



LONGFIELD HALL

# ◇ THE FIRST WORLD WAR ◇

During the First World War (1914-1918) many local men were recruited into the First Surrey Rifles based on Flodden Road.



1st London General Hospital, Cormont Road

The unit served on the Western Front seeing action in the Battle of Loos, the defence of Vimy Ridge and the Battle of the Somme. St Gabriel's College, a teacher training college for women, in Cormont Road was commandeered for use as the 1st

London General Hospital. Writer Vera Brittain, who volunteered as an orderly there described it as "...one of the few distinguished buildings in the dismal, dreary, dirty wilderness of south London". In May 1915, to cope with the increasing number of wounded men returning from the war, the hospital extended into makeshift huts and tents in Myatt's Fields park.

### HOSPITALS IN PUBLIC PARKS.

What to do with our wounded has for some time been a perplexing question to the authorities, for such is the heavy demand upon the available accommodation that it has not been easy to dispose of the cases as they arrive from the front. The conversion of the huge new building—known as the Stationery Office—in Stamford-street, near Waterloo Station, into a temporary hospital has been a god-send to the authorities as well as to the wounded warriors, but the demand for increased accommodation continues, and so it comes about that the pleasant retreat known as Myatt's Fields in Camberwell—a pleasure of some 14 acres—is to be utilised for the purpose of recruiting the health and strength of those who are broken in the war. Despite the fact that recreation grounds are not too abundant in Camberwell, no one, of course, objects to the uses to which it is proposed to put Myatt's Fields; though I personally find it rather difficult to understand why our smaller open spaces should be seized upon in this way when there is ever so much elbow-room available in several of our bigger parks. The use of part of Hyde Park, or Regent's Park, for example, would not press nearly so hardly on those who use it as will the entire closing of the smaller recreational areas to the *habitués* thereof.

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Images courtesy of Lambeth Archives

Mobilisation notice and Lambeth soldiers 1914