

Canadian Loggers Camp in Ufton Nervet Area WW1



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The Canadian Lumbermen

The pine woods which stretched from Mortimer across to Ufton, and from Padworth to Burghfield must have been a grand sight before 1914, but this timber was soon needed for the war effort and had to be chopped down. The extent of the woodland was great enough for the Canadian Forestry Corps to be brought in to do the felling.

These men, who were enlisted in the Canadian army, were mainly lumbermen from the forests of New Brunswick. They had a timber-built camp, thought to be off the present Camp Road, and so well established did they become that a local farmer, John Bucknell of Old Farm, Padworth, allowed them free use of a field on Padworth Common to grow vegetables. The Canadians did the skilled work and employed Portuguese labourers to clear up the brush wood. The Portuguese were accommodated in the stables at Ufton Court.

A railway line was laid so that the tree trunks could be drawn out, horses being used to pull the timber wagons along the lines. The woodsmen were said to be very fond of the horses and looked after them with care. Photos show the animals to be in good condition, with shining coats.

Kathleen Bucknell of Old Farm married the camp adjutant, and went out to Canada in 1919. Their only child, Stedman Henderson, came to Europe in the Second World War with the New Brunswick Hussars, but sadly was killed in Italy.

Mrs. Henderson recalled in 1985 that the Canadians had been well liked in the area, and a number of local residents remember going up to the camp when they were children and talking to the lumbermen. One of these, young Fred Spratley, saw a soldier making frog ornaments from brass (is this what happened to the horse brasses?) and the man told him that they were to be sent to Canada as a present for his mother. However, when the Canadians were due to leave this soldier gave Fred a parcel, telling him not to unwrap it until he got home. In it were the brass frogs that have remained as a souvenir with the Spratley family ever since.



Pam Froom



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