

A Confused Military Police NCO.

In the final days of WW2 the Americans had occupied the medieval town of Hameln (Hamelin) in Germany. In accordance with an Allied Agreement drawn up during the war they handed it over to the British.

There was situated in the town close to the River Weser an ancient prison which the Nazis had taken over in 1935. They had used it to house hundreds of Anti-Nazis such as Communists and Social Democrats plus others opposed to the regime.

From May until November 1945 the British used the Royal Engineers to construct wooden gallows in pairs designed to speed up the process of hanging Germans convicted of war crimes. In October Josef Kramer was hanged. In December 1945 over two hundred were executed this way by Albert Pierrpoint assisted by RSM O'Neil, the only British serviceman who volunteered for this grisly task. Strange, nobody asked O'Neil's first name nor the Regiment he was from!!!

Not only Germans were hanged there. British soldiers who had committed murder on German soil were hanged there also. Albert Pierrpoint was paid to hang a person for £15 a pop if told by the government to do so-this was three weeks wages for us in those days!

On the 22nd January 1947 he hanged two privates. One was RASC driver Frank Upson who had murdered a German female in August 1946. Details of the other private are not known at this time.

The British Government was well aware of the need to show the German population that the same rules applied to everyone where murder was done.

So, on the 5th of September 1947 Pierrpoint was summoned to hang Acting Sergeant Charles Patrick of the Corps of Military Police. Patrick had been a VT (Voluntary Transfer) from the Dorsetshire Regiment assigned to serve with the in the Harz town of Goslar, as close as one could get to the Russian Zone occupation boundary. He was attached to thje Special Investigation Unit there. He was a 28 years old married man with three children. His family lived in the UK.

On the weekend of 11th of January 1947, an acquaintance of Patrick, ATS Private Georgina Kelty who was stationed in Bad Oyenhausen, telephoned him to pick up a leave party of four females and one male from the Brauchsweig (Brunswick) rail station to stay at the leave centre in Bad Harzburg, which he did.

Twenty-one years old Kelty from Glasgow, Scotland, checked into a hotel and changed into civvies, where she and Patrick set out on a short drive to a party being held by the Provost unit in Goslar.

However, the icy weather conditions prevented them completing the journey,

so they left the vehicle and walked the rest of the way. By the time they arrived the party was over!

They then headed for Patrick's quarters where they spent much of the next twenty-four hours in his room with occasional visits to the mess where an employee last saw Kelty at 2230 hours on the Sunday evening (12th January).

Next morning Monday the 13th, the employee took breakfast in to Patrick's room and noticed a shape in the bed covered with a blanket. Then at 1230 hours she heard what could have been a shot. She later saw Patrick half dressed come out of his room. He was seen lounging around in the mess for the rest of the day. The employee went home at around 0130 hours. She returned at 0900 hours on the Tuesday to find Patrick asleep on a sofa in the mess.

When Patrick awoke he telephoned his CSM at HQ in Braunschweig asking him to send someone over to investigate the deaths of two people. His message was somewhat confused and inconsistent. He also 'phoned a colleague with a statement that he had 'killed his girlfriend and was going to kill himself'.

Investigators searched his room where Kelty was found on the bed partly covered with a blanket as had been seen by the German employee earlier. There was also a semi-automatic pistol beside her head where a wound could also be seen.

In several statements to investigators, Patrick varied his theme, again showing confusion.

A Courts Martial was arranged for two days during 28-29th March 1947. Patrick denied he had made certain statements to investigators. He now said that the shooting was an accident.

The Courts Martial was left with no alternative than murder for which the punishment was mandatory death, and he was sentenced accordingly. Pleas had been made for a life sentence in prison, but the death penalty was confirmed and at 0912 on the 5th of September 1947, Patrick was hanged.

Notes:

(1) Those of us who were stationed in Bad Harzburg (then a small detachment of the newly reformed 1 Corps Provost Coy-I was there in 1953), never heard mention of this event. In June 1964 I took my wife and two young daughters to Hameln where we watched the famous Pied Piper re-enactment. It was hard to believe what had gone on in this beautiful town just over a decade before!

(2) In September 2013 Ray Spence visited the Minden War Graves Cemetery (where Georgina Kelty is buried) and the Hannover war Graves Cemetery

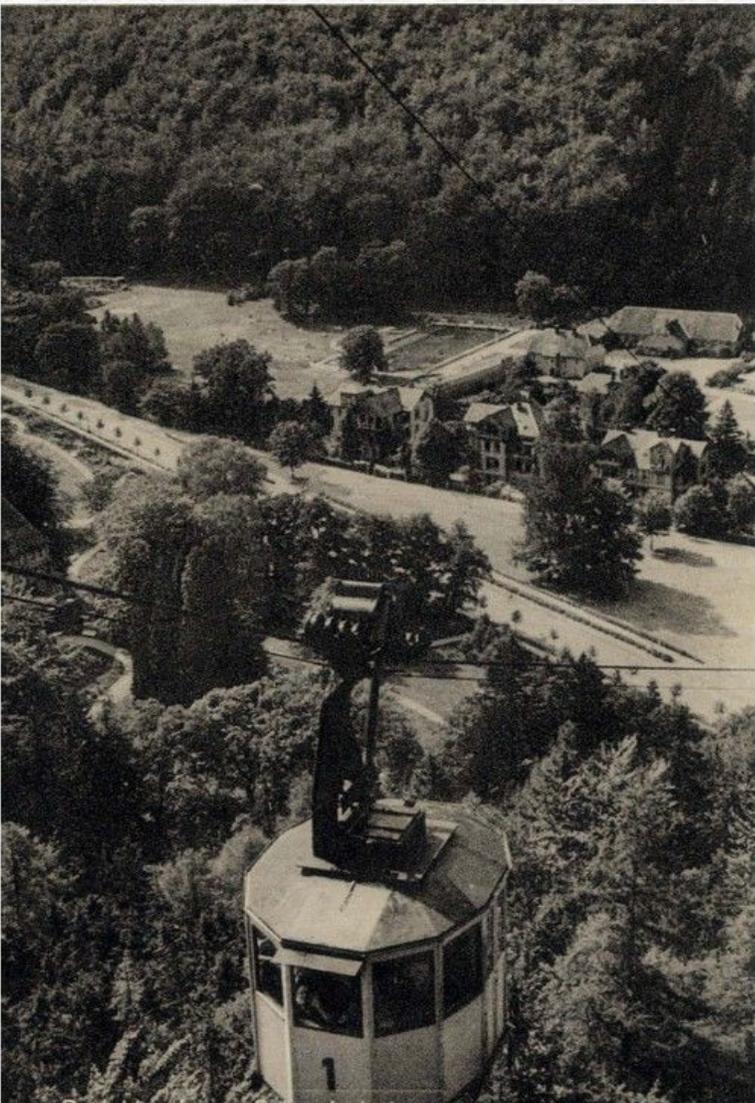
(where Patrick is buried). He took some photographs of Gravestones and sent me copies below. I've added some photos of Goslar, Bad Harzburg and one of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.







Medieval Goslar-Winter-1953/4



Bad Harzburg-Summer-1953



Pied Piper re-enactment-Hameln-June 1964

Ian Dixon October 2013.