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The 1944 Education Act and outdoor education: from policy to practice

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The 1944 Education Act established a framework that, by consolidating previous legislation and encouraging Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to increase the use of the outdoors for educational purposes, extended outdoor education within the statutory education system. However, the role of the Act in the development of outdoor education has, so far, received little attention. This paper will first examine those aspects of the Act that related to the use of the outdoors in the education of children and identify changes made to them as the Bill passed through parliament. Second, through a review of the practice of outdoor education in the late 1940s and 1950s it will consider the ways in which LEAs responded to the legislation. The evidence available will be used to examine the role outdoor education was expected to play in improving the health of children and in giving them experience of the country, in enhancing the curriculum and in developing character. Particular attention will be given to the extent to which outdoor education fulfilled the expectations of policy makers with regard to character development.

With the historical background described below and in the context of a war, the outcome of which was by no means certain, it is to be expected that 'fitness for war' and character training would feature in proposals drawn up in 1942 by a group of officials at the Board of Education. Although a minority of the officials working on the plans, which were subsequently encompassed in the 1944 Education Act, saw a need – and an opportunity – for radical change, the majority was composed of traditionalists 'anxious to preserve what they saw as essentially sound'.¹ Most of these officials were male and from the education establishment, a group described by Gary McCulloch as 'the self-securing élite group in ultimate control of education, imbued with common values arising from their own public school education'.² Members of the Norwood Committee, established in 1941, shared similar backgrounds. Sir Cyril Norwood, who chaired the committee which took his name, was a classicist, a former headmaster of both Marlborough and Harrow, and a staunch supporter of traditions in English education associated with public and grammar schools.³ The Norwood Report provided LEAs with advice on what should be taught and how it should be delivered following the 1944 Education Act. Character building permeated the whole of this Report, which has been judged

1 P. H. J. H. Gosden, *Education in the Second World War* (London: Methuen, 1976), 239.

2 G. McCulloch, *Educational Reconstruction: The 1944 Education Act and the Twenty-first Century* (Woburn, 1994), 14.

3 G. McCulloch, *Philosophers and Kings: Education for Leadership in Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56.

by McCulloch as portraying the 'darker side of the 1944 settlement, the handbrake on a generally progressive reform'.⁴

Fundamental to outdoor education is a conviction, identified by McCulloch with character building, that the behaviour of adolescents can be moulded by the intervention of adults in order that their 'characters and energies' be channelled into 'new and potentially more positive directions'.⁵ Two reasons seem to underlie the use of outdoor activities as a means of influencing the characters of adolescents, namely preparing adolescents to serve the needs of the nation and ensuring their leisure-time was spent in ways that would not disrupt society. With regard to influencing character, this paper will pay particular attention to the way in which the Second World War influenced legislation, the way in which emphasis swung between reasons of 'fitness for war' and attempts to reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency, the extent to which 'a taste of public school life' was made available to 'working class' children and to the way in which pre-1944 assumptions about the 'ideal' character continued to be strongly associated with class and gender. Gender issues will be the subject of another article and are not, therefore, explored in detail in this paper.

Some antecedents

Outdoor education is not a post-1944 phenomenon. A wide range of activities that take place 'in', 'through' or 'for' the outdoors has featured in the education of many pupils for at least a century. However, adventurous activities, such as rock-climbing, canoeing and caving, involving the 'rugged' outdoors have increasingly been added to walking and camping since 1944. Evidence shows that the use of the outdoors in the first half of the twentieth century was related to the school a child attended and, therefore, to class and gender. According to J. Barrett and R. Greenaway the relationships between outdoor activities, character building and the needs of the country, in particular fitness for war, have long been recognised by supporters of public schools.⁶ Character-building activities for leadership in public schools were dominated by the cult of athleticism and frequently linked to jingoism and war. The qualities expected to be engendered included courage, loyalty, endurance, a sense of honour, self-denial, fair play, public spirit and obedience. Underlying all was the public school message of *mens sana in corpore sano*⁷ and the aim of the activities was the production of 'disciplined, socially responsible and self-reliant young men' (*sic*).⁸ In contrast, government support for taking elementary school children into the 'healthy' outdoors was directed at improving the health and raising the moral standards of both boys and girls. School trips and camping excursions were intended to promote national efficiency and foster attitudes that served the needs of the empire. However, the system by which these children were educated was, in E. J. R. Eaglesham's words, designed to promote 'instruction for followership rather than leadership training'.⁹

4 McCulloch, *Educational Reconstruction*, 52.

5 *Ibid.*, 96.

6 J. Barrett and R. Greenaway, *Why Adventure: The Role and Value of Outdoor Adventure in Young People's Personal and Social Development* (Foundation for Outdoor Adventure, 1995), 23.

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

9 E. J. R. Eaglesham, *Foundations of Twentieth Century Education in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 53.

I. Goodson maintains that school subjects are the outcome of historical, ideological and political factors but he also acknowledges the influence of groups and individuals in the continuance and promotion of a subject.¹⁰ Elements found in the outdoor education offered after 1944 can be traced to a number of individuals, movements and progressive public schools that utilised education in the outdoors in the early part of the twentieth century. A brief historical survey will provide information about the practices with which those preparing the legislation within the 1944 Education Act are likely to have been familiar. Following its official formation in 1908, enrolment in Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement was rapid and widespread. Membership had reached 100 000 in England by 1910 and over 1 million by 1922.¹¹ Baden-Powell promoted codes of behaviour, health and service¹² and the parents of the 'respectable, newspaper-and-Bible reading working class',¹³ attracted by notions of self-improvement, willingly allowed their sons to join. The role of the upper class in Scouting was that of leadership; from the start, scout troops in public and grammar schools were intended to generate leaders.¹⁴ Although in 1909 Baden-Powell wrote about Girl Scouts and expressed his concern that they should not be treated as 'dolls',¹⁵ under the direction first of his sister Agnes and then his wife Olive, girls were to act as 'guides' in the background while their Boy Scout brothers led pioneering expeditions into adventure.¹⁶ Adventure, it seems, was not intended for girls.

Among a number of progressive public schools founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were three that made particular use of the outdoors. At Abbotsholme, founded by Cecil Reddie in 1889, a regime was used that apparently included Reddie, standing 'cane in hand' on a bridge high above a Derbyshire river, urging the boys to plunge in to the water below.¹⁷ Like Baden-Powell, Reddie held the Empire in high esteem and he aimed to give boys 'the manly bearing and independent habits' needed to 'fit them for life'.¹⁸ The Forest School represented a different ideology from that of Abbotsholme or the Boy Scout movement. It was founded in 1928 to put into practice the beliefs and practices of one of the woodcraft movements that viewed 'Nature' as the 'great educator' and industrialisation as stunting and distorting to the development of young people.¹⁹ For them first-hand experience with nature meant a simple open-air life using 'the wilderness, the forest, the hills and the sea'.²⁰ Like scouting the movements drew on the presumed woodcraft skills of the American Indians but, unlike scouting, notions of non-competitiveness, equality and democracy were fundamental to their ideology and they really did pay equal attention to girls and boys. Kurt Hahn founded Gordonstoun, the third example, in the 1930s as part of his ambitious plan to cultivate a moral leadership that would not give way to corruption.²¹ Hahn drew on the ideas of Reddie and,

10 I. Goodson, *School Subjects and Curriculum Change*, 3rd edn (London: Falmer, 1993 [1982]), 5.

11 J. Hunt (ed.), *In Search of Adventure* (Guildford: Talbot Adair, 1989), 24.

12 M. Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Scout Movement* (London: Collins, 1986), 233.

13 L. Stone, *Past and Present* [1969], quoted in F. Musgrove, *School and the Social Order* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 1979), 82.

14 E. E. Reynolds, *The Scout Movement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 50.

15 Baden-Powell, *Yarns for Boy Scouts* (1909), on scouting for girls, 207.

16 Baden-Powell, *Girl Guiding* (London: Pearson, 1918), 9.

17 P. Searby, 'The new school and the new life: Cecil Reddie (1858–1932) and the early years of Abbotsholme School', *History of Education*, XVIII/1 (1989), 13.

18 C. Reddie, *Abbotsholme* (London: George Allen, 1900), 22.

19 W. van der Eyken and B. Turner, *Adventures in Education* (London: Allen Lane, 1989), 130.

20 *Ibid.*, 131.

21 McCulloch, *Philosophers and Kings*, 25.

like him, was inspired by the educational and political precepts of Plato. Through the badge scheme that Hahn devised, boys at Gordonstoun were expected to overcome 'disinclination and weakness' as well as to exploit their strengths and aptitudes.²² Baden-Powell and Hahn pioneered their youth movements with a missionary zeal. In attempting to impose codes of behaviour on adolescents, both had in mind an 'ideal character' and both wanted to influence the way in which boys employed their leisure time. Baden-Powell saw his duty in terms of leading by example and rescuing 'working class' boys who 'loafed' on street corners and drifted towards 'bad citizenship'.²³ He promoted the public school ideals of 'obedience, cleanliness, temperance and loyalty' by using tracking, trekking and camping the modified forms of traditional upper class pursuits such as hunting and coursing to redeem 'hooligans', street urchins and 'wastrels'.²⁴ Hahn wanted to change society through educational reform²⁵ and he was committed to cultivating 'character'.²⁶ An expedition test that 'allowed boys to excel in bad weather on the heights of Cairngorm' was part of the early badge scheme.²⁷ The scheme was later adapted to form the basis of Outward Bound and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Baden-Powell and Hahn shared the widely held assumption that the social and political élite could set an example for the working classes to follow. In the period between the two world wars, when the juvenile crime rate was increasing, most rapidly among boys that had left school at 14 and had money to spend, young people's spending power, their habits of 'idling', going to the cinema and gambling all came in for disapproval.²⁸ As a result 'leisure' was seen as an underlying cause of juvenile delinquency²⁹ and recreation, particularly in the 'healthy outdoors', a useful way of reducing the juvenile crime rate. A number of initiatives, such as the Duke of York's camps in the 1920s, aimed to draw together boys from public schools and industry.³⁰ A programme of social and practical activities was intended to give working-class boys an ideal to follow. The New Education Fellowship's discussion document, *The Problem in England* (1935), identified leisure as 'both a portent and a challenge'.³¹ The King George's Jubilee Trust, founded in 1935, grant aided organisations that used outdoor and recreational activities to promote the wiser use of leisure and aimed to 'help the young in body, mind and character to become useful citizens'.³² As the likelihood of war increased, the 'fitness for war' of adolescents was an added aim of those planning to increase the provision of facilities for activities in the outdoors as a means of countering the possible slide of adolescents into juvenile delinquency. The Physical Training and Recreation Act (1937), associated by

22 J. M. Hogan, 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award', paper given to a conference of teachers from Kent County Council, 1976.

23 T. Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), 412.

24 Rosenthal, *Character Factory*, 7.

25 H. Rohrs and H. Tunstall-Behrens, *Kurt Hahn* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, English edn 1970), 121.

26 McCulloch, *Philosophers and Kings*, 25.

27 Hogan, 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award'.

28 E. B. Castle, A. K. C. Ottaway and W. T. R. Rawson, *The Coming of Leisure* (London: New Education Fellowship, 1935).

29 J. O. Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, class and militarism in relation to British youth movements 1908–1930', *International Review of Social History*, XIX (1971), 185.

30 D. Hopkins and R. Putman, *Personal Growth Through Adventure* (London: Fulton, 1993).

31 Castle *et al.*, *Coming of Leisure*.

32 Sixth Report, King George's Jubilee Trust, 1956.

Gosden with preparation for 'the inevitable war',³³ and the Social and Physical Training Grant Regulations (1939) gave legislative powers to local authorities to promote social and physical training for the 14–20-year age group.³⁴ In addition, the Board of Education's circular *The Service of Youth* (1939) aimed to stimulate LEAs and voluntary organisations into increasing the facilities for recreational, social and physical training.³⁵

Legislation for outdoor education

Most important of the several sections of the 1944 Education Act that advanced the cause of outdoor education in schools and youth clubs in England and Wales was Section 53. This made it the duty of LEAs to ensure that the provision for primary, secondary and further education included 'adequate facilities for recreation and social and physical training'.³⁶ Barker (1944) noted that Section 53 did not add appreciably to the powers given to LEAs by Section 86 of the 1921 Education Act;³⁷ a provision first made by Clause 17 of the 1918 Education Act³⁸ and which was amended by the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937. Section 53 did however convert the powers that had previously existed into a duty, which could be enforced 'by mandamus under Section 99 on a complaint by any person interested'.³⁹ Despite its origins in legislation 25 years earlier, Section 53(1), is sometimes cited as the legislation that opened the door to outdoor education:⁴⁰

53(1) It shall be the duty of every local education authority to secure that the facilities for primary, secondary and further education provided for their area include adequate facilities for recreation and social and physical training, and for that purpose a local education authority, with the approval of the Minister, may establish, maintain and manage, or assist the establishment, maintenance and management of camps, holiday classes, playing fields, play centres and other places at which facilities for such recreation and such training as aforesaid are available for persons for whom primary secondary or further education is provided by the authority, and may organise games, expeditions and other activities for such persons and may defray or contribute towards the expenses thereof.⁴¹

An amendment, originating from the initiative of one Member of Parliament (MP), Admiral Sir William James, resulted in the wording of Section 53 being changed and strengthened. That LEAs 'with the approval of the Minister, may establish maintain and manage, or assist the establishment, maintenance, and management of camps, holiday classes, playing fields, play centres, gymnasiums, swimming baths and other establishments',⁴² became 'it shall be the duty of every local education authority',⁴³ and so the pre-war option became a duty.

The evacuation of many thousands of school children in the early days of the war highlighted several social issues that led to a greater recognition of the role of the countryside in the education of town children. Of particular interest is the way in

33 Gosden, *Education in the Second World War*, 210.

34 W. R. Barker (ed.), *The Education Act, 1944: A Supplement to Owen's Education Manual* (London: Chas Knight, 1944), 116.

35 Board of Education, *The Service of Youth*, Circular 1486 (27 November 1939).

36 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 53.

37 Barker, *The Education Act, 1944*, 116.

38 Education Act, 1918, Clause 17.

39 Barker, *The Education Act, 1944*, 116.

40 Hunt, *In Search of Adventure*, 28.

41 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 53.

42 Board of Education (1944), Education Bill, 7, 8 Geo. 6.

43 J. C. Ede, *Hansard*, vol. 398, col. 1166 (23 March 1944).

which associations were made between residential education for the working classes, public school life, character building and outdoor activities. A 1941 Ministry of Information pamphlet, *The Schools in Wartime*,⁴⁴ maintained that country life had improved the health of town children and had brought them into contact with a 'better' way of life. Discussions on several sections of the legislation, including the amendments to Section 53, reflected concern about issues associated with improving the health of children as well as character training. A clause was included in Section 53 enabling LEAs to provide pupils with 'articles of clothing suitable for the physical training provided'.⁴⁵ Other aspects of the legislation also reflected the opinion that education should not be the privilege of the 'better-off'. Section 61 banned tuition fees from being charged by schools maintained by LEAs and, under Section 8, the power of LEAs to charge for board and lodging could be waived if deemed appropriate.⁴⁶ LEAs consequently could offer outdoor education in residential settings to all children irrespective of their financial circumstances.

Brian Simon notes that lack of British success in the early years of the war, the time proposals for post-war reconstruction were drafted, led to doubts about the ability of public schools to train leaders capable of gaining victory.⁴⁷ Yet, some years later, as the Bill ran its course through parliament, references made to character building appear to suggest it was more of the type of outdoor activities usually identified with 'character building' in public schools, that was to be promoted. References were made, in the spring of 1944, during the second reading of Section 8 of the Education Bill, to victory at Waterloo being won on the playing fields of Eton and a suggestion was made that providing more recreational facilities of a character-building nature would contribute to the war effort.⁴⁸ Awareness of the difficulties involved in obtaining land in urban areas resulted in a suggestion for out-of-town provision at weekends.⁴⁹ Butler (President of the Board of Education) replied that provision for this was accommodated elsewhere in the legislation (Section 53).⁵⁰

It seems that the outdoor provision that members intended to promote⁵¹ was the same as that recommended by the Norwood Committee: 'scouting and guiding, school camps, tours, sailing clubs' and other 'courses', 'schools' and 'movements'.⁵² Character training, the Norwood Committee suggested, was to be promoted by secondary schools through the 'infusion of values characteristic of the public schools', and the encouragement of service to the community.⁵³ Boys, the Report claimed, were to be made ready for war and for life at sea.⁵⁴ 'Wholesome out-of-door activities' were to be included in a systematic course of physical training because, the Committee considered:⁵⁵ 'the surmounting of individual difficulties by discipline and

44 Board of Education, *The Schools in Wartime* (London: HMSO, 1941), 16.

45 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 53.

46 *Ibid.*, Part II, Section 61.

47 B. Simon, *Education and the Social Order 1940-1990* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991), 42.

48 Lady Aspley, *Hansard*, vol. 397, col. 101 (15 February 1944).

49 R. Thomas, *Hansard*, vol. 397, col. 101 (15 February 1944).

50 R. A. Butler, *Hansard*, vol. 397, cols 107-8 (15 February 1944).

51 Lady Apsley, *Hansard*, vol. 398, col. 1162 (23 March 1944).

52 Board of Education, *Report of the Committee of the Secondary School Examinations Council, Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools* [Norwood Report] (London: HMSO, 1943), Part III, ch. II, 83.

53 McCulloch, *Philosophers and Kings*, 61.

54 Norwood Report, 83.

55 *Ibid.*, 81.

endurance, is of profound moral significance as well as physical'.⁵⁶ James, the MP who had been so insistent on converting the 'power' to a 'duty' of LEAs in the provision of facilities for physical recreation, represented a Portsmouth constituency and would have been well aware of the needs of the navy with regard to the physical and mental preparation of recruits. Lawrence Holt, employed in his family business of merchant shipping, was a contributor to the Norwood Report.⁵⁷ He had made a study of the statistics associated with deaths following the Battle of the Atlantic in 1940 and had concluded that young seamen were ill-prepared to cope with harsh conditions and that many died, not from initial enemy attacks, but because they had failed to survive in the sea long enough to be rescued. Holt almost certainly brought to the notice of the Norwood Committee the ideas of Hahn. Holt was so impressed by Hahn's exploitation of boys' allegedly natural urge for adventure⁵⁸ that in 1941 he had given his financial support to courses intended to train young seamen in survival techniques. The following extract from the Norwood Report describes Hahn's ideas for the courses which, translated into Outward Bound, had begun in Aberdovey in 1941: 'to bring boys and girls in touch with sea and mountain, and in open-air tasks and ventures to build up moral strength and create the physical endurance that come from such contact. Experience of war has shown that young people can respond to situations demanding courage and endurance'.⁵⁹ The extract is interesting in that it provides a rare example of a reference to girls on equal terms with boys in relation to activities involving the outdoors. Although the Second World War is now credited with changing the role of women in employment and P. Tinkler notes that girls as well as boys were attracted to war service and its military associations, she also comments on differences in the aims of character building and associated physical training for boys and girls. She maintains that although the elements of 'muscular Christianity' associated with the tradition of public schools were thought appropriate for boys, for girls physical training was aimed at improving general health and wartime efficiency.⁶⁰ In addition, along with undertones of a girl's need to retain her femininity were more explicit suggestions that a girl's role was to support her male colleagues.⁶¹ A reference to woodcraft movements, made in the parliamentary debate on Section 53,⁶² suggests at least an awareness among some MPs of ways in which the outdoors was used in the education of young people in a way other than that dependent on physical challenge and endurance.

The interventions of Kenneth Lindsay, during the Bill's second reading, drew particular attention to the way in which the outdoors could be used as a means of improving the health of children and of ameliorating social problems. Lindsay's study of the 'free-place' system *Social Progress and Educational Waste* (1926) had, according to H. Silver, heralded sociological concern with education and social class.⁶³ A supporter of camp schools, Lindsay was instrumental in the development

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., appendix B, 149.

⁵⁸ T. M. Parker and K. I. Meldrum, *Outdoor Education* (Dent, 1973).

⁵⁹ Norwood Report, 83.

⁶⁰ P. Tinkler, 'An all-round education: the Board of Education's policy for the leisure time training of girls 1939-1950', *History of Education*, XXIII/4 (1994), 393.

⁶¹ Ibid., 396.

⁶² Barnes, *Hansard*, vol. 398, col. 1163 (23 March 1944).

⁶³ H. Silver and J. Lawson, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen, 1973), 395.

of the youth service.⁶⁴ In 1944, he was concerned that legislation in the Education Act should consolidate the statutory youth service and give recognition to the work of both municipal and voluntary youth organisations. This was the subject of his proposal for an amendment to Section 53. He asked for a clause to be added in order that the 'marriage between the statutory and voluntary bodies', in connection with the provision of 'camps, holiday classes, playing fields, play centres and other places', be recognised.⁶⁵ Since the end of the nineteenth century, voluntary organisations had been an important means of giving children from industrial towns and cities a holiday in the countryside and they were involved in many of the pre-service organisations. The leaders of voluntary organisations saw themselves as pioneers in the field of youth provision and the main providers of clubs and societies for adolescents. The Education Act had to ensure that statutory provision did not mean the contributions of voluntary agencies were lost. Several MPs expressed their concern that if Lindsay's amendment were passed LEAs might abdicate their responsibilities. Lindsay agreed to withdraw his amendment but only after an assurance from Chuter Ede that 'a form of words' would be put into the Bill 'to recognise the voluntary organisations without discouraging the municipal organisations'.⁶⁶ Subsequently the following subsection was added to Section 53:

53(2) A local education authority, in making arrangements for the provision of facilities or the organisation of activities under the powers conferred on them by the last foregoing subsection shall, in particular, have regard to the expediency of co-operating with any voluntary societies or bodies whose objects include the provision of facilities or the organisation of activities of a similar character.⁶⁷

The legislation of Section 53(2) was among that within the 1944 Education Act that replaced sections of the Physical Training and Recreation Act (1937).

Tinkler identifies military defeats in the early years of the war as contributing to the Board's decision to further encourage pre-service training and to utilise youth leisure as a labour resource.⁶⁸ The Air Training Corps, Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Corps, Women's Junior Air Corps and Girls' Training Corps were either established or expanded in the early 1940s. The intention of the Board of Education's circular *The Challenge of Youth* (1941) was to place Youth Welfare alongside elementary, secondary and further education and promote character building through the continuation of social and physical training among adolescents once they had left full-time schooling.⁶⁹ Hahn's badge scheme, pioneered in Germany and used as a means of character training with boys at Gordonstoun,⁷⁰ was described in *The County Badge or the Fourfold Achievement* (1942) as a useful means of 'pre-service training'.⁷¹ However, the rejection of the scheme for wider use in schools was probably related to suspicion about possible links with 'the Hitler system for youth'.⁷² Concern about the growth of state-controlled uniformity and regulation

64 Gosden, *Education in the Second World War*, 211.

65 K. Lindsay, *Hansard*, vol. 398, cols 1161–2 (23 March 1944).

66 Ede Chuter, *Hansard*, vol. 398, cols 1163–4 (23 March 1944).

67 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 53.

68 Tinkler, 'An all-round education', 388.

69 Board of Education, *The Challenge of Youth*, Circular 11521 (22 July 1940).

70 Hogan, 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award'.

71 County Badge Experimental Committee [probably J. M. Hogan], *The County Badge or the Fourfold Achievement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 29.

72 K. Hahn, in D. James (ed.), *Outward Bound* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), 8.

in youth organisations⁷³ led a number of MPs to oppose suggestions for increasing physical training activities.⁷⁴ A proposal that Tinkler notes derived from the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, for a compulsory scheme of pre-military training for boys, was successfully countered by a suggestion from the Board of Education for a Youth Registration Scheme. Through the Scheme, all boys and girls between 16 and 18 years of age could volunteer to pursue some form of training in their leisure time. Churchill could support this because it went some way to quell his anxiety that:⁷⁵ 'We must be careful particularly that our boys do not run loose during this time of stress. Their education, their well-being, their discipline and the service they can render must all be carefully supervised'.⁷⁶ The Youth Registration Scheme ran for boys from December 1941 and for girls from the following March until December 1945.⁷⁷

Among the other legislation in the 1944 Education Act that encouraged the delivery of outdoor activities in the youth and adult education services was that which related to the general duties of LEAs with respect to further education and to the use adolescents made of their time out of school. In Section 41, LEAs were given the duty of providing 'adequate facilities for further education' for 'persons over compulsory school age'. In addition they were to make provision for:

41(b)leisure time occupations, in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements, for any persons over compulsory school age who are able and willing to profit by the facilities provided for that purpose.⁷⁸

The provision in Section 41(b) was extended to 11–14 year olds through Circular 13 (November 1944).

Although the 1944 Education Act did not lay down guidelines for the organisation of secondary education, the White Paper, *Educational Reconstruction*, and the Norwood Report had made it clear in 1943 that the tripartite system was the favoured policy.⁷⁹ By the time the 1944 Education Bill was passing through parliament a 'great surging impulse to reform'⁸⁰ had replaced the gloom of possible defeat that had prevailed when plans for the post-war reconstruction of education were initially made. Hopes among the general public for 'a new and better order in education and society', in which 'inequalities, injustices and inadequacies' would be gone forever,⁸¹ allowed the Act to be seen as a means of bringing 'secondary education to all'.⁸² Sections 7 and 8 reflect claims made at the time that the Act was a radical measure⁸³ and would mean 'full and appropriate educational opportunity for every boy and girl throughout the period of compulsory schooling'.⁸⁴ Under Section 7, LEAs were required to contribute towards children's 'spiritual, moral, mental and

73 H. C. Dent, *Education in Transition: A Sociological Study of the Impact of War on English Education, 1939–1943* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1944), Preface, 11; 105.

74 Gosden, *Education in the Second World War*, 218.

75 Tinkler, 'An all-round education', 389.

76 W. Churchill, *Hansard*, HC vol. 376, cols 1032–3 (2 December 1941).

77 Tinkler, 'An all-round education', 389.

78 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 41.

79 McCulloch, *Educational Reconstruction*, 33.

80 Dent, *Education in Transition*, Preface, viii.

81 Ibid.

82 R. A. Butler, Second Reading of Education Bill (19–20 January 1944); repr. in *Times Education Supplement* (6 May 1944), vi.

83 S. Maclure, *Times Education Supplement* (6 May 1944).

84 H. C. Dent, *The Education Act 1944* (London: University of London Press, 1944, 12th edn 1968), 13.

physical development' and were charged with providing 'efficient education' to 'meet the needs of the population in their area'.⁸⁵ Section 8 stated that LEAs should take note of the 'ages, abilities and aptitudes' of children of secondary school age.⁸⁶ Examples of practice described later will show the way in which outdoor education was used in curriculum initiatives in the new modern schools with teachers who believed in education 'for its own sake' and who were given a free hand to work with children who were not deemed to be natural learners.⁸⁷ In practice, within the bipartite systems established by most LEAs, the majority of secondary modern schools became the poor relation and never achieved the hoped for 'parity of esteem'.

During the debate on Section 8, the attention of LEAs was drawn to the expediency of increasing boarding provision. The debate draws attention to the way in which the notion of giving all children 'a taste of public school life' was accepted and the way in which it was associated with outdoor activities, residential experiences, character building, widening the horizons of children and improving their health. Evidence of the multiple benefits to which educational activities using the outdoors were attributed, comes from the way in which almost all chronicles of elementary school journeys in the early years of the twentieth century make references to the moral experiences gained by children, to the building of good personal relations, to discipline, to physical exertion, to the novelty of the new and to the occasional challenge.⁸⁸ The Board of Education had promoted camping from at least 1920 and Newman, Chief Medical Officer at the Board, credited scouting with making a 'triumphant contribution' to education and with being 'the greatest demonstration in practical education that the world has seen, it trains men not for the classroom but for life'.⁸⁹ A clause in Section 8 of the 1944 Education Act prompted LEAs to have particular regard 'to the expediency of securing the provision of boarding accommodation'.⁹⁰

Barker suggests this clause contemplated boarding on a more extensive scale than the legislation in earlier Education Acts on which it was based.⁹¹ Section 23 of the 1921 Education Act had included similar legislation in a clause that re-enacted Section 21 of the 1918 Education Act. Although the new legislation was primarily designed for the benefit of children who lived in inaccessible places or in unsatisfactory home conditions,⁹² during the second reading of this section suggestions were made for children in the statutory education system to be given the 'advantages' normally restricted to 'boys in public schools'.⁹³ Admiral Beit considered that 'boarding schools had more to offer the poor than the rich'.⁹⁴ He asked for the words 'expediency of' to be replaced by 'need for', so that the subsection would be given greater importance. Beit thought a system of state boarding schools would be good for teachers, allowing them to establish a better *esprit de corps* in the

85 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 7.

86 Ibid., Part II, Section 8.

87 K. Gibberd, *No Place Like School* (London: Michael Joseph, 1962), quoted in I. Goodson, *The Making of Curriculum* (London: Falmer, 1988), 100.

88 de Montmorency, Board of Education, vol. 21 (1907–08), 63.

89 Board of Education, *Report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health* (London: HMSO, 1928).

90 Education Act, 1944, Part II, Section 8, Clause d.

91 Barker, *The Education Act, 1944*, 43.

92 Ibid.

93 *Hansard*, vol. 397, cols 210–18 (16 February 1944).

94 Admiral Beit, *Hansard*, vol. 397, cols 210–14 (16 February 1944).

school.⁹⁵ Viscountess Davidson, whose Hemel Hempstead constituency accommodated two camp schools, spoke of her admiration for the way in which the headmaster and staff had created 'a public school with a public school spirit'.⁹⁶ During the debate, Lindsay commented that the Fleming Committee, appointed in 1942 to consider how the association between public schools and the general education system of the country could be developed and extended, had not yet reported. Simon maintains that both the Fleming and Norwood Committees were established to defuse criticism and to ensure that little changed within the education system. He sees both Reports as part of a carefully engineered strategy by politicians and officials at the Board of Education to ensure the 1944 Education Act was 'a Conservative measure' that maintained traditional divisions in the education system.⁹⁷

Lindsay expressed the opinion that there was scope for experimenting with boarding schools attached to secondary schools. He considered that as 'we are in an adventurous and experimental age', LEAs might consider 'breaking new ground'.⁹⁸ He referred to camp schools 'where country life and environment have given children a new sense of well-being' and he recommended that the government should 'cash in on this war experience'.⁹⁹ In the interwar years, camp schools were established to give urban children fresh air and good food in the countryside as well as 'the experience of living together and of widening their horizons'.¹⁰⁰ The Camps Act (1939) legislated for 50 permanent camps to be constructed, maintained and managed by a National Camps Corporation under the auspices of, significantly, the Ministry of Health rather than the Board of Education. As it progressed through parliament, the Camps Act had been described as 'an important step in our campaign for better health and fitness among the people' and as having a two-fold object, namely to supplement accommodation available for evacuation and to provide school camps for children in peacetime.¹⁰¹

Policy into practice

The review of practice given below provides examples of the types of outdoor education delivered in the 1940s and 1950s and the groups of children for whom it was deemed appropriate. Almost all the examples given reflect practices in use before the 1944 Education Act reached the statute book and also indicate the way in which outdoor education was rarely used for one purpose only. Taking children into the outdoors to improve their health also served the purpose of stimulating their learning and drew attention to the way in which behaviour could be modified. Consequently, outdoor education came to be seen as a means of resolving a number of social issues. Although the new grammar schools built on the tradition of extra-curricular outdoor activity clubs established in pre-1944 public and secondary schools, examples of practice given below indicate the extent to which outdoor activities became part of the school-time provision for those who would previously

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Viscountess Davidson, *Hansard*, vol. 397, cols 220–1 (16 February 1944).

⁹⁷ B. Simon, 'The 1944 Education Act: a conservative measure?', *History of Education*, XV/1 (1986), 43.

⁹⁸ K. Lindsay, *Hansard*, vol. 397, cols 215–18 (16 February 1944).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *Development Plan for York* (1948), 21.

¹⁰¹ Elliot, Minister of Health, *Hansard*, vol. 345, col. 2074 (29 March 1939).

have attended elementary schools. It was this group of children, now in secondary modern schools, that might have had their learning stimulated in ways that reflected the recommendations made in the first Hadow Report.¹⁰² Dent approved of the suggestion, made by Ellen Wilkinson, the first Minister of Education, that 'free from the pressures of any external examinations (secondary modern schools) can work out the best and liveliest forms of secondary education suited to their pupils'.¹⁰³ Recognising that children learn best if they are interested led to the suggestion that 'one of the most promising lines of solution in the modern school' was the project method, 'that is the relation of a whole body of work in several fields to a central core of interest'.¹⁰⁴ In his extensive study of secondary modern schools between 1945 and 1957, Dent concluded that some schools had grasped the opportunity to base their curriculum on projects or centres of interest with 'zest and enthusiasm'.¹⁰⁵ The example given below is taken from a school that based lessons on a club for canoeing and sailing which had started in 1949. Canoes, dinghies and their fittings were built in woodwork and metalwork lessons by the boys. At the same time the girls sewed pennants, spray decks and sails in their needlework lessons. In mathematics, different types of canoes were costed and balance sheets were produced for several activities involving finance. Surveys were conducted of the canal and surrounding countryside in which the canoeing and sailing took place. The history of the canal and the industries found along its banks formed the basis of history lessons while correspondence with firms and societies took place in English. Science lessons included the theory of sailing, in art lessons, pennants were designed and, in technical drawing, boathouse plans were produced and a single-seater kayak designed.¹⁰⁶

Evacuation was credited with making significant improvements to the health of many children from industrial areas and in 1945, 29 camp schools used to accommodate evacuees were made available to LEAs. Most were used, like that in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 'to give children a chance of a month in the country and to get them away from grimy urban surroundings'. As the health of the child population improved, emphasis in the camp schools changed, Bradford LEA using the camp school they rented in an attempt to modify the behaviour of 'problem' children.¹⁰⁷ In other camp schools outdoor experiences were used to stimulate children's writing and to make science and mathematics more meaningful.¹⁰⁸

This paper set out to examine the extent to which the expectations of policy makers, with regard to character building, were fulfilled through the practice of outdoor education. As Silver suggests, it is by looking at the translation of policy into practice that the aims of policy makers can be more easily understood.¹⁰⁹ Although McCulloch advises that caution should be taken about assuming that the view of the 'educational establishment' necessarily dominated the formulation

102 *Report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on The Education of the Adolescent* [Hadow Report] (London: HMSO, 1926).

103 Ministry of Education, *The New Secondary Education* (London: HMSO, 1947), 29.

104 *Ibid.*, 38.

105 H. C. Dent, *Secondary Modern Schools* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 35.

106 Unnamed teacher, 'A school canoe and sailing club', *Bulletin of Physical Education*, III/10 (1956), 4–7.

107 W. Keay, interview with author (13 December 1995).

108 *Ibid.*

109 H. Silver, *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Education* (London: Methuen, 1983), 24–5.

of policies,¹¹⁰ references to outdoor activities in the 1944 Education Act and in the Norwood Report suggest that there was little competition among ideologies and interests in this instance. It seems the type of character training associated with physical challenges and linked with public schools eclipsed those associated with the less competitive approaches and those inspired by romantic notions of a return to nature and the simple life. However, references to 'fitness for war' in the advisory information available to teachers was largely replaced in the immediate post-war period by emphasis on the social benefits to be derived from outdoor activities. *The New Secondary Education* (1947), issued by the Ministry of Education to advise schools on the curriculum following the 1944 Education Act, included suggestions that the outdoors should be used not for character building purposes in the public school tradition but rather for social purposes, especially the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Although written largely by Wilkinson, it was not published until after her death. She suggested that all secondary schools should teach children how to live in a community and should have a number of clubs and societies that should include journeys or expeditions.¹¹¹ This was important she felt because 'for the child who lives in a large town, particularly, the school journey or club expedition is much more than a trip: it may be a revelation of an outside world of which he [*sic*] has only read in books'.¹¹² In addition to helping children acquire skills, a club would, Wilkinson suggested, provide a 'powerful means of preventing and combating juvenile delinquency'.¹¹³ Every pupil in a secondary school was to be encouraged to form 'sound personal and social relationships with many opportunities for social training arising through residential experiences'.¹¹⁴

As the 1950s progressed, it seems legislation within the 1944 Education Act was increasingly used to promote the type of outdoor education that valued qualities associated with character training for leadership recommended in the Norwood Report and promoted by Hahn. The badge scheme, devised by Hahn, became nationally recognised in the mid-1950s when support from the King George's Jubilee Trust,¹¹⁵ the Duke of Edinburgh and Brigadier Sir John Hunt¹¹⁶ led to the inception of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. In 1950 Derbyshire LEA opened the White Hall Centre for Open Country Pursuits where 'courtesy and teamwork', 'unity and brotherhood' and also the ability to overcome hardship and physical challenges were valued.¹¹⁷ Knowledge of this, of Outward Bound schools and of outdoor activities taking place in schools spread. Teachers of physical education learnt of them through their professional journal the *Bulletin of Physical Education* and, as a result, physical education lessons for boys increasingly included activities of a challenging nature.

110 McCulloch, *Educational Reconstruction*, 14.

111 E. Wilkinson (1947), 4.

112 *Ibid.*, 16.

113 *Ibid.*

114 *Ibid.*

115 King George's Jubilee Trust (1957), note to the Colonial Office (12 April 1957), describes the fund as being inaugurated in 1935 as 'a national thank-offering on the occasion of the Jubilee of His late Majesty King George V', which aimed to fulfil the late king's wish 'to help the young, in body, mind and character, to become useful citizens'.

116 King George's Jubilee Trust (1957), various papers.

117 Hunt, *In Search of Adventure*, 29.

The 1953 Syllabus for physical education advocated modern educational dance but many thought its recommendations were inappropriate for senior boys.¹¹⁸ Many teachers made use of their wartime experiences and knowledge of combat, Arctic warfare, commando training and survival techniques. Taking boys into the 'open country' to present them with 'challenging situations through adventure', to 'encourage observation and provide opportunity for self-discovery', was a suggestion included in a book published in 1951, *Physical Activities for Boys' Schools*.¹¹⁹ F. J. C. Marshall, the author, suggested that the development and exercise of a 'spirit of adventure' in the school curriculum could come from the introduction of 'alternative gymnastics' or 'adventure games'. Through 'walking and running, creeping and crawling, vaulting and jumping and occasionally climbing' in the countryside, a boy would be 'called upon to exercise his mother-wit, his initiative and resourcefulness'. In addition to realising 'his own limitations', he would 'develop his courage and ability to overcome his fears'. Plainly, therefore, in Marshall's judgement, this was of 'tremendous value in the formation of character'. No such book was written for girls, perhaps not surprisingly when, according to Newsom (later Sir John) writing in his influential book published in 1948 *The Education of Girls*, a girl required more than a general feeling of loyalty towards her own team. She should be taught, so Newsom maintained, to 'grow into a woman' and 're-learn the graces' which he thought many had forgotten.¹²⁰ Marshall's suggestions for 'adventure games' were intended to allow the participation of boys in adventurous activities by making use of open country.¹²¹ Despite legislation within the 1944 Education Act intended to increase playing field provision, few secondary modern schools had sufficient facilities to allow more than a minority of pupils to take part in the 'adventure' of 'rugby or soccer football'. In addition, Marshall suggested, adventure games had the advantage that discipline would be through 'self-imposed rules',¹²² and would 'serve the purpose of developing worth-while interests for the leisure hours of pupils'.¹²³ Consequently, he maintained, boys would be discouraged from making 'too frequent visits to the cinema to see lurid gangster and similar kinds of films' and from 'engaging in anti-social conduct, which inevitably brings him into sharp conflict with the Law'.¹²⁴ Marshall's reasoning, and the examples of activities he gives, both echo the views of Baden-Powell in the early years of the twentieth century – map reading, observation walks, hare and hounds and obstacle courses based on natural features.

In the immediate post-war period improving the physical health and the social well-being of children took priority over character training of the type recommended by the Norwood Committee. Curriculum initiatives based on the outdoors were a feature of some secondary modern schools, the number and range of outdoor activities in school and youth clubs increased and residential experiences became a part of many children's education. The 1944 Education Act allowed resources such as buildings, facilities and equipment to be provided, joint agreements to be made between

118 G. H. Atkinson, 'The influence of the 1953 Syllabus on senior boys' work', *Bulletin of Physical Education* (March 1954), 10.

119 F. J. C. Marshall, *Physical Activities for Boys' Schools* (London: University of London Press, 1951).

120 J. Newsom, *The Education of Girls* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948), 109.

121 Marshall, *Physical Activities for Boys' Schools*, 163.

122 *Ibid.*, 162.

123 *Ibid.*, 161.

124 *Ibid.*

statutory and voluntary organisations and between schools and the youth service. LEAs were able to develop residential outdoor education centres and advantage was frequently taken of legislation within the Act (Section 53) so that as much time as possible could be spent in the outdoors.¹²⁵ To a limited extent at least, outdoor education became a means of giving 'working class' children a 'taste of 'public school life'. However, because boys were deemed to be at the root of most social problems it was usually the interests of boys that were the focus of outdoor education initiatives aimed at stimulating learning or modifying behaviour. The interests of girls, according to John Newsom, among others, were apparently 'home-making and the early nurture of children'.¹²⁶ Therefore, Newsom suggested, it was appropriate for girls to be taught to cultivate 'feminine' qualities. Only women, he maintained, who failed in their 'feminine function in society' attempted to attain equality with men.¹²⁷

The way the influence of Hahn was manifest in the post-1944 period supports Goodson's theory that promotion of a subject is dependent, to some extent on individuals.¹²⁸ Two men familiar with the work of Hahn were advocates of outdoor education in the post-1944 era. Jack Longland (later Sir) was deputy education officer to John Newsom in Hertfordshire in 1943 when the County Badge Scheme was trialled with boys and girls in an elementary school.¹²⁹ A renowned mountaineer in the tradition dating from the nineteenth century 'aesthetic aftermath' of the *Grand Tour*, Longland was responsible, as Derbyshire's chief education officer, for the establishment, in 1950, of White Hall Centre for Open Country Pursuits.¹³⁰ Credited (arguably) with being the first LEA residential outdoor education centre, boys and girls from industrial, poor and disadvantaged backgrounds experienced a 'taste of public school life' during their five days stay in the converted country mansion.¹³¹ Jim Hogan was secretary, in 1940, to the County Badge Experimental Committee, a year later he was the first warden of the first Outward Bound School. Following several years with LEA youth and further education services Hogan moved to the West Riding of Yorkshire where, with the support of his chief education officer Alec Clegg (later Sir), he promoted outdoor education in comprehensive schools and residential outdoor centres.¹³² Hogan maintained that because children were involved in new situations they could be judged on their present merits rather than have their social background or past behaviour prejudice opinions of them.¹³³ Consequently outdoor education was promoted by Hogan and Clegg as a means of breaking down the barriers of class that had been perpetuated by the 1944 Education Act.

This paper has shown how the outdoors was incorporated into the education of children as a response to a number of social and political concerns. Legislation within the 1944 Education Act reflected the concern of policy makers that children

125 West Riding Education Committee, 'Education, Finance and General Purposes Sub-Committee Minutes', vol. 40, 1945-46 (24 July 1945).

126 Newsom, *The Education of Girls*, 11.

127 *Ibid.*, 109.

128 Goodson, *School Subjects and Curriculum Change*, 5.

129 'County Badge Scheme, the Hertfordshire Experiment', *Times Educational Supplement* (23 January 1943), 41.

130 Hunt, *In Search of Adventure*, 29.

131 A. B. Afford, *The Story of White Hall Open Country Pursuits Centre: Part 2* (privately published, 1978), 4.

132 J. M. Hogan, *Beyond the Classroom* (Reading: Educational Explorers, 1970), 42.

133 *Ibid.*

should be provided with sufficient socially acceptable leisure activities to prevent them from disrupting society. To some extent outdoor education was born out of a particular set of circumstances associated with war and the need to make children 'fit for war'. Thereafter outdoor education became the means of improving health, stimulating learning and reducing the incidence of juvenile delinquency. Although character building was less obviously promoted in the aftermath of Second World War, both the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and, under the influence of its teachers, boys' physical education, adopted characteristics of character building in the tradition recommended in the Norwood Report. The White Hall Centre for Open County Pursuits provided the model most commonly adopted by LEAs as they established residential outdoor education centres in the late 1950s and 1960s. In the programme of work at this Centre, and others modelled upon it, the various tensions and strands within outdoor education were resolved in favour of character building. To this extent, therefore, the 1944 Education Act succeeded in embodying within the maintained sector, a strand of public school education that belonged to an era of imperial power that was rapidly fading. It was a strand that, despite some attempts to overcome class and gender differences, continued to favour boys. Barbara Humberstone expresses the view that 'merely by mixing boys and girls together without a change in teaching approach and underlying assumptions about gender' only creates a change in the public appearance of a subject.¹³⁴ Further research into examples of the way in which adventurous experiences were used to promote personal development may indicate that the model of outdoor education established in the post-war period caused some difficulty for those later seeking to give girls fairer opportunities.

134 B. Humberstone, 'Theoretical development, gender and PE; educational code and the construction of gender with particular reference to outdoor education', *Physical Education Review*, X/1 (1987), 40–7.