



Great War Hut

During the Great War, two huge Army Training Camps were built on Cannock Chase – Brocton and Rugeley Camps. The hut at the Visitor Centre was originally situated at one of the camps and has been carefully restored as it had been during the war.

Construction of Rugeley Camp began in Autumn 1914, and Brocton Camp followed a few months later in January 1915. When the war ended the huts were sold off. This hut was dismantled and moved to Gayton, where it was used as the parish hall and meeting house.

In 2006, Gayton Parish Council offered the hut to the Friends of Cannock Chase who, in partnership with Staffordshire County Council, moved it to its current location. Today, the hut is used as an interpretation and education facility.

Both camps were built on Lord Lichfield's estate. A workforce of 1,000 men built the camps, which were intended to be almost entirely self-sufficient towns, with a bank, grocery stores, chapels and even a theatre. There were rows and rows of barrack huts, with each camp housing up to 20,000 soldiers. The recruits were trained to fight in the trenches before being shipped to the Western Front. During the Great War, more than 500,000 soldiers received basic military instruction in musketry, scouting, signalling, gas warfare and physical training.



Rugeley Camp (Jake Whitehouse)

At the start of the Great War volunteers enlisted as soldiers. They signed up to fight for their country unaware of the horrors they were to face in the trenches. In 1916, conscription was introduced and by then casualties from the Front were returning and cared for at military hospitals like the one on nearby Brindley Heath.

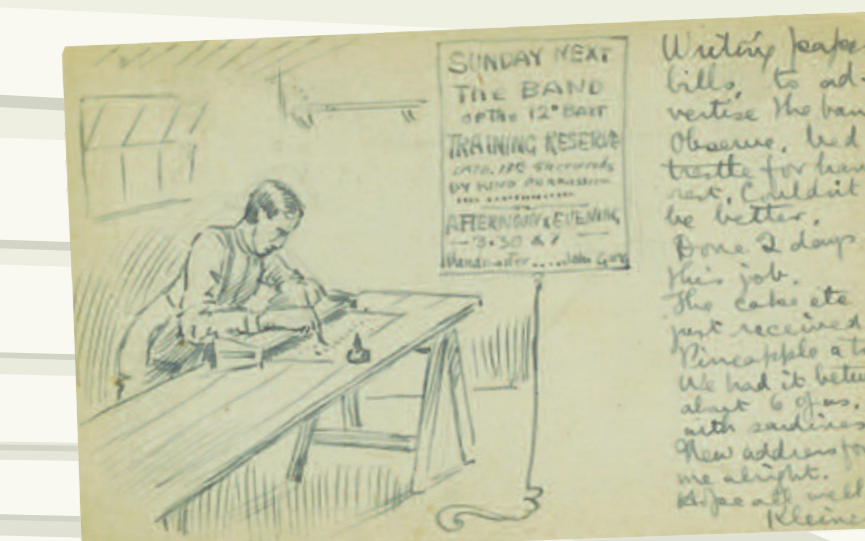


Brocton Camp under construction (Jake Whitehouse)

Imagine what life was like for the young men in the barrack huts. Away from home for the first time, many saw army life as an adventure. They enjoyed the physical training, made new pals and had a laugh.

However, the rumours of trench warfare from the Front must have been frightening. Out of a total of 8.7 million men fielded by the British Army during the Great War, around 1.5 million (17.6%) were killed, captured or wounded.

One record of life at Brocton Camp has been left by Erskine Williams who sent home many humorous postcards and letters with illustrations about his army training in 1916.



One of the Erskine Williams postcards (Daphne Jones)



Cannock Chase has a long, proud association with the Armed Forces. Today, we look back over 150 years of military heritage of national and international importance and the role of the Chase during two world wars. Traces of the past can still be seen in many places. Two military cemeteries commemorate British, New Zealand and German soldiers, from the Great War and the Second World War.

Cannock Chase Heritage Trail

Cannock Chase Heritage Trail is a 10-mile route for walkers and cyclists linking the towns of Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley. It passes through, or close to many sites of historic or environmental interest, with interpretation boards along the way telling the story of each location. The Trail was initially funded by the Heritage Lottery in 2008.

Take on the challenge with the Cannock Chase Can App!

Cannock Chase Can is an exciting health and wellbeing programme to help you make healthier lifestyle choices. It hosts a variety of wellness challenges which can be undertaken as an individual, group or family. Here's how you can get involved. . .



Download the
Cannock Chase Can App for FREE



Scan the QR codes on each interpretation board to bring to life elements of the Trail. Content has been created by local schoolchildren alongside professional artists and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Collect all the QR codes for each trail below to complete the challenge and gain points and rewards for your efforts.



Chase Tales
a family-friendly trail



Hear Our Heritage
a historical trail

/// bungalows.discusses.comply
GREAT WAR HUT

