

Longshaw's part in the First World War

Why was there a hospital here?

During the First World War Longshaw Lodge, the shooting lodge of the Duke of Rutland, became a convalescent home for wounded soldiers.

On 6th February 1915 the Lord Mayor of Sheffield appealed for funds *'to properly equip the place. About £500 is needed and this sum should be quickly forthcoming for such a deserving object.'* The first patients arrived at Longshaw shortly after.



Soldiers, a nurse and Mrs Clifford at Longshaw Lodge. The photo was labelled "A perfect day at Longshawe, August 1916"

At the end of February the local newspaper reported: *"Longshaw Lodge is ideally situated for such a home, as not only is it within convenient distance of Sheffield, but it is placed in the midst of health-giving moors, and surrounded by beautiful scenery, which will prove a mental tonic to the soldiers who are sent there to recuperate."*

What was life like here for recovering soldiers?

The local paper gives us a clear picture of what life would have been like. The journey from being injured on the Front Line, to treatment in a field hospital and eventually to a convalescent home was a long one, and the difference in living conditions were a world away from being stationed in the trenches.

"After the mid-day meal, the 35 men, who with Sergeant Nixon RAMC, occupy the home at present, scattered in various directions, some to take a brisk walk, others to smoke or play cards in the smoking room, where a piano was in constant action. Several of the soldiers possess marked musical gifts, and the strains of dreamy waltzes were heard, as well as lively ragtime tunes and popular songs. A tournament was in progress in the billiard room, the table having been kindly left there for the use of the men.

In the wards, which hold a varying number of beds according to their size, and most of which face south, looking out upon beautiful views, a number of the most recently arrived soldiers were resting. One and all seemed full of quiet content and very happy in their new home. This feeling was voiced by an Irishman, who, looking up and seeing several snowflakes fall, said he wished they might be snowed in, then they would not have to go."



What was life like here for recovering soldiers?

Soldiers from many different countries came to Longshaw to recuperate, as the following photograph shows.



The caption reads: At Longshaw Lodge, July 1916. Cosmopolitan soldiers: English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand. Mrs Clifford.

All institutions which were used as a hospital were presented with a plaque similar to the one at Longshaw. You can see it on the side of the Lodge, near the Tea Room. Many people ask why the final date is 1919 rather than 1918; the armistice of 11 November 1918 was a temporary cessation of hostilities, which was re-negotiated every thirty days, so the war was not officially over until the Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28 June 1919. It was the end of a very long road for injured soldiers, and the start of a new one as they returned to lives which would never quite be the same again.

