

The educational achievements of a 'great visionary': William Boyd (1874-1962)

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the contribution of William Boyd (1874-1962) to the development of educational studies in the first half of the twentieth century. It traces his involvement in, and contribution to, many different fields of enquiry that were important in the subsequent evolution of education as an academic discipline. As Head of the Education Department at the University of Glasgow for nearly forty years, Boyd was able to initiate a range of activities which prepared the ground for the efforts of later researchers. It will be shown that he was ahead of his time in promoting progressive ideas (partly through the New Education Fellowship), in advocating the involvement of classroom teachers in educational research, and in realising the importance of adult education as part of community development. Although Boyd was a prominent public figure and acquired an international reputation, he was never awarded a professorship: the paper concludes by discussing possible reasons for this and by suggesting areas for more detailed investigation of his achievements.

INTRODUCTION

Writing in 1983, Andrew McPherson stated: 'A study of [William Boyd's] life and work is badly needed' (McPherson, 1983: 242, Note 111). In the same year, R. E. Bell observed: 'William Boyd, though never made a Professor, made probably the greatest and most varied mark on Scottish education of any departmental head of education in any university' (Bell, 1983: 159). Other commentators have also paid tribute to Boyd's work and progressive thinking. Sir James Robertson, author of the influential 1947 Advisory Council report on Secondary Education, had studied under Boyd after the First World War and, in an interview in 1962, the year of Boyd's death, described him as 'a wise counsellor as well as a great teacher' (cited in McPherson and Raab, 1988: 415). Marjorie Cruickshank, in her history of the training of teachers in Scotland, refers to Boyd as 'a great visionary' (Cruickshank, 1970: 165) and John Stocks says Boyd 'did more than any academic has ever done in Scotland to link the university study of education to the concerns of teachers and the general public' (Stocks, 2000: 228). These tributes point to the need for a sustained analysis of Boyd's considerable achievements. The present

paper offers an initial overview of the range and character of his work as a preliminary to more detailed thematic studies of particular features of his activities and output.

After a brief biographical sketch, the paper will focus on the following aspects of Boyd's work: the courses he developed and the teaching style he adopted; his published output in the history and theory of education; his involvement in the New Education Fellowship; his early interest in child study and, later, in child guidance; his efforts to involve teachers in educational research; his contribution to adult education and community development; and his engagement with significant aspects of educational policy. It will become apparent that there is considerable overlap in the chronology of these various activities, indicating that Boyd managed to pursue several lines of enquiry at the same time. Finally, some of the reasons for Boyd's relative neglect will be discussed and pointers given to the direction in which deeper studies might be undertaken.

The paper draws on a number of sources: the substantial body of Boyd's published work – books, articles and his account of his life (where the last of these is quoted it will be referred to as *Autobiography* - see Note 1); the unpublished doctoral thesis of R. E. Bell on 'Educational Studies in the Scottish Universities 1870-1970' (Bell, 1986); accounts of the development of educational research in which Boyd is mentioned; informal communication from the late Professor John Nisbet; newspaper reports of Boyd's community involvement in Clydebanks in the 1930s; material in Glasgow University Library relating to the work of the University Students' Settlement, with which Boyd had an association stretching over 35 years (though see Note 2); and a range of secondary sources which make reference to specific aspects of Boyd's work. It should be noted that while articles by Boyd in the *Scottish Educational Journal (SEJ)*, published by the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) from 1918 onwards, are referenced in the normal way and listed at the end, the dates of brief news reports in the journal, which are anonymous and untitled, are simply given in brackets within the main text.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

William Boyd was born in Riccarton, Ayrshire in 1874, the son of a pattern-maker (a skilled trade allied to carpentry). He was the eldest of three children. His parents were devout members of the Free Church of Scotland and he was brought up in that faith. Following attendance at various elementary schools, he received his secondary education at Kilmarnock Academy. A keen and hard-working student, he won bursaries which enabled him to gain entry to Glasgow University. Here too he achieved academic distinction and graduated MA with First Class Honours in Philosophy in 1896. Intending to become a minister, he attended the Free Church College but underwent a crisis of vocation – though continued to subscribe to the Christian faith – and decided to pursue a teaching career instead. Advised to add a science degree to his arts degree, he won a scholarship allowing him to undertake further study: he graduated BSc in 1900. After a short time teaching at Blairgowrie High School he moved to North Kelvinside School, Glasgow, in 1902. He secured the post of Headmaster of Colston Public School in 1907 but in the same year was appointed Lecturer in Education at the University of Glasgow. He remained there until his retirement in 1946. Although promoted to Reader and

awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws for his services to education, he was never made a Professor, remaining Emeritus Reader in Education until his death in 1962.

Boyd married twice, first to Isa Burt in 1905 (with whom he had one daughter, Isabel, also known as Isa) and, following Isa Burt's death in 1918, to Dorothy Wilson in 1919 (with whom he had one daughter, Eileen, and two sons, David and Hugh). Both of Boyd's wives had a background in education and in his autobiography he pays tribute to the contribution they made to his work.

EDUCATIONAL COURSES AND TEACHING METHODS

When Boyd was appointed to Glasgow in 1907 he was faced with the challenge of developing a course of study in a field that had only been introduced as an approved subject in 1894, initially taught by a part-time lecturer. Despite the huge educational challenges facing the School Board of Glasgow, following the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 (see Roxburgh, 1971), the university had not seen fit to follow the examples of Edinburgh and St Andrews universities, both of which had established Chairs of Education in 1876. From 1909 until 1923 Boyd combined his teaching at the university with part-time lecturing at the Glasgow Training Centre (located at Jordanhill College from 1913): ongoing debates about the precise roles of the university and the centre/college in respect of the training of teachers meant that the relationship was uneasy. This was exacerbated by personal rivalry between Boyd and Robert R. Rusk (1879-1972) (Nisbet, 1999: 8). The latter had been a candidate for the lectureship to which Boyd was appointed in 1907 (Bell, 1986: 329, note 170) and when Rusk became Principal Lecturer in Education at Jordanhill in 1923 the severing of Boyd's association with the college was perhaps inevitable.

For a time, Boyd hoped to gain approval for a full undergraduate degree in Education and published a series of five articles in the *Scottish Educational Journal* (*SEJ*) setting out his proposals (Boyd, 1912-13). He was strongly of the view that the status of teaching would not be significantly enhanced until it became an all-graduate profession, an aspiration that was achieved in 1924 for male teachers of academic subjects but not for primary teachers (predominantly women) or teachers of 'practical' subjects until much later in the twentieth century. There was insufficient support for Boyd's proposal at the University Senate, which had to approve all degree regulations. Bell (1986) also suggests that there was strong opposition from the Scottish Education Department to involving the universities in teacher training on the grounds that it would entail a loss of government control over the curriculum. This stance continued until the 1990s when, partly driven by financial reasons, the colleges of education merged with the universities.

The idea that eventually gained acceptance in 1916 was a hybrid qualification, a second first degree (that is, not a research degree) in Education and Psychology to be taken at the postgraduate stage, initially known as the Bachelor of Education (EdB at Glasgow, BEd at Edinburgh), not to be confused with an undergraduate BEd which was introduced in the 1960s (Bell, 1983). The name of the postgraduate EdB/BEd was eventually changed to Master of Education (MEd). Student numbers were initially very small but it gradually became a route for what David Hamilton has called 'the superintendent class in education' (cited in Bell, 1983: 152). According to Bell, the initiative actually came, not from Boyd, but from

the Glasgow University Principal, MacAlister, when he heard that Edinburgh University planned to introduce a similar course. However, Bell's source for this interpretation was an interview with Rusk, so limited reliance can be placed on it without further corroboration. Whatever the explanation of the degree's origins, Boyd took it up with enthusiasm and made it an attractive course for teachers who wished to enhance their prospects of promotion within schools or make the transition to administration, college lecturing, or educational psychology. In the mid-1930s he described the introduction of the EdB degree as 'a profound moment for the teaching profession in Scotland' and claimed it was 'second to none in the world as a comprehensive professional training for responsible educational work in every field' (Boyd, 1935a: 175).

In addition to his formal duties teaching undergraduates and postgraduates, Boyd for many years ran a series of highly successful and well-attended Saturday lectures for serving teachers on contemporary issues in education. Reports of his teaching methods indicate that he was well aware of the limitations of traditional didacticism and was keen to get responses from his students in the form of questions and discussion. He experimented with various approaches, including setting pre-lecture tasks and listening to students' discussions of issues before making his own presentation. In one of the many tributes following his death it was stated: 'His aim was to alert his students to the major issues of the times, to provoke them to criticise the current educational orthodoxies, to help them develop their own convictions and to challenge them with his own thinking which was liberal, humanitarian and optimistic' (*SEJ* Obituary, 7 September 1962: 657). He wanted Scottish teachers to be less cautious, to develop greater confidence in their own judgement and to challenge the power of the inspectorate. He regarded the system of school inspection as 'educationally sterile because the inspectors have come to the schools as outsiders with powers that paralyse originality' (Boyd, 1935: 176). Elsewhere he referred to those powers as 'an affront to an educated professional man or woman' (quoted in Bone, 1968: 154).

As well as stimulating intellectual engagement, Boyd had the capacity to enliven his classes with humour. Bell reports one student who attended Boyd's classes in the 1920s recalling him as the 'most entertaining lecturer by far: his weekly "heckling meeting" was a riot' (Bell, 1986: 305). He was a master of the arresting opening remark. One Jordanhill lecture began, 'When I was last in Barlinnie . . .' (*ibid.*: 305). Unsurprisingly, Boyd's popularity as a teacher did not endear him to all of his university colleagues, some of whom favoured a style of dull earnestness. An article in the *College Courant* in 1956 stated that 'the general feeling was that his manner was considered "common" and that political prejudice was at work to prevent his being promoted Professor, as he most certainly deserved for his writings and ability alike' (quoted in Bell, 1986: 305). Other factors in the failure to award him a chair will be considered later.

HISTORY AND THEORY OF EDUCATION

Boyd's early intellectual interests were in philosophy. While studying for his science degree, he was invited, on the strength of his MA, to give lectures on philosophy to arts students: this stimulated him to write an introductory book on Plato (Boyd, 1904). He later developed a keen interest in the educational ideas of

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), who became the subject of his doctoral thesis (Boyd, 1911 a), which was published as a book in the same year he was awarded his degree (Boyd, 1911b). This was followed by *From Locke to Montessori* (Boyd, 1914). The approach adopted by Maria Montessori (1870-1952) to the education of young children had attracted considerable interest and was seen as a fine example of progressive education, focusing on the perceived needs of the child rather than the role of the teacher. The first English edition of *The Montessori Method* had been published in 1912. Boyd, however, while welcoming the reforming potential of the new method, had some reservations about Montessori's ideas, regarding them as too prescriptive. His work on Plato, Rousseau and Montessori, as well as the philosophical training provided by his arts degree, prepared the ground for his ambitious *History of Western Education*, the first edition of which was published in 1921. In the preface to that edition he stated that his aim was to trace 'the evolution of education' and to 'show educational institutions and principles in their social context'. Notwithstanding his strictures on Montessori in the earlier book, he said that his intention in the more comprehensive history was to offer an expository account of the ideas of the great educators 'avoiding as much as possible negative criticism' (*Autobiography*, p. 76). The success of the book is evident in the fact that, by 1952, Boyd himself had undertaken five updatings and revisions and, following his death in 1962, Edmund King of London University continued the process. In total, eleven editions were published.

Boyd believed strongly that intending teachers should have a thorough intellectual grounding which included the 'disciplines that underlie education' (Campbell, 1938: 428): by this he meant principally philosophy (which included ethics), history and psychology. He himself did not use the term sociology but, as will be shown, it is evident that his interests included this dimension of educational studies. By emphasising the inter-disciplinary nature of educational enquiry, Boyd was anticipating later conceptualisations of education as a field of study, such as those outlined by Tibble (1966), Morrish (1967) and Hirst (1983), in which philosophical, historical, psychological and sociological perspectives were all seen as important. He was also motivated by a feeling that existing teacher training courses were inadequate in terms of their professional preparation. For Boyd, theory and practice were not antithetical: just as the practice of education raised challenging intellectual questions, so theoretical perspectives could cast new light on traditional approaches to curriculum and pedagogy.

CHILD STUDY AND CHILD GUIDANCE

Given Boyd's interest in Rousseau, it is not surprising that he was attracted by attempts to study child development. An important influence on this field was James Sully's book *Studies in Childhood* (1895), which made reference to the American psychologist, G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) who was particularly noted for his work on adolescence. (Before he settled on Rousseau, Boyd had considered making his doctoral thesis a study of adolescence.) While teaching in schools, Boyd began to ask himself questions about developmental stages and

discovered there was a branch of the Child Study Association in Edinburgh, which he promptly joined. He also began reading (later contributing to) the association's journal, *The Paidologist*. In 1907 the Child Study Association merged with the Childhood Society to form the Child Study Society (Lowe, 2004).

Boyd conducted studies of his own children, based on systematic observation of their physical, intellectual, emotional and linguistic development. The growth of his first child, Isa, was carefully recorded, with particular attention given to her use of language (Boyd, 1913). He was interested not just in her expanding vocabulary of individual words but also in more extended utterances. This led to an article in *The Pedagogical Seminary* (Boyd, 1914) in which he analysed Isa's use of words, phrases and sentences. Later he published pieces on children's questions in *Child Study* (Boyd, 1915) and on sentence structure in early childhood in the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* (Boyd, 1926). He also wrote about Isa's dreams, her sex remarks, her play with dolls and her ideas about death (*Autobiography*, p. 164), revealing familiarity with Freudian ideas: not all of these pieces were published.

In the 1920s, Boyd's interest in children's development began to focus on those youngsters who did not, for a variety of reasons, make good educational progress. In 1926 he established the first child guidance clinic in Britain (*Autobiography*, pp. 199-201), though according to Cruickshank (1970: 165) he preferred the term 'centre' to 'clinic'. The aim was 'to study and advise on "problem children", boys and girls who because of physical, mental or social handicap found themselves maladjusted to their environment, or mentally unable to take full advantage of their schooling' (Scotland, 1969: 90). By 1935, the centre was dealing with 150 children a year (Boyd, 1935b), with EdB graduates handling the caseload. In his history of child guidance in Britain, Stewart (2013) suggests that Scotland benefitted greatly from the pioneering work of Boyd.

Boyd's approach to educational guidance was different from that which prevailed elsewhere in Britain (Stewart, 2013). Whereas the dominant view in England (and in the United States) placed medically-trained psychiatrists at the centre of process, with social workers and teachers playing a secondary role, Boyd's centre was led by teachers versed in psychology: he argued that 'the great majority of the problems confronting the teacher and parent were educational problems in respect of both diagnosis and treatment' (cited in Stewart, 2010: 29). By the skilful use of intelligence and attainment tests, properly trained teachers could uncover 'maladjustments in the making' (*ibid.*, p. 29). Psychiatrists, in Boyd's characteristically robust opinion, knew 'nothing about education and not very much about children' (*ibid.*: 29) and thus were ill-equipped to deal with the majority of cases. The debate within the child guidance movement about the contribution of the various 'experts' could be seen as a territorial dispute between the relative claims of different professional groups, each seeking to achieve dominance. Within Scotland, the 'medical' model, so disliked by Boyd, was employed by another Glasgow clinic founded in 1931. The Notre Dame Child Guidance Clinic, led by Sister Marie Hilda, attempted to steer a skilful course between traditional Catholic teaching and scientific insights into the sources of emotional and developmental problems in children. Its aim was the 'study and treatment of children who, though given average home and school conditions,

remain an enigma to parents, and by their undisciplined behaviour form one of the chief difficulties of the classroom' (Stewart, 2006: 61). Diverse approaches were to be employed: the child was to be studied 'from all angles, the physical, emotional, intellectual and environmental' (*ibid*: 61). Despite the differences in approach between Boyd's centre and the Notre Dame clinic, these facilities helped to prepare the ground for the establishment of the City of Glasgow's child guidance service in 1937 (Dell, 1969). It is mildly ironic that the Notre Dame facility, which is still in existence, now calls itself a centre rather than a clinic.

Boyd was supportive of his former students as they went on to develop areas of special interest within child guidance. In his autobiography he refers to Anne McAllister as one of his 'special disciples' (*Autobiography*, p. 173). Dr McAllister became an expert in speech therapy, founding the Glasgow School of Speech Therapy in 1935 and continuing as its Director until 1964. Her book *Clinical Studies in Speech Therapy* (McAllister, 1937) helped to map the future direction of this field.

Catherine McCallum, another protégé of Boyd's, gave a presentation on 'The Vicious Circle in Mental Adjustment' at the 1935 St Andrews conference of the New Education Fellowship. She located the sources of 'mental ill-health' not in the innate predispositions of the child but in a combination of factors: the atmosphere in the home, particularly the relationship between father and mother; a narrow school curriculum presented using formal teaching methods which failed to stimulate interest and intellectual independence; and an over-emphasis on conformity and respectability in ethical training. Echoing Boyd's view on the teaching profession, she said that teachers 'must become free men, not scared servants, and know enough of themselves and of life' (Boyd, 1936: 149).

McCallum also emphasised the need to educate parents. Boyd's Saturday lectures, initially aimed at teachers, were extended to parents in the 1930s and dealt with a range of psychological topics. Brief reports of these were given in the *Scottish Educational Journal (SEJ)*. One of the final lectures in the 1931-32 series was entitled 'The Need for Education for Parenthood' and the overall theme for the 1932-33 series was 'Child Guidance in Home and School'. The twelve lectures included the following topics: the child's heredity; home and school; the home in early childhood; and the home in later childhood and adolescence (*SEJ*, October 14, 1932). Here, as in other areas, Boyd was ahead of his time. For many decades after the 1930s the role of parents in education was not sufficiently recognised. It was not until the 1980s in Scotland that a body of research evidence led to better understanding of the value of cooperation between home and school (Macbeth, 1989; Gillespie, 2003).

NEW EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP

Boyd was an active member of the New Education Fellowship (NEF) founded in 1921 by Beatrice Ensor (1885-1974). A Scottish section was established in 1924 and Boyd became its president a year later. Mrs Ensor was a leading figure in the Theosophical Society and her spiritual interests were influential in shaping her educational ideas (Selleck, 1968; Lawson, 1981). However, as the NEF developed and gained adherents, this dimension was overtaken by other strands

of influence. Brehony describes it as 'a charismatic social movement that attracted the support of social and political radicals as well as mainstream liberals' (Brehony, 2004: 754). Jenkins emphasises its 'emancipatory interests' linked to democratic progress, contrasting the fellowship's desire to promote freedom and self-realization with traditional education which encouraged unquestioning obedience to authority and an aggressive, nationalistic mentality (Jenkins, 2000). The NEF became a broad alliance, attracting a range of adherents, but all committed to progressivism, as expressed in the work of people like Maria Montessori and John Dewey (1859-1952). The movement was international in character and a series of conferences were held at Calais (1921), Montreux (1923), Heidelberg (1925), Locarno (1927), Elsinore (1929), Nice (1932) and Cheltenham (1936). These provided opportunities for both lay enthusiasts and professionals to report on experimental work and exchange ideas (Brehony, 2004). For many, the key aim of the NEF was 'to foster international understanding, to develop a world consciousness and to give an introduction to the duties of world citizenship' (*ibid*: 740). However, it also became a vehicle for the development of educational studies as a disciplinary field, an objective to which Boyd was firmly committed. Thus in some of the conferences there were debates about whether the study of education could become scientific, drawing on the insights of psychology and using standardised measures to test for mental ability (Nisbet, 1999). A degree of tension arose between those who saw the fellowship as an enlightened social movement and those who wished it to become a means of pursuing an academic project – namely, the development of rigorous instruments which would allow for experimentation, the testing of hypotheses and the formulation of generalized theories.

The NEF gave Boyd an international profile. Following the Elsinore conference in 1929, at which Boyd's contributions attracted interest, he had the opportunity in the 1930s to travel to the United States as a Visiting Professor of Education at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York (1930-31) and at Ohio State University (1931). He offered his reflections on these experiences, first as a series of articles in the *Scottish Educational Journal* and later as a book (Boyd, 1939). His topics ranged widely but he was particularly interested in comparisons between the progressive movement in the United States, associated particularly with John Dewey and W. H. Kilpatrick (1871-1965), and European interpretations of the New Education philosophy. Subsequently he visited Canada (1933), South Africa (1934), New Zealand and Australia (both 1937), in each case using what he saw as the basis for further articles. What comes across in these articles is Boyd's keen interest in the history, traditions, language and culture of the people and places he encountered. For example, he offers observations and reflections not only on mainstream educational provision but also on the education of native Indians in America and Canada, of Boers and Zulus in South Africa, and of Maoris in New Zealand and Aborigines in Australia.

As well as international conferences, the NEF organised events within countries with an active membership. The 1935 St Andrews conference, referred to above, had as its theme 'The Challenge of Leisure'. Boyd subsequently edited a report of the conference, with an introduction by the economic historian and social critic, R. H. Tawney (Boyd, 1936). He had planned to write a full history of the NEF but

died before its completion: his notes were used by Wyatt Rawson and the book appeared under both names after Boyd's death (Boyd and Rawson, 1965: see also Stewart, 1968, chapter 12). In his preface Rawson states that the first four chapters are essentially Boyd's. In these, he traces the development of progressive thinking in the first quarter of the twentieth century, describing various experimental schools in Europe and extolling the virtues of approaches that seem unremarkable today but were controversial at the time: respecting the individual child; cooperation rather than competition in learning; group work and project methods; creative learning through art, music and movement.

For Boyd, New Education was a reaction to 'the education of the past (and the present) with its cramping of individuality, with its excessive appeal to authority' (Boyd, 1930: 118). He traces it back to Rousseau (*ibid*: 437) and asserts: 'To know in spirit and truth that the child's growing personality dominates the educational situation is to be a new educator: to magnify the teacher's function at the expense of the child's initiative is to write one's self down educationally old [*sic*]' (*ibid*: 438). On this interpretation, New Education is not simply concerned with the development of mind but involves physical, emotional, creative and spiritual dimensions as well. Moreover, although it is important to emphasise individuality, what really matters is 'education for a larger life in which the individual can satisfactorily realize himself: in the service of worthy aims, in sharing the interests of some community, in membership of the Kingdom of God, in living for the unseen realities' (*ibid*: 453). These last two aspirations perhaps explain why Boyd was fairly comfortable with some of the more ethereal aspects of the New Education Fellowship, whereas a more revolutionary advocate of educational progressivism, such as A. S. Neill (1883-1973), the founder of Summerhill, parted company with the organisation in the early 1920s (Bailey, 2013).

ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Another important strand in Boyd's contribution to the development of educational studies was his work in adult education and community development. His interest in this field can be traced to his student days, though its strongest manifestation occurred in the 1930s when he undertook pioneering work in Clydebank to alleviate the effects of unemployment. As an undergraduate, he became a resident member of the Glasgow University Students' Settlement Society located at 10 Possil Road, a deprived area of the city (not to be confused with the Queen Margaret Settlement Association – see Hamilton and Macleay, 1998). The aim was to carry out Christian, social and educational work in the neighbourhood. The Society had been founded in 1889 following the example of Toynbee Hall in the East End of London (Briggs and Macartney, 1984). Boyd's association began in 1891 and continued in varying capacities for 35 years. The experience of living in the Settlement and becoming involved in the local community clearly had a profound influence on him. In his autobiography he refers to it as 'one of the two or three biggest things in my life' (*Autobiography*, p.116) on a par with marriage and his professional career. He claims that all those who were part of the project were given a new outlook in life, enhancing 'their mental and moral stature' and sending them 'out into the world with a special vitality' (*ibid*: 116). The activities of the Settlement involved visiting and supporting local families, many living in dire

conditions, running clubs for both men and women, opening a small medical clinic and providing legal advice for the poor. Gradually the social and welfare dimensions of the work became more important than the religious motivation which had been the initial inspiration. This reflected Boyd's own personal journey from committed evangelical Christian to a less dogmatic advocate of social justice, reinforced by a liberal interpretation of Christianity.

Boyd became Secretary and then Warden of the Settlement until he completed his science degree in 1900. When he returned to Glasgow after his time teaching in Blairgowrie, he found the Settlement in a poor state of organisation and resumed his role as Warden. Partly through the energetic efforts of Boyd's assistant, J. W. Pratt, all sorts of new enterprises were started: 'a Sunday Morning Meeting for young men and women in their working clothes, a holiday week . . . on Bute during the Glasgow Fair and in 1906, the Citizenship Class, which I carried on year after year till 1921' (*ibid*: 118). The last of these took the form of a night class run under the auspices of the Glasgow School Board and attracted people from across the city. Among the topics covered was economics, though it does not seem that this led in the direction of political activism. Education was seen as a means of self-improvement, rather than a stimulus to collective action. Boyd also ran a small group for Maryhill working men, an experience that made him realise the value of free discussion rather than didactic teaching in encouraging engagement with ideas.

When the student residents were able to take over the leadership of the Settlement once again, Boyd remained an active member of the Management Committee. The First World War produced a new set of problems and Boyd (who by this time was aged 40 and not under pressure to enlist) once again took over as Warden. After the war he retired into the background but was given the honorary position of President. In 1926 the Union Bank of Scotland bought the premises rented by the Settlement and gave notice to quit as a much higher rent could be obtained from business enterprises. This marked the end of the project. It is clear, however, that Boyd's association with it profoundly affected his social outlook, confirming his description of himself as a 'Christian Socialist' (*ibid*: 81). He was certainly not a political revolutionary, belonging to what has been called the 'respectable' rather than the 'radical' tradition of adult and community education (Bryant, 1984). His approach was one of identifying practical needs and doing something constructive to alleviate them rather than developing a committed ideological position allied to a revolutionary agenda (such as was evident, for example, in John Maclean's campaign to establish the Scottish Labour College: see Duncan, 1992). Moreover, Bell observes that Boyd 'seems to have distanced himself from the Scottish Socialist Teachers Society' (Bell, 1986: 304).

Boyd and his second wife Dorothy were the central figures in the establishment of the Clydebank Mutual Service Association (CMSA), a community support group set up in 1932 in response to the economic impact of unemployment in the town, particularly after the government withdrew support for the building of the Queen Mary, a project which had been the main source of employment. Writing in his autobiography many years later, Boyd stated that 'For both of us the work we did in establishing and carrying out the Clydebank Mutual Service Association brought

a deeper satisfaction and greater insights than anything before or since' (*Autobiography*, p. 234).

The setting up of the association demonstrates the importance of Boyd's network of contacts, maintained from his student days. Financing the project was made possible through a chance encounter at a New Education Fellowship meeting with a woman who had been a fellow-student of Boyd's first wife nearly thirty years earlier in 1903-04. She suggested he might approach a charity, the Pilgrim Trust, which had provided finance for similar ventures elsewhere. The secretary of the trust, Tom Jones, turned out to be someone who had been a resident at the Possil Road Settlement and a student who had attended the Plato lectures Boyd gave early in his career. An application to the trust soon secured an annual grant of £300 and an additional start-up payment of £700. This enabled the hiring of premises and the purchase of basic equipment.

From the beginning Boyd was determined that those for whom the project was designed should be active participants in its planning and development. Moreover, the aim was to involve the whole community, employed as well as unemployed, men and women, young and old. The meeting at which the CMSA was launched was reported on the front page of the local newspaper (*Clydebank Press*, April 22, 1932: 1) and Boyd subsequently ensured that the project was well-publicised. Two months after the start a message from Boyd as President said that the CMSA 'has a great ambition. It wants to bring every man, woman and child in the burgh into a fellowship of neighbourly help' (*Clydebank Press*, June 24, 1932: 4). He wanted to promote 'a right conception of citizenship' (*ibid.* 5). As an expression of this, some twenty groups were already in existence and others would be started in response to demand. Activities included joinery, boot repairing, car maintenance, photography, sewing and pottery. A weekly discussion meeting, with speakers drawn from Boyd's extensive range of contacts, attracted audiences of over a hundred (*Autobiography*, p. 235). The Boyds were clearly an effective team, with Dorothy as a very energetic member of the committee and William taking the lead by enlisting support. The newspaper included some interesting comments on Dr Boyd's style. The Treasurer of CMSA, Thomas Dobie, said 'It is very difficult to say "No" to Dr Boyd' (*Clydebank Press*, April 28, 1933: 5). An unnamed colleague referred to Boyd as 'throwing dignity, formality, ceremony and decorum to the far winds' (*ibid.* 5) and a student offered this perspective:

Dr William Boyd is a revolutionary. His Bolshevism, however, relies more on goodwill than bombs . . . The Boydian artillery does thunder at times; when cant, or humbug, or hypocrisy is ditching some forward drive – we all sit back and watch it slaughtered by intelligent sincerity. (*Clydebank Press*, June 24, 1932: 4).

As will become evident later, these qualities – so vital in getting an ambitious project like the CMSA off the ground – may not always have been appreciated within the more cloistered surroundings of the university.

By 1937, when the economic situation had improved and the possibility of war had helped to revive the shipbuilding industry, the number of men attending CMSA activities had declined but the women's groups remained strong. Boyd wanted the principle of mutual service to be kept alive and argued for every town to have its own community centre, in the same way that the provision of libraries had come

to be seen as a vital part of public provision. The Second World War put this aspiration on hold but it can be argued that Boyd's work in Clydebank helped to prepare the ground for the expansion and development of community education in the 1950s and 1960s.

TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

'Involving teachers in research . . . has an important Scottish history which places the Educational Institute of Scotland and Dr William Boyd at its heart' (Brett *et al.*, 2010a: 49).

Boyd's efforts in encouraging the involvement of teachers in educational research represented another aspect of his mission to enhance their professional expertise. Lawn and Deary refer to his 'catalytic energy' in promoting the case for teachers as researchers (Lawn and Deary, 2015: 327). Thanks to his strong links with leading teachers' organisation, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), an EIS Research Committee, chaired by Boyd, was established in 1918. The EIS's weekly publication, *The Scottish Educational Journal*, was used as a means of recruiting teachers to become involved in projects and also to report on the findings. Thus the Committee was able to initiate a programme of school-based research, focusing initially on the development of standards in three core subjects – composition, spelling and arithmetic (Brett *et al.*, 2010b). These projects required the cooperation of teachers across Scotland and the response was very encouraging. For example, in the study of composition, no fewer than 4284 essays from 128 different schools across Scotland were submitted for analysis (Brett *et al.*, 2010b: 8). Again, a standard spelling list was produced and sold in large numbers across the United Kingdom (Boyd, 1923). This remained in use in schools for decades, with revised and updated lists of junior and senior versions being published in 1946.

These projects were brought together in a book explaining the importance of standards and their value for the day-to-day work of teachers (Boyd, 1924). Boyd admitted that 'the standards of today are still limited and imperfect' (*ibid.*: 187) but made the case for the importance of 'definiteness of requirement' and 'objectivity of marking' in the construction and assessment of tests of attainment: 'the foundation of this definiteness and objectivity is the establishment of achievement norms on a wide and varied basis of experience by scientific test-makers' (*ibid.*:187).

Part of the aim behind these initiatives was to encourage teachers to take control of their own professional development, thus enhancing their status (Wake, 1988). This had limited success because in the late 1920s research took another direction. The formation of the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) in 1928 led to what John Nisbet has called 'the dominance of the scientific model based on experimental design, statistical analysis and psychological theory' (Nisbet, 1999: 3). The personal rivalry between Boyd and Rusk, who became the first Director of SCRE, meant that there was little chance of a compromise between the two styles of research – Boyd's 'school-based' approach and Rusk's 'scientific' method (*ibid.*:8). To state this point is not to diminish the important contribution SCRE subsequently made to the development of educational research in

Scotland. Establishing a national research council was a significant landmark: the English equivalent, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was not founded until 1946. Moreover, Boyd's collaborative approach to research, involving the EIS and local authorities, was continued by SCRE and he himself served as a member of the Council for over 23 years (Brett *et al.*, 2010b: 21).

In the decades that followed, SCRE carried out many notable projects, including the Scottish Mental Surveys of 1932 (SCRE, 1933) and 1947 (SCRE, 1949), and a study of selection for secondary education (Dockrell, 1978; Lawn, 2004; Powell, 2012). However, it was not until the 1970s that the notion of classroom teachers as researchers was once again advocated as the best means of professional development (Stenhouse, 1975) and the idea was not really taken up at a policy level until near forty years later under the banner of 'practitioner enquiry' (Humes, 2014). There are several possible reasons for this failure to capitalise on Boyd's pioneering work, apart from SCRE's adoption of a 'scientific' model controlled by 'experts'. The early enthusiasm of the EIS gradually waned as it focused more on salaries and conditions of service, positioning itself essentially as a trade union: moreover, within sections of the membership there was a perception that successful classroom practice depended on common sense and experience rather than on research evidence. Boyd's initiatives were always viewed with suspicion by the inspectorate, who saw him as a challenge to its power: HMI's regarded the programme of inspections which they carried out as a much surer way of identifying 'best practice' and disseminating it throughout the system. Likewise, the colleges of education (until their merger with universities from the 1990s onwards) took a pragmatic view of their role, defining it principally in terms of preparing trainee teachers for the educational system as it currently existed rather than equipping them to transform it. These forces combined to maintain an official stance that Boyd would have regarded as conservative and anti-intellectual.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Boyd was active in educational politics, partly through his work with the Educational Institute of Scotland – he was EIS President in 1920-21 – but more generally through his willingness to contribute to debates about important policy issues in Scottish education. Two examples will illustrate this aspect of his contribution. During and immediately after the First World War there was widespread recognition that major change was needed in the provision of post-elementary education. The Scottish Education Reform Committee (a partnership of stakeholders committed to post-war reconstruction: see Paterson, 2003, pp. 63-64) in 1917 proposed the formation of an Advisory Council on Education. The 1918 Education Act made provision for this and the Advisory Council duly produced a report recommending three levels of schools corresponding to the age ranges 5-12, 12-15 and 15-18. Up to the age of 15 there would be a common core curriculum with options. Officials in the Scottish Education Department took a different view. George Macdonald, who became the secretary of the SED in 1922, wrote a memorandum in 1920 in which he stated that the members of the Council 'have ignored the fundamental fact the school population falls into two distinct parts – a majority of distinctly limited intelligence, and an extremely important minority who are capable of responding to a much more severe call' (quoted in Paterson,

1983). The Department's preferred system was set out in Circular 44 issued in December 1921: the aim was to maintain a strict demarcation between a small minority of pupils who would follow a full five-year secondary course after the age of 12 and the majority who would be channelled into various forms of provision depending on local circumstances, most leaving at the age of 14 (Stocks, 1995).

Professional and public responses to Circular 44's requirements were hostile. They were seen as anti-democratic and undesirable on both social and educational grounds. Boyd offered a detailed critique at a meeting of the Greenock EIS in January 1922: a full report of his argument was given in the *Scottish Educational Journal* (Boyd, 1922). As Stocks notes, he seized particularly on the SED's use of the negative term 'non-secondary' to describe the courses most young people would follow. He saw this

. . . as a sign of the intellectual snobbery of the Secretary of the Scottish Education Department, who, he claimed, had expressed the view that only ten per cent of the population were able to profit from secondary education. Boyd himself was in favour of 'secondary education for all', even before Tawney's famous pamphlet was published under that title. (Stocks, 1995: 49)

Although the SED's intentions were somewhat frustrated by the financial and operational constraints affecting education authorities in the 1920s, what Paterson (1983: 214) refers to as 'a gross ideology of social division' continued until the introduction of comprehensive education in 1965.

During the Second World War Boyd made a different kind of contribution to policy debates, this time based on research evidence which he and others had gathered. The war posed particular difficulties for education, particularly in areas which were potential targets for military attack: a programme of evacuation had to be planned and implemented: 'Here was an extraordinary event affecting the lives of the young people of Scotland. It seemed to me that a proper record of it should be made for posterity and that meant that the facts would have to be carefully investigated.' (*Autobiography*, p. 264). The Education Department of the University of Glasgow undertook three sociological enquiries into the evacuation of children from vulnerable areas. One of these was an intensive study by Boyd himself of 'the evacuation experiences of a representative sample of the whole school population of a Scottish burgh' (Boyd, 1944: vii). The burgh was Clydebank, where Boyd lived at the time of the study and which suffered devastating air attacks in March 1941. His report of the evacuation scheme (see Paterson, 2003, pp. 103-104), based on interviews with parents, included statistical analysis, discussion of the reasons for the limited success of the scheme and policy recommendations for any future arrangements (Boyd, 1944, pp. 77-123). As with his early work at the University Settlement, where he encountered desperate social circumstances, he was clearly affected by the evidence that emerged: 'The situation in the nature of the case was a difficult one for all parties concerned and it shook Scotland, to the core, revealing the deep abyss of evil conditions in towns and cities, involving householders etc, in great hardships in many cases.' (ibid: 265)

DISCUSSION

The range of Boyd's work can be seen as an anticipation of the various specialist areas within educational studies which began to form in the second half of the twentieth century: as well as history, philosophy, psychology and sociology there are significant strands of comparative education, professional development, policy studies and assessment in his output. He was also well qualified to write about educational management as he was a Labour Party nominee on both Dunbartonshire and Ayrshire education committees, and served on the National Council for the Training of Teachers for a number of years. However, he seems to have regarded his committee work as a means of getting things done rather than a basis for advancing ideas about systems and structures. He demonstrated educational leadership in action rather than constructed theories about it.

Boyd emerges as a man of considerable drive and energy, with a strong sense of social responsibility. These qualities are evident in his responses to poverty and unemployment in Glasgow and Clydebank, in his initiative in the field of child guidance, and in his efforts to involve teachers in research. Although his scholarly output was substantial, he was never a narrow academic, content to confine his efforts to the lecture room: he was much in demand as a public speaker, addressing audiences on a diverse range of topics. It is surprising, therefore, that his work is not better known and his achievements more widely recognised. The relative neglect of Boyd's significant contribution to educational studies can be illustrated by comparing him with another key figure in the first half of the twentieth century.

The work of Godfrey Thomson (1881-1955), who was Bell Professor of Education at the University of Edinburgh and Director of Studies at the Moray House Teacher Training College from 1925 to 1951, is fairly well documented (see Vernon, 1962; Sharp, 1997; Lawn *et al.*, 2009; Deary *et al.*, 2011; Deary, 2012; Lawn and Deary 2014). Thomson – who was knighted in 1949 – undertook psychological work on intelligence which was highly relevant to political debates about selection for secondary education. One commentator goes so far as to suggest that Thomson's work 'acted as a legitimator of a pre-existing ideology' justifying educational segregation in secondary schools (Paterson, 1983, p. 212). Thomson saw himself as a scientist, remarking in his autobiography that the whole of his work had been an attempt to bring mathematical exactitude into psychological experiment and theorising (Thomson, 1969). In other words, his research had a sharper focus than Boyd's and fitted well with the growing trend towards specialisation in academic studies. By contrast, Boyd's range of interests was much broader and might have been regarded by specialists as lacking intellectual rigour. His extensive output, which included 'philosophy, the history of ideas, institutional history, psychology and mental testing' (Bell, 1986: 306) was not seen as a strength but as evidence of dilettantism.

Thomson's joint appointment with the university and the training college (Moray House) also meant that he was able to build a substantial institutional base from which to operate. Boyd, working from a small department within Glasgow University, lacked this. His relations with Jordanhill College had always been rather strained – he was not sorry when his part-time lectureship at the college ceased in 1923 – partly because of his temperamental difference with Rusk, but

also because he felt that the culture of the training college was paternalistic towards students and insufficiently challenging in intellectual respects. Add to that his persistent hostility towards the schools' inspectorate and it is not hard to see how he might have come to be regarded as something of a maverick by educational officialdom. He was much better at developing good relations with teachers and others doing front-line work with young people than with negotiating in the corridors of power. Thomson, based in Edinburgh, was well placed to communicate the significance of his undoubtedly important work to policy-makers and senior administrators.

This goes some way towards explaining why Boyd was never offered a professorship at Glasgow, but it is not the whole story. The proposal for a Chair of Education was advanced strongly by members of the University's General Council in October 1937 (reported in the *SEJ* Oct 22 and Nov 5 of that year.) The case was made by Dr Andrew Paterson, Rector of Clydebank High School, on three grounds. Firstly, many other universities in Britain and the United States had established such chairs and, within Scotland, Edinburgh and St Andrews had led the way as long ago as 1876. Secondly, a professorship would ensure that the holder of the post would have sufficient time to devote to research, 'a vital necessity to every community and to every university'. And thirdly, it seemed inconsistent for the university which had for 21 years been awarding the Higher and Honours degree of Bachelor of Education without taking steps to ensure that there should be a Professor of Education. Members of the University Court remained unconvinced: it was not until 1951 that a chair was established, the first holder being Stanley D. Nisbet (1912-2004). With regard specifically to Boyd's claims, R.E. Bell states that he 'retired in 1945 without a chair, yet with prestige and international fame enjoyed by few British professors of the subject' (Bell, 1983: 165). Part of the reason may have been a misreading of his political sympathies:

Suspicion of his personal politics (his social work among the unemployed in Clydebank and his outspoken views on their plight had given him a quite undeserved reputation as a Marxist) appears to have been a major reason why he was never elevated. (Bell, 1983: 165)

Boyd's personal style may also have been a factor. Brett *et al.* describe him as 'often outspoken and opinionated' and cite his Times obituary: 'He sailed fearlessly into any controversy and was unsparing in his criticisms' (Brett *et al.*, 2010a, p. 49). Boyd himself refers, in his autobiography, to his 'usual way of taking a definite stand on political and social questions' (p. 117). With disarming frankness, he also admits that he was better at chairing committees than serving as an ordinary member: 'In the latter capacity I am apt to be a bit aggressive and to lack the art of persuasion' (ibid: 221).

Scepticism by more established disciplines about the status of education as an academic subject was almost certainly part of the explanation. In an e-mail communication (April 11, 2011) to the present writer, the late Professor John Nisbet observed: 'the University didn't think Education was a respectable discipline, and Boyd spoke with a Glasgow accent, and didn't publish in academic journals'. These comments are not quite accurate. Boyd's accent was Ayrshire rather than Glasgow and he did publish in some academic journals – but, apart

from his books, the bulk of his output took the form of short pieces for newspapers and professional magazines: he wanted to reach teachers in schools and the general public. A reputation for being willing to express forthright views in the public domain and skill in writing journalistic pieces in a form that non-specialists can understand, is not always appreciated by traditional academics. Moreover, education failed to conform to the approved methods either of the arts or the sciences (see Langemann, 2000) and so Boyd could not count on natural allies among his fellow academics.

Whatever the explanation for the failure to award Boyd a professorship, it is clear from his autobiography that it mattered to him: 'The fact that I was never made Professor of Education in Glasgow was the one disappointment of my career. I set out with that definitely in my plans, worked towards it, went on expecting it till the end, was universally recognised as worthy of it - but it never came.' (*Autobiography*, p. 260) The politics of the academic world can be petty and unfair. By any reasonable standards, Boyd thoroughly deserved the title of professor.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper has had the modest aim of providing an initial overview of the range of William Boyd's work. More detailed studies of particular aspects are required, as well as the compilation of a complete bibliography of all his publications. The latter will not be easy as his output was considerable and often took the form of short pieces in newspapers and magazines, a few of which are no longer published. Some valuable work has already been undertaken as part of the ESRC-funded project at Edinburgh University, 'Reconstructing a Scottish School of Educational Research 1925-1950' (Brett *et al.*, 2010b). This has informed the account given above of Boyd's efforts to promote educational research among teachers through the work of the Research Committee of the EIS.

There is, however, a need for further research on particular aspects of Boyd's diverse range of work. These include: Boyd's long-term influence through those colleagues and students who went on to occupy senior positions in Scottish education (e.g. his assistant at Glasgow, Dr William Inglis, became Head of Moray House College in Edinburgh); his support for the Workers' Educational Association as part of his contribution to adult and community education; his robust engagement with policy issues, including teachers' salaries and the position of women teachers; his involvement with the Educational Institute of Scotland, which was very productive in the 1920s, but from which he progressively disengaged in the 1930s; the international dimension of his work, particularly his links with American and European educators; and his ideas on the form and content of teacher education courses, which are still relevant to continuing debates, such as those addressed in the Donaldson report (Scottish Government, 2011).

In addition to these lines of enquiry, it would be instructive to trace Boyd's extensive range of professional contacts within and beyond Scotland: such a mapping exercise would enhance understanding of channels of influence in educational policy and practice in the first half of the twentieth century. In this respect, Boyd is particularly interesting because he can be regarded as both an

'insider' and an 'outsider'. He was very well connected and clearly relished the range of contacts he acquired from his student days onwards. But his willingness to express himself in critical terms meant that he was always regarded with a degree of suspicion within the key institutional structures of the educational hierarchy. A deeper analysis of his life and work thus opens up the intriguing possibility of unearthing material that not only enables a better appreciation of the way the educational system worked before and after the First World War, but also affords insights which may serve to question official accounts of the history of Scottish education.

NOTE 1

The original typescript of Boyd's autobiography is held in the archives of the University of Glasgow. An electronic version was kindly supplied to the author by Hugh Boyd, William Boyd's son, in 2011. The following year a printed version of the text was published privately in Australia by the Boyd family (*The Memoirs of William Boyd 1874-1962*, edited by Hugh Boyd and William Boyd). Apart from some minor editing, there is no substantive difference from the electronic text, though page numbering is not the same (the electronic text runs to 294 pages compared to 327 in the printed version). All references in the article are to the published text, a copy of which is held in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh.

NOTE 2

Records of the work of the Settlement Society were lodged with the university by Boyd in 1961, including minutes of meetings covering the period 1903-1926, a report by Robert Grierson, who acted for a time as Poor Man's Lawyer to the Society, and a list of famous ex-residents of the Settlement. Unfortunately, this material could not be found when the present writer enquired about it in 2015: it is hoped that it may yet turn up.

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Dr John Roberts undertook research on my behalf in the National Library of Scotland. This related to Boyd's publications in *The New Era in Home and School*: in particular, a special Scottish edition of the journal which he edited in 1935. Caroline Brett met me to explain the work of the Edinburgh University project, 'Reconstructing a Scottish School of Educational Research 1925-1950', and drew my attention to some of the publications which the research team had produced.

The late Professor John Nisbet of Aberdeen University supplied me with a copy of informal notes he had made on William Boyd and gave helpful responses to a number of questions. Mary-Frances McGlynn and Pat Malcolm of Clydebank Public Library rendered valuable assistance in tracing material relevant to Boyd's work with the Clydebank Mutual Service Association. Cheryl Colquhoun of the Educational Institute of Scotland arranged access to early editions of the *Scottish Educational Journal*.

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