FIFTEEN traumatised Belgian refugees from in and around Antwerp – of whom only two possess a smattering of English – arrived in Newark to be housed at 33 Crown Street and a property in Victoria Street.

They are among thousands who have been violently displaced from their homeland by the German invasion – even though their Government consistently declared their intention to remain neutral, as the Netherlands through the War.

The frightened 15 were welcomed at Northgate Station by the Mayor, Councillor John Charles Kew; the Vicar of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, the Reverend Father Hadican; Councillor Redmond Barton Cafferata, whose business interests frequently take him to mainland Europe (and who will slip away from town eventually to spy on the German Army); and Miss Brooke (sister of Miss Brooke, the St Leonard’s nurse) who will act as the Belgians’ interpreter because she has spent a number of years in Belgium and therefore speaks Flemish fluently.

Instantly, considerable annoyance has been occasioned by the gathering together in the evening of a large number of children, who play about the places. This must be distracting to the refugees who most require quietness and rest after their dreadful ordeals.

HORRORS THEY ENDURED

One of the Belgian refugees, Mademoiselle Marthe Rumes, only 21, was eventually appointed teacher at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic School – one of the few educational establishments in Newark that was able to continue lessons full-time through the Great War.

It is little wonder she speaks near-perfect English; she studied to be a teacher in Sussex only a few years ago.

Now she tells of the brutalities visited upon innocent civilians on the continent by the invading German Army – and reveals why and how she had to lie to escape from Belgium.

While she was living in Ghent, a male acquaintance was taken by the Germans and ordered to bury their dead.

“This drove him mad because he was told to bury them alive if he thought they had no chance of getting better.”

“Another man had to drive two Germans to Dizmude [a town also known as Dizamuda] and for three hours was riding in between dead bodies and over them when he could not drive between them.”

As she had been born in Holland, she holds a Dutch passport – and, desperate to escape the atrocities, she assured the Germans that she wished to visit relatives in Holland, although all her known relations live in Belgium.

They eventually believed her and allowed her to cross the border, whence she caught a boat to Folkestone and then swiftly sought a job.

Dizmude will eventually ensure nobody will ever forget its experiences of 1914-15 by creating ‘The Trench of Death’ as part of the region’s memorials to the thousands of men who were never able to go home.
Every lady is an angel

WITH virtually every day bringing news of death and wounding on the battlefields of the Western Front, Newark ladies stepped forward as never before to come to the aid of the brave menfolk.

They volunteered so readily for a series of instruction in first aid that no fewer than 55 ladies passed an examination in the Town Hall.

The project was organised by the British Red Cross Society and the successful candidates are:

Miss Beatrice Baker, Miss Evadne Branston, Miss Neata Branston, Miss Winifred Clarke, Miss Hilda Drabble, Mrs Jessie Harker, Miss Flora Hutchinson, Miss Edith Knight, Miss Edith Mills, Miss Gladys Mumby, Miss Jessie Quibell, Mrs Maud Seymour, Mrs Lilian M Tomlinson, Mrs Frances A Sorrell, Miss Florence Sorrell, Miss Amy Washington, Miss Margaret Washington, Miss Amy F Wood, Miss Annie W Place, Mrs Betsy Gratton, Miss Dorothy Lockwood, Miss Muriel Mumby, Miss Alice Rouston, Miss Rose Harridance, Mrs Bertha Miller, Miss Louisa Oldham, Miss Louisa Lacy, Mrs Maria Baker, Miss Emma Dawson, Miss Mabel Deall, Miss Mary Fish, Miss May Foster, Miss Florence Free, Miss Alisamon Gadsby, Mrs Lizzie Garner, Miss Katherine Garner, Miss Ruth M Hallowes, Miss Lilian Hawking, Miss Florence Hayes, Mrs Annie Bildage, Miss Maud Hind, Miss Beryl Hunter, Mrs Ada Jones, Miss Ada Lovell, Miss Bertha Martin, Miss May Milner, Miss Florence Moss, Miss Annie Robinson, Miss Josephine Robinson, Miss Elsie Seely, Miss Mary E Swann, Miss Jessie Taylor, Miss Edith Towell, Miss Dorothy Brown, Miss May Sheppard.

The ladies will now be asked to work voluntarily as nurses in a raft of Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospitals being set up in Lombard Street in Newark, on The Burgage at Southwell and many grand houses occupied by the gentry in villages and hamlets.