

NEWTON DON HOSPITAL

Over 3,000 auxiliary hospitals were attached to central military hospitals and looked after patients who remained under military control. Local women volunteered on a part time basis, but there were also paid jobs e.g. for cooks. Local medics also volunteered their services. Most of the patients were less seriously wounded and just needed to convalesce. Auxiliary hospitals tended to be less strict and more homely.



Courtesy of Alastair Brooks

Newton Don House was opened up as an Auxiliary Hospital in March 1915. It was run as a Red Cross Hospital by Captain and Lady Balfour with the nursing/medical staff being supplied through the Red Cross.

The first patients arrived in March 1915.

ARRIVAL OF INVALID SOLDIERS

Twenty-five invalid and wounded soldiers from Craighleith Hospital, Edinburgh were received into Newton Don Hospital on Wednesday afternoon. They were met at Kelso Station by Capt. Balfour, Mr A. S. Hay, and Dr McKellar [Commandant of the Kelso V.A.D.]. The men were conveyed to Newton Don in motor cars kindly supplied by Capt. Balfour, the Duke of Roxburghe, Mrs Cox-Cox of Wooden, Lord Zetland [Makerston House], Mr Hay of Marfield and Mr A. Boazman [The Hermitage].

Extract from Kelso Chronicle 16th March 1915

The Hospital was supported by voluntary subscriptions and funding appeals were led by Lady Nina Balfour.

As well as money, gifts of provisions, clothing, games, books, etc. were gratefully received.

The community in the Kelso District was very generous in their gifts. For example rural communities and schools collected eggs from those who could spare them to donate them to either Edenhall or Newton Don each week.

Fund raising events including concerts and whist drives were held on behalf of both hospitals. In addition regular entertainment for the men such as concerts, picnics and parties were organised.

The fortnightly concerts held at Newton Don were particularly popular and were frequently presided over by Captain Balfour.

Lady Nina Balfour presented a certificate and a National Bible Society of Scotland bible to every soldier when they left the Hospital.

The arrangement was finally wound up in July 1920 when the surplus funds of £350.00, 5 per cent of war stock, were donated to the Royal Edinburgh (£100.00) and Kelso Cottage Hospital (£250.00).

