

**THIS STORY WAS TOLD TO ME BY BOB PATERSON  
FROM CANADA WHO HAD CONTACTED ME TO DO  
SOME RESEARCH FOR HIM, HIS GREAT AUNT LADY  
MARGERITTE ALLAN HAD LIVED WITH HER  
FAMILY AT ENCOMBE IN THE EARLY 1900s HE WAS  
WRITING A BOOK ABOUT THE FAMILY AND HE  
TOLD ME THIS STORY. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE  
RIGHT TO INCLUDE THIS IN OUR EXHIBITION FOR  
THE CONNECTIONS TO BOTH ENCOMBE AND  
SHORNCLIFFE AND OF COURSE THE TRAGEDY OF  
THE LUSITANIA**

**Jill Partridge**



## ENCOMBE - SHORNCLIFFE - CANADA - LUSITANIA

THIS A TRUE STORY TOLD TO ME BY ROB PATERSON WHOM I DID SOME RESEARCH FOR , HE LIVES IN CANADA AND HE SAYS -

In the fall of 1914, after war was declared , Sir Montagu Allan and his wife Marguerite, left there home 'Ravenscrag' in Montreal on a house hunting trip to England. The plan was that his wife was to do Red Cross work in England during the war. Encombe was ideal for them. It was within walking distance of Shorncliffe, that was to become a central depot for the Canadians. The plan would be that Montagu would spend the war largely in Canada, where he had vast business interests. He controlled the Allan line, the main shipping line that served Canada, and also the Merchants bank, one of the largest banks in the country. Marguerite would bring her two youngest daughters to live with her. Her eldest daughter Martha planned to nurse in the UK. Her son Hugh was in his last year at Eton.

They returned to Canada for Christmas. With much to prepare for, Marguerite waited until spring to return to England. She booked the Regal Suite on the Lusitania that would leave New York on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1915. Martha had failed to get a place in the McGill hospital, she had no training, but she was not to be denied and left a week earlier on another ship. Her brother Hugh had just left Eton and was waiting to meet them all.

There was a large party with Marguerite, her daughters Gwen and Anna aged 16 and 15 and included several friends and young people who had been put in her care for the journey.

The Lusitania was sunk on May 7<sup>th</sup> Marguerite and her two maids lived, (although she suffered a broken hip and collar bone), but sadly her two daughters didn't, a Mrs Stephens and her party who were with them, all died also a young woman of 24, Dorothy Braithwaite was lost.

Hugh and Martha got to Queenstown on May 8<sup>th</sup> and on May 11<sup>th</sup> took the ferry to England and we think went straight to Encombe. A few days later the Number 3 hospital The McGill arrives from Montreal at Moore Barracks. (This was the hospital that John McCrae who wrote "In Flanders Fields" worked)



2<sup>nd</sup> in command is Montagu's best friend Henry Yates. My bet is that Marguerite was looked after for a while by his staff. Martha begs the command of the McGill to let her join them. This time they agree, she leaves Encombe in mid June and goes to France with the McGill.

Meanwhile Gwen's body is found on May 18<sup>th</sup> Montagu is crossing from Canada. He and Hugh go to Queenstown to see her for the last time and then make their way to Encombe, it's a shambles. The Allans have lost all their clothes and are distraught. Marguerite is in shock imagine her experience! Hugh is faced with a terrible dilemma, all his friends are on their way to the front, his two sisters are dead and with Martha gone he chooses to look after his parents. His mother slowly recovers and in 1915 he joins up but stays close to home and becomes an instructor in Hythe.

The Christmas of 1915 at Encombe is a dramatic one, Henry Yates falls very ill in France and is sent back to England. He stays with the Allans, Martha who had never fitted in at the hospital was put in charge of the caféteria, where she smoked, drank and played cards with the men, she was reassigned to Moore. I think that got rid of her and also ensured that Henry had care. My grandfather, Alec Paterson, their first cousin joined them all on his first leave, for that Christmas. He had just survived the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres. On Boxing day Henry collapsed and was taken to a hospital nearby. He died soon after, Martha was stricken with pneumonia and was bedridden for 5 months. When she recovered she had a decision to make, going back to McGill was a death sentence, the hospital was in tents! Instead she went to France on her own and bought an ambulance and reconnected with an old lover from before the war. Hugh struggles on at Encombe but becomes ever more frustrated by his role.

In 1916 Marguerite recovers and starts to get busy with her war work. Montagu does the same. He launches the Canadian War Pensions; at some time in 1916 they leave Encombe and go back to London. In the summer of 1917 Hugh joins the RNAS as a fighter pilot. He had played Racquets for Eton. In July he is killed on his first mission. The Allans had lost 3 children, they bury themselves in work, Marguerite finances and sets up a 140 bed hospital in Devon. They do not fully return to Canada until 1921. In 1942 Martha dies too, they give 'Ravenscrag' as a gift to McGill and live on quietly in an apartment in Montreal having lost all their children and their wealth.



**RAVENSCRAG**  
**THE FAMILY HOME IN CANADA**





# HUGH ALLAN



*Hugh Allan  
Royal Naval Air Service  
(Casualty No. 845)*



# SIR MONTAGU ALLAN





# LADY MARGUÉRITE ALLAN





MARTHA ALLAN





# GWEN ALLAN



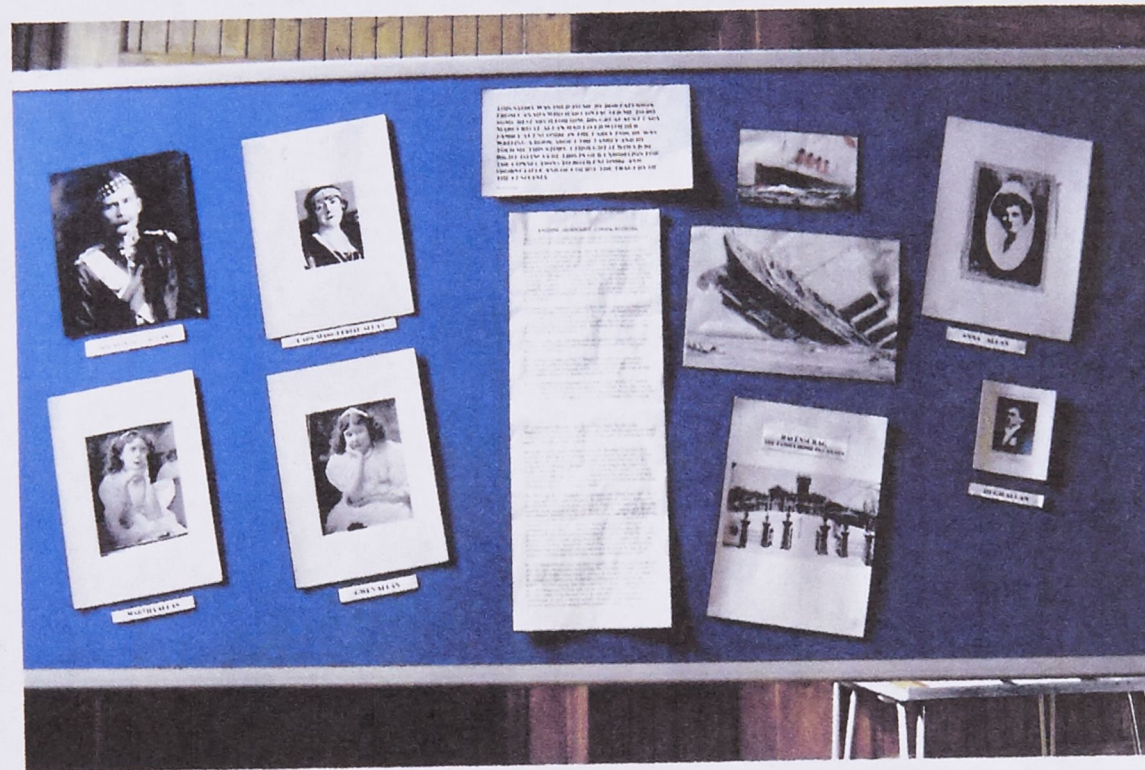
Miss Hugh Alla



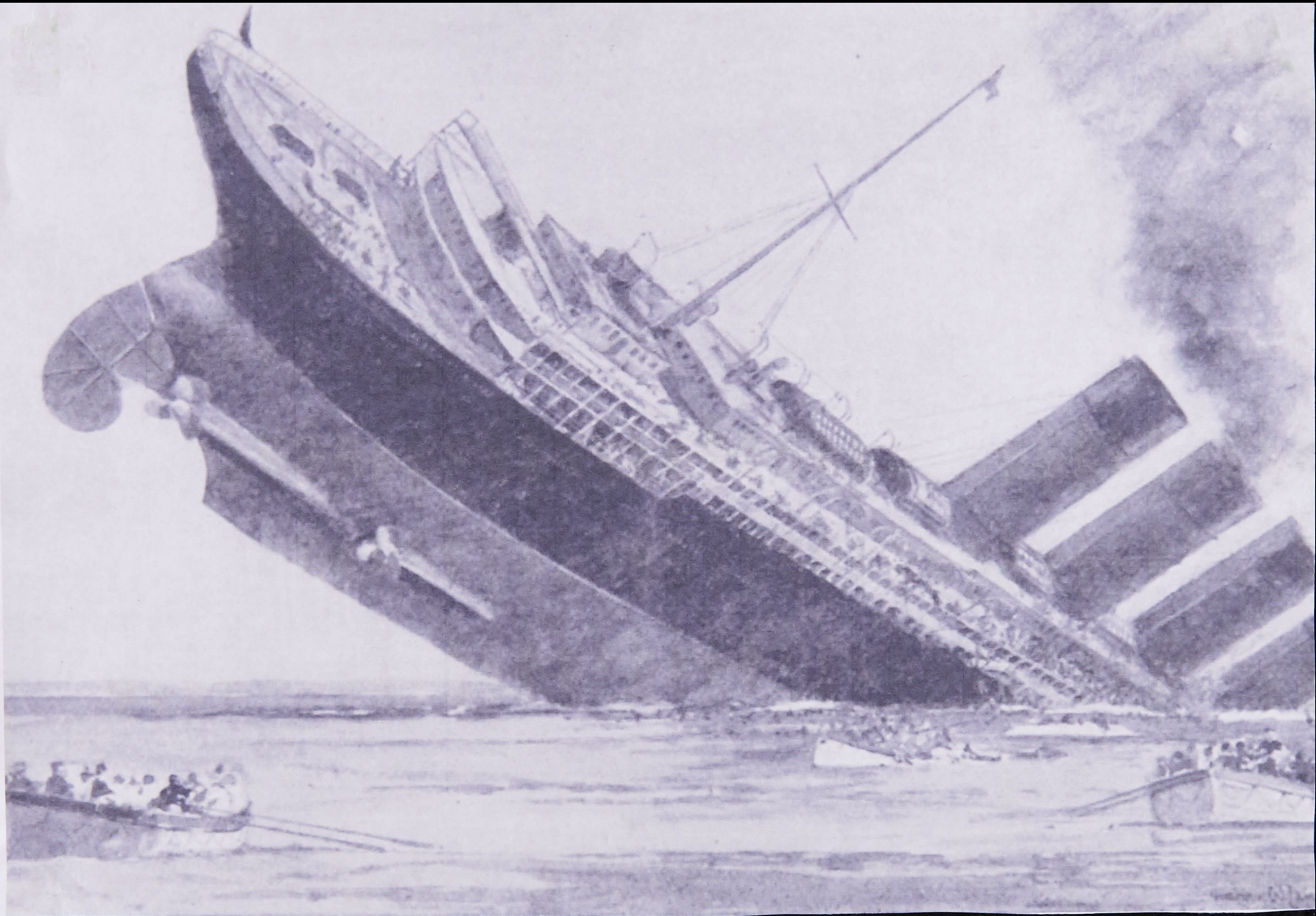
ANNA : ALLAN
















CUNARD LINE.

S.S. LUSITANIA. Turbine.