

Ernest Cockman

Ernest Cockman and his friend Eddy Holloway, enlisted with the London Rifle Brigade at 18 years of age, and did their training at Fovant in 1916. During their time here they helped to cut the LRB badge in the hillside.

To break the boredom of camp life they walked over the downs onto Garston Farm where they met Sam Gurd, a farm labourer, who took them to his home for 'a cuppa'. His wife, Georgina, made them welcome and the two homesick lads returned often until they were dispatched to France. Incredibly, they both survived and came back to take up civilian life but they did not forget their friends and kept in touch over the years; Ernest from Essex and Eddy from Canada.



Ernest, centre, with his wife Mary, in front of the LRB badge which he helped to cut.



Ernest returned to Fovant every year to attend the Drumhead Service, introducing his wife to the daughter and granddaughter of the friendly farming family. Flo and Mary Penny continued the correspondence with Ernest until he died. His son, carrying out his father's desire, scattered his ashes on the LRB badge.



Ernest remembering one of his favourite places; the bridge at the north end of the lake on West Farm.

M. McKenzie 2021