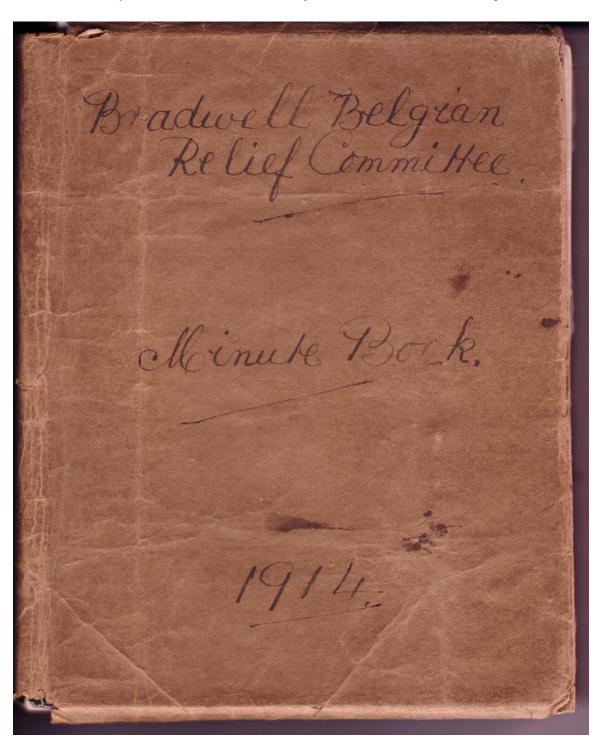
The Minutes Book of the Bradwell Belgian Relief Committee kept mainly by minutes secretary Jesse Barber. **Dates October 1914 to September 1917.** 

Transcription and annotation by David Wilson January 2007



On the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1914 a Committee Meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Rev. A.T. Cowen (Vicar of Bradwell from 1913 – 1916).

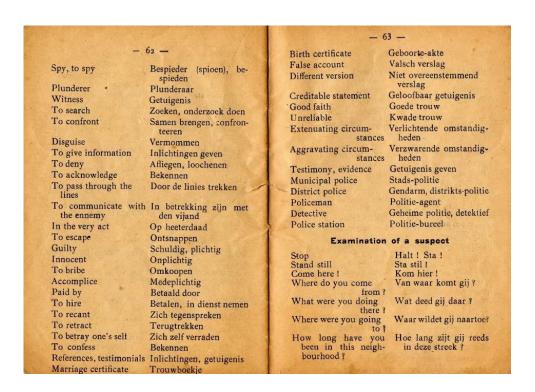
Rev. A. S. Cowen (chair) ell! Wilson cll! Craig (treasurer) J. Barber (secretary cll! D. Evans cll! D. Evans cll! E. Collotton cll! E. Cowen cll! Cowen cll! Shirt cllist Lucas to rage. cll! A. Bradwell cllis ash cllis Clis Cllis Collis Colli

Dr Houlbrook reported that two houses had been promised for the Belgians, one furnished to accommodate a family of four the other unfurnished. It was agreed that promises of furniture be got for the Stretfield House (probably Eden Tree House) by the collectors. The following ladies to act as Guardians to the Belgian families: - Nurse Middleton, Mrs L Morton, Mrs Houlbrook, Mrs Cowen, Mrs Mason and Mrs Glassey.

The Secretary was instructed to obtain collecting books and collecting be commenced the first week in November 1914. A list provides various names and amounts of money presumed promised, these vary from two shillings and sixpence (12 1/2 d) to 2 d (old penniesless than 1 p). A weekly total at one statement stood at £1 3s 10d.

At the meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1914 it was agreed that Mrs Houlbrook, Mrs Glassey and Mr Miller go to Sheffield on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1914 to meet the Belgian family. The other three guardians to be asked to be in the house to receive the Belgian family.

It was also agreed that Flemish Phrase Books be sent for.



20 Flemish phrase books were ordered.

It was also agreed that the list of articles of furniture promised be handed over to the guardians and that they arrange for anything else that is necessary to be bought out of funds. Future meetings were to be held at the Council School (now the Junior School) and meeting dates be announced from Mrs John Hall's window (now Ice Cream Shop).

The Doctors were thanked for canvassing Hazlebadge and farms and to be asked to be responsible for weekly collections of same.

At a meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1914 it was agreed that a brief statement be made giving reason for non-arrival of Belgian family, and that it be exhibited in several shop windows. Also the secretary to write to Derby and Buxton stating that we have two houses ready for Belgian families. Thanks to be sent to Mr Shepley and Mr Hibbs for loan of houses. (Mr Hibbs address was 726-8 Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester.)

At a meeting held on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1914 it was agreed that each Belgian family be allowed £1 weekly and that the shopkeepers be asked to keep a duplicate of their purchases.

Mr Evans to ascertain from Mr Hodkin whether he stipulates exclusively for a Protestant family; and inform him we are prepared to receive another Belgian family. Also that Mr Hodkin be asked if blankets and house linen are provided at the bungalow.

That Mr Ash order a further 2,000 copies of Mr Hall's poem The Kaiser and the Bradda Lads.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1914 Committee Meeting it was agreed that Mr Isaac Hall be added to the Committee. A small sub committee consisting of Mr Ash, Dr Houlbrook and Mr Elliott was formed to promote the sale of Mr Hall's poem. It was also agreed to leave Miss Hodkin to get the Belgian family for the Bungalow.

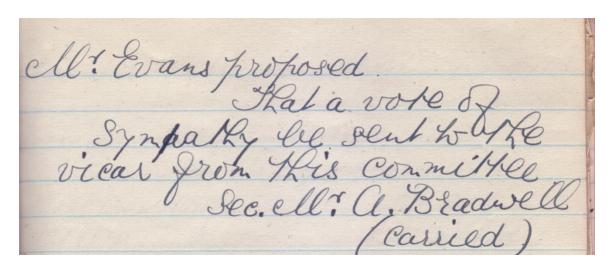
At the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1915 meeting it was agreed the "two shillings" received from "Head quarters" for the Belgian children be handed over to the Guardians. An allowance of £2 was made to buy clothes for the Belgians.

The 20<sup>th</sup> January 1915 Meeting agreed the following:- A weekly allowance of £1.5 shillings (£1.25p) be made to the family in Mr

Hodkins house plus an additional 2 shillings and six pence (12.1/2p) be retained by the Guardians for clothing purposes.

Mr Tremain was thanked for the gift of fowls to the Belgian families at Christmas and Mrs Caterer for kindly sending conveyance to meet the third family.

Mr Evans proposed that a vote of sympathy be sent to the Vicar from this committee (See memorial cross in Bradwell Church Yard at the right hand side of the Church when facing Bradwell Edge in narrow strip of land – "Stephen Cowen From God 14<sup>th</sup> December 1902 to God 11<sup>th</sup> January 1915 - died of diphtheria)



At the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1915 Dr Houlbrook was Chairman, members present were Mr Craig (Treasurer) Miss Bentley, Miss Bardsley, Mrs Harries, Mrs Houlbrook, Miss Ash, Mrs Glassey, Miss Wragg, Miss Miller, Mrs Morton, Mr Ash, Mr Walker, Mr Shirt, Mr Evans, Mr Ford, Mr A Bradwell, (presume Mr Elliott, Secretary, same writing).

It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Hodkin for loan of the Bungalow. Also that Mrs Wilson be appointed collector in place of Mrs Sanderson. The Women's Liberal Association were thanked for their generous gift. The action of the Guardians in getting goods from Selfridges was endorsed.

The Rev. A T Cowen returned as Chairman at the meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1915, the first item of business was that we allow the new Belgian family £1.2s.6d per week. A Mr Baines of Bamford to be contacted about employment of two of our Belgian men, and a sub

committee be formed to find employment for our Belgians consisting of Mr Ash, Mr Ford, Rev A T Cowen and Mr Shirt.

9 1641
JOHN HADFIELD & SONS, Limestone Works.
TAR MAGADAM
TAR CANADA
MANUFACTURERS
TAR PAVING Hope, Derbyshire, MANUFACTURERS  Jany 3/191/2.
Gran W. Cowen
Ithought you would be
interested in the following information.
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for a full week (52 Hours ) of 2/2.
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R. Ford.
A · ·
Manager:

Terms of employment at Hadfield's Limestone Works Thanks were expressed to Mr Ash for his kindness in arranging a concert on behalf of the Belgian Funds.

It was proposed the Hill Head Belgian and the old gentleman at Stretfield have their fares paid to Sheffield (This is the first mention of anyone living at Hill Head – area above Hollowgate in Bradwell) At a Committee Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1915, there seems to have been a fair amount of discussion about finances, the following resolutions were passed

Dr Houlbrook proposed "That the former resolution be rescinded, and that the Belgian families be asked to live on their earnings, in which case the amount previously allowed would be banked for them." Mr Ford moved "That we adopt the suggestion of the Guardians and

Labour Committee and that the Belgians hand over their wages to the Committee" Seconded by Mr Ash.

Mr Ash moved "That the Belgian families have nothing allowed from their earnings in addition to what the receive weekly" Mr Cowen proposed "That the girl be allowed to deduct 2/-

(equivalent of 10p) from her wages, Seconded by Dr Houlbrook. Mr Ford moved "A hearty vote of thanks to the weekly collectors" Seconded by Mr Craig.

At a short meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 1915 Mr Ash proposed "That the action of the Guardians be confirmed in allowing the Belgian men 2/- per week from their earnings" Seconded by Dr Houlbrook and carried by the Meeting.

Proposed by Mr Craig "That the meeting be adjoined until the third Wednesday in October, unless something unforeseen occurred, Seconded by Mr Ford and carried.

Finances were again the main item for discussion at a Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1915.

Dr Houlbrook proposed "That the committee insist that the Belgian families support themselves by wages earned" Seconded by Mr Ford and carried.

Mr Ash proposed "That the former resolution be rescinded allowing £1 per week to each Belgian family" seconded by Mr Shirt and carried.

Mr Shirt proposed "That we inform the Strefield families at once that the new arrangements commence from July 16<sup>th</sup>, being one week's notice." Carried.

Mr Ford moved "That Mr (Cajetan) Comet be told that the weekly allowance will not be made after employment has been found for him". Seconded by Dr Houlbrook – Carried.

Mr Ash proposed "That the Chairman be asked to write to Mr Lowe asking if suitable employment can be found in Sheffield" Carried Mr Craig moved "That Mr Harries be requested to communicate with the three families about new arrangements" Carried

Mr Shirt proposed "That when out of employment through no fault of their own an allowance of 6 shillings and eight pence per head per week be made"

Seconded by Dr Houlbrook and carried.

Mr Elliott moved "That we send £5 towards the fund for the destitute in Belgium" Seconded by Mr Ford (carried)

Mr Ash proposed "That we meet again in a fortnight and that the matter of this grant be considered then" Seconded by Mr Shirt (carried).

Mr Shirt moved "That the accounts presented be passed and paid" Seconded by Mr Ford (carried).

At a meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1915 the following was agreed: That £4 be given to the Hill Head family on their removal, in addition to the weekly allowance.

That an allowance of 7 shillings and sixpence be made to Mrs Selhorst.

That the secretary write to Mr Hibbs, saying that the Hill Head house will be vacated on the following Saturday and enquiring if we may put another family in if necessary.

That we make a grant of £10 to the fund for the destitute in Belgium.

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London	1.
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Jan. 21 st ell: Flassey	1.
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At a meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1915 it was agreed that we discontinue collections for the Belgians at the end of October. It was proposed by Mr Ford "That notice be given by the collectors of a meeting of the subscribers, to be held **November 16<sup>th</sup> in the Council School**, when a balance sheet will be presented.

Mr Ash moved "That enquiries be made by the Guardians as to the amount of Mrs Selhorst's income, and her expenditure, to be reported at the next meeting.

The meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1915 (was well attended) Chairman Rev. A T Cowen, Mr Craig Treasurer, Mrs Cowen, Mrs Houlbrook, Mrs Glassey, Mrs Harries, Mrs Morton, Miss Bentley, Nurse Middleton, Mrs Mason, Miss Ash, Miss Miller, Miss Bradwell, Mr Walker, Mr Ash, Mr Shirt, Mr Ford, Mr Bradwell and Secretary Mr Ernest Elliott.

The following was agreed

That the forms received relating to the employment of Belgians be filled in and returned.

That we adjourn the meeting for a month, pending the final report of Guardians concerning Mrs Selhorst.

That the accounts presented be accepted

That the next meeting be held **December 1<sup>st</sup> 1915** in the Church School at 8.15 p.m.

## **Subscribers Meeting held 16th November 1915**

Mr Walker proposed "That the treasurer's statement of accounts be accepted and the best thanks of the meeting be rendered to Mr Craig"

Mr Walker moved "That 150 copies of the Balance Sheet be printed and distributed among the subscribers"

Mr Ash proposed "That the balance be deposited in the bank in the names of the chairman and treasurer" Mr Harries proposed "That the balance be used by the Belgian Relief Committee in the way they think best."

Mr Walker proposed "A hearty vote of thanks to Guardians, collectors and all helpers"

Mr Shirt moved "That the statements of the Local Relief, National Relief and Red Cross committees be added to the Balance Sheet "Mr Walker proposed "That the best wishes of the meeting be sent to all soldiers and hopes for their safe return

Mr Walker proposed "A hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman"

Committee Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1915 the following items were agreed

That the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary be re-elected for the time being.

That the Committee leave Mrs Selhorst in the hands of the Lady Guardians until we have a further report of her health.

That the report asked for, relating to the Belgians, be sent by the Chairman and Secretary.

That the Secretary reply to the letter concerning the Belgian child, thanking for the enquiry and stating that the committee, do not think it would be advisable to bring her to Stretfield.

That we make a grant of 10 shillings to the Belgian soldier.

That the Strefield matter be left in the hands of the lady Guardians and Chairman.

That the next meeting be called by the Secretary, at the request of the Lady Guardians or Chairman

# **Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> December** 1915 the following was discussed and passed

That the report relating to Belgian work in Bradwell be accepted and forwarded to Head Quarters

That the Guardians be authorised to take the cottage suggested for Belgian family, at the rent mentioned, and to spend anything that is necessary in furnishing.

That the statement of the Christmas Present Fund be added to the Balance Sheet.

That the money paid by Mrs Morton, to Belgians be approved.

That the committee pay the rates of the Belgian cottage

# At a well-attended Committee Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1916 the saga of Mrs Selhorst continued.

The following notes are recorded by Mr Ernest Elliott (Secretary) That an enquiry be made by the treasurer, as to who ordered the ambulance to bring Mrs Selhorst home, before the account is paid, and also that Mr Craig ask for reduction in the fare, explaining the circumstances.

That the committee should not be responsible for the cablegrams sent to M\_Selhorst.

That Mrs Selhorst be paid the weekly allowance for a month and that in the meantime the Lady Guardians should make enquiries to help her to suitable employment, but that it should be left to the discretion of the Guardians to do what they think best, if they do not consider Mrs Selhorst has sufficiently recovered for work or if employment has not been found for her.

The Committee Meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1916 was again dominated by discussions about Mrs Selhorst.

Mr Craig proposed "That the minutes be passed with the alteration suggested" seconded by Mr Walker and carried.

The following items were proposed and passed.

That we discharge the ambulance account, but that Mr Craig tries if possible to get the account cancelled, or if not, reduced.

That the resolution of the previous meeting, relating to cablegrams, be rescinded, and the account be paid.

That Mrs Selhorst's case be left in the hands of the Lady Guardians, and that the weekly allowance be discontinued when employment agreeable to Mrs Selhorst has been found.

Mr Walker moved, Mr Craig seconded "That the resignation of the Lady Guardians be not accepted"

Mr Craig moved "That the Chairman be asked to act as Guardian to Mrs Selhorst" (Carried)

# The Committee meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1916 was again dominated by discussions about Mr Selhurst.

Mrs Grassly proposed Mrs Ford seconded that we take steps to get Mrs Selhorst into a convalescent home for a time, and that necessary expenses be borne by the committee; also that if we succeed in this, Mrs Selhorst receive the weekly allowance as usual, whilst in the home. (Carried).

Mr Walker proposed: That it be left in the hands of the Chairman, Mrs Cowen, and the Secretary, to make enquiries about a convalescent home. Seconded by Mr Ford. (Carried).

Mr Ash proposed: That in future, Mr Craig be asked to pay Mrs Selhorst her weekly allowance, The Chairman wishing to be relieved of this duty. Seconded by Mr Ford (Carried)

### Minutes of Meeting held June 30th 1916.

Present: Rev. A.T. Cowen (Chair), Mr Craig (Treasurer). Mrs Cowen, Mrs Grassly, Mrs Houlbrook, Mrs Morton, Nurse Middleton, Miss Ash, Miss Bradwell. Mr Walker, Mr Shirt, Mr Elliott, Mr Ash, Dr. Houlbrook, Mr Ford. Mr Elliott proposed: that the outlay of the Lady Guardians be confirmed, Seconded by Mr Walker (Carried)

Proposed by Mrs Cowen, Seconded by Mr Ford that Mrs Selhorst is taken to Dr. Barber for a private interview. (Carried).

Mr Ash proposed: That Mrs Cowen and Mrs Harries be asked to take Mrs Selhorst to see the doctor. Seconded by Mr Ford. (Carried).

At another well attended **Committee held on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1916** the following minutes are recorded:

Mr Ford proposed: That the accounts be passed and paid. Seconded by Mr Shirt (Carried).

Mr Shirt proposed, Mr Ford seconded:

That Mrs Bradwell is paid 9/- (nine shillings – 45 new pence) per week until suitable employment has been found for Mrs Selhorst (Carried).

Mr Walker proposed: That Mrs Cowen and Mrs Morton be asked to tell Mrs Selhorst "When suitable employment has been found for her, and also that if she refuses to take it, the weekly payment be stopped after the next meeting. (Carried)

Mr Shirt proposed: That the treasurer be authorised to sign cheques. Seconded by Mrs Cowen (Carried)

### Minutes of Meeting held on the 4th October 1916

The previous hand written minutes had been very legible, however the first item recorded at this meeting was the resignation of Miss Barber as Secretary. It is not recorded who took on the duty as minute secretary but the writing is not easy to follow.

Miss Barber was to be asked to reconsider her resignation.

There is more about Mrs Selhorst, which involved informing the Belgian Consul in Sheffield

The Chairman explained it was necessary for him to resign. (The Chairman was Rev. Alfred Thomas Cowen who was Vicar at St Barnabas Church, Bradwell from 1913 to 1916)

Mr B S Shirt was elected as the new Chairman.

Further discussion took place regarding Mrs Selhorst. (It is not easy to decipher the exact wording – Belgian Consul in Sheffield was involved)

Minutes of Belgian Committee Meeting held September 6<sup>th</sup> 1917. Mr B S Shirt in the Chair.

Present: Mrs Glassey, Mrs Morton, Nurse Middleton, Miss L Hall, Mr R Craig,

Mr Z (?) Walker, and Mr E Elliott.

The minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

On the motion of Mr Walker sec, by E. Elliott it was decided to pay Mrs Vermaelen two pounds from the wages account of her husband to pay for her new glasses etc. £2 and that we continue to pay her £1.1s per week. The Treasurer was instructed to pay the rent due and to pay it in future quarterly or as the owner desires. The secretary had verbally rendered her resignation to the Chairman, which was accepted with regret on the motion of Mr Walker seconded by Mr Craig.

Den 5-8-1914
De bomitijd Van debelge
Vlugte lingen Van Drustwell
heeren en damen it laat ullen
nesten dut het mij Veel skerier
Too doen als opden degoothijt
wild heben Van mijne Voorm
tehelpen met 2 pont hijt
de bank
Dennie Vermaslen
6. T. A. 2 en Batterie d
Instruction En JJ

The Guardians reported that Mrs Vermaelen had been making inquiries as to the payments that the committee were receiving from Selhorst (that lady again) who was at the present time occupying one of her rooms. Considerable discussion followed re the matter and although the Chairman considered the meeting closed it was unanimously decided on the motion of Mrs Morton, seconded by Mr Walker that the secretary be instructed to write to Mrs Vermaelen expressing the committee's regret that she had allowed such a thing without obtaining their consent and stating that they accepted no

responsibility for the action. Asking what the terms were and further if the arrangements were agreeable to her in every way.

(For some reason these minutes are signed by B S Shirt and **a date** of June 11<sup>th</sup> 1918 appended – according to the minute book the last meeting was held in 1917)

#### Minutes of Meeting held February 26th 1917.

Present: Mr Shirt (Chairman) Mr Craig (Treasurer) Mrs Morton, Nurse Middleton, Miss Bentley, Mr Walker, Mr Ford, Mrs Elliott.

Moved by Mr Elliott, seconded by Mr Ford that the Chairman and Secretary be asked to complete the form sent re Belgian (soldiers) children and return it (carried)

Mr Elliott moved, Mr Ford seconded that Mrs Glassey and Mrs Morton be authorised to take Mrs Cheetham Hallam's cottage for the Belgian family and to give notice for the one in which they are residing. (Carried).

Mr Ford moved and Mr Elliott seconded that the committee pay the rent of the said cottage. (Carried)

Mr Walker proposed: That the accounts presented be passed and paid. (Carried).

Mr Elliott moved: That the expenses for having Belgian's photographed be borne by the Committee. (Carried) Mr Walker moved Mr Ford seconded that the Chairman and Secretary call the next meeting when necessary (carried).

### Minutes of Meeting held May 24th 1917.

Present: Mr Shirt (Chair) Mr Craig (Treasurer) Mrs Glassey, Mrs Morton, Nurse Middleton, Miss Lena Hall, Mr Ford, Mr Walker, Mr Elliott.

Mr Walker proposed: That we make Mrs Vermaelen's allowance up to a guinea a week, exclusive of the rent, and that application be made to the commissioners for a grant. (Carried).

(The above minutes are signed by B S Shirt and a date of September 6<sup>th</sup> 1917 appended – these are the last minutes recorded in the Minute Book.)

At the rear of the Minute Book the following entries are made: -

Money Received

Mr Je	_	•	ation				5.0
Miss H	1.6						
Miss F	2.6						
Mr Ro	2.0						
Mrs M	lidgle	У					1.0
				(	Nov 9 <sup>th</sup> S E	Ash)	12.0
Honey Sold Nov 14 <sup>th</sup>						3.4	
"	"	Nov					1.0
"	"	6	21 <sup>st</sup>				2.0
"	"	Jan	25 <sup>th</sup>				1.0
					_		

Rec'd R Craig 24/11/14 and 26/1/15

#### <u>Addresses</u>

Mr A Balfour, Dannemora Steel Works, Sheffield. Mr Hodkin 14 Montgomery Rd.

Mi Found 14 Montgomery Rd.

Miss Epwoth, 33 Hoole Rd. Broomhill

Mr J A Hirde 67 Firth Park Rd.

Mr Hibbs 726-8 Ashton Old Rd, Higher Openshaw, Manchester.

Note on the minutes book itself by David Wilson: 'The above are the final entries in the Minute Book, the book itself is worth commenting on, the first few pages had torn out, presumably had been used for some other purposes previously, the book was then bound in brown paper and fastened with "stamp edging" – no cellotape in 1914!'

Additional information collected:

**Lady Guardians** 

Lady Collectors
Mrs Sanderson

Nurse Alice Middleton Miss Sarah Elizabeth Ash

Miss Amelia Bardsley

Miss Lydia Morton Miss Mary Bentley

Miss Mary Jane Bradwell

Mrs Caroline Houlbrook Miss Lena Evans

Miss Selina Ann Hall

Mrs Edith Mason Miss Mary (Gladys) Kay

Miss Kate Ethel Lucas

Mrs Mary Eleanor Glassey Miss Jesse (Louisa) Miller

Miss Lily Morton

Mrs Emily Anna Cowen Miss Ellen (Mary) Randles

Miss Rachael Redfern

### Belgian Families in Bradwell and where they lived

- 1. Hill Head Cottage (probably lower of the two) property of Mr Hibbs. Henrie Vermaelen with wife and two little children. From Louvain. Henrie was a tractor driver who worked at John Hadfield and Sons. Later joined the Belgian Army and was wounded.
- 2. Eden Tree House property of the late Dr Clegg (Stretfield?). A father and two daughters (possibly Cajetan Cõet but see below). Cajetan was a railway worker from Antwerp.
- 3. The Bungalow (now Moorlow Tor) property of Mr H Hodkin. A family of 5: M Fontaine, wife and 3 children. M Fontaine was Chef de Bureau at FN Herstal of Liege. Moved on to work at Belgian Consulate in Sheffield.
- 4. Cottage of Mrs Nancy (?) Bradwell (née Hall) on Church Street: Mme Selhorst. Husband Norbert, mitrailleur (machine gunner), was fighting with the Belgian Army. Previously lived in Hill Head Cottage with Mme Vermaelen.
- 5. Location not known: Leon van Egeran, mitrailler, visited his family on at least 2 occasions when on leave.
- 6. Moorbrook, Moorbrook Lane property of Mr Harries: Mme Selhorst possibly also the family of Cajetan Cõet.

7. Location not known: Auguste van Achteen, visited his family on leave.