

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 1st 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 7th 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 8th and on May 11th 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)

2nd 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 18th 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 cafeteria, 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 2nd 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.

SANDGATE CASTLE

BUILT BY HENRY V111 IN 1539 AS AN ARTILLERY CASTLE.

**ONE OF A CHAIN OF COASTAL DEFENCES AGAINST
THREAT OF INVASION.**

**255 MEN WERE EMPLOYED, MASONS, QUARRYMEN,
SAWYERS, LIME BURNERS, CARPENTERS & WOOD
FELLERS.**

**BY SUMMER OF THAT YEAR NUMBERS HAD GROWN TO 500
& BY THE FOLLOWING SUMMER HAD RISEN AGAIN TO 630
MEN WORKING DAILY ON THE CASTLE.**

**THE FOUNDATIONS RESTED ON UNDERLYING SHINGLE
FROM THE BEACH, THE WALLS MADE FROM KENTISH
RAGSTONE ALSO FROM THE BEACH, WITH CAEN STONE
USED IN THE DETAILING.**

**459 TONS OF CAEN STONE WAS RECYCLED FROM THE
PRIORIES OF CHRISTCHURCH, CANTERBURY, DOVER,
ST RADIGUNDS & MONKS HORTON.**

**IN TOTAL 147,000 BRICKS FROM 13 DIFFERENT
BRICKYARDS WERE USED & 44,000 TILES MOSTLY
MANUFACTURED IN WYE, ALSO 979 TONS OF TIMBER. AT A
TOTAL COST OF £5,543.19s 2¾.**

**HENRY MAY HAVE VISITED THE CASTLE WHEN HE WAS IN
FOLKESTONE IN MAY 1542, ELIZABETH 1ST VISITED IN 1575
& QUEEN VICTORIA WITH PRINCE ALBERT IN 1855.**

IN 1609 THE GARRISON COMPRISED OF A CAPTAIN, LIEUTENANT, 5 SOLDIERS, 2 PORTERS & 10 GUNNERS.

IN 1627 AMID FEARS OF WAR WITH FRANCE & SPAIN THE CASTLE WAS IN A POOR CONDITION BUT IT WAS 1638 BEFORE IT WAS REPAIRED.

IN 1642 IT WAS SEIZED BY PARLIAMENTARY FORCES AT THE START OF THE FIRST ENGLISH CIVIL WAR. THIS ENDED IN 1646, BUT BROKE OUT AGAIN IN 1648.

IN 1660 SANDGATE CASTLE & OTHER DEVICE FORTS REMAINED AT THE HEART OF SOUTH COASTAL DEFENCES. THE CASTLE HAD FALLEN INTO DISREPAIR. IN 1663 £200 WAS SPENT ON REPAIRS.

DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS IT WAS HEAVILY REBUILT, IN 1804 IT WAS PROPOSED AS A “SECURE SEA BATTERY”

FINALISED IN 1805, WITH THE CIRCULAR TOWER TURNED INTO A MARTELLO TOWER & WITH SEVERAL OTHER ALTERATIONS MADE. COASTAL EROSION REMAINED A PROBLEM WITH FLOODING IN 1878.

IN 1888 THE CASTLE WAS SOLD TO THE SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY CO. WHO INTENDED TO TURN IT INTO A RAILWAY STATION, IT NEVER HAPPENED.

IN 1893 IT WAS OPENED TO THE PUBLIC BY A COMPANY WHO TOOK ON A PEPPERCORN LEASE FROM THE RAILWAY CO.

A SMALL MUSEUM WAS OPENED IN THE PORTER'S LODGE WHICH WAS THERE UNTIL 1928, IN THAT YEAR THE CASTLE & NEARBY PROPERTY 'CASTLE CLOSE' WERE SOLD & A SEAWALL WAS BUILT.

IN 1939 THE CASTLE WAS EVENTUALLY SCHEDULED AS AN ANCIENT MONUMENT.

IN WORLD WAR 11 THE CASTLE BECAME THE BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR THE PLATOON OF THE HOME GUARD.

IN 1950 THERE WAS A SEVERE STORM WHICH UNDERMINED THE SEA SIDE OF THE CASTLE & ENTIRELY DESTROYED THE SOUTHERN THIRD OF THE CASTLE.

IN 1954 THE CASTLE AND 'CASTLE CLOSE' WERE SOLD TO MR BLACK FOR HIS DAUGHTER BARBARA.

IN APPROX 1962 AN APPLICATION TO DEMOLISH THE CASTLE & TO BUILD FLATS & GARAGES WAS LUCKILY REFUSED.

FROM 1975 TO 1979 THE CASTLE WAS RESTORED AS A PRIVATE RESIDENCE, THEN IN 1983 WAS OPENED AS A RESTAURANT. SADLY THE BANK FORECLOSED ON THE PROPERTY IN 1997.

IN 2000 THE CASTLE WAS BOUGHT BY THE BOOT FAMILY & IS PROTECTED BY UK LAW AS A GRADE 1 LISTED BUILDING.

ENCOMBE

THE STORY ABOUT THE ESTATE

Encombe, before 1821 where a washerwoman's cottage was the only building on that land. In November of 1821 a Henry Dawkins Commissioner of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues leased from the Crown 4 acres of land known as Boy Hill, on the Hythe to Dover Road, this formed the southern part of the Estate.

- *1822 the next year he also bought the land behind which extended almost to the cliff top for £900 these two areas formed the main part of the estate.
- *1828 a house was built by the end of the year
- *1845 rates on the property were just £2.10 per annum Dawkin's daughter said she had no idea why he called it 'Encombe'
- *1845 land to the east of Encombe on which the large Undercliff Houses were to be built was carefully drained & water collected was fed into Sandgate to supply a number of houses
- *1852 Henry Dawkins died and Encombe was put up for sale
- *1855 It was bought by James Morris who at the time was the Governor of the Bank of England
- *1872 Morris also bought No 1 The Undercliff and by 1872 it was demolished and a road had been constructed giving a second entry into Encombe. There had been a proviso that the Army could at any time buy back the Boy Hill area for £1000 leaving Encombe with no dignified means of access.
- *1882 James Morris died
- *1883 Encombe sold for £14,400 to the 'Reilly Aunts' it was in bad condition and would soon be pulled down.
- *1883/93 A coachman's cottage was built at the rear of the old main house, which was then demolished
- *1895 A major disaster occurred, a huge landslip hits Sandgate and the face of the cliff for almost 1 mile subsided, 200 houses

were damaged including Encombe, chasms up to 9ft wide appeared causing a great deal of damage to the Estate

- * 1903 Electricity came to Sandgate
- * 1904/06 Both the Reilly aunts died and the estate went to their niece a Mrs Bell
- * 1907 Parts of the estate were put up for sale
- * 1908 Mrs Bell had the second Encombe built
- * 1911 Mrs Bell died, the estate was left to Lady Sackville West her daughter, who apparently rented the property to several
- * 1913/17 different tenants over the next few years including Louis Raphael, and Sir Montagu & Lady Marguerite Allen
- * 1920 Lady Sackville-West died, there is no record of her having lived in the house, it was then sold in
- * 1922 to Ralph H. Phillipson & his 2nd wife Mayo, they moved in altering & adding to Encombe with the help of Basil Ionides changing greatly its appearance to that of a Mediterranean villa.
- * 1928 Phillipson dies ,Mayo only visits for a few weeks each year
- * 1937 the house is sold, no mention of to whom until
- * 1940 It was apparently used by F.A.N.Y.S.
- * 1951 Abbey National obtained it for a staff holiday centre
- * 1958 A series of landslides occurred followed causing damage
- * 1960 Encombe sold to a Dr Leider to be used as a hotel, it was also used during the 1960s as an English school
- * 1969 Encombe was sold to Bruce Cheesman who owned it for 9 years until
- * 1978 a huge fire destroyed the beautiful house reducing it to a pile of rubble, beyond repair, the end of Encombe as it had been for many years. The future of the land was that it would become an estate of a different kind, one of houses, flats and bungalows all with wonderful sea views, built in the footprint of what was once one of the most beautiful houses and indeed grounds in this part of Kent.

SHORNCLIFFE CAMP

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT A LOOK AT SHORNCLIFFE CAMP AND ITS HISTORY

- 1257 There may have been a camp at Shorncliffe from this date
- 1588 There is written proof that men were stationed there in 1588
- 1779 The 4th Dragoons were there to assist the Customs & Excise to deal with smuggling
- 1790 First preparations were made to build a regular Army Camp there
- 1794 Troops began to arrive however the camp remained insignificant until-
- 1803 when Sir John Moore took command, it then became & still remains one of the most important stations for field troops, it was his idea to create a Light Infantry with which to beat the Napoleonic armies. Many new tactics were implored here against the expected invasion of the French.
- After Waterloo the army was run down and Shorncliffe fell into disrepair
- Then came the Crimean war and the German army recruited by Baron Von Stutzenheier, arrived at Shorncliffe by our invitation, to be trained & equipped

- **1855 Queen Victoria visited the camp to inspect the troops**
- **1899 The Connaught Rangers were the first Regiment to occupy Napier Barracks**
- **1902 Kaiser Wilhelm II visited the Royal Dragoons at Shorncliffe after their service in the South African war**
- **1914 In September 20,000 troops were in the camp**
- **1915 The Canadians came to Shorncliffe, within a year 40,000 soldiers were in training there**
- **1912 Brigadier General J.A.L. Haldane assumed command of the 10th Infantry Brigade & instituted plans for an Officers Library and a statue to Sir John Moore**
- **1923 The library was opened and statue unveiled by the Duke of Connaught**
- **During the second World War the Home Counties Brigade Infantry Training Centre was set up at Shorncliffe & the 1st Battalion The Royal West Kents trained their recruits here**
- **1997 It was decided that the Sir John Moore barracks would be refurbished to be the UK home barracks of The Royal Gurkha Regiment**
- **2000 Work was completed and the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles arrived at the Barracks**