

Chichester Observer 7th October 1914 page 3**BELGIAN REFUGEES
AT CHICHESTER.****HOSTEL OPENED AT SUMMERSDALE.****A PARTY OF EIGHTEEN RECEIVED.****GENEROUS HELP FROM CITIZENS.**

A party of eighteen Belgian Refugees arrived at Chichester during last week, and they are being accommodated at what is for the present designated as the Belgian Hostel, Farm Cottage, Summersdale.

Miss Dorothy Paget, of Shopwhyke House, is acting as Hon. Secretary of the scheme under which it has been made possible to give shelter to these unfortunate people who have had to flee from their country, and she is being assisted by her sister, Mrs. Close, of Aldingbourne. For these two ladies the past week has been one never to be forgotten, but they have triumphed over difficulties and received such generous support from all classes of people in Chichester, that the work which they have been able to do must be its own reward.

This party of refugees, who have been sent to Chichester through the Catholic Women's League, comprises members of seven families. There are five men, five women, three boys, and five young children, the youngest being a baby only three months. There is a man and his wife with two sons and a baby of ten months, a man and wife and two boys, a man and wife and a boy, a man and wife and little girl, an old couple, and a boy. One of the men is a market gardener, another a carpenter and cabinet maker, and another a blacksmith.

When a representative of the "Observer" was conducted over the house on Saturday afternoon all of them were busy in the garden and grounds. The house having been unoccupied for some time past there was much that wanted doing to make the grounds presentable, and the men had already effected a great improvement during the short time they had been there.

While the men are thus engaged in the garden, the women are devoting most of their time to household duties, their liking for the wash tub being such that the small quantity of clothes which they possess has been insufficient to keep them occupied at this apparently favourite duty.

It is, of course, important that all should be kept occupied as much as possible in order that their minds may not dwell too much on the horrors through which their country has gone.

Three of the older boys have been very kindly taken in as day pupils by Mr. A. H. Taylor, at the City Grammar School, who has agreed to provide education and books gratuitously.

The majority of the party have come from the district of Malines. The old couple first went to Termonde from Malines; then they returned to Malines, and afterwards to Antwerp, from which place they were despatched with thousands of others to England. All of them are in good health, but their sufferings can be imagined when it is remembered that they have been rendered homeless, and that their possessions are confined to the clothes in which they arrived.

The boys came with their pockets containing pieces of bomb shells as relics of their terrible experiences.

The generosity of the people of Chichester has been most marked in the matter of this laudable scheme for helping our allies. "Its the most generous town I ever came across" said Mrs. Close enthusiastically in the course of an interview.

The house has been kindly lent by Mrs. Arthur Freeland until January, when the lease expires, and it has been furnished wholly through gifts and loans of various articles from tradespeople and others. A bed and a little milk are the only articles that have had to be brought up to the present. Food of all kinds, from seven loaves a day to the smallest household commodity, has been offered, and quite an array of clothing has been secured for distribution among the party.

There are, however, certain things still required. For instance at present there is no linoleum on the floors, and some for the hall at least would be very welcome. Other things would be much appreciated include door mats and a boot scraper, coal scuttles, a carpenter's bench (where the refugee carpenter may more usefully employ his time), tools, French books and papers, rice, cheese, jam, soap, plants for the conservatory, and clothes for the men.

Most of the refugees speak Flemish, and inasmuch as they are sometimes left to themselves in the house, messages should be written to Miss Paget when goods are sent. In the case of gifts of perishable goods it is well to give a couple of days notice before sending because this will prevent waste.

One of the women has undertaken the work of cooking, and she is managing admirably. It is a little difficult to accommodate so large a family for meals, but this is overcome by the serving of dinner and supper in two parties.

Dr. Barford and Dr. Philip Humphrey have offered their services as hon. physicians at the Hostel.

While so much is being given in the way of food and household articles, Miss Paget has started a fund to provide such things as are not given gratuitously, and donations towards this fund will be gratefully acknowledged.

A word of praise is due to Mr. Kendall, groom to Mrs. Freeland, and his wife, who worked extremely hard in cleaning down the house preparatory to the arrival of the refugees. Miss Paget's chauffeur has also lent valuable assistance in many ways.

During the past week Miss Paget and Mrs. Close have spent the greater part of their time in superintending the arrangements, and the comfortable condition of affairs existing on Saturday was a tribute to the able and expeditious way in which they have managed the whole business. They will be pleased to welcome visitors who would care to look over the Hostel.