

Biography of Alexander (Sanny) Boyd



Sanny Boyd on the right with Archibald Shanks on the left. They were both friends of John Smith. (“Fossil Johnny”). It seems very apt that Sanny has a book open on his knee, given his love of reading.

Photo from Calder et al, 1995 “John Smith of Dalry Geologist, Antiquarian & Natural Historian” Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Darvel

Note on his name: Sanny used several different forms of his name, Sanny Boyd and in his book about John Smith he reports that Dalry residents often pronounced his name, “Sanny Bide”.

For these reasons it seems that he preferred to be known as Sanny and this is the form of his name I will use except when quoting from his own writing or official documents where he was sometimes recorded as A Boyd, Alex Boyd and Alexander Boyd.

Sources

All the information about Sanny and his family in this biography has been obtained from his own writing, from Birth, Death and Marriage records, Census records and Valuation Rolls obtainable from Scotland’s People. North Ayrshire Council Bereavement Services provided information on burial places.

Sanny and his family

Sanny’s father, grandfather, uncles and at least one cousin were all handloom weavers in Stevenston before his immediate family moved to Dalry. Sanny’s father was John Boyd, and he was brought up in a house and loom shop in Townhead South Side, Stevenston. Sanny’s paternal grandfather (William Boyd) was a silk weaver, and his grandmother (Agnes Russell) was a muslin sewer.

Sanny’s mother was Catherine Miller, occupation unknown. She lived in Saltcoats at the time of her marriage and her father’s occupation at the time was a twister. (This was Sanny’s maternal grandfather, Alexander Miller and his grandmother was Jean Barton.) Alexander probably operated a machine which twisted yarn in an early automated weaving factory. Sanny was probably named after his paternal grandfather.

Sanny’s parents (John and Catherine) were married in Raise Street, Saltcoats on the 8th of February 1867. This was probably Catherine’s and her parents’ address. Sanny’s father’s occupation is recorded as “weaver”. An earlier census recorded his occupation as “silk weaver”. Both Sanny’s parents and the witnesses could sign their names. This was not always the case at that time, before education had become compulsory.

Sanny’s parents had their first four children in Stevenston: William in 1869, Jean in 1871, Sanny on the 3rd of August 1873, and Agnes in 1876.

The fifth child, Catherine was born in Dalry in 1880 so the family therefore must have moved from Stevenston between 1876 and 1880.

The seven of them lived in a rented single end (one roomed house) in Drakemyre, which was an area to the north of Dalry. Sanny described their first house in Dalry as the bottom flat of a tenement at the beginning of

Hindog Road. It could have been this building in the following photograph or one near it which has been demolished. This would be very convenient for Sanny's father's work as he worked at Ryeside Mill, just across the road.



After the move to Dalry, Sanny's father, John Boyd was working as a warper. This is an operative who prepares the vertical threads on a loom. It can be a hand loom or a mechanical loom in a factory. In John's case it appears that he had made the move from handloom weaving in Stevenston, to operating a warping machine in a factory in Dalry. At this time weaving was undergoing a huge upheaval as mill owners mechanised as many as possible of the steps in producing fabric, undercutting handloom weavers by producing cloth more cheaply and forcing weavers to give up their positions as self-employed artisans to become operatives working on only one step in the mechanical weaving process. Ryeside Mill, where John worked was the base of Kyle, Aitken and Gardiner company which wove Ayrshire blankets (with a blue stripe) as well as tartans and tweeds.

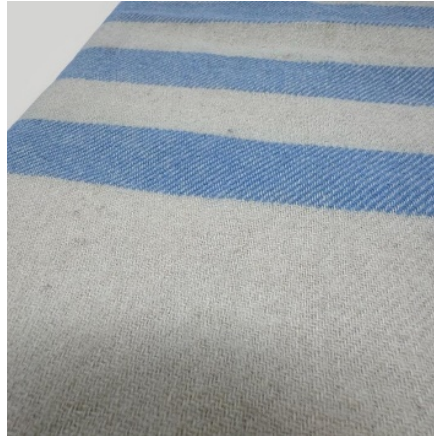


Image of an Ayrshire blanket with distinctive blue stripes

At the same time as weaving was becoming mechanised there was also a boom in mining in Dalry and many of the Boyds' neighbours worked in the mining industry.

John and Catherine had their sixth and final child in 1884 when Mary was born in Dalry. Sanny therefore had one older brother and four sisters – one older and three younger.

Between 1891 and 1921 the censuses show that the family moved between 16 Templand Road and 1 Dakota / Stirrat Place or Row. The latter property was also known to locals as Rabbits Row.



16 Templand Road today



1 Dakota Place / Row today

According to the valuation rolls for 1895, 1905 and 1915 these buildings were owned by either Mrs Catherine Smith or Stirrat and Mrs Jessie Clark or Tait.

Over the next few years Sanny's only brother, William left home and married, as did his sister Agnes. William had 3 daughters and Agnes had one so John and Catherine became grandparents and Sanny became an uncle.

In 1909, Sanny's father, John, died at the age of 68 after suffering from Pneumonia for 13 days. Sanny was present at the death and was the informant to the registrar. John's occupation was recorded as "millworker". At that time the retirement age was 70 so Sanny's father was probably still working until 13 days before his death. Sanny's mother, Catherine, continued to live with those of her children who were still at home until she died in 1927 of vascular disease of the heart at age 85.

Sanny

As already stated, Sanny was born in Stevenston in 1873 but by 1881 the family had moved to Dalry, Sanny was seven years old and attending school. By the time he was ten he had started working in the mill as a half timer. This meant that he shared a post with another young person. They took it in turns to attend school for a half day, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. When not in school during the other half day they worked at the mill. Sanny describes other boys later working under this system and he called it 'cruel' and "odious" in his notes on Ryeside Mills.

When Sanny was 17 years old, the 1891 census recorded his father's occupation as a blanket warper, his mother as a blanket warper's wife, his older sister, Jean as a blanket weaver, Sanny as a pattern weaver and his younger sister, Agnes as a tweed weaver. The two youngest girls were still at school. This suggests that the four members of the family in employment all worked at Ryeside woollen blanket weaving mill. Sanny's job (pattern weaver) was probably on automated weaving machines using the Jacquard method. This consisted of using a special loom which could "read" cards to alter the warp and thus produce complex patterns. His older brother, William had left home.

Twenty years later, by the 1911 census, Sanny's father had died so Sanny was recorded as the head of the household because he was the oldest male resident. He was 39 by then and his occupation was a Winder in blanket mills. Sanny never married. The rest of the household consisted of his mother, Catherine, aged 68, his sister Jean/Jane, aged 39, a weaver in the blanket mills, his sister Catherine aged 31, no occupation listed which probably indicates that she was occupied in domestic duties. Two of Sanny's nieces were present, Euphemia aged ten and Catherine aged seven who were both at school. This is the third Catherine Boyd in the household and in the interests of clarity I will refer to her as Niece Catherine. These were the children of Sanny's brother William. Further information on why they were living with their grandmother and aunts and uncle is provided later

Two years later the First World war commenced, and eventually all fit men between 18 and 41 were called up but by that time Sanny was 43 so it seems likely that he continued working in Ryeside Mills during this war.

The family members recorded in the 1921 census recorded are Sanny's mother Catherine, aged 78, Sanny's sister, Jeanie (Jean) Boyd, aged 49, a blanket weaver, Sanny / Alexander aged 47, a general millworker, sister Catherine Boyd, aged 40, a Blanket weaver. These three siblings all worked for Kyle, Aitken and Gardiner at Ryeside Mill. Sanny's niece, Catherine, aged 17, was a tailoress with Thomas Menzies. His sister Mary was not present on census night, and I have been unable to ascertain her whereabouts that night.

This is the last census currently available, but we can imagine the years going on with Sanny and his sisters working in the mill, going to church on Sunday then Sanny visiting his friend, John Smith on some Sunday afternoons. Sanny was a member of the Temperance movement so we can imagine him attending meetings in the building which was originally the Temperance Hall but is now St Palladius Church Hall. Sanny probably retired in 1938 when he was 65 as eligibility for the old age pension had been dropped to 65 by then.

Friendship with John Smith

In 1912, Sanny had made a friend who became an important character in his life for the next 18 years. At that time John Smith, ("Fossil Johnny") was living in Dalry, studying the local Geology and Botany, having academic papers published as well as numerous articles in the local newspaper, "The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald". Sanny read these articles with interest and one day, meeting John Smith in the Public Park, he approached him and introduced himself. A friendship grew between them which seemed to have become an important element in Sanny's life. Sanny visited John at his various homes over the years and joined John in field study rambles around the local countryside. Sometimes there were just the two of them and sometimes Sanny joined in a group ramble organised by John.



John Smith (Fossil Johnnie)

Biography of John Smith

Around 1929 or 1930, Sanny commenced to write his biography of John Smith. A later monograph on John Smith (Calder J et al 1995) acknowledges that,

"Most of the information on John Smith's life is taken from [A Boyd's Book] published in 1930."

RB Wilson states that,

"John Smith died in November of that year and was aware that Boyd was writing his biography but unfortunately did not live to see it published. Much of the book must have been written before Smith's demise but even allowing for this, Boyd finalised the work and had it published in less than two months, an example of very rapid publication."

At least one other academic article referenced Sanny's biography of John.

Sanny's biography documents John's life events including his education, practical career in mining, academic career in writing articles for academic publications, discoveries in the fields of Botany, Archaeology and Geology, academic awards received, field trips both local, national and international, personal life, foibles,

residences, his lack of interest in Politics, daily routines, books each lent to the other and discussions of these books.

While doing all of this, Sanny interspersed his writings with apt quotations elucidating his points and revealing himself to be extremely well read. The list of authors and poets quoted includes Aeneid, Aristotle, HT Buckle, Burns, Thomas Campbell, William Cowper, Dante, Romesh Duff, Euripides, Herrick, Homer, Charles Lever, Milton, Allan Ramsay, Edward Rice, Shakespeare, James Thompson, Virgil, HG Wells and Wordsworth. If anyone wonders how a renowned scientist like John Smith and a mill worker became friends, Sanny's reading list illustrates that the two men surely had more in common than their respective careers might suggest. John Hodgart remembers going with his father to visit Sanny Boyd and the room was lined with books.

It is surprising that Sanny who started work in the mill when he was 10, squeezing school attendance around part time work, could have such a classical education as is revealed by these quotations. I assume that he spent most of his free time reading and was an autodidact. He mentions in his journal that he had bought a second-hand copy of "The Dramas in French" by Corneille so we must assume that he read French.

As already mentioned, John Smith died in 1930. It must have been a wrench for Sanny to lose his friend. By that time Sanny probably stayed with his sister, Catherine and niece Catherine. He was 57 years old by then.

Friendship with Archie Shanks

Archie and Sanny appear together in the photo at the start of this biography. Archie was born in Gourrock but married a Dalry girl, Jessie Kimm. They lived at Mount Pleasant in Dalry for a time, Archie working as an analytical chemist in a worsted Spinning factory – possibly Fleming and Reid. Sanny admired Archie's knowledge of Botany, Geology and Astronomy and was sad when he moved to Glasgow sometime between the 1911 and 1921 census. He also praised Archie's wife, Jessie in a poem. By 1930 Archibald had returned to Dalry and lived at 1 Templand Crescent, very near to Sanny so presumably they rekindled their friendship. Unfortunately, by then, their mutual friend, John Smith, had died. Archie was 2 years older than Sanny and died the year before him in Dalry.

Diaries

Sanny's journal entries about Dalry from 1943 to 1947 reveal the writer to have time to often walk around Dalry, talk with the people he met and write short accounts of goings on in the town. Near the start of the journal when the war was ongoing Sanny described movement of military personnel. He was particularly interested in how his old place of employment – Ryeside Mills- was being used as a barracks. He mentioned developments in the town such as the opening of the nursery school, building of a canteen at St Palladius School, construction of council houses. We also read about social events such as a sports day, gala day, football matches, as well as a visit from a travelling circus and zoo with fairground rides. There were also musical events by the Salvation Army. He described workers he saw on his walk such as steeplejacks, roadmen and farmers bringing in the harvest. He made notes on who was moving house, leaving the town or moving into it. We hear about businesses changing premises.

Readers can gain an insight into Sanny's character from the diaries. He comes over as an upright citizen who looks askance at the behaviour of some of his fellow residents. He comments on the expense of some public projects and disapproves of betting, conscription of soldiers, delay in the completion of council houses, the use of Glasgow painters instead of local Dalry painting business, the use of motor cars for short journeys and numerous other things. Plenty of people would agree with him on many points but the long list of negative comments makes him seem curmudgeonly. Nevertheless, readers with an interest in Dalry history will find the diaries instructive and as I have learned more about Sanny, I have become fond of him, as have many other Dalry people who have read his writing.

Memories of Ryeside Mills

We don't know when he wrote the account of Ryeside Mills, but he explains how the business was originally formed by Kyle and Holburn, but the latter partner left and set up on his own account in Sharon Street. Later

Kyle formed a partnership with Aitken and Gardiner. Sanny explained that Kyle was a local Dalry man, Aitken lived at Carsehead house; and Gardiner came from Lanarkshire.

Sanny described in great detail the layout of the mill, and the range of machinery which included 40 blanket looms in the weaving department. Other machinery mentioned were the teaser, the condenser, the fillet, a ring doffer and, of course the boiler and engine which converted water from the Rye into steam power to operate the machinery.

He also described the processes by which wool was turned into blankets. Some of these processes are willowing, teasing, carding, spinning, twisting, winding, warping, pirn filling, heddeling, weaving, and dyeing (although this last process was subcontracted to a firm in Stewarton.)

All these processes had previously been carried out by hand but were now mechanised. He also mentioned many of his fellow workers and wrote more about other people than about himself.

Books of poetry

Sanny wrote at least two booklets of poetry, "Verses by Alexander Boyd, Dalry" printed by David Morton, printer, and "The Road to Hindog Glen and other Verses by Alexander Boyd, Dalry" printed by James Oliver, printer, Dalry. Reading "Verses" we get a feeling of what was important to Sanny as follows.

He frequently used elements of the Scots language and was obviously a Burns admirer, but he referred to other poets too, such as Lucretius. He addressed family and friends, including his sister, brother-in-law and nieces- Mr and Mrs Charles Pringle, Kate (Catherine) and Jenny (Janet). Friends to whom he addressed poems or otherwise mentioned were Richard Porteous, Mr and Mrs Archibald Shanks and John Smith.

His fondness of the countryside around Dalry is clear and he mentioned the Hindog Glen, Aitnock, the Rye, the Garnock and Monkcastle. He appreciated nature and wrote about the seasons, flowers and birds.

Although he never married, he wrote three poems about a young woman, named, "A Country Maiden" "Lines to a Young Maiden" and "A Maiden's Smile". We will never know if they were dedicated to a particular young woman or to maidenhood in general.

He was aware of how modern technology for the time was changing life as he mentioned aeroplanes, submarines, trains, telephones, wireless, motor cars and motor ploughs (tractors).

His political views come through in his criticism of war, and support for Socialism, Education and Internationalism.

In his other booklet, "The Road to the Hindog Glen and Other Verses" he covers similar topics. The poem of the title is 142 lines long. In this poem he referred to many poets and authors including Leyden, Burns, Scott, Flecker, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Browning. He showed himself to be knowledgeable about Scottish and ancient Greek and Roman history. He referred to recent local history when ironstone mining and Copper mining took place in the area, the latter carried out at Caerwinning hill by miners from Cornwall. He was sensitive to the hardship of miners' lives.

He listed the farms in the area as Flashwood, Baidland, Windyedge, Whitecraig (where the Carswell family lived) Meiklemyre, Gowanlee, Cunningham Baidland and Dykes.

He described the view to be gained of the Ayrshire coast from the highest point of the Hindog Glen - Carrick shore and Ailsa Craig to Goatfell on Arran are all visible.

He described how Hindog Glen could be enjoyed by walkers like himself, fishermen catching trout and youths swimming in the Rye water.

In other poems in this collection, Sanny refers to the philosophers, Plato and Socrates, Darwin and the artist Turner. He addresses a poem to local artist, George Houston, suggesting that he is Scotland's Turner. There is a poem about the Beetly Bank area of Dalry and another in praise of Larch trees.

He quotes Robert Greene:

*Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content,
The quiet mind is richer than a crown.*

Then expresses the same sentiment in his own words:

*"Give me above all else a quiet mind
And leisure to peruse
The works of those who edify mankind,
The masters of the muse."*

It strikes me that we learn much about Sanny from these words. His wants were modest, and his greatest pleasure was to read, especially poetry.

He was knowledgeable, self-taught, had wide- ranging interests and a strong moral compass and he was non-materialistic.

Another poem by Sanny on the history of Dalry exists but it is unclear whether it formed a part of another publication or stands alone. It can be read in Appendix 1.

Sanny seems to have led a very quiet life, travelling little outside the small town of Dalry. He had a classical education gained through reading which must have been unusual in a millworker. Presumably he found a channel for all this knowledge in conversations with his two well educated and knowledgeable friends, John Smith and Archibald Shanks. His writing was probably also an outlet for his learning. Under different circumstances Sanny might have gained academic qualifications far beyond what was required for his job in a woollen mill.

His writing was serious with very little humour in it so perhaps this reflected his personality. He had a lot of tragedy in his life but chose not to write about that. All the information about deaths and tragedy in his life has been discovered through researching official documents and not through his account.

Old Age

The last dated piece of his writing is from his journal in 1947 and concerns the induction of a new minister into St Margaret's Church, but the previous one to that is quite festive for Sanny:

"December 27th, 1947

In the afternoon at 3 o'clock the old folks were given a treat in the town hall, they were first given a good tea and sausage rolls and other eatables. Mr McDonald's quadrille band played many tunes when the tea was being served and taken. There were several songs sung afterwards and short talks by the new minister, Mr Kirkland, the Reverend McKelvie, the new father of the chapel as well. On leaving the hall the old folk, men and women received a small envelope containing seven shillings and sixpence, there must be much labour in getting up such a treat and those who are engaged in the work are entitled to much praise."

Sanny was by then 74 so one of the old folks himself but in his usual self- effacing way he describes the event impersonally and doesn't mention that he was himself a guest.

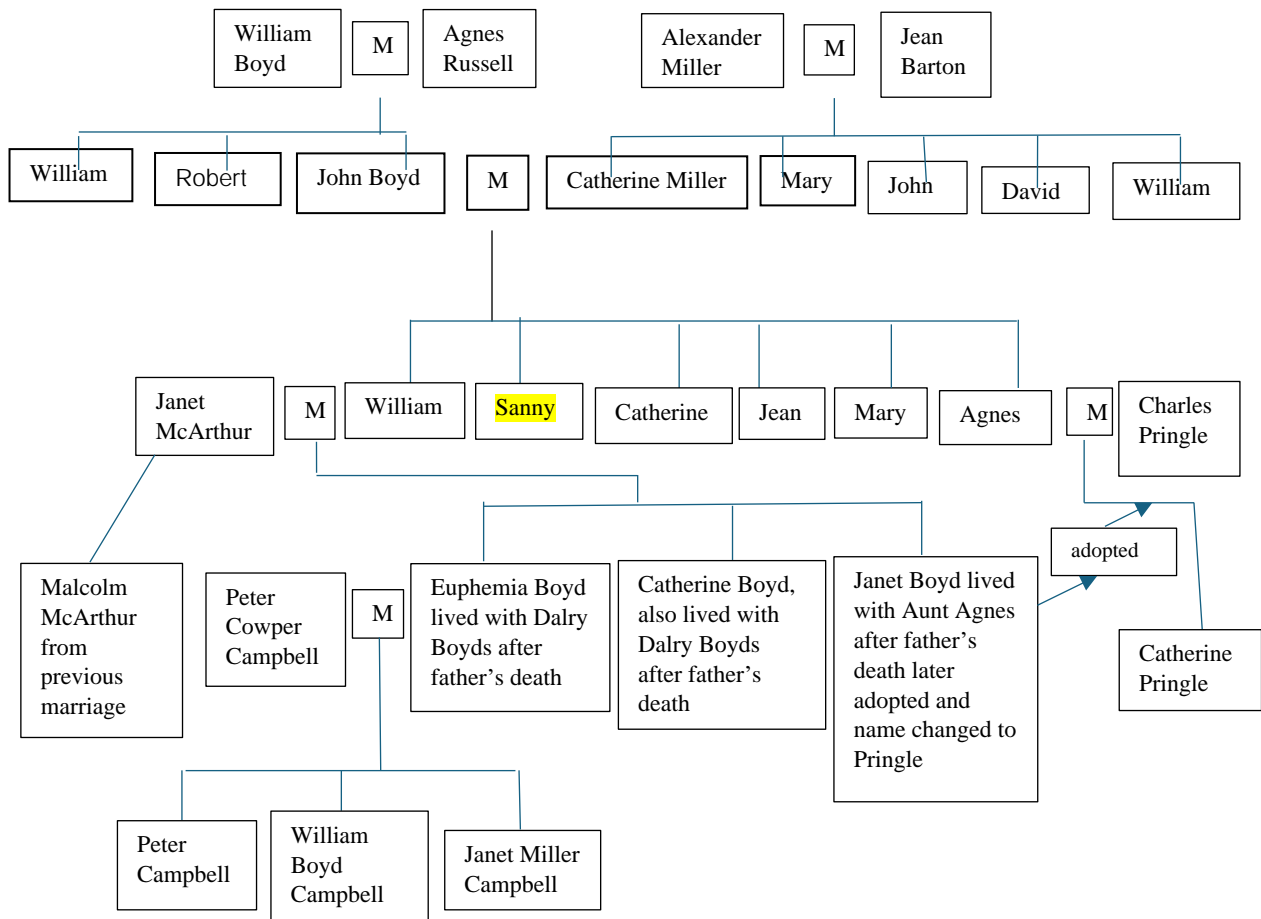
Let us imagine Sanny there, having had a good tea and other eatables and having enjoyed music as well as receiving a gift of money equivalent to £12 today. This is probably almost the last record of Sanny we have until his death certificate.

He died on the 14th February 1952, aged 78 at home in 16, Templand Road of cerebral thrombosis as certified by Dr John Gordon. His niece, Catherine was the informant, and she had been present when he died.

Complicated family relationships

The relationships between Sanny's 4 nieces are complicated especially since two of them were named Catherine. In fact, there were four Catherine's in Sanny's close family. A family tree diagram illustrating the family relationships I have been able to discover might help to make things clearer.

Detail of Family Tree of Sanny Boyd



Sanny's brothers and sisters

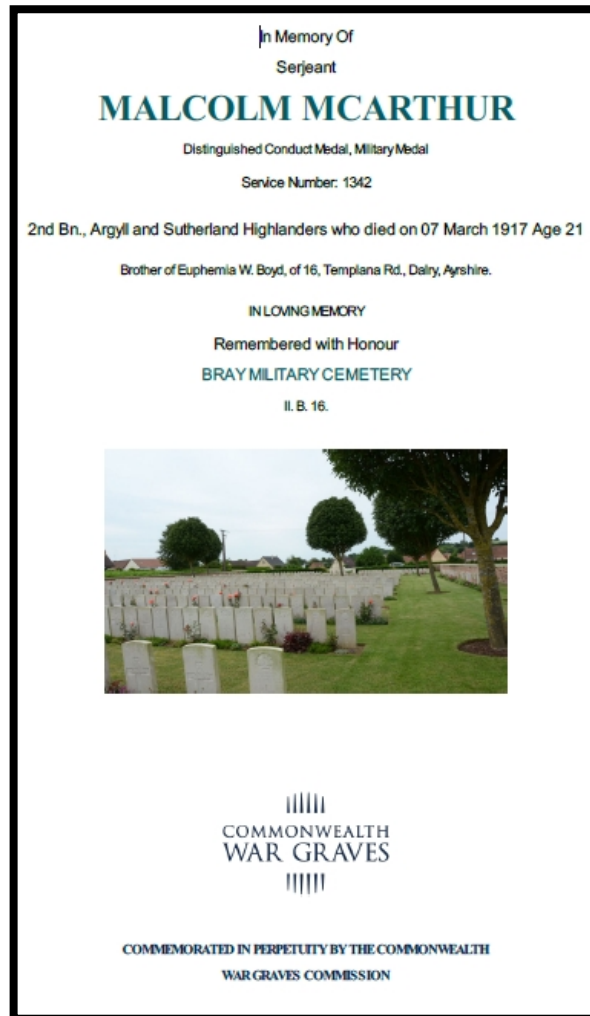
William

Sanny's only brother, William had married Janet McArthur in 1900 in Glasgow. He was a cycle wheel builder, and she was a cycle enameller, so they probably met at work. Janet had been married before and had a son called Malcolm who became William's stepson. They had three daughters, Euphemia in 1900, Catherine in 1904 and Janet in 1907. They were of course Sanny's nieces. William and his family had moved to Kilbowie near Clydebank where William was working as a machinist. I suspect he may have been working in the famous Singer sewing machine factory.

Tragedy struck in 1908 when William's wife, Janet died of heart failure and asthma, aged 31. This left William a widower with a stepson aged 12 and three daughters aged eight, four and one. In those days, even more so than now, it would have been very difficult for William to bring up three young girls while working long hours, so the arrangement was made that the older two girls, Euphemia and Catherine went to stay with their grandparents, their Uncle Sanny and their aunts in Dalry. The youngest daughter, Janet went to live with her Aunt Agnes (Sanny's sister) who had married Charles Pringle and lived in Auchinleck. William was living in Old Kilpatrick with his stepson, Malcolm, now 15. He was working as a sewing machine manufacturer operator and Malcolm was unemployed.

In 1912, another tragedy struck the family when William died by suicide, leaving a 16-year-old stepson and his three daughters who were by then twelve, eight and five. This was four years after the death of his wife and one can only assume that his death was connected to this bereavement and possibly also to being separated from his daughters. We can only imagine the grief caused to Sanny and his family by the death of his only brother in such extreme circumstances.

I have been unable to discover what happened to William's stepson, Malcolm McArthur / Boyd, immediately after William's death in 1912 until the start of the Great War in 1914. He fought with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in the Great War, perhaps being called up as early as 1914. He received a Distinguished Conduct Medal and a bar on his Military Medal. Malcolm died of wounds in France at the Somme on 7th March 1917 aged 21 and his next of kin appeared to have been his half-sister, Euphemia. She was 17 years old when he died.



Full size copy of this document is in Appendix 2

It is a pity that there are 2 spelling mistakes on this moving document.

Sanny and Malcolm were not blood relatives, Malcolm being Sanny's brother's stepson, but Malcolm had such a tragic life that I think it is right to record his story here.

Jean

Sanny's sister, Jean became a blanket weaver, in Ryeside Mills beside her father. For a time in 1911, Jean worked as a live-in servant in Glengarnock in the household of the minister of the United Free Church, Robert Andrew, and his wife Jessie. She later returned to weaving. She was the informant on their brother William's death registration. In 1921 she was living with her widowed mother, brother Sanny, sister Catherine and niece

Euphemia at 16 Templand Road. She died of stomach cancer in 1930, aged 58, three years after her mother's death. Her brother Sanny was present when she died, and he registered the death. Jean never married.

Agnes

By the time Agnes was 15 she was a tweed weaver, no doubt in Ryeside mills along with her father, sister Jean and brother Sanny. In 1897 she married Charles Pringle, a pit engine keeper from Vennel Street. An engine keeper was a kind of early engineer who maintained and operated the main machine which powered other machinery in either a factory or a mine. It seems likely that many members of the Pringle family worked as Engine keepers since Andrew Pringle and Robert Pringle won prizes for best kept engines at the 1865 Dalry Annual Flower Show. Agnes was the only sister to marry and at first lived a few doors away from her parents and siblings in Templand Road with her husband.

They had a daughter, Catherine /Kate, their only child in 1898. This was the first of Sanny's two nieces called Catherine. I will call her Catherine Pringle to differentiate her from Sanny's other niece, born later, who was named Catherine Boyd. (William's daughter).

Sanny's sister, Agnes, his brother-in-law, Charles and niece, Catherine moved to Auchinleck where Charles again was working as an engine keeper. In the 1911 census, Agnes's sister, Mary and their niece, Janet (William's youngest daughter) were also present. Janet had moved in with her Aunt Agnes, Uncle Charles and cousin Catherine after her mother had died in 1908 when Janet was only a baby. Presumably Mary was there on a visit. At this time Janet's father, William was still living in Old Kilpatrick with his stepson, Malcolm McArthur.

Agnes and Charles eventually adopted Janet and in the 1921 census she is recorded as Jenny Pringle, daughter.

At some time, Agnes and Charles, their daughter Catherine and adopted daughter, Jenny returned to Dalry. Charles died in 1937 and Agnes in 1948. The address on both their death certificates is Market Garden, Vennel Street. This might have been "the Orchard" remembered by many Dalry residents.

Catherine

Catherine appears to have spent her whole life living with her parents and then Sanny and working as a weaver in Ryeside mills. She never married. She was the informant on Sanny's death in 1952 and she herself died in 1957, aged 73 of cerebral thrombosis at 18, St Margaret's Avenue. The informant of Catherine's death was her niece, Euphemia. It seems likely that Catherine and Sanny (and perhaps their niece, Catherine Boyd) lived together from 1926 until his death.

Mary

Mary was born in 1884 and appears to have lived a similar life to her sister Catherine. She never married, and lived with her parents and other relatives. On her death certificate her occupation is recorded as a tweed weaver. In the 1911 census she was in Auchinleck visiting her sister, Agnes and her family and no occupation was noted. She was again absent from home in the 1921 census but I have not been able to identify her whereabouts that night. She died in 1925, aged 42 the year before her mother, after having had breast cancer for two years. Sanny was the informant and was present at her death.

Nieces

Catherine Pringle was born in 1898, the daughter of Sanny's sister Agnes who had married Charles Pringle. Catherine never married. She appears to have lived with her parents until they died, after having returned to Dalry to a market garden in Vennel Street. She died in 1971 at 41a James Street.

The next three nieces were sisters

Euphemia Boyd was born in 1900, the daughter of Sanny's brother William who had married Janet McArthur. When her mother died, she moved to Dalry as an eight -year-old, with her sister Catherine and lived with their grandparents and aunts and Uncle Sanny.

In the 1921 census Euphemia was missing from the household in Templand Road as she was working as a housemaid at Warren Park Hospital in Largs.

She married Peter Couper Campbell in Dalry, in 1924 when she was 24 and he was a 33- year- old poultry farmer from Inchinnan. They lived in Inchinnan and had three children: Peter Campbell, 1925, William Boyd Campbell, 1929 and Janet Miller Campbell, 1935. Euphemia was widowed in 1967 when Peter died, aged 77 years. I believe that Euphemia died some time after 1978.

Catherine Boyd was born in 1904, the daughter of Sanny's brother, William who had married Janet McArthur. When their mother died, she moved to Dalry with her older sister, Euphemia and lived with their grandparents and aunts and Uncle Sanny. There were three Catherine Boyds living in the household: Sanny's mother, his sister and his niece. She never married and possibly lived with her Uncle Sanny and her Aunt Catherine until they both died. She trained as a tailoress, and a Miss Catherine Boyd, Milliner who had a shop in North Street in 1940 may have been the same person. She died in 1978.

Janet Boyd Pringle was born in 1908. When her sisters Euphemia and Catherine moved to Dalry after their mother's death, Janet moved to Auchinleck to stay with Sanny's sister Agnes, her husband Charles Pringle and their daughter, Catherine Pringle. Later, after their father, William, also died, Janet was adopted by Agnes and Charles. Like her adoptive sister, Catherine Pringle, she never married, and she appears to have lived with her adoptive parents, Agnes and Charles until they died. She moved to Dalry to the market garden with Agnes, Charles and Catherine and died in 1976.

Summary of Boyd family birth and death dates

Name & relationship to Sanny	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
John (Father)	→													
Catherine (Mother)	→													
William (brother)				→										
Jean (sister)				→										
Sanny				→										
Agnes Pringle (sister)				→										
Charles Pringle (Brother-in-law)				→										
Janet McArthur (Sister-in-law)				→										
Catherine (sister)				→										
Mary (sister)					→									
Catherine Pringle (niece)							→							
Euphemia Boyd Campbell (niece)							→							???
Catherine Boyd (niece)							→							
Janet Boyd/ Pringle (niece)								→						

Surviving Family?

Sanny was survived by his sister Catherine. She died childless in 1957, aged 77. She was the last of the Boyd siblings to die. By then, Catherine had moved to 18 St Margaret's Avenue, in a row of newly built council house designed as amenity houses. They were called "auld folks' hooses" in local parlance.

When Sanny died, his four nieces were still living. Catherine Boyd, Catherine Pringle and Janet Pringle all died childless, so Sanny has no surviving relatives through them. However, Euphemia had married, and she had three children who were Sanny's great nephews and great niece. If any of these great nephews or great niece had children, they would be Sanny's great, great nephews or nieces.

The census records show that Sanny had two uncles on his father's side and three uncles and an aunt on his mother's side, all originally from Stevenston. If any of these uncles or his aunt had children, they would of course be Sanny's cousins. If these cousins had children and grandchildren, they would be Sanny's very distant cousins several times removed.

Memorials

Sanny

Sanny was buried in an unmarked grave at section S, Lair number 282 with his mother, Catherine and sister Jean in Dalry cemetery. This lair is against the back wall of the old cemetery. (Information obtained from North Ayrshire Council Bereavement Services.)

Sanny's sister, Catherine Boyd and his niece, also Catherine Boyd

The graves of other members of his family have headstones in Dalry cemetery and I did find one to his sister, Catherine and niece, Catherine. This niece is Catherine Boyd, daughter of Sanny's brother William.



"In Loving Memory of our dear aunt CATHERINE BOYD DIED 8th JULY 1957 AGED 75 my dear sister CATHERINE BOYD DIED 20th OCT 1978 AGED 74."

Sanny's nieces Euphemia Boyd Campbell and Janet Boyd Pringle both had an Aunt Catherine and a sister Catherine, but Janet died before their sister Catherine, so Euphemia must have erected this stone.

Sanny's brother-in-law, Charles Pringle, his sister, Agnes Boyd, his nieces, Catherine Pringle and Janet (Boyd) Pringle



In LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FATHER CHARLES ROSS PRINGLE DIED 18TH AUGUST 1937 AND OUR DEAR MOTHER AGNES RUSSEL BOYD DIED 12TH JULY 1948 THEIR BELOVED ELDEST DAUGHTER CATHERINE MILLER PRINGLE DIED 8TH August 1971. THEIR YOUNGER DAUGHTER JANET PRINGLE DIED?? OCTOBER 1976 AGED 69 YEARS 'UNTIL THE DAYBREAK' PRINGLE".

I believe that Catherine Pringle and Janet Boyd Pringle had this stone erected for Catherine's parents (who were Janet's aunt and uncle and later her adoptive parents.) Janet and / or Euphemia had Catherine's name added and finally Euphemia had Janet's details added.

Note: As already stated, all the information I have recorded here is based on documentary evidence but if any readers have additional information on Sanny, I would be most grateful if you were to share it and allow this account to be improved.

Appendix 1

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Poem by Sandy**LOCAL HISTORY**

The old ancestral stately House of Blair
 Where many gentlemen and ladies fair,
 Who blest with health and wealth found joy in life
 Unvexed with care of poverty's rude strife,
 Have gone and left the name that is known well
 Those who read Scottish History can tell.
 One of their ancient line with Bruce had fought
 For freedom of the nation dearly bought.
 In modern times another Blair had been
 A Colonel in the Army and had seen
 In times of War and Peace his country rise
 To heights of fame in works of enterprise.
 And social science too began to show
 Some sparks of life which soon did warmly glow.
 A Mason's Lodge that started took his name
 Of Blair to give it more than local fame
 And Boswell of the town of Auchinleck,
 A friend of Blair's and held in much respect.
 (Who was the son of James 'who wrote entire
 The Life of Johnson readers much admire)
 Wrote a Masonic Song which made all gay
 When it was sung on that auspicious day.
 The Colonel's son the Navy joined and rose
 To be a Captain early we suppose.
 His Portrait framed still hangs upon the wall
 In room known as the Lesser Public Hall.
 He built a small Museum on his ground
 And had it filled with relics he had found
 In foreign lands and brought them to his home
 And oft looked at them when he ceased to roam,
 The people of the town too oft did go
 To visit this unique and varied show.
 On one occasion 'twas his happy lot
 To see at Abbotsford Sir Walter Scott,
 Of the short visit Scott has taken note
 In the instructive Journal which he wrote.
 No Motor Cars were driven then with speed
 The mode of travel carriage and good steed.
 And in those days the horses kept at Blair
 Were fed and groomed by horsemen with much care.
 A crest upon the carriage was arrayed
 A Deer's head with the words below displayed
 In Latin 'Amo Probos' which sounds fine
 And suits their high aristocratic line.
 On Sabbath days when to the Church they'd go
 The country folk oft talked about the show
 Of finery the men and ladies wore
 And jewellery of which they had great store.
 A son who was called Frederick by name
 Lived to acquire military fame
 When young it was his parents wish to find
 Some teachers suited to improve his mind
 So off to Harrow he was duly sent
 Where on his education time was spent.
 Horace and Virgil he was taught to know
 Were Poets whom all gentlemen bestow
 Much praise upon their work and learn to quote
 When they make speeches lines these poets wrote.
 From Harrow on to Sandhurst he was sent.
 As he upon a soldier's life was bent

And chose the Cavalry as he felt fit
 To manage any horse with rein and bit.
 Time passed and he on furlough came to Blair
 To see his folk and breathe his native air
 And soon he sought to find a lady friend
 Who would in time to come his home attend.
 The Lady whom he chose Miss Baird was named
 Whose father William Baird in Ayrshire famed
 In industry when Ironstone pits were wrought.
 And coal pits too, much wealth to him they brought
 So great his wealth that it was in his power
 To give two hundred thousand pounds as dower.
 To Rutlandshire they went and made their home
 For many years though often they did roam
 In foreign lands for pleasure and to find
 Some knowledge of the rest of humankind.
 Once to United States a trip they made
 And saw from what their mind did never fade,
 The tall Redwood Trees growing high and fair.
 With them no other sight they could compare.
 They got some specimens in time to grow
 On Blair Estate and are a lovely show.
 Full many years they led this peaceful life
 Till broken up by War's rude horrid strife
 In Africa the Boers were discontent
 With British rule and soldiers out were sent.
 Among them was the soldier heir of Blair
 Who with his company did their hardships share.
 Much fighting with the Boers was taking place,
 The British found they were a stubborn race
 Who knew their land, their rivers and each hill
 And that their Generals were men of skill
 Who gave the British Army much concern
 Before they could their cunning arts discern.
 The names of Smuts and Cronji and De Wet
 Were names we will not readily forget.
 Many the hard fierce battles that were fought
 Ere they for peaceful terms from Britain sought
 At Magersfontein and Tugelaside
 They humbled much the British martial pride
 Till reinforcements were compelled to sail
 Led by Lord Roberts then the Boers did fail.
 Some Britishers were strong against this war.
 They thought on our escutcheon 'twas a scar
 Brought on by greedy men whose only aim
 Was to increase their sordid worldly gain
 And Mr. Chamberlain reviled them sore
 With bitter names of which he had great store.
 Pro Boer was one of them he made much use
 Among the sarcasms of his abuse.
 Whether 'twas thought his language too severe
 By his own party to be made premier
 This high position never did he fill
 Which disappointed his ambitious will
 When he first to the House of Commons went
 T'was as a Radical to represent
 The votes of those who thought reforms were due
 To do some good for all and not the few.
 But after many years the Home Rule Bill
 Which he along with Tories helped to kill.
 This gave to him a fine excuse to change
 His party and with Tories then did range
 And for some years to gain their party's aim

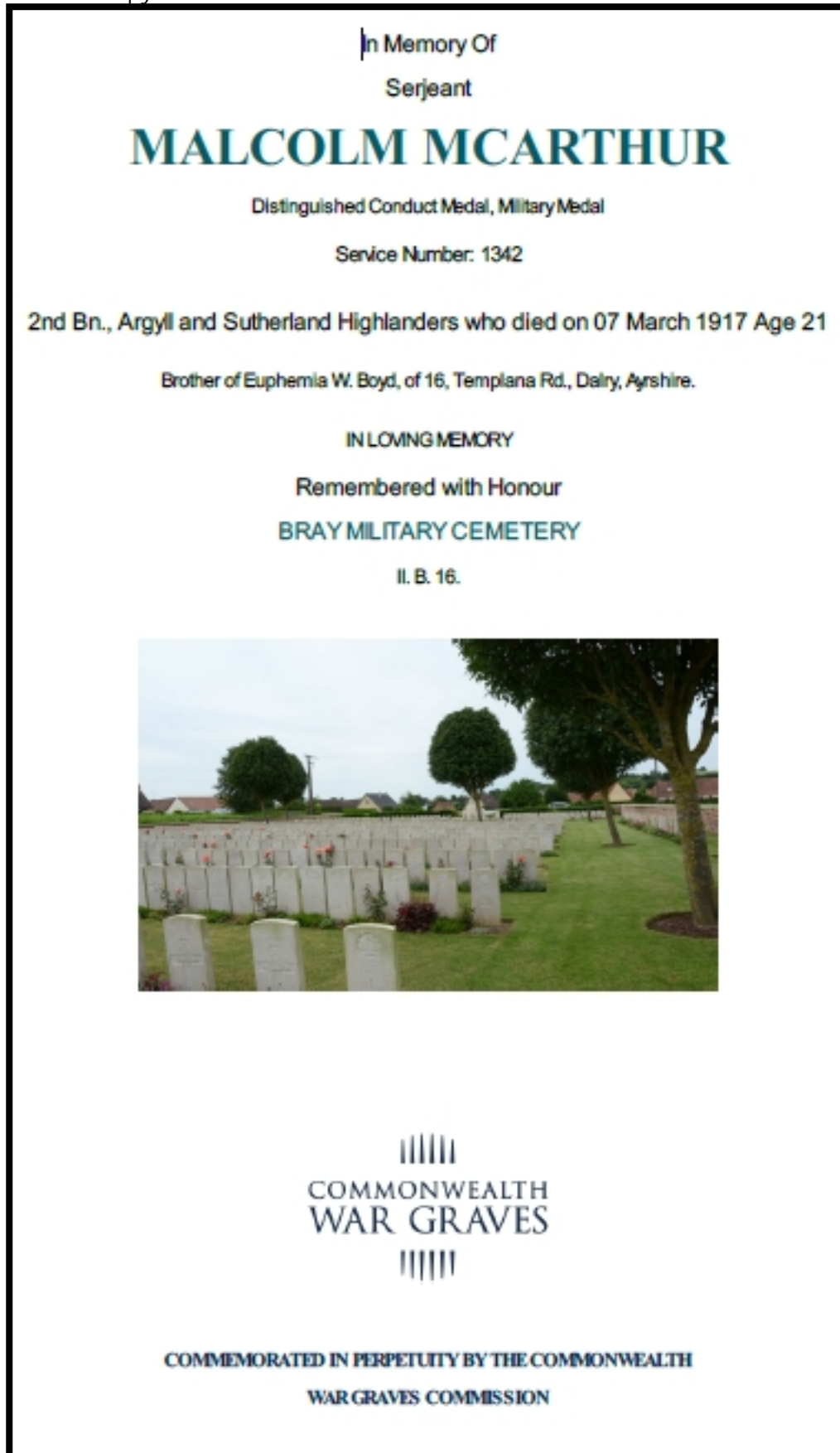
They Unionist adopted for a name.
 When peace had been restored, he came to Blair.
 Great was the gay rejoicing they held there.
 His faithful servants decked the rows of trees
 With British flags that fluttered with the breeze
 And in his soldier khaki suit he rode
 On horseback round the fields of his abode.
 His friends from all the district came along |
 To join him in the feasting and the song
 And tell him how they were so pleased to learn
 That for his skill promotion he did earn
 And henceforth he was now as Colonel named,
 This was the honour he in service gained.
 In Politics he sometimes took a share
 And at some meetings occupied the chair
 And in those days the rich folk one and all
 Composed the platform party in the hall.
 For years the voters in North Ayrshire sent
 To Parliament their views to represent
 A Tory landowner who lived in Fife
 Named Thomas Cochrane who in later life
 For services rendered to the State made Peer,
 An honour coveted by most men dear.
 When he spoke at Dalry he stayed at Blair
 And always found a hearty welcome there.
 The Colonel took sincere and great delight
 In helping him in his election fight.
 Photos of Thomas Cochrane sent by post
 To all electors would much money cost
 But he no doubt could well afford the fee
 To try and keep the honour of M.P.
 The Labour Party had not yet begun
 To enter in this contest with their plan.
 T'was Liberals and Tories in the field
 Each party sure determined not to yield
 But time brings changes and the seat was won
 From Cochrane by a man named Anderson

Who for the Liberals did hold the seat
 But next election Liberals were beat.
 A soldier Captain Campbell brave and bold
 Came forward in the contest to uphold
 The Tories cause which he with powerful speech
 Of his war service voters did beseech
 To send him to the Commons to attend
 Their interests where he would prove their friend
 They canvassed well and trotted him around
 And in one public work a way was found
 To introduce him to some workers who
 Might vote for him and please their master too.
 The contest was a tough and desperate fray
 But for the Tories Campbell won the day.
 The Tories since this seat again regained
 Have through the years of war and peace retained.
 When Campbell through ill-health the seat resigned
 The Party did another soldier find
 Named General Hunter Weston of Kilbride -
 On Hunterston estate known to reside
 Who held the seat until his life did end
 And then Sir Charles MacAndrew did defend
 The Tory Party and he kept the seat
 He Captain Wheatley (Labour) did defeat
 So that North Ayrshire has remained true blue
 Fearing a change would give them cause to rue.
 How true it seems that men by names are ruled
 And politicians keep electors fooled
 Some hope and trust the day's not far away
 When politicians cease this foolish play
 And men known for their virtue then may strive
 To do their utmost poverty to drive
 From out the country and bring in the times
 When peace and happiness in all lands shines.
 Alex. Boyd.

A copy of this poem was given to me by Lesley Hood of Dalry who found it tucked inside a copy of 'The Biography of John Smith' by Sanny. The poem must have been written between 1935 and his death in 1952 since he records the election of Sir Charles MacAndrew MP who held the North Ayrshire seat from 1935 to 1959.

Appendix 2

Full size copy of Malcolm McArthur's memorial certificate.



<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/34608/malcolm-mcarthur/>

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Scotland's People website

Thanks to Robert Barr, James Hodge and Les Hood for providing copies of Sanny's poems.