

James Young, died 3 June 1939 on HMS Thetis



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
JAMES
BELOVED HUSBAND OF **FLORENCE YOUNG**
WHO LOST HIS LIFE ON H.M. SUBMARINE THETIS
JUNE 3RD 1939, AGED 41 YEARS

LOVE'S LAST GIFT REMEMBRANCE

The gravestone was been lying face-down for some years. Thanks are due to Cemetery staff for turning it face-up in 2021.

The loss of the submarine Thetis was a tragedy that gripped the nation for weeks. A fuller account of the events can be found on the entry for Thomas Ankers at Rampside Churchyard.

<https://furnessstoriesbehindthestones.co.uk/stories/ankers-thomas/>

A third local man, Horace Cragg, who died in the accident, is buried in Ulverston Cemetery.

On Thursday 1st June 1939 the brand new submarine HMS Thetis (Lieutenant Commander Guy H Bolus) sailed from the Birkenhead Yard of Cammell Laird into Liverpool Bay to carry out diving trials. In addition to the normal crew of fifty five Officers and Ratings there were a large number of passengers, both uniformed personnel and civilians, on board for Trials purposes. This took the total number of personnel on-board the submarine up to one hundred and one. During the dive difficulties were encountered with the trim of the submarine.

During the investigations into why the submarine could not dive properly it was decided to examine the condition of the tanks and torpedo Tubes. In this process the rear doors of all tubes including No. 5 Tube were opened. Unknown to the crew the Bow Cap of No. 5 Tube was already open and the tube was full of water.

As the rear door was opened water rushed in and the forward compartments of the submarine were flooded. The submarine inevitably ended up on the bottom and was unable to resurface. Eventually four of the trapped personnel were able to make an escape but, despite all the desperate efforts of both those remaining in the submarine and all those on the surface in ships, aircraft and rescue vessels, the remaining ninety nine of the crew and passengers died in the accident.

James Young who was employed as a Foreman Fitter by Vickers-Armstrong Ltd at the Barrow in Furness Shipyard. He was the husband of Florence Young of 8, Falmouth Street, Barrow in Furness and the father of Joan and Hugh who were nine and eight years old respectively. From <http://rnsb.co.uk/articles/lost-found/thetis-loss.html> - the website of the Barrow Submariners Association. The page has a link to an excellent documentary on the loss of Thetis made in 2000.

From Ancestry the National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations) 1939 has:

YOUNG James of 8 Falmouth-street Walney Barrow-in-Furness **Lancashire** died 3 June 1939 on board H.M.S. Thetis at sea Administration **Manchester** 24 July to Florence Young widow.
Effects £312 9s 7d.

In the **1939 Register**, compiled after James' death, the entry for 8 Falmouth Street, Walney, has Florence Young (DoB 13 February 1891 **nb this is an error – other documents say 1898**), Widow, Unpaid Domestic Duties, Joan Young (crossed out – Wilkinson – her married name) (DoB 3 December 1929) At School; *a redacted record* which is probably

Hugh Dale Young, born 1931; and Alice Sparrow (DoB 13 November 1877), Widow, Paid Housekeeper. Alice is almost certainly Florence's mother.

In the **1911 Census**, James Dale Young was living with his family at 7a Schooner Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Lancs. The household was: Hugh Dale Young (41) Head, Brassmoulder, Shipyard, born Kilmaurs, Ayrshire; Isabella Blair Young (39) Wife, born Glasgow, Renfrew; Mary Russell Young (17) Daughter, Domestic Servant, born Riccarton, Ayrshire; Jessie Dale Young (15), Daughter, Domestic Servant, born Riccarton, Ayrshire; James Dale Young (13) Son, Scholar, born Riccarton, Ayrshire; Isabella Blair Young (8), Scholar, born Riccarton, Ayrshire; Robert Blair Young (1), Son, born Barrow-in-Furness.

The same James Young is listed, aged 3, on the **1901 Scotland Census**, with an address at 9 Hurlford Road, Riccarton, Ayrshire, but the full page is not available. The list contains his parents and his two older sisters, confirming that it is the same family.

An **Andrew's Newspaper Card** on *Ancestry* has details of James & Florence's marriage: YOUNG James Age 30 Bachelor. Fitter at Engineering Works, of 6B Schooner Street, Barrow, son of Hugh Dale Young, a Foreman (Oil Works) married 10.3.1928 at Baptist Chapel, Barrow-in-Furness to Florence Sparrow, age 30, Spinster. Draper's Shop assistant, of 42 Harrison Street, Barrow, daughter of John James Sparrow, deceased, Oil Works Manager. Witnesses- R. B. Young. M. R. Young.

A separate **Andrew's Newspaper Card** on *Ancestry* has details thus: SPARROW Florence, daughter of John Samuel Sparrow Oil Works Foreman & Alice formerly Brazier. Born 13.2.1898 at 10 Ironworks Road, Barrow, Lancs. Informant: father, same address. *I suspect that John Samuel is the correct name.*
Below that it has a repeat of the first record, citing her father's name as John James Sparrow.

The Sparrow's were in Sherborne Villa, Shirehampton, Glos. in the **1901 Census**, when Florence was three, and John S. Sparrow was a Cooper, casks, etc., born in St. George's in the East, London. In the **1911 Census** she was staying (or living?) at 210 Desborough Road, High Wycombe with *her aunt?* Charlotte Brazier (29), Single, Confectionery & Tobacco Business (own account), born Barrow in Furness. Florence is thirteen. The rest of the family, John Samuel Sparrow (38), Engineer, works for Oil Company, born Al(d)gate, London, Alice Sparrow (34) born Barrow, Lancs; Emily Sparrow (12) at school, born Barrow; and John Sparrow (7), at school, born Fulham, London, were living at 13 Henniker Gardens, East Ham, London.

There is a family tree on Ancestry which associates the above with a James Young who died in Barrow in 1937. I believe that this is an error of identification.