

## Polkemmet

'Sir Gawaine Baillie of Polkemmet, has, we learn, offered the mansion house of Polkemmet to the Government for the purpose of an hospital, and to pay either the whole or part of the expenses of maintaining it. This generous and thoughtful act on the part of Sir Gawaine is very highly appreciated, and indicates the warm patriotism associated with the soldier.'

*West Lothian Courier* 14 Aug 14, p5

*Sir Gawaine Baillie was killed in September 1914, the first West Lothian man killed in the War. The task of converting the house into a hospital was taken up by his bereaved mother, Isabel, Lady Baillie.*

'Owing to Lady Baillie being so busy arranging for Polkemmet House being converted into a Military Hospital, the Red Cross Flag Day arrangements were undertaken by the Misses Hunter.... By the way, the hospital work at Polkemmet is progressing satisfactorily. It is understood that the music room and other apartments will provide accommodation for about 40 beds.'

*West Lothian Courier* 29 Oct 15, p8

'The following letter from Lady Baillie of Polkemmet is addressed to all the householders in Whitburn and East Whitburn Parishes:--

As Polkemmet Red Cross Auxiliary Hospital is shortly to be opened, I now write to ask all the people to give me as much assistance as possible. As you all know, a Hospital is a very costly affair, and every day extra expenses will occur, so I trust you will all give me a helping hand. I was hoping that each one of you would help in taking in part of the very large washing which must be sent out every week, but I am told that no one will volunteer to do any part of it. As this is the case I am again appealing to you to ask if every one of you will subscribe 2d a week to a washing fund, and this will help to send the large hospital washing to a laundry. I am very pleased to say that the people of Armadale have come forward splendidly and offered their services in every way, and I would feel very proud of Whitburn if you would all come forward and help in this appeal. Will you all send me a post card to let me know if you will give 2d a week, and I will then arrange for a box to be put at some convenient place where all can deposit the money every week.

Yours faithfully,  
Isabel Baillie.'

*West Lothian Courier* 29 Oct 15, p8

'This Hospital is to be opened on Monday first. The following is a list of gifts which have been received for the Hospital: - Messrs Turnbull and Son, Edinburgh, 80 small surgery towels; Messrs Burroughs and Watts, small billiard table; Sir Thomas Maule, 14 coloured day quilts; Messrs Wylie and Lochhead, 14 coloured quilts; Lady Baillie, 12 coloured quilts; John Menzies and Co., books; Messrs Behar, card tables and cigarettes; Mr Martin, George Street, Edinburgh, bath chair; McNiven and Wallace, games; Truslow and Hanson, jig card puzzles; Methven and Simpson, piano; Provost Gordon, Bathgate, bacon and bread cutter; Carron Company, electric kettle; Messrs Grey and Son, sterilizer for surgery; Mrs Robert Allan, Halfway House, pans; Mr Harry Allan, Whitburn, cheque; Rentons, red, white and blue ribbons; Messrs William Hodge and Co., few copies of "Yarns"; Mr Robert Neilson, Whitburn, 2lbs of

butter weekly; Mr James Walker, Bathgate, sausages once a week; Mr Kay, Whitburn, buns once a week; McVitties, Edinburgh, cakes and buns occasionally; Mrs Sceuls, 40 small linen bags. The children of the Whitburn Public School have promised pennies every week for comforts for the patients, and many others have promised to help.'

*West Lothian Courier* 12 Nov 15, p5

Polkemmet House was opened this week as an auxiliary hospital. Lady Baillie has had the building equipped for twenty patients; and the first lot arrived on Tuesday.

The arrangements for the comfort of the patients leave little to be desired. In her work of mercy, Lady Baillie is sure of the help of the surrounding district.

*Linlithgow Gazette* 19 Nov 15, p3

#### 'OPENING OF POLKEMMET AUXILIARY HOSPITAL

Through the instrumentality of Lady Baillie, who is taking such a keen and active interest in Red Cross Society work, an Auxiliary Hospital was opened on Tuesday at Polkemmet House. Accommodation has been provided for 40 patients, and the hospital is not only well-equipped, but is excellently staffed for the purpose. Reading and recreation facilities are provided in abundance for the soldiers who are able to be out and about.

Several of the Women's V.A.D. are giving assistance to the nurses.

At present there are 23 cases being treated and more are expected shortly. The patients were conveyed from Armadale Station and from Bangour Military Hospital, and Mr J. Livingstone and Mr J. Browning (Whitburn) and Messrs Edinburgh, 80 small surgery towels; Messrs Burroughs and Watts, small billiard table; Sir Thomas Maule, 14 coloured day quilts; Messrs Wylie and Lochhead, 14 coloured quilts; Lady Baillie, 12 coloured quilts; John Menzies and Co., books; Messrs Behar, card tables and cigarettes; Mr Martin, George Street, Edinburgh, bath chair; McNiven and Wallace, games; Truslow and Hanson, jig card puzzles; Methven and Simpson, piano; Provost Gordon, Bathgate, bacon and bread cutter; Carron Company, electric kettle; Messrs Grey and Son, sterilizer for surgery; Mrs Robert Allan, Halfway House, pans; Mr Harry Allan, Whitburn, cheque; Rentons, red, white and blue ribbons; Messrs William Hodge and Co., few copies of "Yarns"; Mr Robert Neilson, Whitburn, 2lbs of butter weekly; Mr James Walker, Bathgate, sausages once a week; Mr Kay, Whitburn, buns once a week; McVitties, Edinburgh, cakes and buns occasionally; Mrs Sceuls, 40 small linen bags. The children of the Whitburn Public School have promised pennies every week for comforts for the patients, and many others have promised to help.'

*West Lothian Courier* 12 Nov 15, p5

Polkemmet House was opened this week as an auxiliary hospital. Lady Baillie has had the building equipped for twenty patients; and the first lot arrived on Tuesday.

The arrangements for the comfort of the patients leave little to be desired. In her work of mercy, Lady Baillie is sure of the help of the surrounding district.

*Linlithgow Gazette* 19 Nov 15, p3

#### 'OPENING OF POLKEMMET AUXILIARY HOSPITAL

Through the instrumentality of Lady Baillie, who is taking such a keen and active interest in Red Cross Society work, an Auxiliary Hospital was opened on Tuesday at Polkemmet House. Accommodation has been provided for 40 patients, and the

hospital is not only well-equipped, but is excellently staffed for the purpose. Reading and recreation facilities are provided in abundance for the soldiers who are able to be out and about.

Several of the Women's V.A.D. are giving assistance to the nurses.

At present there are 23 cases being treated and more are expected shortly.

The patients were conveyed from Armadale Station and from Bangour Military Hospital, and Mr J. Livingstone and Mr J. Browning (Whitburn) and Messrs Tennant (Armadale), kindly lent their motors for the purpose. Any other gentlemen in the district who are willing to lend their cars for this work might kindly send their names to Mr Robt. Allan, Halfway House, Whitburn. The subscriptions are coming in steadily, and in addition to the list of articles published last week, gifts are being sent by Mr Behar (cigarettes and card tables), Messrs McVities and Price (big parcel of cakes), while farmers in the district have promised meal and potatoes. Mr John Bryce, Avonbank, Whitburn, has given £1 and Messrs Grant and Mackie, Longridge, have sent 10s.'

*West Lothian Courier* 19 Nov 15, p8

#### 'AN IDEAL HOSPITAL

Polkemmet has had and is still maintaining a close connection with the war.

Practically at the outbreak of hostilities, the young laird, Lieut. Sir Gawaine G.S. Baillie, Bart., who so readily and willingly volunteered to fight for his King and country, fell on the field of honour, to the great grief of his mother and relatives and the people of West Lothian.

A year elapses since that tragic event and the house of Polkemmet again testifies to its unswerving loyalty and patriotism to the cause. Two or three months ago ambulance and nursing lectures were inaugurated at Polkemmet through the instrumentality of Lady Baillie, and thereafter a Women's Voluntary Aid Detachment was formed.

With characteristic energy and enterprise, her ladyship made arrangements for the opening of an auxiliary hospital at Polkemmet, and with that end in view, she, at considerable personal expense, arranged for the converting of the fine old mansion house into three wards and the other necessary apartments.....

...accommodation has been provided for 40 patients, viz. - 20 in the music room, 11 in the dining room and 9 in the drawing room. The exquisitely-designed hall contains a billiard table, bowling alley, also dominoes, draughts, etc., and on the occasion of a casual visit recently, the lads were taking full advantage of these excellent facilities.

...

...The matron is Miss J. Torrance. ... The personnel of the Polkemmet Nursing Staff is as follows:.... The men in hospital at this date are as follows:...

*West Lothian Courier* 26 Nov 15, p5 - detailed article including a (dark) photo of all the nurses.

Armadale singers 'motored to Polkemmet House on Sunday afternoon and entertained the wounded soldiers there to an excellent sacred concert. The nursing staff, with Lady Baillie as commandant, and Sir Adrian Baillie, were deeply interested in the concert, which was rapturously enjoyed by the wounded soldiers'.

*Linlithgow Gazette* 28 Jan 16, p3

Polkemmet House patients with nurses entertained by Linlithgow VAD, given a tour of the Palace and Church, then a performance at the picture house, then entertained to tea in the Masonic Hall. the arrangement carried out by Miss Agnes Steel.

*Linlithgow Gazette* 23 Jun 16, p2

#### 'PRINCESS CHRISTIAN VISITS POLKEMMET HOSPITAL

Her Royal Highness Princess Christian' [fifth child of Queen Victoria, particularly interested in hospitals and nursing] 'paid a visit to Polkemmet Auxiliary Hospital yesterday afternoon. She was attended by her Lady-in-Waiting, Lady Edmonstone, and accompanied by Lady Linlithgow, Hopetoun House. Her Royal Highness was received at the Hospital by Lady Baillie, Commandant, and Colonel Chalmers, Director of Linlithgowshire Red Cross Society. After the reception, the Matron and Sister of the Hospital were presented. - Dr Millar, Harthill, and Dr Michie Whitburn, were also presented to Her Royal Highness. The nurses were all lined up and formed a guard of honour.

Accompanied by the Commandant, the Matron, and the doctor, the Hospital was then inspected, each ward being visited in turn, and Her Royal Highness expressed satisfaction with everything she saw.

Each ward was beautifully decorated with flowers and plants, and the whole Hospital was looking most beautiful. There are forty wounded soldiers in the Hospital, and these men were all standing at attention at their beds.

The party afterwards went into the garden, where a photograph was taken of Her Royal Highness, the staff and the soldiers. As her Royal Highness drove away, the soldiers, who had formed up in line, gave three hearty cheers. Tea was thereafter served in the Staff Room to the other visitors.'

*West Lothian Courier* 8 Sep 16, p3

'Polkemmet Hospital is now clear of patients, and the whole hospital is undergoing a thorough overhaul. All sorts of tradesmen are engaged in the work, which is not expected to be completed before September 1st. The staff are thus getting a holiday.'

*West Lothian Courier* 27 Jul 17, p3

'The accounts in connection with Polkemmet Hospital have been audited and certified correct by Mr Hutton, Bank Agent, Whitburn. The total expenditure for the period during which the hospital was open was £2730 14s 5d. and the income was derived from Capitation Grants £2452 7s; donations from the public £66 10s 8d, the balance of £211 16s 9d having been paid by Lady Baillie. There is a fund of £43 13s 3d for the entertainment of the men in hospital, this being the amount received from the Committee who organised band contests at Polkemmet and Whitburn. As the hospital remains closed, the amount has been placed on deposit with the Commercial Bank of Scotland Ltd., at Whitburn, and will be available for the purpose for which it was contributed when the Hospital is again occupied by our wounded men.'

*West Lothian Courier* 19 Oct 17, p4

'Polkemmet Hospital. - This hospital has re-opened, and this week a large number of patients arrived. It is understood the hospital is now full.'

*West Lothian Courier* 2 Nov 17, p2

Armadale Red Cross V.A.D. resolves to present Mrs McNab of Armadale with a handsome dressing case for her 'voluntary work so ungrudgingly done at Polkemmet Auxiliary Hospital.'

Gaz 25 Jan 18, p3

'Another change brought about by the cessation of hostilities is the closing of Polkemmet Auxiliary Hospital, which took place yesterday, according to instructions from the authorities. The last of the wounded men left hospital yesterday, and the staff are busy preparing for their departure. The hospital has been run for a period of over three years, with Lady Baillie as Commandant and nurse, and she has fulfilled all the duties in an able manner. She did not spare herself in the routine work of the hospital, and she has been "specially mentioned" for her work by the authorities.

In devoting Polkemmet House to the purpose of an auxiliary hospital, she and Sir Adrian Baillie did a very noble and patriotic thing, which entitles them to the gratitude of the country. Many hundreds of patients have passed through the hospital, and these men will have pleasant recollections of their stay in the beautiful house and policies.

On Wednesday evening there was a social gathering of patients remaining and the staff and friends. Among those present were Sir Adrian Baillie, who is at present on leave; Rev. Mr McKinnon, Whitburn, and Rev. Mr Watt, Harthill. After an excellent repast, songs were sung by members of the company, and games and dancing were also engaged in to the great enjoyment of all present, which included a number of the estate people. Sir Adrian addressed the company, as also did the two ministers. As a souvenir of the occasion, each of the men was presented with a cigarette case, and afterwards the nurses and the men took part in a treasure hunt, with prizes for all engaged. Pte. Rutter, in an excellent speech, spoke highly of the hospital and of the staff, and expressed the gratitude of himself and the other patients for all that had been done for them. The proceedings finished with "Auld Lang Syne" and "God Save the King".'

Courier 10 Jan 19, p3