

pneumonia 14 March 1915, aged 24.

Opposite Burway House is Coronation Island bearing the oak trees planted at the coronations of King Edward VII, King George V and King George VI.



8 Take Longhills Road up to the War Memorial – near the top take the footpath with handrails on your left.

“Forget not the men of Church Stretton who

fought for God King and Country in the Great War 1914-1919.” When the War was over some 68,000 war memorials were erected. Many communities chose the local churchyard of their C of E church. However, other denominations were not always happy. Sensible Church Stretton chose this dramatic site overlooking the town from the lower slopes of Bodbury Hill. The memorial is in the form of a Celtic wheel-head cross of Portland stone with marble plaques. 51 names from the First World War appear. It was unveiled by Major General Deverell and dedicated by the Bishop of Hereford on 13th October 1920.

9 Return downhill and take Church Street.

Passing the Scout Hut where you can see their Centenary Gates. Lt Butler was the first local scout to be killed in the conflict. Opposite the Church was the site of the earlier Church Parish Hall where the women work-parties at the War Work Depot, made dressings using sphagnum

moss both for the local VAD hospital and other troops.

8 Inside St Laurence Church.

On the left hand side of the aisle a unique and poignant war memorial. It marks the death of 2/Lt Guy Barnett, 5th Bn. Attached 1st Bn., Worcestershire Regiment, only son of Dr & Mrs Barnett MBE. Guy Barnett was born on 31 July 1890 in Church Stretton. He died on 12 March 1915, aged 24 but his body was never recovered. His parents bore their loss patching up survivors of the conflict. This memorial is very special, as his mother made it herself.

At the crossing is a ceiling sculpture depicting St Laurence and his martyrdom on a gridiron, dedicated to the memory of the guests and staff, who were killed in 1968 in a fire at The Hotel.

11 Coming out of the church turn left continue along Church Lane to the end.

Each year the town and Royal British Legion mark the family memorials of the War dead. En route to Cunliffe Road Cemetery you will pass the library, formerly the town school. Headmaster, Mr Butler, who lived in the adjacent school house, was the church organist, presiding at St Laurence for 55 years. He officiated at all services for the Great War dead. He played the organ at the double memorial service for Lt Turnbull MD and 2/Lt Guy Barnett, who were killed within days of each other. He would also preside during the service for ‘Mac’, his only son, Lt Fred Harold Butler.

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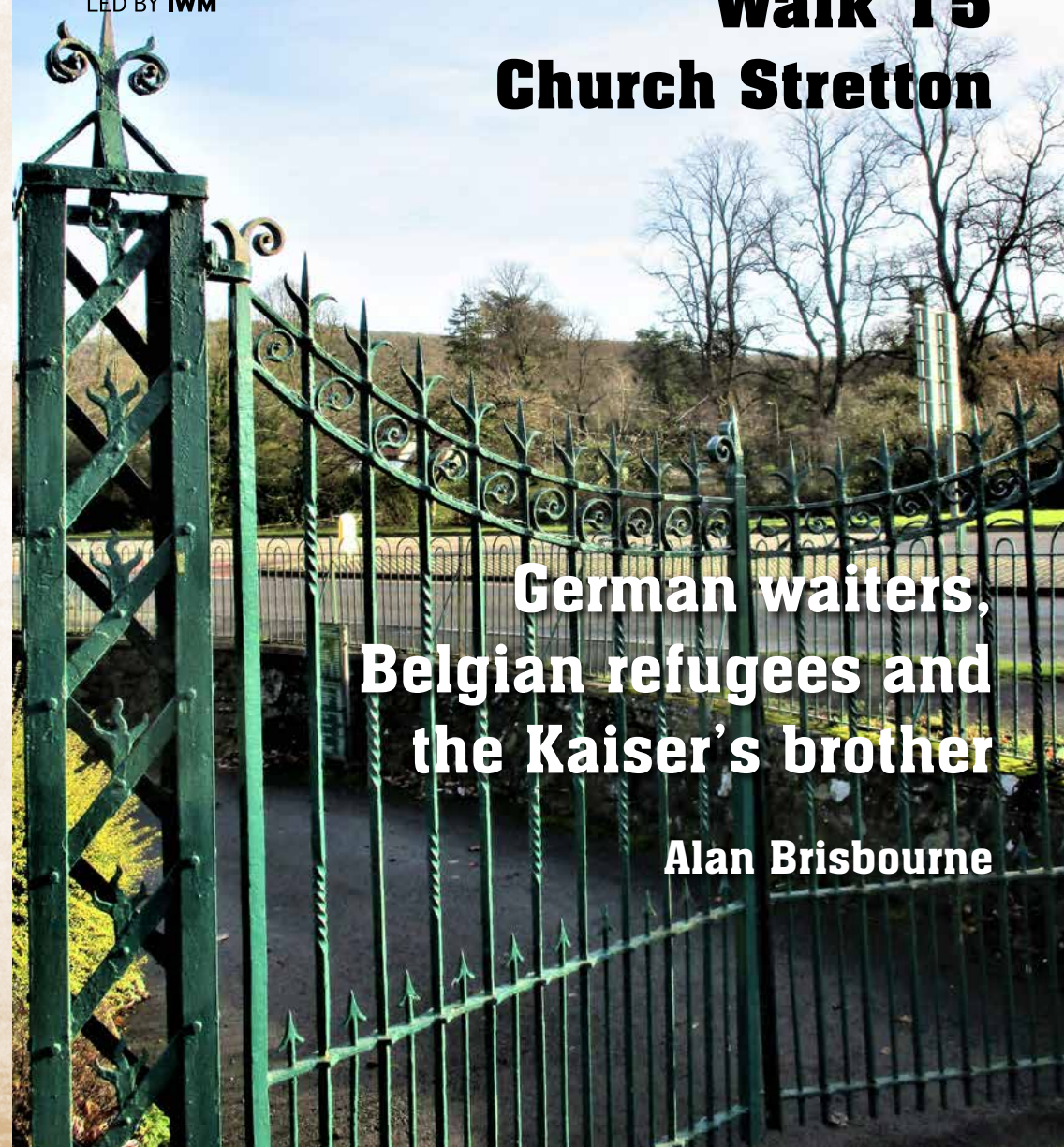
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War Walks on the Home Front

Walk 15 Church Stretton

German waiters,
Belgian refugees and
the Kaiser's brother

Alan Brisbane



Church Stretton: German waiters, Belgian refugees and the Kaiser's brother

This is a town trail mainly on the level except for a short steep climb to the War Memorial.

1 The walk begins on the A49 side of the railway station: a short stub of a road between Church Stretton Motor Cycles and the car wash of the Applegreen petrol station.

Among the early 'battles of the War' was that between German waiters from here at The Hotel here and members of the football club. On their recall to the Kaiser's Reserves, the waiters, fighting a rearguard action, were pursued to the 'new' (opened earlier in 1914) station. They made a hasty departure 'under fire.' Once at the Channel, they found the border closed. Word was sent that the waiters might be returning. An all-night vigil was kept at the station to greet any returning 'invaders.'

2 Return to the A49 and turn left to the traffic lights.

Sympathy for the Belgians at the invasion of their neutrality was strong. Two refugee families were housed in The Tower Buildings, which once stood across the A49 at the junction with Sandford Avenue. Expenses were met by individual donations and fund-raising concerts in Church Stretton.

3 At the traffic lights cross over to the Recreation Park.

Mijnheer Hermans, the head of one Belgian family, was an artisan blacksmith. The Council encouraged him to continue in productive work. He made the ornamental gates at the entrance to the recreation park. At the unveiling in May 1915, they were freshly painted in green and gold, and bore the inscription 'These gates the work

of M. AC Hermans, a Belgian guest of this town in consequence of the European War.'



4 Leave the Park and turn right up Sandford Avenue. When crossing the bridge over the railway look down to your right – this is the original station. Take the short flight of steps down to the road.

In 1914 the building now entitled Stretton Chambers was Essex House. It was loaned by Mrs Treasure as a hospital. Initially it served as a First Aid Post for soldiers stationed under canvas at Stretton. In December 1914 it became a VAD Auxiliary hospital. Casualties from the Western Front began arriving by rail. Dr Barnett was appointed Medical Officer. His wife, Margaret, acted as Commandant throughout the war and received an MBE for her services.



5 Return to Sandford Avenue and turn right.

From the corner of Beaumont Road, to your right there is a block of flats. They stand on the site of the Urban District

Council Building. Mijnheer Hermans used the Council forge here to make the Gates, with other ornamental works which still adorn the Strettons today.

6 Continue ahead to The Hotel at the junction with High St.



In this period The Hotel accommodated important civilian, diplomatic and military persons. In July 1911 the German waiters, (many Army Reservists), had the opportunity to serve Prinz Heinrich von Preussen, Kaiser Wilhelm's brother. Prince Henry was taking part in a competition between the RAC and the Kaiserlicher Automobil-Klub. It began in Homburg, Germany and ended in London after a circular tour of England and Scotland: over 1,500 miles. The Shropshire leg embraced Whitchurch, Wem, Shrewsbury, Church Stretton and Ludlow.

The British won and were presented with a trophy of a young lady with the word 'Peace' engraved. Arthur Conan Doyle participated. He wrote "as an attempt at an entente it was a great failure ... war was in the air. Both sides spoke of it. Several of the British officers ... were unanimous. "The only thing I want to do with these people is to fight them," said Colonel Holman. It was a deep antagonism on either side. They were not only sure of the war, but of the date. "It will be ... after the Kiel Canal is widened." The Kiel Canal was finished in June, 1914, and war came in August, so

that they were not far wrong. It was this experience which first made me take the threat of war seriously... »

At the outbreak of war Prinz Heinrich was made C-in-C of the Baltic Fleet. Members of the Stretton football team at the Queens Head, heeded Kitchener's call for volunteers. Together with their landlord, they would all join up, thereby depriving their pub of its customers, bringing about its closure.

7 We pass up the Burway to the open space ahead.

On the corner of Longhills Road, Burway House. Formerly home of Dr Barnett, it passed to the Turnbolls. Mr Turnbull, acted as Treasurer for the VAD Hospital until his death in 1917. The large family would entertain the patients with plays and musical concerts. Their son, Lt Derwent Christopher Turnbull, was serving with 84th Field Ambulance, RAMC, attached to the 1st Bn Cheshire Regiment. He was shot through the right lung in March 1915 whilst attempting to rescue an officer from no-man's-land, near Hooze Crater, Ypres. He died from his wounds and the onset of



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