

Belgian Refugees – newspaper cuttings from the *Linlithgowshire Gazette*

A speaker to the Bathgate Women's Liberal Association tells the women (having suspended political work for the duration) how they can help the Belgian refugees.

'Even if only half of the barbarities reported to have been inflicted on this brave people were true, the indictment against Germany was a terrible one, and would lower the perpetrators in the eyes of civilisation for all time.'

Linlithgowshire Gazette 23 Oct 14, p3

The three United Free Church and Established Church local Presbyteries (Bathgate, Linlithgow and Falkirk) formed themselves in The Churches' Refugee Committee, with three local committees, with object of leasing 12 houses in Slamannan for Belgian refugees. Mainly concerned with fundraising.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 8 Oct 15, p5

Glasgow Presbytery had taken in some 3,000 Belgian refugees, and asked Presbyteries throughout Scotland to appeal for funds. Glasgow was a receiving and distributing centre - 9,000 had passed through their hands. Refugees couldn't be sent into a prohibited zone - such as the Highlands, and West Lothian (because of the coast and port of Bo'ness, military areas). Linlithgow Presbytery directed each minister to do what seemed best – there was a feeling of 'too many calls upon their charity'.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 7 May 15, p4

'There are now, it is said, over 10,000 Belgian refugees in Scotland, and a reader informs us that the whole of these - men, women and children - have passed through Glasgow.'

Linlithgowshire Gazette 25 Jun 15, p3 (Bathgate Brevities)

Retiring collection in parish church for Belgian refugees. An appeal for furniture and clothes, especially for children. To be received by Mrs Miller, Bonnytoun House. Gaz. 5 Nov 15, p2.

Report to the Churches' Belgian Refugees Committee hears that the employment of the men is a problem. The Slamannan refugee males were to be employed in the mines where there's a shortage of labour, but there was local opposition, on the grounds of safety, as the danger of accidents through their ignorance of our language. So only families without breadwinners received there. Total income not meeting expenditure, and meanwhile more refugees to be received there. Earnest appeal to all congregations for more donations.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 7 Jan 16, p1

By March 1916, some feeling abroad that too much was being done for the Belgian refugees, that they didn't want to bring more 'aliens' into the country, and many of them were of a different faith ([i.e. Roman Catholic]. One minister voiced these feelings, but was opposed by most of the others. The refugees in their district 'were the wives of men who were now fighting at the front or on the sea. There were in all about 30 children, and these were attending school, and were picking up the English language very well indeed.' The wives got 12s each per week and 2s for a child.

By March 1916, there were 17 houses occupied by Belgian refugees in Slamannan, accommodating 60 refugees, and four additional houses in preparation. All have no breadwinner. These families are entirely dependent on the provision made by the committee, with the exception of the wives of soldiers, whose small separation allowances is deducted from the committee's weekly payments.
Linlithgowshire Gazette 31 Mar 16, p3

Bo'ness took responsibility for 'a house at 23 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow, which has been opened since 28th February last, and in which there are 12 inmates'. To be known as the Bo'ness Home. 'The cost from the opening up till now has been £43 5s, and if you approve of my proposal, I shall be pleased to receive your treasurer's cheque for this amount, and I shall advise you monthly thereafter of the outlay.' - Letter from the Glasgow Corporation Belgian Committee to the Bo'ness Belgian Refugee committee.
Linlithgowshire Gazette 23 Jun 16, p2

By August 1916, two years into the war, Bathgate had contributed £830 for Belgian refugees. Mr George Wolfe and Mr Wm Livingstone have each given 5s weekly since Sep 1914.
Linlithgowshire Gazette 18 Aug 16, p3

'I notice that America has taken over entire care of the Belgians, and that no further calls are to be made upon us to contribute to their relief. Armadale Relief Committee has been steadily sending funds to relieve the distressed Belgians, but now such contributions can be directed into the channels of home relief funds, such as the Local Fund, Infirmary, and Red Cross.'
Linlithgowshire Gazette 25 May 17, p3

Belgian refugees urged not to go to London hoping for repatriation as soon as peace comes. 'As soon as repatriation of any Belgian refugees to Belgium becomes possible, notices will be issued, instructions given, and all necessary arrangements made for permits and for transport. Refugees, must, therefore, remain where they are, and, as far as possible continue their work until they receive instructions.'
Linlithgowshire Gazette 8 Nov 18, p1