

William Allison Hudson and Mary Hudson d 4th May 1941



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
WILLIAM ALLISON HUDSON
AND HIS WIFE MARY
KILLED BY ENEMY ACTION
4TH MAY 1941

William Allison Hudson, B.A., (aged 47) and Mary Stobart McLoughton Hudson (aged 45) died at 26 Hill Road, Hawcoat. CWGC reports that she was the daughter of Mrs. Binnie, of 28 St. Paul's Road, Ardmore, Philadelphia, USA. He was a schoolmaster at Barrow Grammar School. (See below)

On 17 May 1941 the *News* reported:

**LATE MR. W.A. HUDSON
21 YEARS BARROW GRAMMAR SCHOOL MASTER
NOBILITY OF SPIRIT WILL BE TREASURED MEMORY.**

War could hardly have dealt the Barrow Grammar School a crueller blow than the taking of Mr. William Allison Hudson. He joined the staff of the school in January, 1920, as modern languages master, and having served under every headmaster the school has known, could rightly be regarded as an indispensable part of the place. On the death of Mr. J. H. Childs, the second master, in 1936, Mr. Hudson was entrusted with the senior modern languages post, a promotion which was not only a fitting reward for his sound work over many years, but also a confidence amply justified in the years, unhappily few, which followed. But the school's record of modern language scholarships to the Universities was due as much to the solid foundation which Mr. Hudson laid in the middle school as to his work with the sixth form. He had the gift of inspiring the boys and bringing out the best that was in them.

By many old boys, however, he will be remembered more for his untiring interest in Association football, of which he was in charge. He had coached the school eleven, and right up to the time of his death could often be seen changed to play with his form. He was also responsible for the school music, and the interest which boys took in music was largely due to his patient endeavour. The musical programme on speech day, together with concerts in the happier pre-war days, were entirely in his hands.

But Mr. Hudson's work did not end when these things were done. He always gave most generously of his time and energy to all the best things in the life of the school. And while the illness of his wife over many years restricted his social activities in the town, it gave to him a nobility of spirit which will always be a treasured memory in the minds of those whose good fortune it was to work with him.

The **1939 Register** has William A. Hudson (DoB 17 Feb. 1894), Assistant Master, sharing 26 Hill Road with Frederick W. Hudson (DoB 9 October 1901), Master watch-clock repairer, and Air Raid Warden; and Hilda Hudson (DoB 27 November 1904), Unpaid Domestic Duties.

William's origins were in the North-East. In the **1911 Census** the Hudson's were living at 9 Broxbourne Terrace, Sunderland. Father Joseph Hudson (49) is a Watch and Clock repairer; William Allison Hudson (17) is a Bursar at School; brother Joseph Hudson (15), is an Apprentice Watch and Clock repairer; brother Laurence Hudson (12) is at School; brother Frederick Whitfield Hudson (9) has no recorded occupation, nor do mother Mary Elizabeth Hudson (49) or sister Elizabeth (18). The whole family were born in Sunderland.

The **National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1941** has William Allison Hudson leaving his Effects of £1995 4s 3d to Joseph Hudson, watchmaker.

In the **1901 Census** the Hudson's were at 44 Cleveland Road, Sunderland, along with Father-in-Law Allison Whitfield (66), Traveller for a Foundry.

The Barrow Boys Grammar School magazine, *The Barrovian*, had a lengthy eulogy to Mr. Hudson:



IN MEMORIAM — W. A. HUDSON.

THE dull, grey dawn of Sunday, May 4th, 1941, was the saddest and longest I have ever experienced. The home where I had spent many happy years was ruined; the friends I had made were wandering up and down or trying to see what they could save from their broken houses; cars, ambulances, rescue squads, demolition squads, soldiers, police—all the services called forth by the stupidity of modern warfare, seemed to be congregating in my own locality. But I did not realise what was happening, was not aware that I was part of this sorry business; I did not know that for a short time my life was changed and I should have to start again. I stood in the debris-strewn roadway with little thought of what was going on around me.

For twenty years I had gone to and from School with the first friend I made after the last war. We had accepted each other as part of our lives; we discussed our pleasures and little troubles as if soliloquising, we met and parted as if sure of meeting again. Now, as the light was growing stronger, I knew that we should not see each other again—but realisation will not, even as I write, crystallise into certainty. It is difficult still to accept that he has gone, so many memories remain of him who was as constant and staunch a friend as the School has ever produced.

The memories are of little things—insignificant compared with the might of the catastrophe that has come upon us these last two years—but life was made up of little things for most of us in those happy days.

I remember his eager enquiry in the morning of his games day regarding the weather—he always knew it would be fine that afternoon. It made no difference if the rain poured down; he would return long after four o'clock, wet and shivering, blue with cold and weary of limb, but with an eager smile and a keen light in his blue eyes. "A grand game!" He did not demand keenness for football from the boys; he played and enjoyed the game for over thirty years, and no one could be indifferent to soccer with him on the field; his Form played football well because he played and loved the game.

The week before he died I watched him playing gramophone records to one of our forms; an aria by Handel or a movement by Mozart made his eyes shine with delight. He grumbled at the poor re-

production—he always grumbled to improve what was not perfect—but his love of the old composers was in every word he said, and his delight in music kept his class listening to what normally they would have ignored. And how he loved preparing those School productions of Gilbert and Sullivan! His utmost energy, seemingly tireless, was spent at long rehearsals, but his happiness at success was itself his reward. I have just seen the collection of photographs he made of those shows. He must have enjoyed every minute he spent at the piano.

I remember him complaining once or twice during those twenty years. On one occasion he was not satisfied that the Modern Sixth could appreciate poetry, and on another that he could not find time to read modern authors. I used to wonder how he maintained his consistent calm, until I learnt what a good actor he was. He simulated anger in the classroom, but he rarely carried his temper outside it. He forgave easily, except laziness and indifference. Conscientious to a degree, his thoroughness was always evident. He insisted on boys working hard because he worked hard himself; he made them energetic because he was so brimful of life himself.

His life outside School was devoted to his wife, as his energy inside was to the boys. Only those of us who knew them intimately appreciate what this meant. All his time was spent entertaining, comforting and nursing one who had known nothing but illness for sixteen years. His skill in mimicry gave him the power to recreate for his wife the personalities of the School; his memory for detail caused conversations to live again; and his enthusiasm, tempered by a keen sense of fairness, made pictures of classroom, staff-room and playing-fields live vividly for her who long before had joined in those happy meetings at Croft Park and Duke Street—now only memories, alas! Such devotion is rarely found, and makes all the more bitter the apparent consolation that the two were killed together. It is too painful almost to remember that even his last thought was for her—he was holding the chair in which he was struggling to place her when the blow fell on them, and took from me the one whom I had admired as a colleague and loved as a friend, and whose memory I shall cherish for ever.

Mrs Hudson is something of a mystery. The article from the School Magazine implies that she was an invalid of some description. Where was she at the time of the **1939 Register**?

The CWGC has her as the daughter of Mrs Binnie in Philadelphia.

Documents on *Ancestry* have her full name variously as

Mary Stobart McLoughton Hudson (from CWGC)

Mary Brown Stoddart McLauchlan Hudson [from **National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1941**]. Her Effects of £1002 10s 8d are left to the care of George Southcote Townsend solicitor.

In the **1911 Census** a Mary Binnie (15), born Falkirk, is living in the orphanage at Secretary's Sheltering Homes for Orphan, Fatherless and Destitute Children, Myrtle Street, Liverpool, where she attends school part-time. *NB While Ancestry connects this Mary Binnie with Mary Hudson, it is by no means confirmed.*