

Samuel Hardingham

Samuel Hardingham was born in Romsey to Samuel and Jessie Hardingham. In 1901, the elder Samuel was working as a general labourer at Broadlands. By 1911, the younger Samuel, sixteen, (and 'helpfully' labelled as female by whoever tagged the census at Ancestry.co.uk) is boarding with the Bastable family in Maybush. The head of the household was a motorman on the municipal electric cars and Samuel is listed as a conductor.

As I've found with every serviceman I've researched, mysteries crop up. On the Commonwealth War Graves site, Gunner Hardingham is listed as the son of Samuel and *Annie* Hardingham of Rownhams Mount. A second marriage? A mistake in name transcription, again? In August 1914, Lieutenant Colonel JF Stuart-Menteth was living at Rownhams Mount (we know that from a letter he wrote to the Times suggesting that death duties not be exacted from the estates of officers who died during the war). Stuart-Menteth's son is listed on the board in the church hall, among those in the Parish who served in the Great War.

So was Samuel senior working on the estate? The last mention I find of him is in 1911, as a farmer at Crown Cottage, Crampmoor. One assumes he'd moved to Rownhams in the next few years.

Samuel junior was part of the Gallipoli landings, then later served in France as a gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery. He was killed in action on 9th April, 1917, (Easter Monday) the first day of the Battle of Arras. On this day the British 3rd Army attacked German positions at Arras while Canadians assaulted and captured Vimy Ridge. The attack was initially successful. During the day 17 Brigade RFA struggled to bring their guns forward in support of the advancing infantry. The Brigade War Diary states that "during the afternoon Gunner Hardingham was killed by a shell". He was buried at Beaurains Road Cemetery on the southern outskirts of Arras.

Ann Laird - Rownhams October 2013