



DURHAM
AT **WAR**



LUMLEY CASTLE

Transcript of correspondence concerning its use as a hospital

Records held by the archives at the Museum of the Order of St John

OSJ 1/1/12/20

August – September 1914

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11th August 1914

War Office,
Whitehall,
SW

My Lord

I am directed to acknowledge your letter of 7th instant, and in reply to say that while thanking you for your generous and patriotic offer, we are prevented under the Field Service Regulations from accepting offers of Voluntary Aid except through the British Red Cross Society to whom all offers of assistance in aid of the sick and wounded must be submitted in the first instance.

The address of the Society is: Devonshire House, London, W.

I am,
My lord,
Your obedient Servant,
AP Blenkinsop

Lieutenant Colonel, RAMC [Royal Army Medical Corps]
for Director-General, Army Medical Service.

[addressee]

The Right Hon.
The Earl of Scarborough KCB
Sandbeck Park
Rotherham
Yorkshire

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**11th August 1914**

From General Officer commanding  
West Riding Division  
Danum Hotel  
Doncaster

Dear Sir

Might I trouble you have you to give me leave to manoeuvre troops on your property.

Nevil Wilson  
Major, General Staff Officer  
Lord Scarbrough's Property

~~~~~

13 August 1914

Sandbeck Park
Rotherham
Yorkshire

Sir,

In reply to yours of the 11th instant; please inform the GOC that he is welcome to manoeuvre troops over my property and to use the park here for camping or any other purpose. There is an ample water supply. The house is also available for temporary headquarters, and I shall be glad to accommodate and entertain any officers.

I am,

Your obedient Servant

The General Staff Officer



Danum Hotel
Doncaster

~~~~~

**13 August 1914**

Sandbeck Park  
Rotherham  
Yorkshire

On the 7th instant I intimated to the war office that I desired place my residence Lumley Castle County Durham at their disposal for any purpose for which it might be useful, and I have received a reply, asking me to notify the same to you society.

The castle which is very large can easily be equipped to accommodate between 100 and 200 patients or convalescents, exclusive of medical and nursing staff. It is situated within one mile of Chester le Street station on the main North Eastern Railway midway between Durham and Newcastle and might conceivably be most useful for naval casualties coming from northern ports.

Lady Scarbrough also desires me to say that her unfurnished house at 21 Park Lane is at your disposal for any purpose whatever.

I am  
your obedient servant  
Scarbrough

[addressee]  
The Secretary  
British Red Cross Society  
Devonshire House

~~~~~



14 August 1914

British Red Cross Society

Devonshire House

Piccadilly

London, W.

My Lord,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 13th August, containing your generous offer that Lumley Castle, County Durham, and No. 21 Park Lane, can be placed at the disposal of the War Office, should additional hospital accommodation be required. At the present moment, however, abundant hospital accommodation exists for immediate needs, but should the occasion arise for us to avail ourselves of your very kind offer, a notice will be promptly sent to you.

I have the honour to be, My Lord,

Your obedient Servant

Frank Hastings

Secretary.

[addressee]

The Lord Scarbrough

Sandbeck Park,

Rotherham,

Yorkshire

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**15 August 1914**

Durham County Association

Dear Lord Scarbrough,

As chairman of our association, I write to thank you for your kind offer of Lumley Castle for hospital purposes in case of necessity.

Your letter has been forwarded to Mr Palmer our County Director who will deal with the matter.

Yours sincerely

CW Darwin

~~~~~

16 August 1914

Elston Hall

Newark

Dear Lord Scarbrough,

Your letter of the 8th instant only reached me yesterday on my return home from Durham. We live here now half the year. We have had a strenuous fortnight and I am going north again on Tuesday to see about the recruiting and interview candidates for commissions. It will be a hard task to draw the line! We got through mobilisation all right, but the camp at Conway rather added to our troubles.

I wrote yesterday to thank you for Lumley, for hospital work in reply to your other letters.

Yours very truly

CW Darwin

~~~~~



**22 August 1914**

Sandbeck Park

Rotherham

Dear Sir

As vice president of the Territorial Branch of the St John's Ambulance Association in the Rotherham Petty Sessional Division of the West Riding, I venture to ask you to be good enough to convey to any working parties which may be found in your parish the attached information respecting the West Riding branch of Queen Mary's needlework guild.

I remain

Yours faithfully

~~~~~

24 August 1914

Territorial Force Association of the County of Northumberland

Territorial Force Association of the County of Durham

Voluntary Aid Detachments

Temporary Headquarters: -

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle on Tyne

Dear Sir or Madam,

Temporary Hospitals and Convalescent Homes

With reference to your offer in connection with above: will you be good enough to complete the enclosed form, so far as possible, and return to me at the Cambridge Hall, Newcastle on Tyne, at your earliest convenience.



Your faithfully
CB Palmer,
County Director,
Northumberland and Durham

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Temporary Hospitals  
Voluntary Aid Detachments  
Durham

List of Premises offered for Temporary Hospitals in the County of Durham

Description and position of premises: Lumley Castle, County Durham, situated within one mile of Chester-le-Street Station on the main North Eastern Railway midway between Durham and Newcastle.

Town or nearest Village: One mile from Chester-le-Street; six miles from Durham; seven miles from Newcastle.

Number of beds: 100

Whether now equipped: Not as a Hospital.

Whether equipment arranged for: No, but personally prepared to provide up to 50 beds.

Whether staffed: No.



Whether staff arranged for: Prepared to provide experienced matron and two fully trained nurses; also domestic servants, with assistance from VADs.

Postal Address/Telegraphic Address: Chester-le-Street

Telephone No. Can be installed if required.

Remarks: It is thought that the castle may practically be regarded as an overflow from the No.1 Northern General Hospital for treatment of less serious cases or for convalescents.

Scarborough

29 August 1914

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1 September 1914

Headquarters

Northern Command

York

Dear Lord Scarborough

I am desired by the Surgeon General, Northern Command, to acknowledge, with very thanks, your very kind offer – of which he has heard through Mr CB Palmer, County Director V.A.D, of Lumley Castle as a temporary hospital, with 50 beds and fully trained nursing staff, for sick and wounded.

Your offer has been gratefully noted.

Would you be so good as to inform the Surgeon General whether medical staff, stores and equipment, or any of them, will be provided in connection with the accommodation offered.



I am,

Yours very truly

JE Hodgson.

Major, RAMC [Royal Army medical Corps]

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**6 September 1914**

Sandbeck Park

Rotherham

Yorkshire

Dear Major Hodgson,

In reply to yours of the 1st instant; I attach copy of return which I sent to Mr CB Palmer, County Director, County Durham.

Since doing so I have gone more closely into the matter and made enquiries from Hospital Authorities and I have come to the conclusion that a country house is not, as a rule, well adapted for such a purpose.

Although the space available is probably sufficient for the number of beds I have mentioned, the ordinary sanitary accommodation is, I believe, wholly inadequate, also sinks, and provisions for washing up, etc.

I feel therefore that in this case, as well as in many others, it is very necessary that an inspection should be made by the Medical Authorities to decide how such houses can best be made use of, if required, before expense is incurred or any preparation is made.

If there is really a likelihood of these places being wanted it would be a great advantage if this course could be adopted, and I should be certainly glad if it could



be done in my case as I am anxious not to mislead the authorities through ignorance of what is essential for hospital purposes.

Your truly,

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8 September 1914

Headquarters

Northern Command

York

Dear Lord Scarbrough,

The Surgeon General asked me to thank you for the details enclosed with your letter to me of the 6th instant. He is very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in making enquiries, and suggest that, for the present at least, you should not contemplate providing more than 50 beds; and that even with feedback to these you should not undertake any preparation until you hear further from him.

It would be a great pity to put you to more trouble now if eventually the house was found to be, as has occurred to you, not adapted for the accommodation of such a number of sick. He will try to send you a medical officer to give an opinion on this house as soon as possible, but at present, as he is sure you will understand, they are all very busy.

I am,

Yours very truly

JE Hodgson.

Major, RAMC

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**14 September 1914**

Territorial Force Association of the County of Durham

Voluntary Aid Detachments

Temporary Headquarters: -

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle on Tyne

Dear Lord Scarbrough,

I am quite in accord with you in calling into question the policy of taking many of the promises for convalescent homes or hospitals without anything definite being known as to whether they are likely to be used or adapted for the purpose.

The position I find is really this:

All the general hospitals will first of all be occupied to their utmost capacity. An expansion will take place from these hospitals into civil hospitals, where such are available and are put at the disposal of the Military Authorities. After that the voluntary hospitals in the near locality, if possible, of the general hospitals will be utilized.

At the present time in the north there are about 100 beds vacant in the general hospital out of 520. The civil hospital is totally inadequate and therefore voluntary hospitals will be automatically used. These are arranged in Newcastle and South Shields and Gateshead. It is therefore probable that, except in the event of a very large number of sick and wounded being thrown on the hands of the medical staff, Lumley Castle will not be required.

As regards a convalescent home I have a letter from the Secretary of the Central Registry to the effect that the convalescents are all preferring to go to their own homes, and that as a matter of fact, no convalescent has been set to any of the registered homes of which there are thousands on their books.



If there is any likelihood of Lumley Castle being required, I will inform you without delay, and in this case I will get the ADMS [Assistant Director of Medical Services] to inspect and report as to its suitability etc.

I am, my Lord,  
Yours faithfully,  
CB Palmer  
County Director

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No date

Incorporated Soldiers and Sailors Help Society
Temporary Convalescent Homes

Name: Lumley Castle
Address: Chester-le-Street County Durham
Telephone number: Can be installed if required
Nearest station: Chester-le-Street
Distance from station: One mile
Would transport be provided? Yes
Numbers of beds available: 100

(a) Officers:

(b) Men:

Under which heading should your offer be placed?

- (1) All expenses paid including food
- (2) Is any grant required for food?
- (3) Is any equipment required? 50 beds to be equipped

Regiments preferred:

Would you take any nationality including Germans?

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