not there were no funds available for this type of employment.

Efforts to find fieldwork in Cornwall were unenthusiastically received by Charles Singer, and Croft Andrew, Secretary of the Cornwall Excavations Committee, warned that “If Bersu were brought down here, I should always be afraid of hearing that he had met with a nasty ‘accident’; for which I should feel some degree of responsibility”<sup>107</sup>. Stringer considered that “masterly inactivity” was the best course of action. As a result, SPSL found funds to maintain the Bersus, who continued to write up the fieldwork, if and when the Manx Museum was no longer able to support them.

Gerhard’s strategy of apparent acquiescence to authority but with a stubborn determination to carry out archaeological fieldwork, if at all possible, meant that he was active, despite logistical problems, through most of the war. Given that everyone suffered from shortages and limitations on their employment options, he was able to indulge his own preferences to a remarkable degree. Safe from bombing and in a beautiful landscape with a little-explored archaeological record, the Manx Museum and Bersu both gained from this symbiotic relationship that made the most of the privations of wartime.

### Freedom but continuing work on the Isle of Man

That the Bersus remained on the Isle of Man for several more years after their release indicates that they were happy there, or at least content to remain until the immediate post-war chaotic situation in Britain and in Germany began to be resolved. The correspondence indicates Gerhard’s considerable concern about the fate of many of his old colleagues, and Hawkes and others clearly valued his opinions on many of the German and Austrian archaeologists that had survived the war, and how any antiquities service could be re-established in the areas under Allied control. After the Nazi surrender in May 1945, controls on movement still applied to the Bersus as they did not have the necessary paperwork for travel, but their options began to widen. They had another three months’ support from the Manx Museum, with a further three months from SPSL if and when the Manx support came to an end, thus providing financial support through to at least the autumn. By July 1945, Gerhard could write “we are now much more used to the fact of being free only to be in a big crowd as we were when we saw the King and Queen, when they visited this island is still a strange feeling”. He exchanged correspondence frequently with Crawford, who sent supplies from his garden<sup>108</sup>.

The loss of contact with family and friends on the Continent was gradually re-established after the Armistice. By November 1945, Maria had heard that her sister, husband and children had survived the war and escaped from Czechoslovakia and were in Wiesbaden<sup>109</sup>. Later, by March 1946, Gerhard had heard that his 86-year old mother had died in February of that year, but he had received no news of her for over a year, and his two sisters were alive in Berlin, though the one that was married was concerned that her husband had been arrested by the Russians. He notes that nothing can be found out about the fate

<sup>106</sup> SPSL 181/118 letter 7.3.1945 from Friends Committee for Refugees and Aliens to SPSL; SPSL 181/127 letter 16.3.1945 SPSL to Sir F. Kenyon.

<sup>107</sup> SPSL 181/127 undated letter 1945 from

C. K. Croft Andrew to Stringer, sent on to SPSL 14.3. with a comment.

<sup>108</sup> CFCH; letter 11.7.1945 from G. Bersu.

<sup>109</sup> CFCH; letter 21.9.1945 from G. Bersu.

of Maria's mother but that, given that she had been deported to Poland in 1943“ it may be better for Maria if she hears nothing at all”<sup>110</sup>; in fact, she was sent to Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, but clearly at this stage information was still inaccurate<sup>111</sup>.

They returned to Douglas from their first trip off-island on 7 February 1946, “feeling not hampered at all by the long seclusion”<sup>112</sup>. They had stayed in Edinburgh with a man who had worked in security on the Island during the war and had frequently visited Bersu's excavations but saw Childe before heading to Glasgow. They then travelled on to Belfast and met Estyn Evans (whom Gerhard had previously met in Dundee before the war)<sup>113</sup> before heading down to Dublin and the O'Riordains. A formal after-dinner lecture, with deValera in attendance, was followed the next day by another to the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, then further lectures in Limerick and Cork. The rath-like Manx sites were of particular interest to the Irish audiences, and Rory deValera, who had established the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies in 1940, later asked Bersu if he would like to come and work in Ireland, in the Institute, National Museum, or a University. Bersu was reticent, not wanting to take a post from one of the young Irish archaeologists he knew, but this set the scene for his professorship at the Royal Irish Academy, achieved no doubt because of the high level political and academic supporters he acquired during this trip.

Whilst writing up Manx excavations undertaken during wartime continued, the excitement of the Viking burial finds at Balladoole led to other investigations now possible in the north of the Island. The burials at Cronk Mooar, and at Ballateare, both in the parish of Jurby, greatly increased understanding of Viking occupation of the Isle of Man, though these were only published after Gerhard's death<sup>114</sup>. The prehistoric findings at the latter site also had to await his death<sup>115</sup>, though an excavation of a promontory fort near the northern town of Ramsay was published<sup>116</sup>. He also excavated at Peel Castle. The Viking burials, as with the Ballanorris and Ballacagen sites, were only published through the editorial determination of D. M. Wilson and Raleigh Radford respectively, but they were all heavily reliant on Gerhard Bersu's illustrations and records and also often extensive draft reports that were never finished to his satisfaction<sup>117</sup>.

Fieldwork at various locations was now possible for Gerhard, accompanied by Maria, and in June and July 1946 he was excavating at Lissue Rath in Northern Ireland, whilst staying in Lisburn<sup>118</sup>. Maria surveyed the site and produced the contour plan, which continues the contributions seen with the Manx sites. She also acted as secretary for the excavation and was “pretty busy with the accounts as most of the money is given by the government of Northern Ireland and they are rather bureaucratic with endless forms to fill out”<sup>119</sup>. During the dig, deValera and O'Riordain visited the site from Dublin and said that a post in Ireland was still a possibility; Gerhard did not think it would be feasible for him yet to return to a post in Germany. He also returned to excavate further at Lissue in 1947, and both seasons had interim reports published<sup>120</sup>.

Bersu resumed his visits to Scotland and delivered the Dalrymple lectures in Glasgow during October 1946, subsequently excavating for two weeks at Traprain Law in early

<sup>110</sup> CFCH; letter 25.3.1946 from G. Bersu.

<sup>111</sup> Thanks to Professor Dr. Eva Braun-Holzinger for this information.

<sup>112</sup> CFCH; letter 8.2.1946 from G. Bersu.

<sup>113</sup> Letter 26.12.1940 from Estyn Evans to Megaw in the possession of C. Alford.

<sup>114</sup> BERSU / WILSON 1966.

<sup>115</sup> BERSU / CUBBON 1967.

<sup>116</sup> BERSU 1949.

<sup>117</sup> BERSU 1977.

<sup>118</sup> CFCH; letter 23.6.1946 from G. Bersu.

<sup>119</sup> CFCH; letter 31.7.1946 from G. Bersu.

<sup>120</sup> BERSU 1947b; BERSU 1948.

1947<sup>121</sup>, but the Bersus were still based on the Isle of Man and in April were back writing up the excavations undertaken there until the end of May. Gerhard was meanwhile hoping that he would be able to make a visit to Germany before taking up his Irish position<sup>122</sup>. He became Professor at the Royal Irish Academy in 1948, and excavated at Freestone Hill, County Kilkenny in 1948 and 1949<sup>123</sup>. In the end, Gerhard went to Germany for four weeks in November and December 1948. He also completed his publication reports at Green Craig in Scotland and Llyn du Bach in North Wales whilst in Ireland<sup>124</sup>, before his eventual permanent return to Germany in 1950.

### Conclusions

What is clear is that Gerhard Bersu's relationships with archaeological sites and deposits, with concepts and methods, and with other archaeologists, all affected his actions, interpretations and impact on Manx and British archaeology. Whilst the visual was extremely important, and most of the site archive is drawn or photographic<sup>125</sup>, this forms part of Bersu's emphasis on doing – as seen by the desire to keep digging rather than any form of teaching or curating role as a means of escaping internment. It is unclear what Maria's influence was, on-site or within their constrained domestic life on the Isle of Man, but she was clearly an important administrative, logistical, and emotional support for her husband. The role of women within the married camp was limited not only by internment but also social attitudes of the time, but Maria certainly assisted at least with site survey, and possibly other tasks including finds administration and other recording, though none of the extant illustrations appear to be in her hand.

The wide range of influential contacts, and a reputation that allowed him to gain the support of the Manx Museum curator and trustees as well as camp commandants throughout his stay on the Island, created access to sufficient resources – both financial and workforce – for large-scale, long-term excavations to be undertaken despite internment. It is now clear that Gerhard, at least, considered that a constrained existence but able to carry out archaeological excavation was preferable to greater freedom but having to take some alternative employment. Despite the best efforts of some of his archaeological friends (many themselves undertaking war effort roles), and the SPSL and government moves to release him for alternative activity, Gerhard managed to elude release. The final judgement must be that Gerhard Bersu preferred internment to the alternative; he and his wife could have been free, but an archaeologically active incarceration was preferable to freedom with uncertain purpose.

Whilst the Little Woodbury interventions had an immediate impact, the delay in publication of the Manx Iron Age sites meant that they have been largely overlooked as, by the time that the definitive publication appeared in print, sufficient numbers of British round-houses had been excavated that their irrelevance – or incorrect interpretation – meant that they could be generally ignored<sup>126</sup>; a detailed critique has yet to be set out and any alternative offered, though Evans has considered the various interpretations contemplated by Bersu and how he constructed his arguments regarding the buildings' forms<sup>127</sup>. The

<sup>121</sup> See F. Hunter, I. Armit and A. Dunwell in this volume.

<sup>122</sup> CFCH; letter 26.4.1947 from G. Bersu.

<sup>123</sup> See K. Rassman et al. in this volume.

<sup>124</sup> BERSU 1947a; BERSU / GRIFFITHS 1949; CFCH; letter 15.2.1949 from G. Bersu.

<sup>125</sup> EVANS 1998.

<sup>126</sup> HARDING 2009, 66–68.

<sup>127</sup> EVANS 1998.

overall effect of the Bersu campaigns on the Isle of Man – first during internment but then continuing for several more years – was profound, and his discoveries have been used to reinforce a Manx nationalist exceptionalism held by some, with a unique Iron Age settlement form and strong archaeological evidence for the Viking component of Manx heritage from which the independent government through Tynwald is claimed<sup>128</sup>. Bersu's legacy is visible in both the recently redesigned Viking gallery in the Manx Museum, and the model he had made of the Ballacagen roundhouse is still a major feature of the prehistoric display. Ballanorris was the template for the full-size interior recreation at the museum's House of Manannan in Peel.

Even as the more recent archaeological re-evaluations continue to critique the Bersu large roundhouse interpretations, it will probably take much longer before Manx popular perception shifts to a more recognisably western British Iron Age cultural package. Even so, Manx and British archaeologists will still be indebted to the efforts of the Bersu through a period when others were unable to carry out research excavations, and where the value of Continental methods could be demonstrated across a range of different sites.

### Acknowledgements

Many individuals and institutions have assisted this research which commenced with my arrival as Director of the Centre for Manx Studies at the University of Liverpool in 2008. Manx National Heritage contributed towards the funding of the Ballanorris and Ballacagen excavations, as did the University of Liverpool. Manx National Heritage allowed access to their Bersu archive, and Historic England (Swindon) did likewise. The photography of the Manx archive and much of the logistics, supervision, and archive ordering for the Centre for Manx Studies fieldwork was undertaken by Kate Chapman, who also researched the Southlands guesthouse. Other site supervisors were Rachel Crellin and Alistair Cross, and the excavation team comprised University of Liverpool students (including those on the international field school) and local volunteers. I would like to thank the Keeper of Archives, University of Oxford, the Secretary of the SPSL, and staff at the Bodleian Scientific Library for access to the SPSL papers. Sally Crawford and Katharina Ulmschneider made the O. G. S. Crawford and C. F. K. Hawkes archives at the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford, available for consultation. I am grateful also to Alexander Gramsch for encouraging this paper, and passing on details of various primary sources, including the information derived from the Megaw's correspondence from Clare Alford who has kindly allowed its use here.

<sup>128</sup> For the role of historical archaeology in assertions of Manx distinctiveness and independence, see MYTUM 2017.

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HE	Historic England, Bersu files, Swindon	OGSC	O. G. S. Crawford archives, Institute of Archaeology, Oxford
MNHB	Manx National Heritage Library and Archives, IM 147 MS 09865, Bersu excavation archives, Douglas	SPSL	Society for the Protection of Science and Learning Archives, Bodleian Library, Oxford

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Internment archaeology:  
Gerhard and Maria Bersu's collaborative efforts to live  
and research on wartime Isle of Man

Zusammenfassung · Summary · Résumé

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG · Gerhard Bersu und seine Frau Maria wurden nach England eingeladen, um die Fundstelle Little Woodbury auszugraben und dank der Grabungs- und Aufnahmemethoden aus Kontinentaleuropa in der britischen Siedlungsarchäologie neue Maßstäbe zu setzen. Während Bersu auf diversen Tagungen und Konferenzen bereits Kontakte mit britischen Archäologen und Archäologinnen geknüpft hatte, war es insbesondere seine Geländearbeit in Wiltshire in den Jahren 1938 und 1939, die einen großen Eindruck auch auf die jüngere Forschergeneration in Großbritannien hinterließ. Die Internierung von Gerhard und Maria Bersu auf der Insel Man während fast der ganzen Zeit des Zweiten Weltkriegs war äußerst ungewöhnlich – Flüchtlingen wurde ansonsten jeweils relativ schnell eine Rolle in den Kriegsanstrengungen zugewiesen. Die archäologische Erforschung der Insel Man profitierte jedoch von einer Reihe von längeren Ausgrabungsprojekten, die als die ersten nach wissenschaftlichen Kriterien ausgeführten Untersuchungen auf der Insel gelten dürfen und auf denen die Rekonstruktion der insularen Eisen- und Wikingerzeit beruht. In diesem Beitrag wird die Internierung des Paares in einen größeren Zusammenhang gestellt, ihre Lebensumstände auf der Insel etwas genauer untersucht und anhand des Beispiels von Maria Bersu zum ersten Mal auch die Rolle der Frauen beleuchtet. Die Methoden und logistischen Herausforderungen der archäologischen Forschung während des Krieges werden ebenso untersucht wie die Briefwechsel, die dem Ehepaar Auftrieb gaben, Gerhard Bersu in fachlichen Fragen unterstützten und schließlich beide auf ihre weiteren Reisen und Grabungsunternehmen nach dem Krieg vorbereiteten. Ungefähr ein Drittel von Bersus Werdegang als einer der wichtigsten europäischen Archäologen der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts fand auf der Insel Man statt und sein Wirken gilt bis heute als der wichtigste Beitrag an die Grabungsgeschichte der Insel. (S. H. / I. A.)

SUMMARY · Gerhard Bersu, together with his wife Maria, were invited to carry out excavations at Little Woodbury to set new standards for British settlement archaeology and apply Continental excavation and recording methods for the first time in Britain. Gerhard was familiar with British archaeology and archaeologists through meetings at conferences, but his Wiltshire fieldwork in 1938 and 1939 also heavily influenced the young generation of British archaeologists. The Bersus' internment on the Isle of Man for almost the whole the duration of World War II was extremely unusual, as most refugees were rapidly found roles in the war effort. Archaeology on the Isle of Man benefitted from a series of long-term excavations, the first of any scale conducted there according to scientific principles, and thereby created narratives for the Manx Iron Age and Viking periods. Here, the context of the Bersus' internment on the Isle of Man is considered, and their lives under internment explored, with the role of women – including Maria – highlighted for the first time. The methodologies and logistics of the wartime excavation campaign are also reviewed, together with the communications which sustained the Bersus' morale, advised Gerhard on the excavation results, and then prepared the Bersus for their immediate post-war travels and fieldwork. Around a third of Gerhard's career as a major European archaeologist of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was based on the Isle of Man, and he is still the single largest contributor to excavated archaeology on the Island.



RÉSUMÉ · Gerhard Bersu avait été invité, avec son épouse Maria, à mener des fouilles à Little Woodbury en vue d'établir de nouveaux standards pour l'archéologie de l'habitat britannique et appliquer pour la première fois en Grande-Bretagne les techniques de fouille et de relevé continentales. Gerhard connaissait bien l'archéologie et les archéologues britanniques à travers ses rencontres lors de conférences, mais ses campagnes dans le Wiltshire en 1938/39 ont aussi fort influencé la jeune génération d'archéologues britanniques. L'internement de Bersu sur l'île de Man durant presque toute la Seconde Guerre mondiale fut très inhabituel, la plupart des réfugiés étant rapidement engagés dans l'effort de guerre. L'archéologie sur l'île de Man a profité d'une série de fouilles à long terme, les premières de toute envergure à être réalisées selon des règles scientifiques, et a fourni ainsi des descriptions de l'âge du Fer et de l'époque viking de l'île de Man. Cet article analyse le contexte de l'internement des Bersu sur l'île de Man, leur vie dans cette situation et pose pour la première fois un regard particulier sur le rôle des femmes, dont Maria. On y examine aussi la méthodologie et la logistique des campagnes de fouille, ainsi que les échanges qui ont soutenu le moral des Bersu, donné des conseils à Gerhard sur les résultats des fouilles, et préparé les Bersu aux voyages et campagnes qui suivirent immédiatement la fin de la guerre. Environ un tiers de la carrière de Gerhard, un des archéologues européens les plus importants du milieu du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, se déroula sur l'île de Man et il reste celui qui a contribué le plus à l'archéologie de l'île. (Y. G.)

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