

CHAPTER 6

OUTWARD BOUND

KEY EVENTS

In Chapter four, it was described how Gordonstoun's sail training vessel, the Prince Louis, was sailed from Scotland to Wales, in August 1941, by a crew including ten Gordonstoun students. After an eventful voyage the Prince Louis was met at Conway (Wales) by Hahn and Holt. Holt was a long time supporter of Hahn and through his company, the Blue Funnel Line, had supplied the captain and other members of the crew (Brereton, 1968; Hahn, 1944). After meeting the boat, Holt had said to Hahn, that they should start a 'Sea School' at Aberdovey (Brereton, 1968; Hahn, 1944).

It is not known when the Sea School became the Outward Bound Sea School but Hahn (1957a) states that the choice of 'Outward Bound' was Holt's. From this point on, for brevity, it will be referred to as Outward Bound.

During the last week in August, 1941, Hogan was running a training course for 'leaders, teachers and organisers' of the County Badge Award at Gordonstoun, in Wales (Hogan, 1968), as described in Chapter five. This was the last week of Hogan's three month secondment from his teaching post and, as he had a family, he was concerned about the future (Hogan, 1968). Hogan had spoken to Hahn about this and various options had been discussed including him residing at Gordonstoun - Hogan had thoughts about returning to his old school (Hogan, 1968). Towards the end of the leaders' course Hogan states that Hahn came to him: "He then formed the idea that my services could be retained if I were to become the Warden of a training centre; to demonstrate the method rather than be Secretary of a committee merely recommending it" (Hogan, 1970b, p. 62).

Hogan thought that as enough money could not be raised to fund his continuation as Secretary of the County Badge Committee it was unlikely that enough could be obtained to start a school (Hogan, 1968, 1970b). Hahn however was adamant that a "training centre in which we could put on a 'compelling demonstration'" was needed (Hogan, 1968, p. 25). This would be a place where youngsters could be given a "training holiday" and Hogan should be the Warden of such a centre (Hogan, 1968, p. 25). Hogan was convinced that this idea had been in Hahn's mind for a long period of time "which now for the first time he judged to be ripe for development" (Hogan, 1970b, p. 63). It can be seen from Chapters two, four and five that Hahn had indeed been thinking about the concept of training centres for a number of years. In the summer of 1941 Hahn (1957a) had been looking for funding to start a 'short term school'.

Hogan (1970, p. 33) states that Hahn "knew of a wealthy shipowner who would certainly support us if we could put up a convincing case. All I had to do was prepare the case". This was to be Lawrence Holt, who Hogan (1970b) states had long been an admirer of Hahn's educational practice.

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Figure 17. Lawrence Holt (Circa 1950).

As Holt was a governor of the training ship Conway, Hogan (1968, 1970) believed that he and Hahn must have had discussions about how both schools' traditions could contribute to the new venture. Sources (Brereton, 1968; Hahn, 1944) indicate that this happened when the Prince Louis, after travelling from Scotland, stopped at Conway, as described in Chapter five. Hogan also felt that Hahn knew that the Prince Louis would need financial and logistical support to continue, and Holt, with his background, would have been an ideal candidate to support it (Hogan, 1968).

Hogan had to quickly prepare a scheme as Hahn had arranged for him to visit Holt at his offices in Liverpool (Hogan, 1968). He knew that Holt had "tremendous admiration" for Hahn's educational vision and knew of Holt's "faith in the virtues of sail-training" (Hogan, 1970b, p. 64). Hogan also knew of Holt's belief that men were dying unnecessarily during the Battle of the Atlantic which was happening at the time (Hogan, 1970a). When merchant ships were torpedoed the crew were

forced to take to the lifeboats. Due to their experience being largely in powered craft, as opposed to sailing vessels, many were not surviving – those that did survive had experience of small boat sailing and “had developed a sense of wind and weather, a reliance on their own resources – physical, nervous and technical” (Hogan, 1968, p. 26–27).

When once one knew of Lawrence Holt’s deep concern about these matters it was comparatively easy to present a proposal which would give young seamen the preparation for emergency which Holt regarded as imperative, and at the same time demonstrate Hahn’s County Badge training scheme idea under favourable conditions. (Hogan, 1970b, p. 64)

Hogan, presented the scheme to Holt in such a way as to secure his funding, but, at least in Hogan’s eyes, the intention was to demonstrate the County Badge training scheme. In any case, as will be demonstrated, the scheme appears to have changed little from the Moray Badge carried out at Gordonstoun.

Hogan visited Holt and he agreed to fund the scheme and also supply technical aid in terms of trained seamen and supplies (Hogan, 1968, 1970a, 1970b). As Gordonstoun already had a small sailing base at Aberdovey, which could be developed further and also meant the Gordonstoun students and Hahn could be involved, it was chosen as the location of the new venture (Hogan, 1970b). Outward Bound, at Holt’s insistence, started five weeks later on the 4th October, 1941 (Hogan, 1968).

STRUCTURE

Dr. B. Zimmermann and George Lowthian Trevelyan were both teachers at Gordonstoun and they had both also instructed on the ‘leaders’ course there, for the County Badge Committee in August, 1941 (Hogan, 1968). It is also known that Zimmermann instructed on the Welsh summer course at Gordonstoun in 1940 (Campbell, 1976). As G.L. Trevelyan was also working at Gordonstoun then it is probable he instructed on it as well. They were described by Hogan (1968) as being highly experienced in the athletics and expeditions offered at Gordonstoun and this is probably the reason they were seconded to Outward Bound. Chew, another teacher from Gordonstoun, was also seconded from the Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre at Glenfeshie (running a course resembling the Moray Badge (Hahn, 1957a)), to work at Outward Bound, and he was succeeded at Outward Bound by Farnell, another ex-Gordonstoun Housemaster (Hogan, 1968).

Zimmermann eventually left Gordonstoun and worked at Outward Bound full time (Hogan, 1968). He was in charge of the Physical Education Department there which included expeditions (Carpenter, personal communication, March 2, 2006). Hahn (1957a, p. 445) described him as “Hogan’s chief helper”. Zimmermann’s son, Peter Carpenter, an ex-pupil of Gordonstoun, and later a lecturer at Oxford University’s Institute of Education, assisted him from 1942–45 (Carpenter, personal communication, December 2, 2005).

The accommodation at Aberdovey was limited at first, with room for only twenty-four boys – eight each from Gordonstoun, Conway, and Alfred Holt and Company



Figure 18. The Outward Bound sea school at Aberdovey.

(Carpenter, 1958; Hogan 1970a, 1970b). Progressively more accommodation came into use until a year later over one hundred boys were being accepted on 11 courses a year, each lasting for 28 days (Hogan, 1970b). Originally Gordonstoun and Conway only sent boys for a week at a time – they changed over every Saturday while the eight from Alfred Holt and Company stayed for the full four weeks (Hogan, 1968). Eventually this changed and all boys stayed for 28 days (Hogan, 1968).

The boys were aged from 16 to 19 and, as the numbers increased, came from “an extremely wide cross-section of society” (Hogan, 1970a, p. 41). The eclectic nature of the student population is confirmed by other sources (Brereton, 1968; Carpenter, 1974; Hahn, 1952, 1957a; Hogan, 1968, 1970b) - as well as coming from Gordonstoun, Conway and Alfred Holt and Company, there were boys from state schools, other public schools, other merchant shipping lines, from factories, from offices, and boys awaiting call up (to the forces). It is clear that the student population was made up of both those who had an interest in entering the Merchant Navy and those who did not.

The County Badge syllabus was followed at Outward Bound (Carpenter, 1974; Hahn, 1944, 1957a; Hogan, 1968, 1970a). The project element was based on sailing and seamanship, the service element was based on training for rescue operations (lifeboat drills, coastguard and mountain rescue training), physical training included athletics and hiking trips, and expeditions were land and sea based (Hogan, 1970b). During the course the students also had to demonstrate active citizenship and be helpful members of the community (Hahn, 1948a, 1957a, 1957b).



Figure 19. Launching the cutter at Aberdovey (1940s).

Hogan (1968) and Carpenter (personal communication, December 5, 2006) described the facilities as being basic at first but gradually improving over time. In the beginning the two Gordonstoun cutters and the Prince Louis were used for the seamanship but eventually more boats were brought from Scotland and more built (Hogan, 1968). In the summer of 1943 another large sail training vessel, the ketch Garibaldi, was supplied to Outward Bound by Alfred Holt and Company (Gordonstoun Record, 1945; Hogan, 1968). It was handed over in a formal ceremony where Professor G.M. Trevelyan (Master of Trinity, Cambridge), G. Winthrop-Young and Lawrence Holt each gave speeches (Gordonstoun Record, 1945; Hogan, 1968). It appears that Hahn was not present.

The layout of the programme appears to be very similar to that on the Welsh summer course (Appendix F). The students were divided into watches of 10–12 people (Hahn, 1957a). Each watch stayed together for each activity, with marks being awarded for the activities in an inter-watch competition (Hogan, 1968). The watch with most marks were then allowed to fly their watch pennant from the school flagstaff for that day (Hogan, 1968). Each student also had to keep 'training conditions' during the course (Carpenter, 1958; Hahn, 1957a; Hogan, 1970b) and not smoke or drink (Hahn, 1957a).

Each day there was a morning run, followed by fifty skips, prayers, and then each watch cleaned its own accommodation (Carpenter, 1958; Hogan, 1968). After this



Figure 20. The Garibaldi.

activities took place which included seamanship, expeditions and athletics (Carpenter, 1958; Hogan, 1968). First-aid, life-saving, (Hahn, 1957a) and swimming (Carpenter, 1974) were also part of the programme.

Seamanship involved both theoretical and practical elements, the practical included sailing in small boats and then going to sea in either the Prince Louis or Garibaldi (Gordonstoun Record, 1945; Hahn, 1957a). The small boat sailing involved travelling under oars and sail, with the instructors leaving the boat as soon as possible to allow the students to learn from their own mistakes (Hogan, 1968). Therefore, the boating was very similar to that which had taken place beforehand at Gordonstoun and Salem.

Students were taught map and compass skills, and expeditions were introduced which through the course of the month gradually became technically harder and longer (Hahn, 1957a; Hogan, 1968). Zimmermann used Norwegian Compass Games (orienteering) to introduce some skills (Carpenter, personal communication, March 2, 2006). The course culminated in a thirty mile trek across the Welsh mountains (Hahn, 1957a; Hogan, 1968).

Athletics were taken by Zimmermann (Carpenter, personal communication, March 2, 2006; Hogan, 1968) with each student aiming to reach the standards contained in the County Badge Scheme (Hahn, 1957a). Zimmermann “inspired every youngster to discover his hidden reserves, and was far more interested in the diffident and clumsy boy than the gifted athlete” (Hahn, 1957a, p. 445). His aim was not only to teach athletics but through athletics to achieve “all-roundness” in the individual (Hahn, 1957a, p. 445).

Zimmermann considered it more important for a boy to learn how to overcome his innate weakness than to develop his innate strength. To him the training of the body was no end in itself-it had to serve the whole man.... Zimmermann was never tired of saying, “Give them the opportunity to overcome adversity”. (Hahn, 1957a, p. 445)

Therefore, for Zimmermann, the aim was not primarily to teach athletics but to develop the individual through athletics. Indeed, the whole course could be viewed as having this developmental aim. It is important to note that Outward Bound originally used athletics as a medium to develop the individual, not just outdoor activities. Zimmermann believed that students could develop by overcoming their weakness and knowing that they had done so. This point will be expanded on in Chapter eight.

Hogan had been a Scout Leader before meeting Hahn (Hogan, 1970a). While in the Scouts he had visited the Scout training centre at Gilwell Park (Hogan, 1970a) (Chapter three). The visit had impressed him, in particular the ‘patrol system’ which was used to develop teams (Hogan, 1970a). The watch system developed at Outward Bound appears to be very similar to this. Despite not having the same team of dedicated and experienced instructors Hogan (1970a) stated that he hoped to emulate Gilwell Park. This is an example of influences by practitioners, as opposed to founders, which probably influenced the nature of the course.

Each student had a personal log book and all achievements were entered into it (Hogan, 1968). At first, as with the County Badge Scheme, ‘Standard’ and ‘Silver’ badges were awarded (Hahn, 1957a). Over time it became obvious that this was unfair, as participants arrived with different levels of ability, very often through no fault of their own, and despite immense efforts there was not enough time for them to reach the required standard (Carpenter, 1958; Hahn, 1957a; Hogan, 1968).

Therefore, lower standards were introduced in some athletic events but raised in others because it was found boys dramatically improved their stamina during the course (Carpenter, 1958). Carpenter (1958) states that the badge system changed to a Merit Badge and Honours Badge and different age bands were incorporated to reflect the different age group using the centre. A Membership Badge was also introduced to give recognition to those who had tried their best during the course but had not reached the required standards (Carpenter, 1958). This is supported by Hahn (1957a) and Hogan (1968) but no date given. Hahn (1957a) states that the honours badge was white, the merit badge blue, and the membership badge red. This appears to be the only change from the original format, as it is reported that the programme did not change in its essentials between 1941–1944 (Carpenter, 1958; Hogan, 1968). Hogan left Aberdovey in 1945 (Hogan, 1968).

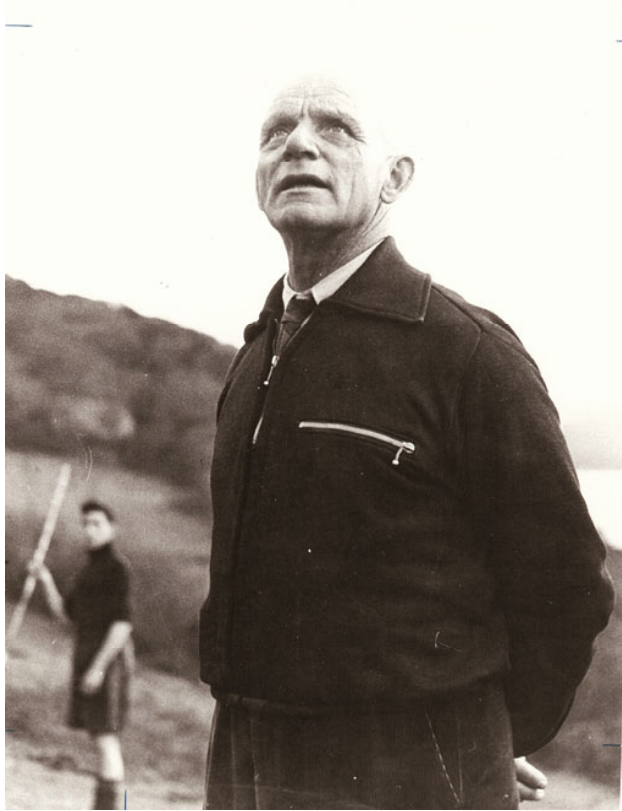


Figure 21. Bernhard Zimmerman teaching athletics at Aberdovey.



Figure 22. A selection of early Outward Bound sea school badges.

Therefore, there is a connection not only in founder, philosophy and syllabus with Gordonstoun but also personnel. In effect these also highlight connections to the County Badge Scheme.

TRAINING THROUGH THE SEA

Therefore, against a backdrop of war and through the association of Hahn and Holt, Outward Bound came into being. Hahn (1957a) later stated that in 1941 he had wanted to start a short term school but lack of funds had prevented him, until Holt, in the summer of 1941, secured the financial support of his company, the Blue Funnel Line.

The interest of the firm was mainly vocational. Holt was concerned about the young of the country. "In a democracy you can only compel by example," so he said: "the training at Aberdovey must be less a training for the sea than a training through the sea, and benefit all walks of life." But he very naturally insisted that there should be reserved on each course places for the Merchant Service apprentices... (Hahn, 1957a, p. 444)

Hahn (1957a) went on to state that Holt believed that sail training improved his employees' understanding of the sea. Therefore, according to Hahn, there were two reasons, which could be achieved in combination, why Holt's company supported the formation of Outward Bound. One was the company's wish to gain better trained Merchant Navy personnel and associated with this was Holt's believe in the virtues of sail training for his staff. The other was based on Holt's concern for the 'young of the country' and his believe that 'training through the sea' could 'benefit all walks of life'. Skidelsky (1968, p. 221) is one of the few authors to use the quote above and he supports our interpretation of Hahn's view of Holt's motivation. Stewart (1972, p. 340) is, perhaps, less certain how to interpret Hahn's statement and he simply provides the quote and leaves the reader to decide.

Holt had known Hahn from at least 1937 and during that time had sponsored scholarships at Gordonstoun (Chapter four). He had "tremendous admiration" for Hahn's "educational vision" (Hogan, 1970b, p. 64). Holt at that time also had a son at the school, and a belief in the virtues of sail training (Hogan, 1970b). He also promoted Outward Bound during his evidence to the Norwood Committee (Holt, 1942). This firm support for Hahn's educational ideas appears to be significant in the development of Outward Bound as Holt's company supported Outward Bound financially and with other resources.

The traditional explanation has been that Outward Bound was formed due to the wartime need to train young seamen in small boat handling and to improve their physical and mental capabilities, so they would be better able to cope if they were at sea. Hopkins and Putnam (1993, p. 29) are some of the few authors to raise doubts about this when they say that Holt may have had that aim but that they suspect the "truth may be more complex". Richards (1981), in his Doctorate concerning Hahn's educational philosophy, is more direct when he describes it as a 'myth'. Hahn stated that Holt's company was mainly interested in setting up Outward Bound for vocational reasons. Holt also had these vocational reasons but he was additionally

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concerned for the 'young of the country' and he had a wish to provide 'training through the sea' which would 'benefit all walks of life'. Therefore, the evidence indicates that it is not a myth but it clearly is not the sole reason.

Hahn had wanted to set up 'short term schools' to demonstrate the Badge Schemes for a number of years and four had been run prior to 1941 (Chapter five). Hogan (1968) had presented a scheme which had the main aim of providing a demonstration of the County Badge Scheme. G. Winthrop-Young, when speaking at the ceremony to launch the Garibaldi, is unequivocal that the purpose of the school was character building through adventure on the sea and in the hills (Hunt, 1989). The stated reason for the formation of Outward Bound can be questioned even further when it is considered that many of the participants on the courses did not wish to enter the Merchant Navy. According to Hahn (1957a) Holt's company's main reason for providing the funds was to gain trained seamen but it was perhaps fortunate that Holt appears to be the one who made the decision about the investment.

The formation of Outward Bound and the Outward Bound syllabus needs to be seen in the light of a number of inter-related contexts. First, Hahn's education aims, as shown at Salem and Gordonstoun, and symbolised by the Report Cards at each school. Second, the methods with which he hoped to achieve this aim are represented by what Hahn was doing at Salem and Gordonstoun and epitomised in the Badge Schemes, particularly the 'Four Fold Achievement' of the County Badge. Third, the Second World War, and preparation for it, which led to the perception that there was a need to improve the fitness of the youth of the nation. This in turn provided the opportunity for Hahn's 'experimental' courses in Scotland and Wales to take place – the forebears of Outward Bound (Hahn, 1957a).

It must be remembered here that in the early 1930s Hahn had let his students take part in camps for military sports organised by the Stahlhelm, as a preparation for war (Chapter two). Fourth, Holt's, and his company's, belief that sail training, rather than training carried out on powered craft, produced better sailors. Fifth, Holt's 'concern for the young of the country' and that the training at 'Aberdovey must be less a training for the sea than a training through the sea' which could 'benefit all walks of life'. Closely linked with this is Holt's association with Hahn and his belief in Hahn's educational concepts.

Hogan (1970a) provides the sixth context when he asserts that both his and Hahn's intention with Outward Bound was to demonstrate the effectiveness of the County Badge. Hahn (1960), when discussing Outward Bound, states that "in a democracy you can only accelerate developments by example". Therefore, what developments, through Outward Bound, did Hahn want to take place? Hogan provides an answer:

Our real task was to create an entirely new kind of educational establishment. That is not to say that all the elements in the school were to be completely novel. As I have already shown, the intention was to demonstrate the Gordonstoun badge scheme in a short-term as opposed to a long-term community. (Hogan, 1970a, p. 37)

This demonstration, through Outward Bound and the Badge Schemes, had the intention of changing, or at least influencing, the current educational system.

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Hahn (1960, p. 6) states that “as yet there is little penetration into the established system of education” and at the moment “there is no doubt: too many boys and girls climb the educational ladder, purchasing knowledge at the price of power”. Hahn was dissatisfied with the education system at the time and wished to change it.



Figure 23. Stone inscription at Outward Bound Aberdovey.