

## History Walk 2 - Tobacco Factory to Cannon Street

This walk should take about 45 mins. It is about 2 km in length. The route is fairly flat with no steep gradients.

You can view the route of the walk on the 'Bedminster War Resisters' digital map at [https://www.brh.org.uk/site/article\\_type/map/](https://www.brh.org.uk/site/article_type/map/). When you have opened the map, scroll down the menu on the left of the screen, click in the box beside 'History Walk 2' and then click on the subtitle for the route to be shown.

Start at the **Tobacco Factory** at the junction between Raleigh Road and North Street.

*W D and H O Wills built their first tobacco factory on East Street in the 1880s. In the 1900s a second tobacco factory was built on Raleigh Road /North Street. Hundreds of Bedminster people worked at these factories. Four of our war resisters and a further six war resister households had members of their families in the tobacco industry.*

Cross Raleigh Road and walk along North Street. Take the second turning on the left - **Gathorne Road**.

*John Shoreland Harris, a grocer's book keeper lived at 47 Gathorne Road with his elderly mother. John was a conscientious objector and was successful in getting exemption from military service on hardship grounds as his mother was reliant on his care.*

Carry on to the end of Gathorne Road and then cross over Upton Road and turn right. Take the next turning on the left - just a few houses up on the left is **45 Vicarage Road**.

*This was the home of the four Livingston brothers: Alex, William, Charles and John. All were conscientious objectors. Alex, Charles and John, while refusing to fight, all accepted some form of non-combatant service. Unlike his brothers, William Borthwick Livingston, a clerk, went on the run with another Bristolian clerk - William Wall. In April 1916 he was arrested in the Carsphairn Hills in SW Scotland with a group of war resisters including some London anarchists. They were imprisoned for two weeks for having camped on land without the owner's permission. William then eluded the Military authorities and went on the run again till he was arrested in April 1918. This time he was imprisoned in Horfield Prison for three consecutive sentences under the Military Service Act, finally being released in May 1919.*

Cross over Vicarage Road, return to the junction and turn left up Greville Road. Walk round the bend in the road and then cross over to **68 Greville Road**.

*George Abraham Smith, a carpenter and trade unionist, lived here. He was arrested at his home by Detective Woods and appeared before Bristol Police Court as an absentee on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1916. In court he is reported to have said: 'I will not obey any military order. I would rather die. I am guilty before the law but not guilty according to justice.' He was imprisoned and later did non-combatant service.*

Walk back along Greville Road and take the first left (a continuation of Greville Road). Walk to the junction with North Street and turn left. A few shops along is **204 North Street**.

*This was the home of Sidney Vicary Vowles, a lecturer and election agent. According to his family Sidney went on the run to avoid conscription. He took passage on a ship in an attempt to reach the USA. Unfortunately the ship was torpedoed by a German U-Boat. He and many of the those on board survived as they were rescued by a British ship and brought back to the UK. Sidney then went on the run again and managed to evade the Military till the end of the war.*

Continue along North Street till you come to a Tesco supermarket, cross over to the other side and go up the left side of **Agate Street**.

*Herbert John Pym, a fitter's mate and a conscientious objector, lived at 45 Agate Street. Herbert was from a family of domestic servants who had come to Bristol from Wellington in Somerset.*

Take the next turning on the left - Parker Street - and go to the end of the road, turning left onto South Street. This will take you back down to North Street where you should turn right. Shortly you will come to **123 North Street**.

*On the site of this modern dwelling was the home of a joiner and conscientious objector, Ernest William Roe. Ernest was from a family who were all in the building trade. He was a Member of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners as was another conscientious objector - George Abraham Smith who lived at 68 Greville Road.*

Continue till you reach **53 North Street**.

*Gilbert Silverthorne was a boot maker who lived and worked at 53. He was a Christadelphian and claimed exemption on religious grounds. He was given 'work of national importance' at a market garden, a sawmill and then a coal mine.*

Look across the road to the left at **62 North Street**.

*Walter Told, a bicycle shop owner, lived and worked at 62. He assisted George Barker, another bicycle shop owner, in creating a secret chamber for those on the run from conscription. In 1917 Walter was arrested in Reading, as he tried to escape conscription by cycling to London. In Reading he had encountered a secret service agent who deceived him by pretending to be another conscientious objector. Walter divulged the existence of the secret chamber and this resulted in George Barker being arrested and the chamber being discovered.*

Continue to the end of North Street, turn right at the mini roundabout onto Cannon Street and walk along till you come to the large Kustom furniture shop. This is the former **Bedminster Town Hall**.

*Bedminster Town Hall was built in 1891. It was converted to a cinema by Ralph Pringle in 1909 becoming Bristol's second picture house.*

With your back to the Kustom furniture shop look across the road to the Robert Fitzharding pub, a betting shop and a chemist. Somewhere beneath this block was **12 Cannon St**.

*In WW1, this was the cycle shop and home of George Edgar Barker and his wife Minnie May. On 14th March 1917 George appeared before the Bristol Police Court following his arrest by Detective Woods. The Court Record states that he: 'Unlawfully did commit an act prejudicial to the Defence of the Realm, to wit, during the 12 months last past, with intent to assist the enemy did construct, maintain and use an underground chamber at his premises 12 Cannon Street, Bedminster, for the purposes of hiding and harbouring persons liable for military service.' George was assisted in the constructing the secret chamber by Walter Told, another cycle shop owner who lived and worked at 62 North Street.*

Walk up to the London Inn and turn right into British Road. Walk up British Road and take the first right into Victoria Place. At the far end to your left is **15 Victoria Place**.

*Walter Henry Christopher Lewis, a tobacco operator lived here with his wife Mabel and young daughter. His brother Frederick (Victoria Lodge, Whitehouse Lane) was also a conscientious objector. Walter was an international socialist and was arrested in 1918 under the Defence of the Realm Act for attempting to cause sedition among the civil population, after making speeches in the Haymarket in the centre of Bristol. He was subsequently imprisoned as a conscientious objector.*

This is the end of the walk. You can catch buses to the city centre and elsewhere by retracing your steps, crossing Cannon Street and going a short way down East Street.