

## ALLAN NEWSOME BUSHILL (06-09)

1906-09 HMS *Conway*  
1909-1915 Mercantile Marine Officer  
1915-1919 RNR Officer  
1919-1923 Broadmoor Prison  
1927-30 Canada  
1930-35 Los Angeles

Allan Newsome Bushill was born 13th October 1893 in Coventry, a son of Newsome Bushill, a wealthy stationery manufacturer of 'Kielder', Eaton Road Coventry (since demolished). He was one of three brothers.

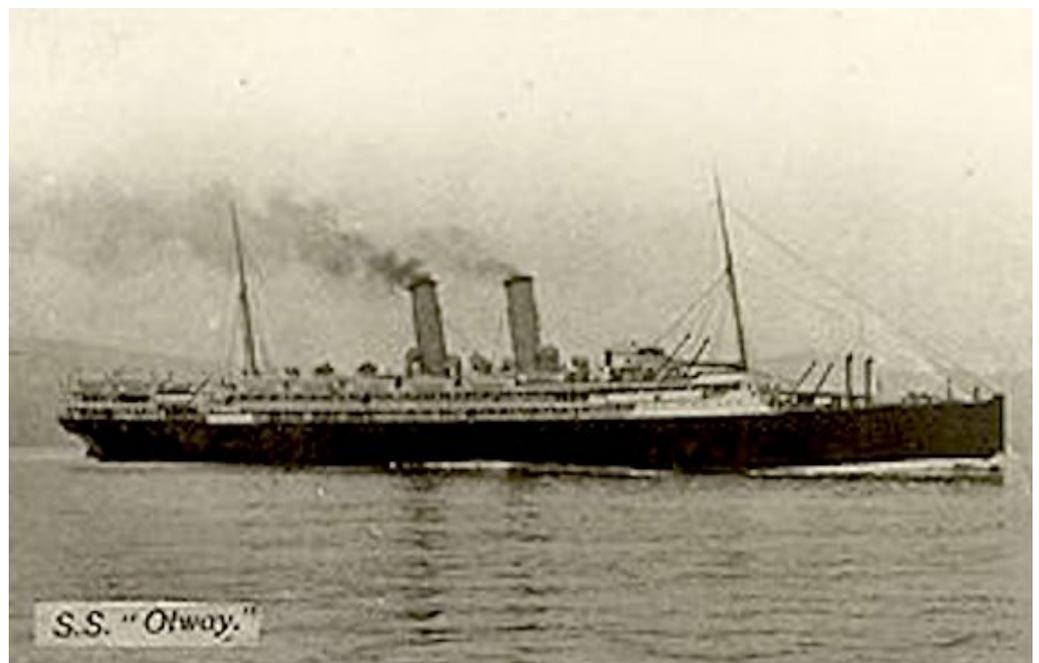
He had a slightly unusual upbringing in that he was educated in a Moravian School in Germany before joining *Conway* in 1906. This was a popular choice for a certain section of British society during Victorian and Edwardian times - prosperous middle class families adhering to non-conformist Protestant religious convictions. Allan's family were devout Coventry Baptists. Moravians believed in simple, honest to goodness values and it was probably felt that such a schooling offered a more grounded alternative to the often arrogant manners and false sense of entitlement typified by British Public schools.

After leaving *Conway* in 1909 he became an Apprentice to White Star Line, initially serving aboard their in-house training ship *Mersey*. His linked report card indicates a certain lack of self confidence.



He served in Henry Fernie & Sons' Liverpool Shipping Co Ltd from 1912 to 1914, first as 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer in *Dalezan*, then as 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer in *Benazan* and was 1<sup>st</sup> Officer in *Martazan* when war began in 1914. They operated ships on the trans-Atlantic route and so this would have provided Allan with his first experience of North America.

He joined the RNR in May 1915 and was commissioned as a Temporary Sub-Lt, and served in the former Orient Line steamship *Otway*, an Armed Merchant Cruiser, during which time he was promoted to Acting Lt. He then served aboard the monitor M.22 attached to the Dover Patrol, becoming a confirmed Lieutenant in May 1917.



He ended the war as a navigating officer in the submarine service (HMS V.1) based in Harwich. Submarines were still in their infancy so this was a very stressful way of life.

So far, this is a fairly normal account of an Old Conway of the period, however from here on in things start to take a very different path.

## POST WAR

After the war, his heart was set on joining the family business and making a successful career in commerce but his father didn't want that and this threw him badly.

### Wife No 1 - Murdered

His later asylum records show that he suffered from malaria which in rare cases can give rise to depression, psychotic delusions and temporary insanity.<sup>1</sup> In 1918 he was engaged to 22 year old Audrey Guendoline Quiggan, the daughter of engineer Daniel Arthur Quiggan. He was certainly suffering from depression as, according to his father-in-law, he wanted to call off the engagement for this very reason but was persuaded that the love of a good woman would see him right, so the marriage went ahead. On 10<sup>th</sup> September 1918, in the Parish Church, Great Yarmouth, he married. They lived at Tower House, Grange Road, Formby (right).



On 28<sup>th</sup> February 1919, after a victory ball, Bushill bought a £171 diamond ring for his wife, as well as a revolver and three cartridges. On Formby beach, whilst she was admiring the ring, he shot her twice in the back, killing her. He then shot himself in the chest, but survived. A letter found in his pocket explained that his father had refused to employ him in the family business. His father-in-law had offered him employment, but he didn't feel that he would make a good engineer. He had decided to commit suicide, but wished to spare his new wife disgrace by killing her first. He wanted her to die happy, so had bought the ring.

At his trial he was found not guilty of murder by reason of insanity, and ordered to be detained in Broadmoor Asylum i.e. not HMP Broadmoor. His record card shows he suffered a mental breakdown. He claimed depression, hearing of voices, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> "So common and diverse became the psychiatric effects attributed to both severe and mild forms of malaria during the post-WWI era, that an entire textbook, well received by psychiatrists at the time was published (\*) with chapters featuring case reports of malarial psychoses, "dementia praecox", confusional and delusional insanity, mania, melancholia, delirium, and dementia attributable to the disease"

(\*) Anderson WK. *Malarial psychoses and neuroses*. London: Oxford University Press; 1927. pp. i-vii.

## **MOVE TO NORTH AMERICA**

With his release in sight he applied for a replacement Mate's Certificate (see link) so he was perhaps thinking of returning to sea. Once recovered, and safe to be let out in society again, he did not go back to sea but decided to make a new life for himself across the Atlantic. Unfortunately things didn't work out too well for him there either.

### **Wife No 2 - Died**

In 1923, Allan went to Canada, subsequently marrying Bessie Eldret Green on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1925. She died 19<sup>th</sup> September 1926.

### **Wife No 3 - Died**

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 1927 Allan married Rosa Henriette Magdalena Wessels in White Rock British Columbia. Tragically there is a record of a child dying 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1928, and Rosa the mother just a few days later on 6<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Wife No 4 - Died**

He moved to the USA, to King County, Washington State on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1928. He appears to have married Mildred Leigh on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1928. She too died and according to the 1930 U.S. Census, Bushill was lodging in apartments in Los Angeles, 'a 36 year old, widowed salesman of washing machines'. His name also appears that year in the California Northern District List of Naturalizations, having become a naturalised U.S. citizen (petition dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 1930).

### **Wife No 5 - Divorced**

On 16<sup>th</sup> May 1934, in Glendale, Los Angeles, he is married yet again, this time to Patricia B Mitchell from Alabama, who at age 20, was 18 years his junior. That marriage didn't last long either; he was divorced after only six weeks.

### **Wife No 6 & His Death**

Finally this tragic tale ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1935. While living at the Barker Hotel, 2000 Miramar Street, Van Nuys, L.A., (photo below) he attached a hose from the exhaust of his car and committed suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning. The name of the informant on the death certificate is a Naomi Bushill (divorced) who in 1934 was residing at 72 17<sup>th</sup> CT R LA.



*The Barker Hotel since demolished*