



**DURHAM**  
AT **WAR**



## **FAIRLAWN**

**Transcript of correspondence concerning its use as a hospital**

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

OSJ 1/1/12/21

**August – October 1914**

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**14 September 1914**

[copy of incoming letter]

Fairlawn,  
Leeholme  
Bishop Auckland

CB Palmer, Esq.  
County Director

I have today received word from Lady Perrott that it is intended that my hospital shall be used. There are one or two details that I should like to point out, and ask your assistance in connection therewith.

The NE Railway is a good 1½ miles from here, but there is a colliery line connected with the NER mineral line which runs within 40 yards of the proposed hospital. If the wounded soldiers should be sent on to the NER passenger station at Coundon, I would want the colliery ambulance van and ambulance for any serious cases – the remainder I would get up in the 10 horse vehicles which I have had promised.

If the wounded soldiers should be sent to Leeholme direct on the mineral railway, the carriages at a certain point would enter Bolckow Vaughan's sidings, and would be to further convey by their locomotives and workmen.

Would you therefore please ask Mr Hare, the company's agent, whether he will place the ambulance van and the railway and the locomotive and your disposal for the purpose of conveying patients to the Leeholme Temporary Hospital.

(Signed) Margaret A Hall

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**16 September 1914**

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle upon Tyne

Dear Lady Perrott,

I have received the enclosed letter from Mrs Hall, commandant of one of our detachments. I have replied that she should not expect any wounded being sent to her, as I know for a fact that she will not. I think that she must have been misled from something you have said.

The premises that she had at her disposal is a council school, and the Board of Education, will not grant permission for this to be used, nor do I consider it is necessary.

Would you therefore, kindly communicate with the lady and tell her that there is some misunderstanding; otherwise we shall have all her District in a state of excitement with the idea that wounded may be coming in to them at any time.

Yours faithfully,

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

No.6 (Northern) District

~~~~~

**No date**

[annotated at top]

We are endeavouring to get the same privileges for St John

Dear Mr Palmer,

I enclose the whole correspondence referring to Mrs Halls' offer.



In accordance with your note on the lack of Mrs Halls' original communication, I forwarded her offer of ~~a convalescent home~~ to Major Craig (Soldiers and Sailors Help Society) and forwarded the type written notice (enclosure No.I) to Mrs Hall, whose response I enclose (No. II) in answer to which enclosure No. III was sent.

I think if you will read the correspondence you will see that Mrs Hall misunderstood the situation.

I enclose a the further offer of a temporary hospital at Sunderland for your kind perusal. Thank you so much for your letter referring to the Red Cross Parcels

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**No. I**

**25 August 1914**

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is important that the particulars asked for on the enclosed form should be recorded at Headquarters, and I shall be glad if you will kindly return same to be duly completed at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

Ethel Perrott

Lady Commandant-in-Chief, St John Women's Voluntary aid Detachment

Record of Temporary Hospital, ~~Convalescent Home, or Rest Station~~ organized by St John

*Voluntary Aid Detachment no.*

456 Durham at Leeholme, Bishop Auckland in the County of Durham (Leasingthorne Colliery Nursing Division)

*Nature and location of buildings selected*

Leeholme Mission Hall and Leeholme Primitive Chapel, close to main road and within 40 yards of railway from Hartlepool, Middlesbrough etc. No noise. Well



ventilated, lighted and heated. All on ground floor. Fields in front and open at side. Situate in Parish of Coundon near Bishop Auckland.

*State if Temporary Hospital with Operating Theatre, etc. Convalescent Home, or Rest Station*

Well lighted operating room, two larger wards holding 40 beds, 2 small wards, 2 kitchens, 1 reading room adjoining, capable of being turned into a pack store, destructor, offices, etc. Have made arrangements for temporary wash house ([hole punched through word] garden can be used for convalescent patients)

*Has the Hospital been submitted to the Territorial Force Association of your County for registration at the War Office*

Have sent detailed report to Mr CB Palmer (County Director), Colonel [Clay] (Northumbrian Divisional Clearing Hospital), MR HG Stobart (assistant County Director)

*Number of beds available*

40

*Arrangements for providing necessary equipment*

Particular requisition work has been completed. The necessary beds, bedding, ward furniture, kitchen utensils and hospital comforts have all been promised. The VAD equipment is complete, a working party is now in progress, for extra shirts, [?], socks etc.

*Funds available for maintenance*

I take this to mean maintenance of hospital. We have full supplies of dressings, medicines, and operating instruments, to start with as per VAD book and would apply to Darlington or Durham depots for supplementary ones when this supply ran short.



*Personnel available*

1 Commandant, 2 Medical Officers, 14 Nurses, 6 Cooks, 3 Laundresses, 17 Orderlies, 4 Storekeepers, 4 Scouts, 1 Cyclist etc.

*Other particulars*

11 horses carts and drivers have been promised

We can easily get provisions for the wounded, but have no funds in hand to pay for them.

If possible would like 2 days' notice when wounded are brought in.

*Signature of Commandant*

Margaret A Hall

*Full address*

Fairlawn, Leeholme, Bishop Auckland, County Durham

[annotated on reverse]

Not likely to be required as a hospital but might be used for convalescents. A [keen?] detachment but the position of its headquarters too far inland to be of use at present.

CB P

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**No. II**

The Soldiers and Sailors Help Society has been appointed by the Admiralty and the War Office to deal officially with the arrangements for Convalescents received by any society, so all the details of your kind offer to us have been submitted to them, and you will receive in due course an intimation stating when they propose to send you patients.



If when notice reaches you, you decide that you will want any extra nurses will you kindly communicate with us at the above address, stating the precise nature of your need and we will do our best to supply you.

Yours truly,  
Ethel Perrott

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**No. III**

**18 September 1914**

From Mrs Hall, Commandant  
Fairlawn Leeholme

To Lady Perrott, Honorary Secretary  
Special Committee of Ladies of the Order

Madam,

In reply your letter of the 11th instant re the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society. Would you please make things as clear for me as you possibly can by giving me full information re details, which I am asking for viz:

- 1) Should I receive patients from the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society, what condition would they be in as I note that you mention the word convalescent?
- 2) Would they be able to walk about and get outside?
- 3) 'How would they be sent here' – The passenger line is 1¼ miles distant (Coundon Station) and is North Eastern Railway. The mineral line is only 40 yards distant and is a continuation of LER and Messrs Bolckow and Vaughan's private mineral line. If you were to send the patients on the passenger line would they be well enough to take 1 ¼ mile drive in a brake [carriage] (fitted up of course). If not, would you please ask the colliery owners in good time to let me have the use of their Leasingthorne ambulance van.



4) In the case of your sending patients here by the mineral line (which [leaves] the train line (NER) at Ferryhill, would you please make a timely application yourselves for the use of this line. Your application should be made to Mr S [Hare], Howlish Hall, Bishop Auckland, who is the mining agent for Messrs Bolckow and Vaughan. You should also ask him to let you have firecoal for cooking and heating the hospital.

I have quite sufficient staff, and full equipment for dressings, medicines, beds, bedding, furniture and soldiers clothes and comforts (to at least start them well) and operating instruments on order, but I have no control over the ambulance van, the mineral railway or the firecoal. These are entirely at the goodwill of Mr [Hare] and he prefers to be asked by public bodies rather than by the local representative.

You will see that it would place the patients, yourselves and me in an undesirable position if you were to send them on here without having first got these details settled.

I had perhaps better mention that we can manage to cater for the patients if the money is forwarded by you to pay for them. And I would like to say that if you can make these arrangements satisfactorily that I and the whole staff are ready and very willing to do our best for the patients.

Please let me have an answer to this as early as ever possible.

Yours truly Margaret A Hall

Commandant

Durham

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#### **No. IV**

Madam

With reference your enquiry:

1) The patients sent by the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society would be convalescent





- 2) They will most probably be able to be up and go out.
- 3) The patients could travel from Coundon station 1 ¼ miles by brake [carriage]

Yours truly,

[different handwriting]

I send this note but I think it will be well to strike this home off our books.

[S]CO

~~~~~

**25 September 1914**

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle upon Tyne

Lady Perrot,

52 Onslow Gardens,

London W

Dear Lady Perrot,

With reference to Mrs Hall's offer. As this lady is the wife of a subordinate official of Bolckow Vaughan's extensive collieries, and as the wife of the agent (Mrs. Hare) is the real controlling spirit in the nursing arrangements in this companies' collieries, I do not think it would be desirable to sanction Mrs. Hall's application, as there is some friction already going on between Mrs. Hare and Mrs. Hall.

Mrs. Hare has already offered her house as a Hospital, and there will be further trouble if Mrs Hall's offer is accepted without Mrs. Hare's. With reference to the Sunderland offer. This is one I most heartily endorse, and it is one of those that I sent forward to be accepted as a Temporary Hospital.



The place is fully staffed, and has received already a good number of patients. It should be called, however, a Private Hospital, as apparently the Military Authorities will not hear of the name 'Voluntary'.

I hope that the hospital will be taken over and I trust that you will do all you can to get it accepted.

Yours sincerely,

C.B. Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

No.6 (Northern) District.

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**14 October 1914**

From Mrs Hall, Commandant

Fairlawn, Leeholme, Bishop Auckland, County Durham

To Lady Perrott

Honorary Secretary of Special Committee of Ladies of the Order

Madam,

Having heard from the County Director, Mr CB Palmer, that some of my [nurses] will be going to the Newcastle Infirmary to have a month's training from time to time during the war. I am writing to ask you whether you would let the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society know that I cannot have any convalescents to nurse now, and that I am therefore withdrawing the offer of a 'temporary hospital' at Leeholme. I regret to have to write this but I cannot now undertake to have any wounded.

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