



John's paternal grandmother, Willie, Alexander, John, Catherine, Elizabeth (Eliza) and Helen circa 1898

Port Logan and then at Stonehouse. Alexander was politically active, first with the Independent Labour Party under Keir Hardie and then later with the Communist Party. John's mother came from Fauldhouse, West Lothian and after completing her teacher training at Glasgow Normal School, taught for some years. Elizabeth, or Eliza as she liked to be known, was a cultured woman, being both a keen pianist and gardener and in 1918 contributed a poem on the impending defeat of Germany to Orage's The New Age. Alexander and Eliza were married on the 31st of December, 1888, from which followed the birth of William in 1889, Catherine in 1891(?), John in 1893 and Helen in 1897.



John Anderson was the third born, and second son, of the marriage of Alexander Anderson and Elizabeth Brown. His father, the son of a shepherd from the Lammermoor hills, took advantage of the expansion of the university system in Scotland during the 1880's and enrolled in an arts degree at Edinburgh University in 1884. He graduated with an M.A. in 1888 and took up schoolteaching, first at

Looking at John's early school and family photos, one sees a serious, perhaps even solemn young boy. He is rarely smiling, but then being a bookish, intellectual type is the coal mining town of Stonehouse would not perhaps encourage one to be happy. Nor, perhaps, would the fact that your father was the headmaster at the school you were attending, and who, judging by John's later academic successes, perhaps drove John and the other children of the family to succeed in their studies.



Both John, and his elder brother Willie, did succeed, and both entered Hamilton Academy for their higher secondary education as a preparation for the All Scotland Bursary Competition, the only way children from working and lower middle class families could enter Scottish universities.

There can be little doubt that John excelled in this intellectual atmosphere, where between 1907 and 1910 he studied English, higher mathematics and higher Greek and when he sat the Scholarship competition in 1911 he came first, thereby surpassing the achievement of brother Willie who had only come second.





The matriculation class at Hamilton Academy

John's achievement in coming first is one that should not be underestimated. As Jim Baker has shown, many of the Professors of Philosophy who occupied various chairs throughout Scotland and the rest of the world, never achieved this distinction. Equally worthy of mention is the fact that John's future wife, Janet Baillie, came third in that same competition.

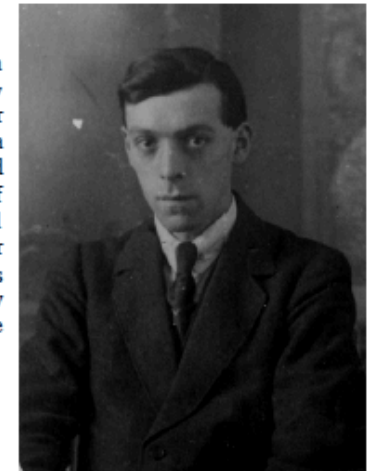
The serious and solemn young boy who had studied at his father's school was now a serious and solemn young man about to enter Glasgow University as the brightest product of his year, and perhaps even of his generation.



The winners of the All Scotland Bursary Competition of 1911: John (first) is third from left and Janet Baillie (third) is second from left.



John had grown into a young man who now achieved higher and higher distinction, becoming a member of a smaller and smaller elite of intellectually gifted individuals, like his elder brother Willie, Willie's best friend Mathew Robieson and his future wife, Janet Baillie.



John entered Glasgow University in 1911 and studied mathematics and physics and in 1915 was awarded the Cunninghame medal for study in mathematics. After the completion of his initial degree, he then studied for a degree in logic and moral philosophy, graduating with Master of Arts in 1917 with a dissertation on William James and winning the Caird medal for study in moral philosophy. He then won a Ferguson Scholarship which enabled him to teach at University College, Cardiff between 1917 and 1919, before returning to teach at Glasgow during 1919. He then won the Shaw Philosophical Fellowship in 1919 which enabled him to research and lecture at Edinburgh University between 1920 and 1926.





John and Jenny were married on 30th June, 1922, by which time John was sporting his trademark moustouche and pipe.



Within a year, their only child, Alexander, or Sandy as he became more commonly known, was born.



By this time, John was lecturing and researching at Edinburgh University and had begun to formulate his basic philosophical position.

While his position may have bought a certain amount of security to his life, it certainly didn't make his political views conservative, as he was an admirer of the General Strike in Britain in 1926 which probably only confirmed his acceptance

of Communism which had no doubt been growing for some years but which couldn't be openly expressed in the 'kirky' atmosphere of Edinburgh University.



John and his father, c 1926



The philosophy staff at Edinburgh University circa 1925. John is third from the right front row. Rush Rhees, a student of John's but later a philosopher in his own right, is back row first from the right. Professor A.E. Taylor is centre left and Professor N. Kemp Smith is centre right.



All that was about to change with his appointment as the Challis Professor of Philosophy at Sydney University in 1927. His references from Kemp Smith and Samuel Alexander were glowing and with only one other applicant for the job, John had no difficulty in securing the Challis Professorship at the tender age of thirty four.



The family lived at King's Cross for the first few months of 1927 before purchasing the house 'Levenshulme', at 1 Nulla Nulla St, Turramurra, which remained in the family's possession for another seventy years..



The Andersons in Melbourne Feb 1927



Sandy playing in Kings Cross



'Levenshulme'





'Levenshulme' became the hub of the Anderson's social life during the thirties when students would call in over the weekend for a round of tennis and some afternoon tea.





John and Mrs Fowler, 1939



Ruth Walker, 1930's



Jenny and Mrs Fowler, 1930's



Jenny, Sandy and John on their way to Scotland, 1938

During the thirties, John was active with his academic work, writing nineteen articles for the A.J.P.P. between 1927 and 1937, as well as teaching all the philosophy courses. During this time, he was also actively involved with the Communist Party of Australia and the Trotskyist 'Workers Party'. However in 1934, Ruth Walker began her undergraduate studies at the University and this event was to irreversibly change the Anderson's domestic life. Ruth became one of John's best students and by 1939 had also become his lover and closest confidant. Although the couple tried to be discreet about the relationship, it was only a question of time before it came out into the open.



John, Jenny and students at Newport? during the thirties



Newport 1940's?

Back: Alec (Ritchie?), Shiela (Sharp?), John Anderson, John K., Christine,
Centre: Don M., Ray G., Helen, Harry (Eddy), Noel R., John S., Madge (Eddy),
Front: Don S. Frank (Fowler).

During the nineteen forties, John's academic output declined, although he remained popular with students and meetings at the WEA conference centre at Newport occurred on a regular basis over the Christmas period.



John and students at Newport during the nineteen forties? John is in the foreground and Ruth is seated behind his right shoulder.

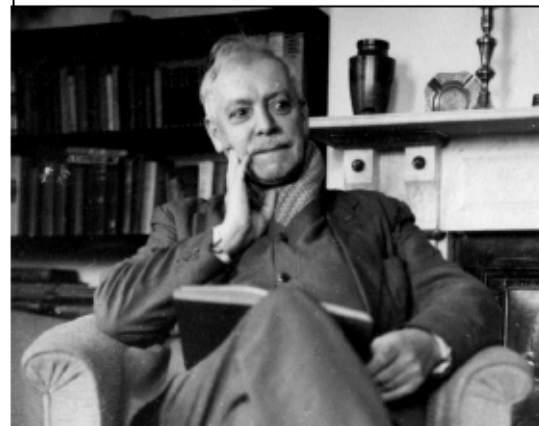
John's relationship with Ruth finally came out into the open in 1949 when Sandy confronted his parents about the relationship and Ruth had a nervous breakdown and was off work for most of 1950. When she went on sabbatical to England in 1952, the sexual aspect of the relationship appears to have finished although they corresponded on a weekly basis throughout the year. The intellectual nature of the relationship was reinforced in these letters and at one point John says that Ruth is closer to him 'in mind' than any other person.



Newcastle 1954. John is seated with A. Bussell with Tom Rose seated to the right. Standing left to right: R. Walters, Ruth, M. Roxon, Sandy Anderson, Harry Eddy, D.H. Munro, Barabara Roxon, John Mackie.



Newcastle 1954: B. Roxon, A. Bussell, Harry Eddy, Sandy Anderson, John Mackie, R. Walters, John, Tom Rose, Ruth, D.H. Munro, M. Roxon.



In early July 1962, John was completing the index to his book, *Studies in Empirical Philosophy*, when he went outside to chop some wood. However he over-exerted himself and had a heart attack. He was admitted to Royal North Shore Hospital and died on July 6th.

