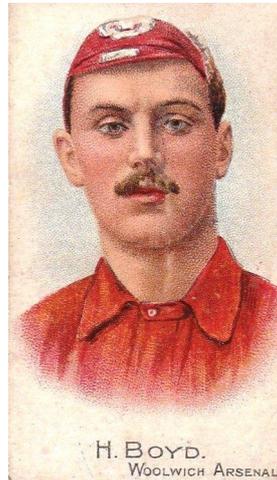


HENRY BOYD - A TALENTED BUT TAINTED FOOTBALLER

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(with acknowledgements to Barry Marsh)



Henry Boyd as a Woolwich Arsenal player

In the exhaustive history of Scottish football the name of Henry, "Harry", Boyd does not resonate loudly. Although from the Glasgow area, Boyd never played for the city's two major clubs, Celtic and Rangers, nor did he turn out extensively in senior Scottish football. He was only briefly recognised by the international selectors, although this may have been because most of his playing activities were spent in England during a decade when Anglo-Scots were not selected for the national team until 1896.

So who was Henry or "Harry" Boyd? Briefly, he was a goal scoring centre-forward whose playing career between 1890 and 1899 took him to Sunderland Albion, Burnley, West Bromwich Albion, Third Lanark, Woolwich Arsenal, Newton Heath and Falkirk before he returned to his origins as a coal miner.

So far so good, but Henry had a dark side to his fiery character which flared up frequently. There were several desperate interludes in his career when indiscipline and a surfeit of drink seem to have caused him major problems, among them assaults, arrests, summonses, court appearances, suspensions, and even disappearances from several of his clubs, which led more often than not to a severance of his arrangements with them.

As the following sketch of his life and football career shows, he seems to have avoided trouble only at Third Lanark, for whom he played in the years 1893 and 1894; in his short life, he scaled the heights (especially at Woolwich Arsenal and Newton Heath) but plumbed the depths, as sadly illustrated by his ignominious demise in a Lanarkshire asylum at the age of 44.

We now reveal much of his colourful but extraordinary life, although, of course, we do not have the full story some 105 years after his death. There is no wish here to besmirch his character but we cannot ignore the fact that trouble seems to have attracted this talented individual, both as a professional footballer and in his private life. It goes to show that nothing is new in the world of football; like Boyd, a number of modern day players have "gone off the rails" in recent times for one reason or other.

We would also wish to correct the erroneous birth and death details of Henry Boyd and other "facts" which have appeared in various recent Who's Who publications. Unfortunately, these have been repeated in good faith on various web-sites relevant to the clubs Boyd played for. With this new profile of a talented but tainted individual we can now hope to clear these matters up once and for all.



Henry Boyd as a Woolwich Arsenal player

HENRY BOYD - A TIMELINE OF HIS LIFE AND FOOTBALL CAREER

1869 29 April: Henry Boyd is born at Torbush, Morningside, a mining village in the Cambusnethan area of Lanarkshire. His father is John Boyd, a coal miner employed by the Chapel Coal Co. Ltd, and his mother is Margaret Boyd (nee O'Bryne). O'Bryne is probably a mis-spelling of O'Brien in the 1869 Cambusnethan register of birth (entry no 295). In due course Henry is also known as "Harry"

1871 2 April: the Scottish census shows the Boyd family resident at Tarbrax Oil Works, Carnwath, Lanarkshire, about 20 miles from Morningside.

1881 3 April: Henry Boyd and his family are living in the Eastwood registration district of Renfrewshire, at Potterfield, part of Pollokshaws, according to the Scottish census.

c.1889-90 Henry Boyd is playing for Vale of Clyde F.C., a junior club based at Tollcross in the east end of Glasgow.

1890 5 August: the *Sunderland Daily Echo* reports that Boyd has been spotted at the local railway station with two other Scots about to join Sunderland Albion. He is identified by the newspaper as coming from the Tollcross area. He is 21 years of age. Boyd plays at centre-forward in 11 matches for Sunderland Albion in the Football Alliance, scoring 8 goals including four in an 11-1 win over Walsall Town Swifts on 27 December. He also participates in 3 FA Cup ties, scoring once. The Scottish Referee of 1 December reports that Boyd and his colleague J.C.Smith have returned to Scotland to enlist two more players.

1891 24 January: Boyd breaks two small bones in his foot while playing against Nottingham Forest which places him *hors de combat* for the rest of the season. There are rumours that he is to join Newcastle West End F.C. but nothing comes of these. Boyd returns to Scotland, having had his train fare to Glasgow paid by his club, and plays no more matches for Sunderland Albion. The club disbands the following year after withdrawing from the Football Alliance and the Northern League. Henry Boyd cannot be traced in the Scottish census of 1891.

c.1891-92 Boyd sails to America. How he is able to afford his fare and how he spends his time overseas are not known. While there he meets Pat Gallocher, a former Burnley player, who recommends that he contacts Burnley on his return.

1892 8 August: Boyd joins Burnley after his sojourn in America. He makes his debut at Wolverhampton on 3 September, but is later suspended over a disciplinary matter, according to the *Burnley Express* of 24 September. His new club does not rate him very highly, although in his last game on 22 October he scores 8 goals for Burnley Swifts v. Peel Bank Rovers (a).

1892 28 October: after 4 League games (1 goal) at Burnley, Boyd is offloaded to West Bromwich Albion, who are desperately seeking a new centre-forward. He signs on at £2.10s a week and receives a £5 signing on fee. Due to make his first appearance v. Aston Villa on 5 November, Boyd is ruled out through a knee injury sustained in practice. His debut for Albion in a Wednesbury Charity Cup match v. Everton (h) on 21 November is underwhelming - he seems exhausted after half-an-hour and has to be switched from centre-forward to half-back. Subsequently, his form and conduct are so poor that West Bromwich Albion resolve to give him seven days' notice from 31 December that his services are no longer required. It is proposed in a club minute of 28 December that his railway fare back to Scotland should be paid.

1893 7 January: Albion have a change of heart and give him a League debut v. Burnley (h) in which he earns plaudits from the local *Free Press* newspaper: "...he played a clever and strong game, the spectators frequently applauding smart feats by which he eluded his opponents. In the matter of strength he seemed about equal to the two Burnley backs put together, and if he can only keep up the form he displayed on Saturday the Albion can congratulate themselves upon having a fine and reliable centre-forward". It is a false dawn, however, for Boyd participates in only 6 more League matches (1 goal) until 13 April when he last appears v. Preston North End.

1893 7 April: arrested for assaulting Richard Darby, a timber merchant from Smethwick and a well-known Albion supporter.

1893 15 April: Boyd scores twice in his very last appearance for Albion when his club loses a friendly match at Newcastle by 7 goals to 2.

1893 17 April: at this time he is living at 47 New Street, West Bromwich. He fails to answer a summons on 17 April and a warrant is issued for his arrest at West Bromwich police court. Boyd disappears from the Midlands, presumably returning to Scotland, where he signs for Third Lanark in May.

1893 21 April: *the Scottish Referee* reports that Boyd's altercation is with Joseph Darby, the so-called "champion jumper of the world", but local information suggests that Richard Darby, no relative of Joseph, is the person involved.

1893 20 May: the *Glasgow Evening Post* reports that Boyd has been given permission to take part in Scottish football; he is thus reinstated to amateur status. Boyd first plays against Rangers on this day in the Glasgow Merchants' Charity Cup. He is now living at 112 Hawthorn Street, Possilpark, Glasgow.

1893 12 July: the unfortunate Richard Darby dies at his home at 19 Lewisham Street, Smethwick, at the age of 31, having failed, it is rumoured, to have fully recovered from being kicked by Boyd. He leaves a wife Eunice, whom he has married at the age of 17. He has suffered for five days from acute uraemia (a condition associated with chronic kidney disease or acute kidney injury) and has been in a coma for 16 hours.

1893 25 November: Henry Boyd scores a hat-trick for Third Lanark v. Inverness Thistle (h) in a Scottish Cup tie.

1894 27 January: Boyd is chosen for the Scottish League against the Irish League at Celtic Park and scores once in a 6-0 victory. On 3 February he plays at centre-forward for Third Lanark who lose 3-5 to Celtic in the Scottish Cup semi-final. He also plays 15 League games in 1893-94, scoring 6 times.

1894 3 March: Boyd is selected for team D in a Scottish international trial at Ibrox Park.

1894 14 May: Boyd re-invents himself by signing for Woolwich Arsenal of the English Second Division. On 6 June his son Henry is born at Mansion Street, Possilpark, Glasgow, his father's profession being given as that of a coal miner. The birth certificate shows that Boyd has married Annie Allan on 10 December 1893 in the Gorbals, Glasgow, but no registration of this marriage has been found.

1894 8 September: after travelling to Glasgow without permission Boyd is persuaded to return and makes a goal scoring debut for Woolwich Arsenal in a friendly match v. Fleetwood Rangers. Although playing in just six games at the start of his Arsenal League career, including a debut goal v. Grimsby Town (h), he obtains 9 goals, three of these coming against Manchester City (h) on 29 September. Boyd also plays in a friendly against his old club West Bromwich Albion (h) on 17 September.

1894 15 October: Boyd breaks an ankle bone in a friendly v. Sunderland and is side-lined until Christmas Eve when he returns for Arsenal in a friendly v. New Brompton. He then goes absent without leave and returns to Glasgow.

1895 25 January: the *Sporting Life* comments on his desertion, saying that punishment is appropriate for leaving his club in the lurch. Boyd finally contacts Arsenal, asking to be forgiven and taken back. Arsenal, who have retained his registration, eventually relent at the end of September and welcome him back.

1895 19 October: the rejuvenated Boyd plays his first match v. Burton Swifts (h) and scores in a 5-0 win; subsequently, he becomes Arsenal's leading League scorer in 1895-96 with a further 12 goals in 21 League games and as many as 30 in 17 friendly matches.

1896 Now captain at the start of the season, Boyd provides 10 more goals in 12 League fixtures. He is then suspended sine die for reasons which remain obscure at the time but involve a 0-8 defeat at Loughborough on 12 December. Rumours suggest that certain players, having taken to drink after club officials criticise them for lack of effort, proceed to throw insults back in their direction. Boyd is placed on the transfer list, but asks for the suspension to be lifted which is refused. In 79 League and friendly games for Woolwich Arsenal he has scored 80 goals to become Arsenal's top goal scorer of all time on a goals per game ratio.

1897 18 January: at the age of 27, Henry Boyd is transferred to the Manchester club, Newton Heath, Second Division runners-up in 1897, for a fee of £45. Boyd scores 5 goals in 10 League outings for his new employers, including one on his first appearance against Loughborough Town (h) on 6 February. At the end of the season he takes part in three Test Matches to decide relegation and promotion, but Newton Heath are unsuccessful.

1897-98 at the beginning of this campaign Boyd is in explosive form, obtaining hat-tricks against Lincoln City (h) on 4 September and Burton Swifts (a) a week later. He plays in every League game (a total of 30) and becomes the club's leading scorer by obtaining 23 goals including three more v Loughborough Town (h), on 29 March 1898.

1898-99 at the start of the new season Boyd is suspended for missing training. Eventually he re-emerges to score 5 goals in 12 League encounters before a further suspension in March 1899 for misbehaviour ends his career at Newton Heath. He does not play for the club again.

1899 26 August: after a career total of 82 goals in 132 League matches he signs for Falkirk of the Scottish Central Combination at the age of 30 but misses his debut v Stenhousemuir because of the death of his 13 day old daughter Elizabeth, born at 38 Pollok Street, Pollokshaws. Evidence of Boyd subsequently playing for Falkirk has yet to be discovered.

1899 2 September: an old problem that has plagued him throughout his life resurfaces in public when the *Kirkintilloch Gazette* reports an appearance at the local burgh court on 28 August where he is accused of punching his wife Annie Allan in his own home at East High Street. His defence, which does not impress the magistrates, is that he was "mad with drink". He is fined two guineas or one month's imprisonment. During these proceedings it comes to light that two court cases concerning assault by Boyd have also occurred recently.

1901 1 March: Henry Boyd is married again to Annie Allan at 216 Dalmarnock Road, Glasgow. The couple have been living together since 1893 and have a six year old son. The Scottish census taken on 31 March shows them now resident at 21 Craignestock Street, Calton, Glasgow.

1904 9 February: Annie Boyd dies of "ulceration of the stomach: peritonitis" at the early age of 34. The place of death is given as 44 Dalmarnock Road, Glasgow, and Henry Boyd registers the death.

1906 9 November: described as a widower and coal miner, Henry marries Janet Trotter at the age of 37. They are living at 85 Springfield Road, Glasgow.

1911 2 April: the Scottish census shows the Boyds residing at 5 Ewing Place, Camlachie, Glasgow.

1913 14 September: the somewhat chaotic and colourful life of Henry Boyd comes to a tragic end at the age of 44 when he dies in a psychiatric hospital, Hartwood Asylum, at Shotts, North Lanarkshire (entry no 71 in the middle district of Shotts register of deaths). The cause of death is shown as general paralysis of the insane, a medical euphemism for the final stages of the sexually transmitted disease, syphilis. His home address is given as 101 Causewayside, Tollcross. His former Sunderland Albion team-mate Jack Rae also dies at the same location of the same illness.



Henry Boyd wearing the shirt and cap of the Scottish League

HENRY BOYD'S SENIOR LEAGUE APPEARANCES: A SUMMARY

| | Apps | Goals |
|--|------|-------|
| Sunderland Albion (Football Alliance) (1890-91) | 11 | 8 |
| Burnley (Football League Division 1) (1892) | 4 | 1 |
| West Bromwich Albion (Football League Division 1) (1892-93) | 7 | 1 |
| Third Lanark (Scottish League Division 1) (1893-94) | 15 | 6 |
| Woolwich Arsenal (Football League Division 2) 1894-97) | 40 | 32 |
| Newton Heath (Football League Division 2 and Test Matches) (1897-99) | 55 | 34 |
| Career total | 132 | 82 |

HENRY BOYD'S FA CUP AND SCOTTISH CUP APPEARANCES

Sunderland Albion 1890-91: 3 FA Cup (1 goal)
West Bromwich Albion 1892-93: 1 FA Cup
Third Lanark 1893-94: 4 Scottish Cup (5 goals)
Woolwich Arsenal 1895-96: 1 FA Cup
Newton Heath 1896-97: 4 FA Cup (1 goal)
Newton Heath 1897-98: 3 FA Cup

Total of FA Cup and Scottish Cup appearances and goals = 16 (7)

Boyd did not make any Cup appearances for Burnley in 1892-93, nor Woolwich Arsenal in 1894-95 and 1896-97, nor Newton Heath in 1898-99. He also appeared in numerous friendly and minor cup matches for his various clubs.