MINUTE BOOK OF THE COUNTY BATTALION
(18TH BATTALION)
THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

A record of the raising of the first DLI Pals’ Battalion
and its training at Cocken Hall

21 September 1914 – 7 May 1915

This volume is part of the Rowland Burdon papers in the Clayton and Gibson solicitors’
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The County Battalion
The Durham Light Infantry

Committee
Lord Durham, W. Cresswell Gray; Col. Bowes, Col. Darwin, Lord Southampton, F.T.
Tristram, A.F. Pease; Rowland Burdon

Minutes of 1st meeting
21st Sept 1914

(1) Col. Burdon reported that some 570 men had joined up to date.

(2) That the names of 16 gentlemen had been sent in as being employed temporarily as officers.

(3) That the clothing of the men in draft had been approved and it had been ordered – delivery of some being hoped for in a fortnight.

(4) That he with Capt. Roberts, Messrs Tristram, Longdon, Lilley, and Col. Bowes had inspected Newton Hall and Cocken Hall yesterday and had found the latter suitable in every way for housing a large proportion of, if not the whole Battalion and that he had written to the Earl of Durham asking him on what terms the Comm[ittee] could have the house.

(5) That it was proposed to feed the men and officers by contract and enquiries were being made to that effect, and

(6) That some of the officers and men were to be brought in before the end of this week.

On the question of housing Mr Tristram stated that it was proposed that each man should bring his own 2 blankets and certain of the smaller items of the necessary details. It was decided that 2 blankets ought to be in the possession of each man. On the question of palliasses, Mr Pease urged that these should be provided. It was suggested they should be purchased second hand if possible. On Col. Burdon’s asking whether in case of shortage of numbers a company of miners should be substituted it was decided unanimously that the classes intended in the original prospectus should be adhered to.

Rowland Burdon
Minutes of the Second Meeting
28th Sept 1914

Present: Lord Southampton; Col. Darwin; Mr. W. Cresswell Gray; Capt. Tristram; Capt. Roberts; Col. Bowes; Col. R. Burdon

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The list of gentlemen appointed temporarily was corrected. It was decided that an early opportunity should be taken to allot positions to these gentlemen; and to secure that a commission be granted to them. It was decided to accept no more officers for commissions at present (unless some exceptionally valuable officer present himself) in order that vacancies might be retained for the promotion of candidates from the ranks.

Colonel Bowes mentioned that a considerable quantity of clothing was expected at a very short delivery.

Captain Tristram reported that only 568 officers and men could be accommodated in the house and out buildings at present; and it was decided to at once ascertain how many huts would be required for additional accommodation for the whole Battalion; what the best position for these huts would be; and Colonel Burdon was instructed that tenders should be invited for them; and to obtain the necessary permission to proceed immediately from the G.O.C in C.

On the question of the telephone Colonel Burdon was instructed to request the Postal Authorities to at once put a telephone in; and he was further instructed to obtain the leave of the G.O.C in C. that this should be done at public expense.

Colonel Burdon was also instructed to press the question of the medical examination of officers being conducted by a local man.

On the question of the wet and dry Canteen, it was decided to accept Messrs Speedings’ tender, by telegram, on the 24th inst, subject to such reduction as could be obtained, if any.

Colonel Burdon announced that additional subscriptions up to date – including £5 from Col. Darwin, and £50 from Sir Thomas Wrightson – amounted altogether to £5550.
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
5th October 1914

Present: Lord Southampton; W. Cresswell Gray, Esq; A.F. Pease, Esq; Colonel Bowes; Capt. Tristram; Captain Roberts; Col. R. Burdon.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Colonel Burdon reported there were 711 of all ranks now quartered at Cocken and at West Rainton; and it was stated that about 100 more men were enlisted, and ready to come up.

The Adjutant reported that Mr. Hughes Games and Mr Ince had joined; and a telegram offering a commission to Mr Lowe was written to be despatched.

Colonel Burdon notified that a subscription had been sent from Mr Henry Salvin for £25.

Colonel Burdon was authorised to offer a commission to Dr. Alfred Squire Taylor, M.B. B’ch. [MBChB] Edin.

Colonel Burdon was authorised to proceed at once with the erection of huts, to hold 700 men; and also a Recreation Shed, as soon as permission could be obtained for the latter.

Colonel Burdon was instructed to write to Colonel Darwin and ask if he would be good enough to undertake the management of the finance of the Battalion, as being so much nearer the spot.

The new pattern equipment was fitted for inspection, and it was suggested that the old Webb pattern should be obtained, if possible.

Sites for the huts - as suggested by the Darlington Construction Co, and laid out by Mr Ventris this morning - were approved. Construction is to be commenced at once.
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
October 12th 1914

Present: - Lord Durham; Lord Southampton; Col. Darwin; W. Cresswell Gray, Esq; Colonel Bowes; Captain F.T. Tristram; Captain Roberts; Col. R. Burdon.
The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Colonel Burdon reported that Mr Lowe had now joined, and that Dr Taylor proposed joining immediately.

The list of officers for commissions was produced and inspected.

Subscription list now amounted to £5715, including a donation from Mr J.E. Rogerson for £50.

Parade state was now 930, rank and file; and 22 officers. Accommodation as follows: - Newton Hall, 230. West Rainton, 212. Cocken Hall, 510.

Col. Burdon also reported that recruiting had been stopped in consequence of some very undesirable men having been recruited from Stockton and Durham.

Authority was given to proceed with the Bath House as soon as possible.

Colonel Bowes stated that clothing for about 900 was now forthcoming; and asked for a cheque for £2000 on account for clothing.

Lord Southampton had made enquires with regard to obtaining a suitable Orderly Room Clerk, and the matter was left in his hands.

It was noted that no progress – except putting up the side posts – had been made with the shed over the kitchens; and Captain Tilly was requested to accelerate the erection of this.

It was decided to indent for sufficient rifles for the purpose of

drill for the whole battalion, together with buff waist belts and frogs, until the equipment could be procured.
Colonel Burdon was instructed to write a letter to the newspapers, drawing attention to the fact that it was open to anyone to subscribe to the County Battalion, if they so wished, as a record of the Battalion and of the names of the subscribers would be preserved.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
Oct 19th 1914

Present: - Lord Southampton; W. Cresswell Gray; Colonel Darwin; Colonel Bowes; Captain Roberts; Colonel R. Burdon.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The adjutant reported that the parade state was now 991, of all ranks, being 9[ ] men, and [ ] officers.

Colonel Burdon reported that the list of officers had to be revised, so far as the dates of joining were concerned, in order to effect the necessary seniority in rank.

The question of the return of 23 men to Stockton was considered; and it was decided that Captain Tristram should proceed to effect, if possible, the transfer of these men to other units, as they were not of the classes originally selected for representation in the County Battalion. Colonel Burdon was instructed to proceed to York if this could not be effected, to obtain the sanction of the G.O.C in C to any suitable arrangement.

Lord Southampton said that as the man whom he had in view as a suitable Orderly Room Clerk would have had to be trained for 10 days at Borden it was simpler to have a man trained for the purpose at Cocken Hall, and the matter was left there.

The question of the separation of the Finance which had to be dealt with by the Committee, and the Finance which had to be dealt with by the C.O. was gone into; and Mr Gray suggested that Mr Fortune, of West Hartlepool, would probably be good enough to undertake the work, and would be most suitable for it.

Colonel Burdon was instructed to meet him, and go into the matter with him.
It was noted that the shed over the kitchens had made some progress, but it was not yet finished.

It was decided to indent for miniature rifles; and a full supply of service rifles for the use of the battalion. A further supply of rifles for instruction purposes had been received.

Colonel Burdon mentioned that it might be necessary to pump water from the river for the purpose of water supply.

Fourteen huts, in various stages of completion, were now standing.

The Quarter Master was instructed to lay a cement floor (for which he was to borrow men from the Darlington Construction Company) for the purpose of a bin for refuse.

The men’s rooms were inspected; and were not found to be altogether in a good condition; this being partly due to the fact that the company from West Rainton had been moved, and had not had time to clean their rooms.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
October 26th 1914


The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Colonel Burdon reported that the transfer of the 23 men returned to Stockton had been satisfactorily effected; and they had now been removed from the strength of the County Battalion.

It was noted that six huts had been completed and were occupied; three completed, but unoccupied; and the remainder - with one exception – under construction. The foundations for the Recreation Room had been laid.

The Parade state today was 1004.
A Company 243
B Company 239
C Company 270
D Company 252
Total 1004

Major Tristram reported that the War Office Establishment of Officers had been as follows:
- 1 Lieut. Colonel
- 3 Majors
- 6 Captains
- *6 Lieutenants
- 12 Second Lieutenants
- 1 Adjutant
- 1 Quartermaster
- *1 Lieutenant for details at base

The question of the bath house, combining bath and drying house, was considered; and it was decided that an amended plan should be made.

It was decided to carry out the additional lighting of the huts with our own staff, as we had in the ranks men perfectly capable of doing it.

The name of Mr Griffith Jones was added to the list of Officers with rank as Captain, second in Command of the Company.

The names of other members of the Durham U.T.C. were considered; and it was decided to offer commissions to at least two of them, if they were found suitable.

Rowland Burdon

Minutes of the Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
November 2nd 1914

Present: Lord Durham, Lord Southampton, Major Tristram, Captain Lowe, Colonel R. Burdon.
The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed, as amended. Parade state was given as 1065, and 24 officers.

It was decided to obtain some oil stoves for the purpose of turning two huts into temporary drying sheds for the men’s clothes.

The tender of the Darlington Construction Company for the Range, according to Government plans, was accepted, at the price of £195.

Major Tristram was instructed to communicate to Mr Gradon our opinion that undoubtedly the drains of the ablution sheds should – as he suggests - be made of proper sanitary pipes, and not let into field drains.

Colonel Burdon was instructed to accelerate the carrying out of the drying room as far as possible.

It was decided not to line the roofs of the huts; and that an attempt should be made to find other premises for the Orderly Room, in order that the present Orderly Room might be turned into the Guard House.

Major Tristram was instructed to obtain 6 Sentry Boxes from the Contractor or elsewhere.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
November 9th 1914


The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Colonel Burdon reported that the subscription list now amounted to £6615.

The parade state was given as 1073 and 24 officers. This being 2 over strength of the men, and 5 under strength of officers.
Colonel Burdon reported

(1) that oil stoves had been obtained for the purpose of drying the clothes in one of the huts; but up to the present there had been no necessity to use them.

(2) That he thought that it was almost necessary that a car should be obtained for the use of the battalion and he was authorised to take any steps he thought necessary in the matter.

(3) That he had ordered 20,000 rounds of short, and 5000 rounds of long .22 miniature Rifle Cartridges; (and a further quantity - 100,000 rounds – was reserved) from the Army & Navy stores.

Major Tristram reported that it had been decided to leave the Orderly Room where it was, but to put the Guard Room and sick room opposite the front door of the Hall.

The huts were inspected. It was decided to let the latrines and ablution sheds remain as at present designed for cleaning purposes; and instead of a new building for a Canteen it was decided to add a wing to the Recreation Hut to answer that purpose.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
November 23rd 1914


The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Colonel Burdon reported that the electric light for 2 rows of the huts had been completed. The Range and the drying house were in the process of erection; and the Regimental Institute was in a very advanced state, and waiting for the addition of the Canteen.

Colonel Burdon also reported that he had found it necessary to appoint a Clerk of the Works, who would act for him, and overlook in his absence.

Also that Mr Gray had most kindly lent a car for the use of the battalion.
Five hundred men and officers (as by Parade State given below) had been ordered to Hartlepool on the Tuesday previous to assist in the defence of the Port if necessary. These had been armed with the rifles provided for the use of the detachment, and had had 100 rounds of ammunition issued. Owing to having no equipment they had had to have mess tins issued separate.

Colonel Burdon mentioned also that he had, himself, seen the Military Secretary, Northern Command, and asked him to represent to the G.O.C-in-Chief that this detachment work at present was most detrimental to the training of the men; and to earnestly request that they may be restored to Cocken at the earliest possible opportunity, which he had promised should be done.

Col. Burdon asked leave – which was granted- to request from York that he should be allowed to recruit up to 400 over strength for the present battalion, to fill vacancies, and to form nucleus for the reserve battalion, should that be eventually authorised by the war office.

Col. Burdon was instructed to write a very grateful letter of thanks to Lord Southampton for his patriotic and unselfish action in taking command of the battalion, and for all the most efficient help he had given.
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<th>A Co.</th>
<th>B Co.</th>
<th>C Co.</th>
<th>D Co.</th>
<th>Total Officers &amp; all Ranks</th>
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Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
November 20th 1914

Present: - Lord Southampton, Colonel Hugh Bowes, Col Rowland Burdon.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The parade state was presented as under.

Colonel Burdon reported that - as was seen by parade state – none of the men had yet been sent back from West Hartlepool.

The frame of the drying shed was erected and the Recreation Room and Rifle Range were both approaching completion.

Arrangements had been made whereby Mr C. Fortune (Messrs Accountant, 36 Church St, West Hartlepool) has taken Mr Roberts’ place for financial purposes; and the signature of cheques – both with regard to the regimental account and the Committee’s account. It is hoped that the payment of bills will now proceed somewhat more regularly.

Payment on a/c to the Darlington Construction Company to the amount of £4000 had already been made by the Paymaster, York.

The question of appeals for clothing for the regiment was mentioned; and it was felt rather strongly that there was no occasion for this at the time; as much of the underclothing provided by the Committee had not been applied for by men for whom it was intended. It was decided that the Colonel should write a letter conveying this to the writers of any appeals to the newspapers.

Colonel Bowes mentioned that instruments for a band had been presented to the regiment by Col. McKenzie of Seaham Harbour; and he hoped to be able to get together from the battalion itself a band of 16 performers.
Samples for the furnishing of huts were inspected; but were not found to be satisfactory; and the Clerk of the Works was instructed to proceed to Newcastle, and obtain further samples from Messrs Emley & Messrs Walker.
### Parade State

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<td>255 264</td>
<td>264</td>
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</table>

On Detachment at Hartlepool, as per telephone message of this morning
No 1 Co. 254 Officers & all Ranks
No 2 Co. 253 Officers & all Ranks
507
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
December 7th 1914

Present: - Colonel Bowes, and Col Burdon.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as read.

Colonel Bowes asked how the question of the equipment for the officers should be dealt with; and it was decided that as a sum of £10 had been very generously offered to pay for the equipment of each officer of the battalion who required it, the matter should be left there.

Colonel Bowes asked whether it would be acceptable to the Committee that a commission should be offered to Sergt. Robinson, for which permission was given.

A good many motor bicycles, etc. having been used for regimental purposes belonging to private individuals of the Battalion it was agreed that the cost of the petrol should be reimbursed to those to whom bicycles belonged.

Colonel Bowes was instructed to purchase a Sam Browne belt for the Sergt. Major; it being very desirable that he should be dressed in conformity to the dress of the Commissioned Officers.

Colonel Bowes was instructed to tell the Clerk of the Works to go into the question of the officers latrines, in order to do away as far as possible with the hiring at present going on.

It was notified that the County Battalion would be entered in the Army List as the 18th Service Battalion.

The band instruments had been ordered, second quality; which would leave a small sum for music etc. It was decided that practice for the band was to be in the spare time of the musicians; and there was no pay to be attached to the appointment.

Satisfactory samples of upholstering, etc, for the huts have been received and selected, and the furnishing was being proceeded with.
It was notified that the first 200 sets of equipment had been received.

With regard to the huts, some slight alteration will have to be made at the miniature Rifle Range; and the lighting at the Target end will be provided for by 2 Acetylene Generators kindly lent by Messrs R.E. Hall & Co.

The lighting of the bath house will have to be attended to; and it will be necessary to put glass in the upper part of the outside wall, as the opening at present is too much. The bath house was very nearly ready for occupation.

Colonel Bowes was instructed to place the stoves in the Regimental Institute in the most convenient place.

Instructions with regard to the painting of the wood work of the Regimental Institute had been given, and were satisfactory.

The new latrines and ablution sheds had been taken into use, and appeared to be working satisfactorily; but the pipes will require protection from the frost.

The Clerk of the Works had made arrangements for laying down cinder paths under contract with Mr Gradon.

Colonel Burdon notified the result of his interviews at the war office on Friday last (the 4th inst) which included the appointment of the Medical Officer; and the permission to ask for another Company as soon as ever the first Depot Company had been formed; the War Office, of course, paying for everything outside the 1100 men of the present Battalion.

December 26th 1914

To

The Committee of the County Battalion

The Durham Light Infantry

The only important matter to report since the date of the last meeting of the Committee is the Bombardment of Hartlepool, and the loss sustained by the County Battalion. Almost the whole of the Guard at the Battery were either killed or wounded by the first Broadside from the German vessels. Neither the battery, nor any of the other troops realised that they were German ships. I very much regret that we have already lost six men killed - five on the spot, and one dying afterwards from wounds,
and ten wounded, but none dangerously; and it is hoped that most of them will be fit for duty again within a comparatively short time. How any of them escaped is rather wonderful. No damage was done in the trenches at all, with the exception of a few sandbags, etc, knocked

on to Major Roberts, and one or two of the men, without serious damage. One of the Officers had to leave the trenches while still under fire to re-call two Sentries posted on the cliff, who were discovered marching up and down with fixed bayonets on their beat as usual. Generally speaking, the men behaved excellently; and I think the Officers must have kept their heads under very trying circumstances. The Raid has, unfortunately, made it impossible for the G.O.C. in C. to allow the half Battalion to return to Cocken; and it is still under consideration whether we shall not take temporarily, at all events, the half battalion from Cocken to West Hartlepool; the G.O.C. in C. not having signified his approbation of that course if Colonel Bowes chooses to adopt it. There are reasons which appear to be good for this course; which will not, however, be adopted for at least ten days.

The whole of the lighting has been finished, and the engine seems to take

the load quite satisfactorily.

The Miniature Rifle Range is in use, though the targets were not in a finished condition three days ago.

The drying-house, and bath-house, are finished, and in use.

The new Canteen works exceedingly well, far better and more comfortable than the old tent.

The roads still present considerable difficulty; but cinders are being brought in and a more permanent covering will be given to the main road, under the direction of the Highway Surveyor to the Chester-le-Street RDC.

I felt rather strongly that after our use of the building we could not leave the carriage drive in the abominable state it has been reduced to. The cost of this will probably be about £60 or £70, which will be chargeable against Government.

The four Miniature Rifles presented by Mr Henry Clark, of Whitburn, have
arrived, and are of the greatest use.

The men’s huts are leaking in one or two unimportant places, but are generally most comfortable; and the men have no fault to find, even in this cold weather.

The tables and furniture, etc, authorised by the war Office are being provided, sufficiently to meet requirements.

A proportion of men and officers have been granted leave for Christmas and the New Year. Leave has, of course, to be made subject to the requirements of safety.

The management of the finances has been handed over to Mr. J.C. Fortune of West Hartlepool, in conjunction with myself.

I ought to add that I had, myself, an interview with the G.O.C in-Chief on the 21st inst. with regard to the stations of the battalion.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
January 4th 1915

Present:- Lord Southampton, Col. Bowes, Colonel R. Burdon, Capt. Lowe

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read.

Colonel Bowes mentioned the question of the payment of the funeral expenses of members of the battalion killed in action at Hartlepool on the 16th December, and asked if any expenses extra to the sum provided by the War Office would be met by the committee. This was granted.

He also asked whether he might consider that the balance of expenses of the Christmas Dinner- if it could not be covered from the Canteen funds- might be met by the Committee. This was agreed to.

It was decided to obtain, through the

Clerk of the Works, tenders for the erection of shelves in the barrack huts; and also for wooden grids for the bath-room.
Colonel Burdon was instructed to obtain tenders from the Army & Navy Stores for 1350 rifle slings; Col. Bowes stating that he had already placed the order for equipment for the Depot Company.

It was agreed to ask the Paymaster at York to send down a Clerk for one day to give instruction and advice in the Orderly Room with regard to certain forms which presented some difficulty.

Colonel Bowes reported that the bath-room had been taken into use and was satisfactory: that a drying room had been allowed to each Company to be used as required during certain hours; and that the miniature Rifle Range was working satisfactorily.

The Canteen was found to be very successful; and the room a very good one for sound for Entertainment.

Colonel Burdon was requested to communicate with Mr. Gray with regard to the provision, if possible, of a special train for the conveyance of the Battalion to Sunderland for recruiting purposes.

The question of recruiting was also considered, together with a letter from Capt. Longden, and it was decided to let the matter stand over for a week to see how the new arrangement of the extra fee of 1/- [one shilling] per man to the Recruiting Sergeant would work in practice.

Col. Bowes was requested to draft a letter, in conjunction with Capt. Longden, to be sent to magistrates and notables, asking their assistance in recruiting.

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
January 11th 1915

Present:- Colonel R. Burdon, Colonel Bowes and Captain Lowe

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Colonel Bowes stated that tenders for the shelves in the barrack huts had been obtained, but were so much more expensive than was expected that the matter had been again referred to the Clerk of the Works.
The Paymaster at York had written stating that they could not at present spare a Clerk to give instructions with regard to certain difficult War Office forms, but that the Battalion might send a Non-Commissioned Officer to York for instructions.

The bath-room, drying house, and Rifle Range, and the canteen, were all now working most satisfactorily.

It was agreed that Colonel Burdon should write to Messrs. Gradon and call their attention to the fact that the Latrines were not yet finished, in spite of continued notifications.

Colonel Bowes reported that recruits were coming in quite fairly. The letter to the Magistrates, etc, has been drafted, and is being sent out.

It was further agreed that Col. Burdon should write and urge Messrs. Gradon to proceed with the repairs to the roads.

Mr. Kirkup, manager for the Lambton Collieries, has also very kindly arranged for ashes to be delivered at 4/- per load. The number of loads to be checked by the Pioneer Sergeant.

It was decided to purchase four more Miniature Rifles; and that a good recruiting notice should be inserted in the “Evening Chronicle”, and the “North Star”.

Authority for the erection of four more barrack huts had been applied for to York to accommodate the Depot Company: Colonel Bowes having stated that it was possible to carry on with that amount of accommodation: but on talking the matter over, and in view of the fact that two Depot Companies will eventually have to be provided, and that it would be a great convenience to the Bantam Battalion if the County Battalion resigns the use of Newton Hall in their favour, it was decided that as Colonel Bowes said that he would be able to provide for both Depot Companies, if six new huts were built, and he could rely upon the use of West Rainton Drill Shed, Col. Burdon should write to York, and ask for permission to build six huts; and as the tendency of contracts to rise Col. Burdon accepted a tender from the Darlington Construction Company for six huts at £153 each, lined, and with stove fitted (but not including cost of stove); the first two
January 16th 1915

To The Committee of the County Battalion
The Durham Light Infantry

Owing to a press of other important business, and to there not being very much at the moment to consider, I have postponed the meeting of the Committee for - at any rate - a week.

The Battalion has at last been united; and I hope great improvement will be noticeable before long. All the best N.C.O's had been sent, of course, to Hartlepool. They will now - as also the men - be restored to their original Companies; and in the end I hope the time at Hartlepool may not be altogether wasted.

I have authorized the erection of six new huts. I have received the sanction for this from York.

I hear the band is a great success; and will be very welcome on route marches.

On Thursday the battalion marched about 22 miles, without any greater inconvenience than a few sore feet. They always manage about 20 miles once a week.

Miniature Rifles are still a difficulty, as we want to get them as near as possible the weight and pull of the Government arm. This is being attended to. The range is working excellently.

Brigadier General F.G. Hunter inspected the half battalion at Cocken on Thursday the 7th inst: and I think was fairly pleased with what he saw. It was due to his action that the battalion was re-united. He appears to know what he wants, and is likely to get it; and I think we may congratulate ourselves on his appointment.

The roads are still a great difficulty; everybody seeming in this wet weather to want ashes at the same time; but Mr. Kirkup, the Manager of the Lambton Collieries, has been good enough to help us; and a few dry days would make
a great deal of difference now.

There were 100 cases on the sick list yesterday (the 15th) but nothing serious.

Colonel Bowes is in communication with the Canteen Contractor with regard to the prices now paid for feeding the men. He is asking - and will probably obtain - a rebate from the Contractor of five-eighths of a penny per head per day. The Contractor to include biscuit and coffee in the early morning. In view of the large number of men being at present supplied this appears to be quite reasonable; and the sum obtained will be of great assistance, as representing the privy purse of the battalion.

The last of the latrines were not left in a very satisfactory state; but owing to the men coming back we have made the best of it, and I think it will answer the purpose for a sufficient length of time. The frosty weather might have had something to do with this.

I am glad to say the drainage appears to be working fairly satisfactory.

**Minutes of Committee Meeting**

*Cocken Hall*

January 25th 1915


The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed, as altered.

Colonel Burdon reported that in order to provide accommodation for the men up to the strength of the two Depot Companies, in addition to the original Battalion, he had accepted a contract for six new hut shelters at a cost of £150 each, lined; stoves fitted, but to be extra.

The case of the Quartermaster was considered; he having had money advanced to him at the same rate as he was previously earning, viz, £2-10-0 per week, until such time as his pay could reach him. It is
now a question of whether he was to be asked to refund to the battalion the whole, or a portion of this money advanced; and it was decided that the Committee would be content if he would repay them one half of this sum.

It was reported that one or two undesirable men had been received from Durham; but that as a rule recruits were coming in fairly satisfactorily.

It was suggested that a statement of accounts should be prepared to show the financial position of the Committee up to date.

Colonel Burdon reported that he had had a subscription of £25 from His Honour Judge Greenwell; and Mr Gray also reported that he had been promised £50 for the battalion by Mr. A.B. Horsley.

The question of leave was considered informally by the Committee; and Colonel Bowes was requested to lay before the Brigadier their opinion that - especially in the case of the men who had been quartered at Hartlepool, and considering the class of men who formed the Battalion - it was desirable that as much leave should be granted as was in accordance with the discipline.

Colonel Burdon also reported that in consequence of a conversation between himself, the Brigadier, and Col. Bowes, which took place at Cocken on the occasion of his meeting the Brigadier there, he had written to York, and had received definite instructions from the G.O.C. in C, Northern Command, that from this time onward neither he nor the Committee were any longer responsible for the discipline and training of the battalion, which now vested in the Colonel Commanding and the Brigadier.

February 5th 1915
To The Committee of the County Battalion
The Durham Light Infantry

There seems to be comparatively little new at Cocken at the moment; and therefore I do not propose to have a Committee meeting on Monday, as I cannot be there myself without inconvenience.
Colonel Bowes proposes to promote three men from the ranks to be officers in the Battalion; and to bring in one from the Durham O.T.C. I see no reason to interfere in the granting of these commissions, as at this stage the appointment of Officers concerns primarily the Officer Commanding, and the second in Command. In any case, these appear to be suitable appointments.

The new huts have again been delayed; but must be ready for occupation in a day or two.

The question of stoves for the cook house to be run by the battalion is having attention. These can be obtained at short notice, as I ascertained when at the War Office on Wednesday the 3rd inst.

The supply of ashes is now coming in well, and considerable progress is being made with the roads.

Colonel Bowes reports to me that the Brigadier has visited the battalion since the last meeting, and has expressed his approval of the progress made; and he is prepared to relax, to some extent, his restrictions with regard to leave.

I presented a request at the War Office on Wednesday to be allowed to continue the formation of the second Depot Company uninterrupted. General Sir Herbert Belfield told me that he could not give permission on account of the precedent which would be followed by other battalions. He suggested that there were some things that are better done done first and asked for afterwards, and therefore, the formation of the second Depot Company is being proceeded with; and I have applied in writing. There is a certain amount of sickness, but none of a really serious nature.

**Minutes of Committee Meeting**

**Cocken Hall**

15th February 1915

Present:- Colonel Burdon and Major Tristram.

Nothing of any importance was reported.
The parade state was certified as being 1355 of all ranks. Recruits were only coming in slowly: and constant drains were being made upon the regiment for the provision of Commissioned Officers for other battalions. The total loss from this source up to date would probably reach nearly 50 men.

The question of a notice and advertisement issued by Mr. Evan Hayward, M.P., and Mr. Godfrey Palmer, M.P. for the purpose of obtaining 100 or 200 men for the 13th (Pioneers) Gloucester Regiment was considered; and it was agreed that support ought only to be given to this when our own County Battalions had been filled.

With the exception of a few of the huts not being water tight (though not to any serious amount, except in one case) the rest of the camp was in good order, and might be considered finished; except the roads, which are still awaiting the action by the Surveyor to the RDC, which has been delayed in consequence of stone and trucks not having been forth-coming.

The Rifles which had been lent to the Battalion by various members of the public were directed to be returned to their owners.

Colonel Burdon notified that he had applied for cooking stoves and boilers, and also arm racks.

**Minutes of Committee Meeting**

**Cocken Hall**

February 22nd 1915


The minutes of the previous meeting at which no one was present but Colonel Burdon, Major Tristram and Capt. Lowe, were taken as read.

The parade state was presented as under and Colonel Burdon mentioned that one of the reasons why such slow progress was being made with the 6th Company was that some forty of the members of the Battalion had been transferred to commissions elsewhere.
The samples of necessaries for the men were inspected, and it was decided that those offered by Messrs. Mappin & Webb should be accepted, subject to reasonably quick delivery: or failing those that provided by [blank]

Colonel Burdon reported that he had authority from the war office for the 6th Company to be proceeded with at once.

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Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
March 8th 1915

Present:- Wm. Cresswell Gray, Colonel Hugh Bowes, Captain W.D. Lowe, and Colonel R. Burdon.

Colonel Bowes’ action with regard to the appointment of the two officers to the Depot Company was confirmed.

The strength of the Battalion remained approximately as at the last meeting, in consequence of transfers to other Battalions, and the men being rejected after medical examination.
Colonel Bowes notified that some of the senior officers had been sent to Alnmouth for a course.

Hudson

Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
March 29th 1915

Present:- Lord Durham, Colonel Bowes, Major Tristram, Capt. Lowe, and Colonel Burdon.

The strength of the battalion was stated to be 1362 of all ranks. That some were still being transferred to other battalions, and others who had been dismissed on the ground of health.

Colonel Bowes stated that the camp had been inspected by Colonel Blackburn, Chief Engineer, Northern Command, York, on the 24th inst: and that he had expressed himself as satisfied with its condition and arrangements. No objection had been made by him to the rather congested state of the camp. He had given certain directions with regard to the disposal of the drainage, which will be carried out.

It was stated that very few recruits were now coming in, in spite of advertisements in the newspapers; the accounts for which were stated to be very large, but were not given.

Colonel Bowes undertook to send Colonel Burdon an account of the number of field glasses required for the battalion, in excess of those probably issued by the War Office.

Colonel Burdon mentioned the question of leave for men and officers, and expressed a hope on behalf of himself and the Committee that leave to the very fullest possible extent would be granted until the time that the regiment moved into camp elsewhere, as very considerable dissatisfaction existed, owing to other battalions being able to obtain leave very much in excess of that granted in the 18th. Colonel Bowes stated that the difficulty lay with the orders given by the
Minutes of Committee Meeting
Cocken Hall
April 19th 1915


The parade state was handed in, showing 1393 of all ranks. Of these it was expected that 8 artificers would have to be returned to their employment.

It was agreed that a payment of £14 should be made to the electricians. Their services as members of the Battalion having been the means of effecting a large saving in the cost of installing electric light.

Recruiting expenses incurred by Captain Longden were ordered to be paid, amounting to £74-1-2.

The question of the cookhouse was considered. The medical officer having reported that in hot weather, at all events; it was unfit for its purpose, from a sanitary point of view; and it was determined to erect a cook house according to Government plans; and that application should be made to the War Office for permission to carry out this work.

Colonel Bowes reported that 8 new officers had been appointed to the Battalion by the war office, but had not yet arrived; also that the Battalion was now probably going to Blagdon, under canvas, early in May. There was considerable discussion as to the probable ultimate destination of the Battalion; and as to the Brigade to which it might eventually be attached; but it was felt that no action could be taken at the moment until it was ascertained what the ideas of the General Officer Commanding, York, might be on the subject.
April 23rd 1915

To The Committee of the County Battalion
The Durham Light Infantry

There will be no meeting of the Committee at Cocken Hall on Monday the 26th inst. There is little that requires immediate attention; and probably only half the Battalion will be there.

Orders were received by telephone on the morning of the 21st that the Battalion was to proceed to camp near Blagdon immediately - I believe the same evening. Colonel Bowes very wisely decided that the Garden Party which had been decided to be held that afternoon - together with a show parade - should not be interfered with; and it was the means of collecting together something like 2000 people, friends and relatives of the members of the Battalion. After consultation with him I decided to try and postpone the departure of the Battalion for a few days, if possible; and therefore, at about 5 p.m. I telephoned to York, only to find that all the arrangements had been counterordered an hour previously; and that 400 men and officers were to entrain, at two hours' notice, for Middlesbrough, for what York described as "an emergency." The entraining was carried out without a hitch; and 710 men and 23 officers, horses, etc., are at present in Middlesbrough. Colonel Bowes has, however, applied that the Battalion shall be allowed to reassemble at Cocken before they finally go into camp elsewhere. Major Tristram - who unfortunately has had rather a serious fall - is meanwhile in Command at Cocken. If the Battalion is to move at this short notice there is sure to be trouble in future with the Contractor; which, however, will, of course, lie upon the shoulders of York.

The second Depot Company grows very slowly. At present there are about 1400 of all ranks, of whom we shall lose 8 special artificers, who go back to their firms for the manufacturing of armaments.

A new cook house must be provided. I propose to go on with this quite independent of the 18th (Service) Battalion leaving Cocken, as it must be provided for the incoming Battalion; about which I am writing to York.

About half of the men have been vaccinated; which, of course, would not have been done had we known of the move.
May 7th 1915

To The Committee of the County Battalion
The Durham Light Infantry

There seems to be at present no necessity for meetings of the Committee. The discipline having been taken out of our hands two months ago, and the administrative duties having been withdrawn a week ago, there seems now very little for the Committee to do. We are nominally responsible for the two Depot Companies; but even there, requisitions for clothing, etc., will be more or less automatic from the Depot, which we are still retaining at Cocken, where there will always be stationed – probably – an Officer, two N.C.O.s, and two or three Privates; where we have reserved two huts, and quarters in the Hall. This plan does not entirely recommend itself to me; but I see no alternative to it at present.

The Battalion are drawing their own pay on an imprest account; all rations, etc.; are now coming from the A.O. department; and clothing has long been out of our hands. Rifle slings are on the way: if not already received: and I think that except for occasional small items - our account can be concluded by the end of this month; anyhow, I shall try and send out a draft account by that time.

The Battalion, itself, marched out on Monday, to proceed by two trains to Cramlington, to the 122nd Brigade Camp; and the remaining 280 men yesterday; they having been detained in consequence of arms inflamed by the really hard time they had at Middlesbrough; where all the night duty had to be done in marching order; and many of the officers got practically no sleep for three days. There are, however, wonderfully few cases of sickness. I think 10 was the number that went yesterday by train; and I hope it speaks well for the sanitary conditions at Cocken; which will be further improved by the building of the new Cookhouse, which I have obtained authority to proceed with (on a contract with the Darlington Construction Co.) for £330, including drainage, laying on water, etc.

It is now definitely settled that the Bantams succeed us. An advance party with about 30 men came in last Monday; and the remainder, I believe, are to follow shortly.

I should like to record to the Committee that the whole place has been left in first rate order. I have not been over the house; but I can answer that the whole of the
grounds are perfectly clean. They were, in fact, left in a state which was entirely a credit to the men, as well as the Commanding Officer.

It is recognised by York that Lord Durham’s sanction is required for any change, or any new departure, at Cocken; but it would appear that I must still be in some sense responsible while our Depot is there.