



This issue... 'Young People in the Countryside'

- Young People Enjoy the Countryside • A Place Where the Needs of Every Child Matters • Today's Youth Reach New Heights
- Free Range Teenagers- the Role of Wild Adventure Space in Young People's Lives • Peak District Young Achievers Award
- Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto • Opportunities for Young People - Then and Now
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Countryside Recreation Network

Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)

CRN is a network which:

- covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors networks thousands of interested people

The Network helps the work of agencies and individuals in three areas:

Research:

to encourage co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to countryside recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.

Liaison:

to promote information exchange relating to countryside recreation, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.

Good Practice:

to share information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of countryside recreation.

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Vice-chair: John Watkins, Countryside Council for Wales

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Countryside Recreation Editorial Policy

Countryside Recreation is the journal of the Countryside Recreation Network. The purpose of the journal is to act as an exchange for sharing information, ideas and practical solutions that promotes best policy and practice in countryside recreation across the UK and Ireland. Countryside Recreation is free and is published three times a year. We welcome articles and letters from all readers. The editorial policy for the journal is to provide a platform for a fair and honest discussion on issues relating to countryside recreation.

Articles will be accepted from anyone from the Network organisations and other organisations and individuals who wish to share their knowledge, research findings, practical experiences or promote policies and strategies in the provision and management of access, recreation, sport and active tourism.

The Journal is not a lobbying or campaigning platform. We will not accept articles that are defamatory and potentially libellous. Rights of reply will be offered when organisations' actions are brought into question.

The Response section is used to enable comments to be made on specific articles. Articles offered for this section may be edited for length.

The journal is managed by the CRN Network Manager and guided by an editorial panel made up of representatives from organisations in the Network. The editorial panel and CRN Network Manager reserve the right to reject articles and curtail discussion on specific subjects if the panel feel that the issues have been appropriately and satisfactorily dealt with. We will always discuss with authors the reason for rejecting articles.

The CRN Network Manager will commission articles related to the specific themes that are part of each journal. We will also accept articles on a range of subjects for each issue but they must be related to the business of the Network members' remits.

The Spring journal will be based on the theme of 'Green for Go! The future of recreational greenspace close to where people live'.

If you would like to submit an article or a news item for consideration by the Editorial Board, please email the document in word format to the Network Manager (cm@shu.ac.uk).

Please note the following submission deadline dates:

Articles for editorial board consideration to be submitted by 18th January 2008.

Commissioned articles to be submitted by 31st January 2008.

News items to be submitted by 15th February 2008.

Chair of Editorial Panel: Rachel Hughes, Sports Council for Wales

printed in the UK by The Magazine Printing Company
www.magprint.co.uk



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Countryside Recreation goes out to over 2950 individuals working in the field of countryside recreation, tourism and leisure. If you would like to have a flier or advert distributed with the journal, please contact the Network Manager for further details and pricing policy.

Editorial

Jo Burgon, The National Trust

Next year CRN celebrates its 40th anniversary. The Network's origins lay in the arrival of the Countryside Commission and the Countryside Commission for Scotland as a result of the Countryside Acts of 1968.

This legislation enabled the creation of country parks, the establishment of heritage coasts, the setting up of National Trails.

CRN is planning to hold a conference at the end of 2008 which looks forward to the challenges ahead, whilst reflecting on what has been achieved over the last 40 years. One of the main themes that crops up with remarkable regularity is youth and the outdoors. There are many opportunities that have been developed over the years for giving young people experience of the outdoors and how these experiences have contributed to personal development and life changing moments. There are still barriers for many which are complex and multifarious – cultural, psychological, financial, physical.

The articles for this issue on the theme of youth and the outdoors touch a small part of so much that is going on. They highlight changes of attitude towards the young or not as the case maybe! The power of adventure and risk taking offered by the outdoors features as common thread through many of the articles. In an increasingly risk averse and litigious society where the blame culture seems to become ever more prevalent it is encouraging to learn of the ways in which challenge, adventure and the taking of informed risks is being actively encouraged, promoted and supported.

Jim Davis' perspective on how young people connect with the countryside contains some wise and salutary lessons. Stefan Wathan's historical take on the National Trust's experience of running working holidays over the last 40 years reminds us that perhaps not all

that much has changed between an adult and young person's view of the countryside and personal behaviour. Tony Thomas from the Field Studies Council indicates that there is still a considerable amount of effort required to ensure that field trips will still be available for generations to come and that the approach to risk management and fear of the compensation culture are considerable barriers to progress.

Perhaps we should hold onto the experiences illustrated by the work of the Adventure Network - 'I've just been abseiling! It was awesome and I want to go back and do it all over again'.

This is the last issue of the journal I shall be acting as chairman of the editorial panel. I am handing over to Rachel Hughes from the Sports Council for Wales. The journal has developed considerably over the last few years through the capable hands of Mel Bull and currently Magali Fleurot. The circulation is touching 3000. We are always keen to have ideas for future themes and for articles linked to themes or related to the activities of the Network in general.

Jo Burgon
The National Trust

How Young People Enjoy the Countryside

Jim Davis, The Forum for Rural Children and Young People



There is no doubt about it; we are scared by groups of young people. Almost every day in the papers there seems to be a story about gangs of young people attacking each other or assaulting adults who have simply been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The threat of violence seems to be ever present and the prospect of young people using guns and knives is presented as a growing curse in our society. How accurate a picture this paints of current youth culture is debateable and the reaction to groups of young people as a potential threat at all times is unfair. But, accurate or not, unfair or not, the impact is the same, as adults we have become very uneasy about young people and troubled by the sight of them in public space. Largely these stories present a dark picture of urban life. The countryside is still seen as a place to escape to, an environment that is safer, quieter and a less vulnerable place to be.

So where does that leave young people who do access the countryside? What kind of welcome can a group of young people expect if they head out for the great outdoors?

My experience of taking young people into the countryside is very mixed. It ranges from unexpected tolerance and welcome to outright hostility and resistance. It doesn't seem to make any difference whether the young people are from a

Church youth group or are a challenging group of young Travellers. I just can't be sure of the reception we will receive. I had the experience this summer of taking a group of 12 young people on a beach for an overnight bivouac building a camp fire and making a shelter out of branches and sheets. We were approached by the Beach Warden who quickly appeased my anxious look and told us that we should simply make sure we were above the tide line before wishing us a pleasant night. I can't vouch for the pleasant night once the rain set in, but it was encouraging to be welcomed that way. It was a positive experience for the young people with me who had expected the warden to tell us off and ask us to leave. But some months before I had been walking a group of young people down a country lane for an evening walk.

They were not used to being in the dark in the countryside and every cow behind a hedge and owl hoot made them jump and scream. As we passed two isolated houses we were faced by the angry residents who threatened to call the police if we didn't move on quickly. Their agitation was caused not by any specific action directed at them by young people but that they were in a group and were noisy in a quiet environment.

In the situations I have described I was on hand as a responsible adult to pick up on what was being presented and was able to thank the warden and attempt to appease the angry residents. But surely young people have the right to make their own independent use of the countryside? As



adults they are able to access the outdoors in the way and time that suits them. But perhaps that is the problem, what suits young people isn't always welcome.

Young people have a variety of ways of entertaining themselves and exploring their environment. I have been consulting with young people in rural communities in the South West over many years and they have told me what they like to do. This is not a definitive list but it is probably an accurate reflection of what young people enjoy doing across the country. It includes:

- Going for walks
- Riding bikes
- Walking the dog
- Meeting friends
- Having parties, planned and impromptu
- Making fires
- Playing music
- Meeting up in cars, driving in cars, looking at each others cars
- Camping out
- Drinking alcohol
- Shooting and fishing
- Racing (cars, bikes)
- Having barbeques
- Making dens and shelters
- Just hanging out

Many of those activities are legitimate and enjoyed by adults as much as young people. But some of those activities can develop into or be seen as anti social and unwelcome. None of them in themselves are illegal but they can involve some illegality, for example racing on bikes or driving in cars without MOT's or insurance. Having parties and drinking can lead into anti social behaviour but it is not a given.

The key factor in these activities is that by and large they are activities that young people can organise themselves and involve little or no cost. In that respect the countryside becomes a place where young people choose to conduct their activities because they want space to do them or to be out of the gaze and supervision of adults. This applies both to young people who live in the countryside and those who

live in towns and cities. It allows for young people to explore the outdoors and make use of open space that may establish a pattern they take into adulthood. But we can't get away from the tension that exists between the need to conserve and protect the countryside and the principle of open access.

That tension is heightened with young people because as soon as they meet as a group they are perceived as a potential risk. The risk might be that they simply are noisy and boisterous in a way that adults sometimes find difficult and intrusive or it may be that the risk is more physical. Riding dirt bikes, building fires or racing in cars carries a risk to young people, the environment and other people. Young people like to take risks and don't always recognise the risk they present to others. The response is often to deny access, limit or restrict this unsupervised activity or expect the police to take action to stop it. The subsequent risk is that young people feel unjustly denied access to the countryside and expect to be made unwelcome in the future. This is particularly difficult for young people who live in the countryside and have limited options for recreation in the first place.

We need to accept that young people like to make use of the countryside in a way that is unsupervised, unregulated and unrelated to paying activities. But that is also how many adults like to use the countryside. I am concerned that in the general debate about anti social behaviour our expectation of young people is that their very presence is a threat.

We should be encouraging young people to make use of and explore the countryside, to take advantage of the opportunities it offers them to do things at low cost or for free. People with responsibility for managing resources and land in the countryside should be open to the possibility that groups of young people will use the countryside for recreation, but in their own way. Young people should expect to be made welcome, but also be educated in how to use the countryside. This is perhaps the area of greatest challenge. I am promoting greater toleration of young people but accept that some behaviour or action is not to be tolerated.

We need to find ways of accommodating the occasional excesses of young people while giving them some guidance and direction about how to use the countryside. That is not an easy task and at times the occasional excess is too much to ignore. But we need positive dialogue with young people, dialogue in the context of telling them off, calling the police or denying access is not a good foundation for progress. Approaching groups of young people is in itself seen as a dangerous activity, but avoiding any contact and dialogue simply increases the distance between adults and young people. Making positive approaches to young people, encouraging their use of the countryside while reminding them of their responsibilities has to be a priority. How young people use and access the countryside now could be seen as vital to their future use as adults and

therefore worth the energy in engaging with them. Some of the experiences we have as young people have a profound impact on our attitudes in adult life and a positive experience of the countryside can provide not only a fond memory but an encouragement to go back. But the countryside is a place where young people should be seen, heard and accepted as legitimate users now and not just as future adults. I find myself challenged when I am walking in the hills enjoying the sound of silence not to be offended by the noise of young people listening to music on their mobile phone or shouting at each other. But then it isn't my private, personal space is it? The great outdoors is for all of us, any of us and that is what makes it so great.

Photographic References

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Other photographs credited to Jim Davis

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A place where the needs of every child matters: Factors affecting the use of Greenspace and Woodlands for Children and Young People

Liz O'Brien, Forest Research and Sue Weldon, Independent Research Consultant



New play equipment at Haldon Forest Park

“Young people want to play and spend time outside and it’s important that we provide suitable spaces for them” (Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2002¹)

Provision of outdoor play space for children

To what extent can outdoor access agencies provide and maintain safe places for all children to play? The provision of an outdoor place to play, or to ‘hang out’ with friends, is now seen as a crucial aspect of children’s development. So much so that it is written into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child² that all children have a right to ‘engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child’³. The Forestry Commission has recognised this in current recreational strategies across Britain and is committed to opening up opportunities for children to play in woodlands, but research shows that safety concerns are continuing to limit these opportunities.

In the Green paper ‘Every Child Matters’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) and followed by the 2004 Children’s Act it is suggested that all providers, from schools and health professionals to local authorities and outdoor access agencies, should work together to achieve better outcomes for children up to the age of 19. A document published by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2006) makes the point that well-managed and stimulating

places to play, alongside its obvious role in keeping children fit and healthy and in helping to tackle obesity, is an important aspect of that provision. Play provision is often seen as being exclusively for younger children (under 12 years), and much attention is directed towards providing safe play areas for them, but free play is also an important way of helping older children to socialise, build confidence and to reach their potential as well balanced caring and respectful adults. This is something society would like to see, given widespread experience of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, particularly in urban environments. However, herein lies a dilemma because older children’s unsupervised outdoor activities are sometimes perceived of as a problem, and actively discouraged, for precisely this reason.

In the light of many high profile cases in the news, the fears and constructions of what it means to be a ‘good’ parent is putting increasing pressure on parents to impose restrictions on their children’s outdoor activities (Valentine, 1996). This means that young children are either not allowed to play outdoors or they are only allowed to undertake organised activities that are supervised, rather than being able to decide for themselves what they might do and enjoy, because of fears for their safety. Recent research by the Children’s Society found that parents were reluctant to let their children out on their own or with friends before the age of fourteen (Children’s Society, 2007). Restrictions such as this, whilst understandable, may have a long-term effect on children’s self development, potentially increase the risk of their involvement in anti-social behaviour and thus further

exacerbate the restrictions for future children. Holloway and Valentine (2000) highlight this situation by talking about 'twin fears' that portray younger children as vulnerable to danger in public space whilst teenagers are viewed as unruly, destructive and a potential threat to public safety.

Playing in the woods: benefits and issues

In the light of these factors it seems that we are severely restricting our children's freedom whilst, at the same time, a growing body of research is emphasising the importance of them having unfettered access to high quality natural environments (see, for instance Thomas and Thompson, 2004). This research also highlighted inequality of access between children in urban and rural areas and suggested that children's experiences of the green environment are currently in decline, particularly for urban children in low income communities. Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Commission (2007: 16) argues that 'low quality environments impact negatively on children's ability to enjoy and achieve, and this is most pronounced among vulnerable and disadvantaged children'. In addition to play opportunities, it is clear that close contact with nature and wild adventure space is important for the well-being of young people (Bingley and Milligan, 2004; Sustainable Development Commission, 2007) and for their social and educational development needs (Travlou, 2006). Crucially, however, this contact needs to start at a young age; for example a study in Central Scotland for the Forestry Commission found that if children were taken to woodlands when they were young they were more likely to respect and use them as adults (Ward-Thompson et al. 2002).

Current research

These findings have been taken seriously by the Forestry Commission in planning its strategies. The Commission is keen to promote wider access to woodlands for all children, whatever their age. The following case studies, conducted by Forest Research, investigated the use of woodlands and greenspaces, by young people and looked at the barriers experienced by children (and their parents) in accessing these spaces for recreational purposes. All of the studies mentioned here were carried out in urban and peri-urban areas.

Community use of Littlewood in Liverpool

The first study, conducted in 2003 in Liverpool, explored with local residents how they used local green spaces and woodland and what these spaces meant to them, particularly Littlewood a linear woodland of eight hectares located at the edge of the Stockbridge Village housing estate (O'Brien, 2004). This work primarily involved adults rather than children, however it became clear that children and young people were very much a concern for the adults on the estate. They felt that it was important for children to have

contact with green spaces in order for them to enjoy nature and respect it. As one older male resident stated: *It's not all the kids [that cause trouble]... it's like anywhere else I suppose, you've got a few bad eggs that strip the bark off a tree but you try to talk to them and educate them. Tell them where they're getting their oxygen from, and what a tree does, and hopefully it gets through to some.*

The adults also realised that facilities and places to go for teenagers was very limited and this led to them hanging around the streets getting into trouble. Many adults were fearful of approaching some of these young people in case they were attacked or verbally abused.

Social housing and green space in Lambeth, London

A second study in London (Lambeth) in 2006 explored the use and meanings of a small woodland (Peabody Hill Wood, three hectares) between two social housing estates by the estate's residents (O'Brien, 2006). A consultation was undertaken at a local youth club with twenty children (aged 6-10 years). The majority of children enjoyed playing outside more than inside. They thought there were not enough parks or woods near to where they lived. Playing outside allowed them opportunity for freedom and running around with friends. It allowed them to be out from under the feet of adults in the home. However, it was noteworthy that playing in the street was frequently mentioned as being less dangerous than the park or wood. The majority of children did not have access to a garden and this meant they had to find other areas in which to be outside. They chose the local park and a local wood as the spaces they played in most often. The children were asked about Peabody Hill Wood, whether they used it, what they liked and disliked about it and where they preferred to play in general. The children were acutely aware of potential threats in these outdoor places and they identified these as predatory adults who might harm them and teenagers who might wreck the dens they had built in the wood. The importance of these places, in providing social space came over clearly from this consultation. For instance, in the following quote, we hear from a 13 year old (who attended a focus group as part of the research) talking about making dens and highlighting the need for young people to have a social space where they can be with friends:

In the summer we come up and build our bases where we like to hang out and we bring all our mates here to chat. Researcher: What sort of bases are you building? Like somewhere to sit down and chat to your friends. What we mostly do is go down to the dump and try to find any wood or plastic coating for when it rains. We put the plastic coating over the trees and then we build the base around the plastic curtain.

Barriers to accessing green space and woodland in Scotland
The third study, carried out in 2007 and involving several case studies in Scotland, has explored factors affecting



people's access to woodlands for their health and well-being (Weldon et al. 2007). The study confirmed that in deprived urban areas parents were acutely aware of, and sensitive to, the issue of personal safety on both their own behalf and for their children. For example, parents of young children in

Motherwell cited evidence of litter, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, (such as burnt trees and rowdy groups of young people) as an indication that no-one is looking after the outdoor environment and it is not safe to take children there. They felt hemmed in by their unsafe environment and would rather walk along a busy road than risk encountering groups of inebriated youths:

*See walking down that [pathway] it's no really safe for women I don't think.
Researcher: why isn't it safe for women? It's not safe 'cos it's trees?
No. There can be smack-heads or anything down there. I wouldnae walk down anywhere that didnae have a main road beside it by myself.*

However, as the following quote clearly demonstrates, the parents were well aware that lack of provision for the needs of the local teenagers was an important factor in limiting their own access:

You're talking about us right? But it's a wider problem, it's no just about us and our young kids. Teenage kids as well, that's why they're hanging about, that's why they're getting into gangs, that's why they're teasing people and intimidating us cos they don't have anything else to do either

In another case study (Dundee) a group of older children (aged 11-15) were asked where they would choose to play and what factors prevented them from doing this. They explained that there is an attraction of wooded areas to 'hang out' and provide seclusion away from adults, but that needed to be balanced by a desire to be safe. The park and the woods are not good places when it is dark. So they meet within their local streets, near the shopping precinct with the lit and busy 'carry-out' venues. They want to be free from adults, yet they needed to know that they are near to civilisation. However, their presence is not welcomed by local residents and shop-keepers which means that large groups of youngsters were constantly being 'moved on' by the community policeman and their dens were regularly cleared away to create a more orderly environment.

Summary

This research has highlighted that children's needs for outdoor leisure are not being met, particularly in urban areas. For young children and their parents safety is a key factor in preventing them from playing out in local green spaces and woodlands and the activities of older children are perceived to be part of the problem. But, when children

reach an age at which they can socialise and play without parental supervision they need safe places to hang out. Margaret Hodge, as the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, raised this issue as a conundrum when she addressed a seminar on 'The Youth of Today' in 2005. She said: *Some adults perceive teenagers on the streets as a problem and teenagers need safe places to hang out. Surely we must somehow be able to square that circle..... (Margaret Hodge. 2005)*

There appears to be an over simplified view of young children as vulnerable angels who need to be protected, but who then metamorphose into young devils whose activities are problematic. Valentine believes this simplified view ignores the complex and multiple constructions of children and young people's everyday lives and can lead to inappropriate provision. She argues that anxieties about dangerous children appear to 'be an assumption that the streets belong to adults and children should only be permitted into public spaces when they have been socialised into appropriate 'adult' ways of behaving and of using space' (1996: 596). As Margaret Hodge went on to say in her seminar address: *at present, all too often what teenagers get is what adults decide is right for them..... perhaps we should think more about where young people 'can' not just where young people 'can't' spend their time on activities in which they want to engage.....One message from all of this is that we need to ensure that young people feel a real ownership of what is provided for them locally....(Margaret Hodge 2005)*

In an effort to get children involved at an early age, the Forestry Commission has supported various initiatives such as Growing Adventure (Gill, 2006) which was a year long project with the aim of developing Forestry Commission activity around children and young people's play and leisure. The work has led to the production of guidance, such as designing play space, for Forestry Commission managers and advice on how to deal with risk. Den building day is another way in which the Commission is providing play opportunities for young people and letting them create their own spaces. Many of the 'Active Woods'⁴ events taking place around Britain focus on families, and new adventure play areas have been created in public forests such as Bedgebury in Kent and Haldon in Devon.

In conclusion we would like to suggest the need for the following ideas to be considered that have been highlighted by the research we have done to date. Children and young people could benefit from:

- Social spaces and breathing spaces in which to 'hang out' and be with friends away from adults, highlighting the need for young people to appropriate places for themselves.
- Adventurous and novel activities with some element of risk and challenge.
- Engagement with nature through local schools,

- familiarising them with the natural environment.
- Play spaces for all ages using different types of play equipment and utilising naturalistic play spaces.
- Engagement in community outdoor activities such as tree planting, events and environmental volunteering



Young people getting involved in tree planting at Peabody Hill Wood, London

To find out about the research mentioned in this article please visit the Social and Economic Research Group web-pages at www.forestresearch.gov.uk/peopleandtrees

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Footnotes

- 1 Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell "Children need Safe and Stimulating Places to Play". A review of children's play areas. <http://www.culture.gov.uk> (archive 2002)
- 2 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) ratified by the UK Government in December 1991
- 3 Opp Cit. Article 31
- 4 "Active woods" is a Forestry Commission Campaign to raise awareness of the use of woodlands to improve people's health and well-being

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Photographic references

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Today's Youth Reach New Heights by Climbing in the Great Outdoors

Tina Gardner, British Mountaineering Council



Many young people get a taste for climbing at indoor climbing walls or are introduced to it on activity weekends. Many then want to take on the climbing-related challenges that are available outdoors. Outdoor activities range from bouldering on small rocks and boulders, to rock climbing on cliffs and crags, to hill walking, scrambling, ice climbing and mountaineering.

There are lots of benefits for young people participating in these activities and it's also true to say that as with many recreational activities, there is an element of risk as well. However, it's about understanding the activity, being aware of the hazards, acquiring the necessary skills and all-importantly having fun.

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) is the representative body for climbers, hill walkers and mountaineers in England and Wales. The BMC is continuing to develop a programme to give practical advice to those interested in helping young people learn the sport in a responsible manner.

Benefits of outdoor climbing activities

There are many benefits to be gained by young people

climbing outdoors. As well as physical and psychological skills that climbing can develop there are also the health benefits – including aerobic exercise, keeping weight under control, improving flexibility, getting out in the fresh air and stress busting. On top of these there are less obvious benefits such as developing self-responsibility, risk management and communication skills. Additionally, by being outdoors, young people pick up knowledge of the surrounding geology, flora & fauna, boosting their awareness of the wider environment.

Managing risk and promoting safety awareness

The BMC is very keen to make people aware of the hazards associated with climbing and hill walking, as such awareness promotes self-responsibility, which it believes very important. The BMC's participation statement states, "The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions". Safety and training form a key part of the BMC's work as there are many variables associated with outdoor adventurous activities, such as the weather or time of year. However, it's important to remember that there are many other recreational activities such as horse riding or gymnastics, for example, which include an element of risk. Thousands of people now participate in climbing and walking, including many young people. A guide for parents has been produced by the BMC

to help get a better understanding of what is involved which is available to download on the BMC website. The booklet is called "Young people: Climbing, Hill Walking, Mountaineering, A Parent's Guide".

BMC working with young people

The BMC has over 60,000 members, including 1300 family memberships which include children. There are also over 300 young members (under-18s). Many of the BMC's activities are focused on young people – including youth meets, training courses, an annual student seminar and a national climbing competition for 7-16 year olds. Two successful youth meets were held this summer – one in the Peak District and one in Wales. The North Wales/Cymru Outdoor Meet in May was for young people and their parents who have experience of climbing and wanted to visit a new area or meet people in a similar situation and make new contacts. The BMC also administers the Jonathan Conville Memorial Trust subsidised training courses. These courses take place in Scotland in the winter and the Alps in the summer, giving young people the opportunity to gain new mountain skills.

BMC Area Youth Coordinator Mandy Dennison said: "In an age where increasing numbers of young people are leading less active lifestyles, and many drop out from traditional school PE and sports, climbing offers a new perspective on getting active and staying fit. Young people can take part independently or as part of an organised group; they can climb at any level and enjoy being with others of all standards. In being outdoors you gain a great appreciation of the countryside and nature at its best. As a parent I find the whole family can enjoy a day's climbing and being together and it's amazing what you see and who you meet. The BMC supports young people who wish to climb - and their parents - by offering seminars, information, advice, outdoor meets out and indoor competitions - in fact there is something for everyone!"

The BMC Youth Climbing Series is a competition for specifically for young people in England and Wales. This year, over 500 young people took part at selected climbing walls around the country. The growing number of entrants suggests a growth in climbing as a whole.

Getting started

A great way to start climbing is at your local indoor climbing wall. The BMC's website has a directory of over 250 climbing walls throughout the UK. Others will start climbing outside straight away – especially if their parents are keen climbers or if family friends and are acting in loco parentis.

Young people have done many adventurous and inspirational climbing challenges in the outdoors. Recently two teenagers completed the Stanage traverse – a 5 km traverse along the

cliff that is the jewel in the Peak District's crown.

So let's hear what the kids themselves think of climbing:
"Climbing is challenging and fun"
"Climbing takes me to new places...it gives me space and freedom"
"Climbing is a good activities we can do as a family "
"Climbing keeps me fit"
"Outdoor climbing is fun in the summer!"

BMC and the countryside

A major part of the BMC works relates to access to the countryside and conservation of crags and mountainous areas. The BMC has two dedicated Access and Conservation Officers as well as a network of access reps throughout England and Wales. The access team negotiates access agreements and works with environmental groups to ensure the best of both worlds – where recreation and conservation go hand in hand.

The BMC relies on membership subscriptions to fund our vital work. If you're enjoy hill walking, climbing and mountaineering, join today at www.thebmc.co.uk

References

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How to get started climbing, hill walking and mountaineering www.thebmc.co.uk/getstarted
Youth section www.thebmc.co.uk/youth
Plas y Brenin and other centres www.pyb.co.uk
Young People booklet – a parent's guide to climbing hill walking and mountaineering www.thebmc.co.uk/Download.aspx?id=9
Climbing Outside booklet - handy guide for people who are making the transition from climbing indoors to climbing on rock www.thebmc.co.uk/Download.aspx?id=17
The Andy Fanshawe Memorial Trust, which gives grants that allow disadvantaged young people to take up opportunities to experience the great outdoors www.andyfanshawe.org
Jonathan Conville Memorial Trust www.thebmc.co.uk/Feature.aspx?id=1166

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Free Range Teenagers: The Role of Wild Adventure Space in Young People's Lives

Catherine Ward Thompson, Jenny Roe & Penny Travlou, Openspace Research Centre



Introduction

This study was carried out on behalf of Natural England (formerly English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service) to investigate the proposition that ‘wild adventure space’ can play an important role in meeting the developmental needs of young people across England.

Its purpose is to inform Natural England’s policy development. The study draws on evidence to support the notion that free and easy access to ‘wild adventure space’ confers a multitude of benefits on young people’s development and therefore benefits society as a whole. It sits within the context of current headlines on risk-taking, debates on Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO’s) for teenagers, as well as concerns about poor mental health and obesity. The evidence presented is drawn from several sources including a systematic literature review, focus group discussions with young people together with evidence from

providers of wild adventure activities for young people. The concept of “free range teenagers” supports the idea of teenagers having free and easy access to a wide spectrum of

wild adventure spaces, local and further a field and in an unstructured and structured capacity.

Free form adventure space

Wild adventure space is defined as any outdoor space offering teenagers a degree of freedom and risk. It is broadly interpreted to encompass the rich context of young people’s experiences ranging from the local context (climbing a tree or making a den in a nearby woodland) to what is more traditionally interpreted as “wilderness” as provided, by example, from our national parks. The focus of the study was on free form adventure, activities young people find for themselves, whether through a supervised or unsupervised context, and therefore excluded activities offered within mainstream education. The study focused on young people aged 11 to 18 where there is a gap in knowledge in the use and benefits of wild adventure space within the UK.

Evidence from recent literature

Over 150 research papers, project reports, monographs, position papers and systematic literature reviews on topics relevant to this project were reviewed. The full results of which can be found on the URL http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/rtf/wasyp_finalreport5dec.doc.

The review built on a similar review undertaken by Barrett and Greenaway in 1995 on the role and value of outdoor adventure in young people’s social and personal

development, updating and developing themes identified there as well as filling gaps and drawing on newly emerging approaches and findings.

In the literature, wild adventure space is seen as an outdoor place that is 'unregulated' (at least in some sense) and offers opportunities for adventure. Ideally such spaces are free in every sense of the world: free to all ages, free of charge and where people are free to do what they want. In practice, an important distinction is apparent in terms of young people's engagement with wild adventure space: space where the activities are structured and/or supervised as opposed to spaces that young people access or find for themselves and use in an unstructured and unsupervised way. Unstructured and unsupervised wild adventure space tends to be local and readily accessible on foot. Structured or supervised adventure activities often take place at a distance from young people's homes or schools and are often more targeted or restricted in the freedoms they offer.

The evidence gathered demonstrates that experience of the outdoors and wild adventure space has the potential to confer a multitude of benefits on young people's physical development, emotional and mental health and well-being, and social and educational development, which may have long-lasting effects into adulthood. Some of the benefits of engagement with wild adventure space, including those that arise through activities organized within such environments, include the following:

- Be away from adult supervision
- Enjoy the challenge of getting in to such places and the excitement of being chased by security guards
- Explore abandoned buildings, discover what is inside and what can be smashed up
- Have a place of their own.

Along with the above evidence on the benefits of wild adventure space, there is an overgrowing literature suggesting that young people suffer from a 'nature-deficit disorder'

as they lack real contact with nature (Louv 2004). Part of this so-called disorder depends on the change of perception on risk. There are a number of dimensions to perceptions of risk in the outdoors, ranging from the attractions of risk in undertaking challenging activities as part of wild adventure to fears of risk and its negative consequences. These notions are shared by parents and carers, teachers and other figures of influence alike - and often by young people themselves in an increasingly restrictive social climate that constitutes 'a culture of fear' (Cooper, 2005). The most frequently reported types of risk include:

- Fear of traffic
- Fear of accidents, e.g. falling
- Fear of racist assault or racially motivated bullying;

especially reported by members of ethnic minorities

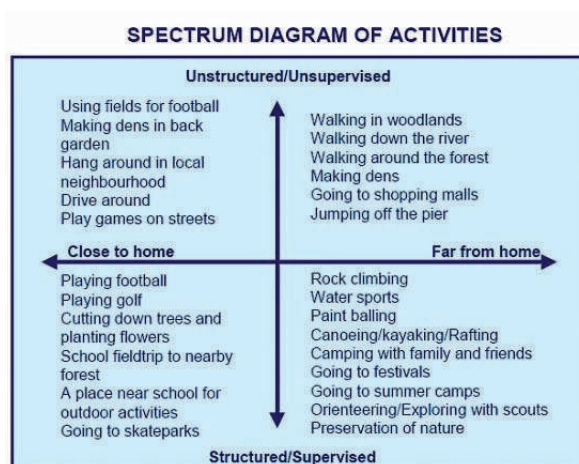
- Fear of physical assault
- Fear of moral injury of children through contact with others
- Fear of strangers ('stranger danger')
- Fear of other children and teenagers; very frequently reported by young respondents
- Fear of accidents due to lack of suitable infrastructure (especially for very young children or children and teenagers with physical disabilities).

The conceptualisation of young people as 'problem' and 'threat' by adults – and the media - is another barrier that restricts their access to the outdoors and results to their marginalisation and social exclusion. Young people from lower social classes and ethnic minority backgrounds suffer the most from this kind of social exclusion.

"What's in it for me?": evidence of the benefits of wild adventure space from young people themselves

Five focus group discussions were held across England, chosen to represent a diverse range of backgrounds (rural to inner city), with equal numbers of boy and girls age 11 to 16 and including young people from disadvantaged areas.

Perceptions of wild adventure space ranged from the local and unstructured (big, open grassy areas to play in) to far away places (forests with adventure courses) accessible in a more structured form. The diagram below maps the far ranging spectrum of activities perceived by young people that offer "wild adventure" and is evidence of the richness of that experience.





“Wild adventure space” is diversely interpreted by teenagers to include natural places (“forests all around” and “wild animals”) to structured environments (parks, farms, play structures “a big, long slide”), from a place to be with others or to be alone. Actual experiences ranged from bungee jumping to more atypical adventure such as having a picnic or reading alone in a park. Some key themes that emerged from the discussions include:

- The importance of the social dimension in wild adventure activities including both the positive (having fun together, working as a team, making new friends, “an exciting place you go with friends”, “a place for kids with no adults around”) and the negative (fear of gangs, “(other) groups can be intimidating (smoking, drinking etc.)”).
- The emotional dimension of wild adventure activities both positive (the adrenalin rush “abseiling .. it’s like speeding, going really fast”) versus breathing space, “where you can relax and feel free” (particularly important to teenagers in disadvantaged circumstances where family life is stressful) and the negative (fear of accident, boredom of hanging about waiting for an activity to start, frustration with health and safety rules). Some spoke of the variety of nature, “where you can see different things each day”, a property of the environment that instils fascination (“when the clouds went down into the valley, it was like a sea down there”) and associated with restorative experiences.
- The need to ‘play’ in an age-appropriate environment: teenagers are in transition period of their lives and there is a tension between wanting to play as they used to whilst at the same time being free from adult supervision and developing new skills to take them on into adult hood. Local playground environments are a source of frustration and fail to provide a sufficient risk and challenge to this age group. “Some adventure play grounds are too young; (we want) something aimed for older kids”
- Frustration with the typical stereotypical image of teenagers as trouble makers: “Teenagers don’t really want to be on the streets, they want to be somewhere with their friends where there is no one to tell them to get off”. The threat of ASBO’s combined with the wet and cold is a real deterrent to teenagers visiting their local parks. They want warm, sheltered, comfortable and quiet local places to hang out, free from the unwelcoming attitudes of society. A key benefit identified by the teenagers was the potential of such spaces to keep them out of trouble.
- The value of ‘packaged’ activities provided by youth centres offering wide adventure activities over day trips, residential weekends and weeks away, providing a much needed escape from home and social support for many young people in deprived areas.

Teenagers are not a homogenous group and they differ widely in age, background context and expectations. The

spectrum diagram illustrates the sheer breadth of their engagement with wild adventure space. The ideal wild adventure experience is different for different ages and different cultural groups requiring choice, freedom of selection and different levels of support.

“What’s in it for teenagers and the wider community?": evidence from providers of wild adventure activities for young people

A mapping exercise of 70+ ‘best practice’ projects across England offering wild adventure space activities provides evidence from service providers on the perceived benefits to young people as well as to the local community, an area currently under-researched. Whilst much of this evidence is anecdotal common themes emerged.

Benefits to the young people included improved physical health (tackling obesity for instance), improved mental well-being (promoting emotional and even spiritual responses), promotion of positive self-image (improved self-esteem, self-identity, self-efficacy), improved social development (interpersonal, negotiation and listening skills) and educational development (problem solving skills).

Benefits to the community cited included:

- Reduction in anti-social behaviour, particularly in disaffected young people from disadvantaged areas.
- Environmental improvements in the local community such as litter removal and tree planting.
- Regeneration of deprived areas through specific park development or provision of new facilities for young people shifting local perspectives and encouraging residents to stay in an area.
- Improved community relations through, for example, removal of a noisy activity to a less sensitive place.
- Economic benefits to tourism from residential trips.
- Promotion of environmental awareness within the home particularly within ethnic communities.

Further research and the wider promotion of these communal benefits is required to help shift negative social perceptions of teenagers and promote their inclusion in local outdoor environments.

“What restricts young people’s access to wild adventure space and what are the challenges ahead?”

Foremost are social barriers, including public attitudes that cast young people as a problem contributing to their marginalisation and social exclusion, particularly in the case of outdoor urban environments. Simply hanging around on the streets is now classified as anti-social behaviour and young people take seriously the threat of ASBOs. Perceived fears from parents and teachers, fuelled by negative perceptions of woodland and wilderness promoted in the media, significantly restrict access and require a long term dialogue to promote positive perceptions of wild adventure space. Inequalities of access in the provision of wild adventure activities, particularly amongst teenage girls and

ethnic minorities, need addressing.

Financial barriers include the need for intensive and specialist staff resources, crucial in terms of managing risk and in meeting the wide spectrum of different needs in young people, plus the need for good local transport to and from activity centres. Practical issues more easily overcome include the need to deliver quickly on participatory projects where young people are involved in the decision making processes, the use of peer support to nurture confidence in young people and the negotiation of good behaviour contracts directly with young people when undertaking risky activities.

Priorities for Action

The aim of this research was also to inform Natural England and other stakeholders on possible actions to increase opportunities for young people to experience wild adventure space and to gain the benefits which it offers. Those actions may be summarised as follows:

- Safety, risk and liability
- Social Inclusion
- Understanding unstructured use of local wild adventure space
- Involving young people and training them as leaders and mentors
- Managing and maintaining wild adventure space
- Adequacy of access to and supply of wild adventure space
- Improved evidence of physical, social and environmental benefits

Summary

Our findings support the notion that “free range teenagers” (free to access adventurous and fun activities in an unstructured or structured manner across a wide variety of places) promotes physical and mental well-being in teenagers and confers benefits directly to society. The risk of ignoring such evidence and failing to promote wild adventure experiences is to risk condemning our young people to an impoverished and “nature deficit” existence (Louv, 2004) or, as suggested by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority, to condemn “an entire generation to a life of awful quality and shocking brevity” (Baillie, 2005).

All young people have a right of access to wild adventure space, irrespective of cultural or economic background. Teenagers need to be able to access attractive, exciting places for wild adventure on their local doorstep as well as experience far away, distant nature. In developing better access for young people to such experiences society urgently needs to be engaged in a dialogue that promotes awareness of these benefits and promotes a positive image of young people and their value within the public realm.

The full report by Ward Thompson, C., Travlou P. and Roe, J. (2006) ‘Free Range Teenagers: The Role of Wild Adventure Space in Young People’s Lives’ is available to download from the OPEN space website at

http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/researchprojects_wildadventurespaces.htm

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Peak District Young Achievers Award

Michael O’Roarke Barnsley Youth Service



The Peak District Young Achievers Award was set up from a demand identified in urban environments, less than 10% of young people who live within 20 miles of a National Park boundary have actively participated in a programme of conservation skills. This information provided further reasons for the development of this programme, which would engage young people in becoming active citizens in their local national park.

Young people were to be given an opportunity to experience their local national park in a range of settings; they were provided with training whilst also contributing to the sustainability of the national park habitats. Within this programme they also developed new transferable skills from practical countryside management skills to first aid and an

introduction to map and navigation skills which all contribute to a person's understanding of the local environments. The programme was developed to be delivered in a residential environment, enabling the Rangers and young people to develop a positive working relationship; this also provided an opportunity for Barnsley Youth Service staff to work with young people in a closer environment to progress the development of young people as active citizens within their own community on their return home.

The initial stage of the project provided Youth workers with an opportunity to bring young people on a pre visit to the national park, which provided the young people with an opportunity for a familiarisation day. The working relationship was in the primary stages between all participants – Young people – Rangers – Youth workers.

On completion of this young people and parents had to sign up to the project, committing them to a 4 nights –5day programme, which would lead them to a validated National Park qualification, this provided recognition of the young person's distance travelled in their personal development. As the project developed two levels of programmes were available, the second phase enabled young people to contribute to the national park over a five-day non-residential programme leading to a level one qualification.

The learning outcomes for the young people were to be measured not only in a vocational nature, but also in many situations in considerable behaviour changes recognised by local schools. The values of such projects contribute to the young people's development in enabling them to develop as individuals and gain confidence in their transition to adulthood.

The project has been upheld as a beacon of good practice at a local and national level, a DVD programme provides a clear overview of how young people participated, enjoyed their new experiences and gained practical environmental skills.

The development of the young people in their newfound skills cannot only be measured in the medium and long-term benefits. The short-term development is of direct value to their progression in school. Many have been seen to make changes in their behaviour in an everyday context. The value of the project is measured in many ways; such as the young persons self esteem developing in parallel with their new skills.

The design of the programme allowed young people to be reflective as an individual whilst developing as a group member / team player, which the school environment cannot cater for in the days of target driven learning. This has been emphasised by people such as Janet Watson – Social scientist, when talking about rural youth work she stressed

“we should involve young people in identifying their needs at all stages” – she also notes *“do not sacrifice the fun element by trying to satisfy adult agendas”*, this programme of environmental education was enabling young people to develop as active citizens. The need for our future leaders to have the global reflectivity on their wider environment was also a key factor in how the programme was designed and developed. As the programme developed young people contributed to the change process. The critical elements of learning had to be delivered in a style that revolved around small steps and digestible chunks.

To have ownership of anything a young person needs to understand the basics of the subject, to ignite the spark, careful and quality delivery was of the highest priority. As young people have many distractions from everyday life, e.g. the digital era, the committed environmentalists of youth work have to capture that magic and to present a very special journey to the bombarded young person of 2007+.

As most of you read this article, thinking well just yet another *urban “do-gooder”* – Please remember that the Mass Trespass groups after the war were at that time looking for escape, today if we do not educate the wider community to care, there will be no need for mass trespasses. Unfortunately the future lorry driver of tomorrow will pass through our urban fringe national parks, distributing packets of cheese & onion crisps. That special place when we were “young”, hopefully is one those special footprints which is left in our memory. As we explore many places, all of us! We have an impact! The programme challenged the young people to be banking knowledge for the future; this extended their opportunities to investigate the unknown to them.

Our programme brings to young people a special experience, a place too many of them, that is the unknown. The awareness raising factor can be only achieved if they have a perception, and if they question the values on urban and rural communities a like.



The skills gained are of real value, but the real change is if our young person passes the message on, so one less tin of pop / crisp packet in the national park is our first step to some form of sustainable development.

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Photographic References

Top photograph credited to Adventure Network

Second Photograph credited to Outdoor Solutions

Last photograph credited to The Peak District National Park

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Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto: **Progress and Barriers**

Anthony Thomas, Field Studies Council



In a recent Times Educational Supplement (TES) poll¹, cost and red tape had caused more than a third of teachers to abandon or cancel school visits/trips. 'More than half the teachers in the survey knew a pupil who had missed out on a trip because they could not afford to go.'

These findings concur with the interim research report produced by Prof. Sally Powers and Prof. Gareth Rees of the University of Cardiff. The aim of the research, funded by the Field Studies Council, RSPB, PGL, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) and the Wildlife Trusts (WTs), was to identify factors which foster or hinder provision of, and participation in, out-of-school (or classroom) learning activities at secondary level.

This 10% survey of all secondary schools in the UK state and independent sectors produced a 32.5% return. 'The factor that was most frequently identified related to the 'lack of finance/resources amongst pupils' families in attending such activities'. The latter was mentioned by 81% of schools (and colleges)². Other factors identified as significant barriers relate less to participation and more to problems with provision. Many of the provision barriers were identified by the Real World Learning Partners (FSC, RSPB, WWT, National Trust and PGL) in launching the RWL Campaign on the 10th December 2003, at the FSC's 60th Anniversary Conference: Learning Outside the Classroom (LoTC).
Provision Barriers

- Prescriptive, overloaded curriculum – no time/space for out of classroom activity
- Negative attitude of Teacher Union (NASWT)
- Bureaucracy associated with visit documentation, especially risk assessment
- Compensation culture – 'fear of being sued'
- Limited accessible evidence of the benefits of LoTC
- Lack of support from decision makers – DfES and senior management in schools
- Lack of competence and confidence in taking groups out of school/out of the classroom
- Reduction in LoTC in secondary/post 16 biology and geography

Active lobbying of MPs and peers, Early Day Motions, Parliamentary Questions, discussions with Ministers and their acolytes, resulted in all the main political parties including in their 2005 electoral manifestos a commitment to 'all young people having access to the 'natural' environment'. Alongside the lobbying, the RWL partners funded a desk top study, undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to bring together the outcomes of research into fieldwork, outdoor and adventurous activity and school grounds, and community based enquiry³. The government honoured that commitment by hosting a stakeholder event in July 2005 to explore the scope and identify sector interest. Nine Manifesto working groups were established covering a wide range of interests from outdoor and adventurous activity, fieldwork, food and farming, early years and schools grounds, to creativity and culture, built

environment and worshipful places, plus the natural environment. The chairs of the working groups, with guidance from DfES officers, produced a series of recommendations for Lord Adonis, Minister of State, in December 2005. After a rather protracted gestation, the Manifesto was launched by Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, on 29th November 2006. Prior to the launch, two 'Outdoor Manifesto Champions' had been appointed to promote its content, develop an action plan, and lay the foundations for the creation of an Outdoor Council. As an interim measure, a National Advisory Group (NAG) was established to advise the Outdoor Champions and to further the aims and objectives of the Manifesto.

The key features of the manifesto included seven key actions/pledges on behalf of the signatories to the manifesto:

1. We will provide all young people with a wide range of experiences outside the classroom, including extended school activities, and one or more residential visits.
2. We will make a strong case for learning outside the classroom, so there is a widespread appreciation of the unique contribution these experiences make to young people's lives.
3. We will offer learning experiences of an agreed high quality
4. We will improve training and professional development opportunities for schools and the wider workforce
5. We will better enable schools, local authorities and other key organisations to manage visits safely and efficiently
6. We will provide easy access to information, knowledge, expertise, guidance and resources.
7. We will identify ways of engaging parents, carers and the wider community in leaning outside the classroom

The laudable aims enshrined in the Manifesto are still to be realised in a number of areas. The government, through the Department of Constitutional Affairs, and various DfES press releases, have tried to address teacher concern, even fear, that a compensation riddled culture could result in them ending up in court or even facing imprisonment as a result of a negligence claim.

The DfES has had a number of meetings with the NASUWT, and the commitment to rewrite the HASPEV guidelines (Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits) plus the work undertaken as part of the 'Out and About' package should result, in the near future, in the union withdrawing its guidance to members 'not to undertake educational trips/visits'.

The 'Out and About' package, which has been divided into two lots should meet other aspects of the Learning Outside

the Classroom Manifesto.

Lot 1: the project manager will work with the various sector groups to undertake a gap analysis of CPD in the 8 work areas. When the gaps have been identified, key providers will be contracted to produce CPD materials and resources which should provide a coherent package of training and support for teachers undertaking LoTC from 3 to 19. One importance thread will be to ensure that the approach and activities are appropriate to the learner and that they offer the opportunity to provide both progression and differentiation.

Lot 2 should assist in significantly reducing the bureaucracy associated with visits and trips where a school is using a provider. The project manager (Price Waterhouse Cooper) has the task of merging/integrating/establishing a badging system which places a premium on the quality of the learning experience and incorporates health, safety and welfare.

At the moment, most of the work has concentrated on developing a 'family' of Health and Safety badges under the aegis of EVAC (Educational Visits Advisory Committee) which consists of a representatives from OAEP (Outdoor Education Advisers Panel who advise the Director of Children's Services); Teacher Unions and Outdoor and Adventurous Activity (BAHA); Language and Cultural visits, including skiing (STS); Overseas visits, and field-work/environmental education (National Association of Field Study Officers/FSC), plus the work of FACE in developing certification for educational farm visits and BS8848 which applies to overseas visits but does not encompass state schools undertaking such work. Museums and art galleries have developed a quality standard as have event/theme based providers, with Tourism England. A funded pilot is being undertaken by FSC/NAFSO which is a modification of the School Evaluation Framework applied to providers (PEF). The members of the Natural Environment Sector of the National Advisory Group are participating in this pilot which will look at large and small providers, with single and multiple programmes/services. The pilot will include zoos, botanic gardens, centres, themed providers, reserves, forest schools, etc. The evaluation of the pilot will take place in December with a report produced for the DCSF by the end of 2007. The timescale for the badges is towards the end of 2008.

The DCSF is committed to bringing together further research to assist NAG and the Outdoor Council in making the case for LoTC. Besides research, a publicity firm, Band and Brown, has been appointed to coordinate publicity to raise the profile of LoTC. One promotion has already taken place with the Growing Schools Garden at Hampton Court achieving TV, radio and press coverage. Two major initiatives in the autumn of 2007 and the spring of 2008 will give prominence to 'outdoor and adventurous activity'

and 'worshipful places'.

An on going discussion continues around whether or not LoTC is increasing or decreasing and the department is working with OEAP to establish a single system for recording all Category Two visits recorded by EVCs and forwarded to Outdoor Education Advisers. Such a database would indicate visits/trips away from school on particular activities and residential. What such a database will not include is work in the school grounds and Category 1 activities within the school day.

Whilst more research data is collected, senior management appears to need further evidence that the costs of LoTC, and there are a number, do not outweigh the benefits. Without raising the profile of LoTC, possibly including a module as part of the National Leadership course, it will be difficult to ensure that all young people access the entitlement to a range of LoTC experiences. The Powers and Rees research indicates that 'less than one half of schools report that participation rates in their school are 'high' – with over one in ten reporting 'low' participation rates'. The research also suggests that there is a relationship between levels of disadvantage and level of provision. Those schools with high levels of FSM (free school meals) eligibility offered on average the fewest number of activities. It is worth noting that whilst there was some relationship between actual levels and perceived levels of provision, nearly 40% of those who offered 'enough' or 'too many' trips fell into the category of 'low providers'.

Even with 'low' providers, it was noted that a majority of schools identified groups of pupils who tended to 'miss out' on out of school learning activities with under-participation of pupils from poor homes being mentioned most frequently. Other groups who appear to do 'badly' in terms of access include traveller children, Turkish students, Sikh girls and particularly Muslim girls. Proportionately those children in rural schools did worse than those from urban based schools. One other group who fail to gain entitlement are those who misbehave. A number of teachers use visits as a reward strategy, denying access to those who do not conform.

One of the responses to Foot and Mouth was the need to make young people more aware of the food they eat and how it was grown or reared. The Government's healthy eating agenda and the work of the farming and countryside education initiative are building bridges between rural and urban communities. If we want young people to recognise diversity and value the natural environment then teachers, youth workers, parents and providers have to maximise their engagement with the natural environment.

All young people need memorable experience 'of' and 'in' the natural environment. The opportunity should not be limited by the socio-economic status of their parents or guardians or their behaviour in the classroom. Amos and Reiss⁴ have

shown 'almost without exception, students did achieve success and received an enormous boost to the self-esteem'. Work in Forest Schools has shown that children with major behaviour/emotional conditions benefit from the skills acquisition, physical and mental challenges of the strongly kinaesthetic approach to learning.

The Outdoor Manifesto Action Plan, although low to start, is now gathering pace and many of the barriers identified have the potential to be overcome or 'got around' but as long as 41% of the teaching force are cancelling trips, then many young people in the UK will miss out on an essential part of childhood experience. If senior management in LA Children's Services and in schools can be convinced of the cognitive, affective, physical and behavioural benefits of LoTC, then possible the financial barrier will not be an insurmountable peak.

Footnotes

¹ TES: 12.10.07 'Where will we go this year, Miss..... the North Pole?'

² Powers S et al

³ Rickinson M et al 'A Review of Research on Outdoor Learning' – (FSC) – NFER and Kings College, London

⁴ Amos R and Reiss M; 'What contribution can residential field courses make to the education of 11 – 14 year olds?' *School Science Review*, Sept 06

Photographic References

All photographs credited to Anthony Thomas

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Opportunities for Young People: Then and Now

Stefan Wathan, The National Trust



Brecon Basecamp

Forty years ago the National Trust began its Working Holiday programme. It charged £3 for people to experience the pleasure of taking part in conservation work, spending a weeks residential in a wooden hut on the Stratford Canal.

The idea¹ for the residential working camps sprang from an article in the Guardian newspaper by their Environmental columnist. It inspired Eric Crofts (Head of Science at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Barnet) to call at the National Trust's Head Office ('without an appointment!' exclaimed a report from the time) to discuss it with the assistant to the Director-General. It was recognised that voluntary work might attract young people to the organisation and help get work done.

The Beginnings of Youth Involvement

The first organised 'Acorn to Oak Work Camp' took place in 1967 and in 1968 it was recommended that the Trust form a Junior Division to encourage the involvement of younger people through membership and active participation. Eric Crofts became its Project Officer and Richards Sneyd, previously a farmer in Cornwall was appointed as its Secretary.

By 1970 the Trust built its first purpose built base-camp in the Lake District, including piped water. The programme

blossomed into the following decades (Eric Crofts received an MBE for his efforts on retirement in 1984) and eventually the Junior Division became the Volunteer Unit. By the way the National Trust also had Panel for Youth in those early years and Fiona Reynolds the current Director General was a youth representative and Jo Burgon, editor of this magazine also sat on the panel.

It is fascinating to read some of the reports from those pioneering days of youth involvement and here are just some that may bring memories of childhood and how things have – or haven't changed since.

"Accommodation. The huts in the canal yard were generally adequate. Despite efforts of the Major and the convict labour the leaky roofs, windows and a rather troublesome fire gave the impression that the standard was not quite all that could be desired. I know that the first thoughts of some of the arrivals was one of slight depression at the sight of this"

"Discipline. Ages varied from 16-36 and it was clear from the start that rules necessary for some might be irksome for others. I decided to err on the side of over-strictness. It has been said by some that 'fun and games' ought to be arranged for evenings. One view is that the day is already sufficiently organised to make any further community programme excessive. To put it another way I would prefer not to be the one to make such arrangements'
Major C B Grundy MC. Report on 'Acorn to Oak' Work Camp, August 1967.

Building on Positive Experiences

Of course there also stories from young people themselves. Tamzin Phillips, an Environmental Practices Advisor with the National Trust recounts her experiences

“ In July 1982, I was 17 years old and driving a Fiat 500 having just passed my driving test. Together with my friend we were off to do our gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award residential. Our accommodation was fairly basic and I remember the weather being hot as we cleared pine ‘seedlings’ to stop trees encroaching on New Forest heath land. I loved it (my friend hated it) and I subsequently went on 25 working holidays over the next 13 years”. Working Holidays changed my life. They gave me a sense of direction and confidence at a crucial stage of growing up.”

Enter 2000 and the programme was as strong as ever. Young people had to be aged 17 to take part and like Tamzin, many of these were using the experience to gain the Residential section of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. However change was on its way and with the introduction of new child protection measures it would have been impossible to undertake Criminal Records Bureau checks on all 400 of our adult holiday leaders just on the off-chance that another Duke of Edinburgh Award candidate booked on.

To address this issue and help meet demand from young people, we started a pilot programmes in 2004 aimed at 16-18 year olds called Youth Discovery. It coincided with a 3 year grant from the Department for Education and Skills (now the Department for Children, Schools and Families) which funded a new (for the second time!) Community & Youth Involvement team and allowed us to develop our capacity to work with young people and youth organisations.



Pen Y Fan 2007

Youth Development

We were keen for these holidays to be recognised as a youth development programme, but one which was entirely voluntary for the participants and which retains the pioneering spirit of those early years. Discipline is encouraged but hopefully our use of ‘fun and games’, teambuilding, motivated leaders and responsive wardens helps to inspire respect amongst the group as a whole. Our basecamps have definitely improved but I think they provide the right amount ‘sleeping rough’ without bringing on the blues!

Another interesting reference from the past is described in memo regarding the 1976 Acorn Camp Programme. It was stated that ‘men volunteers should be at least 16 years old and girl volunteers at least 17 years old’. It was recognised at the time that this would contravene the Sex Discrimination Act but also that more girls apply to join the camps and book earlier than boys. However it was also stated that the most successful camps ‘are where there are as many (if not more) boys than girls!’

Actually things haven’t changed that much since. More girls do apply (though we now manage it so that places are split equally), they also apply earlier (boys generally leave it to their mothers) and at a younger age, which always makes an interesting dynamic within the group.

Despite paying for the ‘holiday’ the participants decide on the menus, buy the food, cook it (and washing up afterwards). Team building activities, reviews and time for reflection are built into the programme and the young people themselves determine the day-off activities and agree the budget to pay for it.

Each volunteer leader –without whom we couldn’t run our programme, brings their own personality to the residential and builds in the different elements as and when it seems right, and of course every group is different. State school, private school, trainees and those still yet to decide their next steps all come together for the first time. Some bond within a day, for most it tends to be the middle of the week before they are relaxed in each others company and get into the swing of things.

Managing the form, storm, norm, perform of a group is always a challenge. Just when you think you’ve got it things can kick off, and sometimes it doesn’t come together until the last night, but a good leader won’t give up and will never rest on their laurels. The best moments are often those where young people have experienced something for the first time. Cooking toad-in-the-hole successfully for 12 people is no mean feat; sleeping under the stars and waking up with face of midge bites is a lesson learnt; seeing 50 metres of newly stone path on Pen Y Fan is truly satisfying, no matter how bad you ache.



Youth Discovery Working Holiday

This August, thirty six young people took part in the first ever Brownsea Island Youth Discovery Working Holiday to celebrate the 5th decade of the programme- £100 per head just so you know. Tents and camp-cooking haven't changed all that much since 1967, they're still hit and miss depending on who put them up or who happens to be on the rosta that night, midges still bite and 2 minutes after getting out of the shower your feet –and your towel are black and dusty and you wonder why you bothered.

Incidentally, Brownsea Island was where Baden Powell's first camp for scouts took place 100 years ago and the Scouts have had a presence there since. It is one of the few places you can still find red squirrels and the peacocks have a habit of staring down at you from the trees. Quite disconcerting to fresh-faced campers!

Gizmos and Gadgets

Young people and their mod cons are an interesting in feature. And in this regard I have something in common with Major Grundy of the first Acorn Holiday.

"The rule on transistors should certainly be kept, and the fact that one of these had to be confiscated for the duration did not seem to arouse resentment at this schoolmasterly action"

I admit it. I have 'encouraged' the removal of ipods during residential particularly when we are trying to work as a team, though background music does help to break the silence over the first couple of nights. In fact it is still a tradition on many working holidays to ban them all together.

Personally, it drives me mad when people can't live without

their mobile phone switched on, just on the off chance that a friend wants to tell them what they are doing at that exact moment in time. And I can't help grinning when I inform them that the chances of receiving a signal in the wilds of Wales are slightly worse than winning the lottery. Mind you, there is always someone ready to prove me wrong -"It works in the corner of that field over by the fence, next to the cowshed"- "yes Craig but was it worth the dung that now adorns your white Converse All Stars?" – "yeah totally man! my mate has just got a Nokia 63 something or other with MP3 and integrated toaster"

But mobile phones, ipods and digital cameras have made a huge difference to the experience. Not always positive at the time but a boon after the week is finished and young people and leaders have gone their separate ways.

In fact, I imagine it's annoying as me whirring away with my digital camera trying to get a picture that will somehow look different to the thousands of others I have of people slashing and burning rhododendron. Yes, guilty as charged but don't you see? Photo's have to be taken as evidence to funders and to share with group.

To prove the point, on my return I diligently copy and burn multiple CD's of photos to send out the group, only to find that they have already set up Facebook group, shared their own photos (blurred and pixelated pictures of people in various states of dishevelment somehow being more interesting than a perfect Dorset sunset providing a backdrop to purple heather and silver birches...), and arranged a reunion for next half term!

But look at the conversations, known as 'posts'. They did actually enjoy themselves, the food was 'not bad', the leaders 'wicked' and the experience 'awesome'. Best of all they haven't been asked to do any of it. Blow the feedback forms, I'll print off the pages and stick them in the 'justify every thing you do for your funding' file.

Yes, it is a brave new and technological world but the things that help make a fantastic experience are still the same. A great location, doing something worthwhile, working in the outdoors, a group experience, willing participants, good leaders and a bit of hardship (ie no television)!
Leaders of the future

About 200 young people a year take part in 15 discovery working holidays, a modest number I know but as much as we can manage when you consider the weeks available in the school calendar, the number of volunteer leaders we have and the times they are available.

What we are also looking out for are the potential leaders of the future, those who offer a little bit more of themselves. Those who don't always go with the crowd or wait to be told what needs doing; those that use their particular skill,

personality or confidence to help bring people together and to get the job done.

Some young people come back 2 or 3 times before they are too old for the programme and in order to capitalise on their enthusiasm and to give them a reason to come back, we have developed a Young Heritage Leaders programme. This has been supported by kind donations from the Shears Foundation and matched with money from V, the new youth volunteering charity set up last year.

This programme gives young people opportunities to learn about leadership and experience it first hand. They learn theory on leadership, undertake 50 hours of volunteering with a charity if their choice, complete an on-line workbook and take part in 2 short residentials to learn the basics of how to plan, manage and execute a conservation task. Over a period of 3 -4 months they have the support of a mentor and each other. At the end of the programme they undertake both a written assessment and practical assignment and if successful gain a level 2 in Team Leadership recognised by the institute of leadership and management.

Several of these young people have now co-led on discovery holidays and that is really where they begin to understand what leadership is all about, made all the more complicated by the fact that they are just a year or two older than the participants. We have also been lucky enough to work with some fantastic young people to establish ways in which they can support and influence the organisation. In addition to this, we have many thousands of young people engaging at a local level with our built and countryside properties. Work experience placements, young offender projects and groups from the Young Farmers, the Prince's Trust and Millennium Volunteers are welcome visitors and volunteers and make a real difference to our conservation work.

So over 40 years great numbers of young people have discovered new friends in new locations but I imagine we are still rarely perceived as a youth involving organisation by the general public. Hopefully we can continue to raise the money needed to sustain our programmes but I know there will always be opportunities for young people to engage with our staff and volunteers at properties.

As each generation of young people brings new opportunity and new ideas to timeless issues and those young people themselves develop new movements and campaigns, hopefully access to our basecamps and conservation activities will continue the legacy of Eric Croft and Richard Sneyd. With the help of a few more Majors, Captains, school teachers, youth workers and eager volunteers from all areas of life there is no reason why not.

The Outward Bound movement, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Scout and Guide movements motored along in the last century and are justly recognised for the fantastic work they

do with young people. But maybe, just maybe the National Trust has a small niche in the field of youth involvement, adding value to a rich landscape of opportunity and one that has access to countryside at its heart.

Footnotes

1 History of Acorn Projects (The First 25 Years). The National Trust - Author Unknown

Photographic References

Photos are credited to the National Trust

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Life's One Big Adventure

Richard Godley, Peak District National Park Authority



For some young people that may well be the case but for many urban and rural young people wanting to access outdoor pursuits it can seem out of reach or even a bit daunting.

Background

It is widely acknowledged that regular outdoor activity can positively shape the lives of today's young people and influence the choices they make for the future, giving them:

- Exciting ways of channelling energy
- The opportunity to experience physical and personal achievement and learn valuable, transferable skills
- Increased Self-esteem and confidence
- New interests and an appreciation of healthy lifestyles.

The Adventure Network is a Sheffield based, not for profit social enterprise working with an extensive network of professional outdoor adventure providers, businesses and organisations, local authorities, community groups and schools based mostly in South Yorkshire and the Peak District.

The aim is quite simply to improve skills and opportunities for the region's young people and people at work through challenging adventure activities. The focus is on working with young people from socially

disadvantaged, black and minority ethnic backgrounds, young people with disabilities and people in all work roles.

Origins of Adventure Network

The Adventure Network was originally formed by a group of professionals and outdoor enthusiasts who felt that if people knew more about who to talk to and where to go, lots more of us would enjoy doing things in our stunning and diverse British countryside.

The organisation is interested in helping more people to enjoy activities in the many green spaces, woodlands and countryside that we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep.

The Adventure Network makes outdoor adventures available to everyone – individuals, families and groups. The organisation reaches out to communities in the Peak District and the surrounding towns and cities to people who might not normally have the opportunity to experience outdoor adventure or leisure activities.

Providing high calibre adventure activities for corporate and private groups helps to provide free or subsidised adventures for deserving young people and people with disabilities. For example, many business customers take advantage of a corporate social responsibility scheme where they pay a supplement in addition to the delegate rate, which directly funds an equal number of young people to enjoy a similar

adventure experience.

Adventure Network Aims

- To enrich the lives of young people through personal development and achievement
- To develop valuable skills which are transferable to the work place
- To strengthen a vision of South Yorkshire and the Peak District as a place for people to come to pursue an exciting and healthy lifestyle
- To boost participation in outdoor activities by increasing access and promoting healthy lifestyles, especially to those who do not traditionally participate.
- To create a facilitation service to enable school and community groups, adult and corporate businesses to access sustainable, regular, organised outdoor adventures
- To create awareness of opportunities in the outdoor sector, including volunteering.

MISSION: To change lives through adventure!

That's what the Network is all about, with a focus on making it easier for young people and those who don't normally have the chance (because of social, financial or disability barriers), to access outdoor leisure and learning experiences.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The decisions that organisations make regarding the way they do business can impact on many stakeholders, including staff, customers and the communities they operate in, as well as having local and global effects on the environment and society as a whole.

Corporate Social Responsibility can be an important aid to recruitment and retention and help to build a 'feel good' atmosphere among staff. In crowded marketplaces where companies strive for the 'X Factor' a genuine and committed CSR agenda can separate them from the competition in the minds of consumers and staff.

The Adventure Network offers the opportunity for businesses be recognised for 'putting something back' into communities by sponsoring activities, rewarding staff with activity days and volunteering opportunities and their contribution to a vibrant economic future through the engagement and development of today's young people – the workforce of tomorrow!

Working with the Peak District National Park Authority

At the Recreation Forum at Losehill Hal in January 2005, the Adventure Network's Managing Director, Jane Bellamy met with Sean Prendergast, Head of Access and Recreation, PDNPA and Richard Godley, Sustainable Development Officer, PDNPA to discuss the opportunity for a project aimed at involving rural and urban young people, including those

living within the Park, in a series of short courses that would introduce them (or reintroduce them) to the landscapes of the National Park and the opportunities for recreation and learning, whilst enjoying adventure activities.

Jane worked with co-director Toby Rhodes to develop a series of one-day and weekend residential activities designed to maximise the opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to work together to successfully overcome physical and cultural challenges and to explore how to make the most of what's available to them so close to home. An overview of the project, along with some responses from the young participants, follows later in this article.

Sustainable Development Fund

In July 2002 the Government introduced the new Sustainable Development Fund (SDF), to be operated by

English National Park Authorities, providing grants to support sustainable development projects. The model for this had

already begun with the Welsh Assembly committing funding for sustainable projects to the Welsh National Park Authorities a few years previously.

The SDF demonstrated the Government's commitment to the work of the National Park Authorities and the principles of sustainable development. The aims of the SDF are to: Encourage individuals, community groups and businesses to co-operate to develop practical, sustainable local projects.

Develop and test new ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in countryside of the greatest natural beauty and diversity.

That means projects that deliver environmental benefits but also bring tangible benefits to our local communities by creating and safeguarding jobs, or providing new community facilities, or promoting local activities.

At the heart of the Sustainable Development Fund is a desire to identify and encourage new ideas for good practice, which can be replicated more widely in rural areas.

One of the recommendations from the report conducted by CEPAR was to strengthen links to urban/ rural young people. This is a task made slightly easier by the fact that so many major urban populations lie close to the Peak District National Park. Therefore the ideal grant scheme to help develop this idea into reality was to approach SDF.

Peak Park Adventure Challenge (Pilot Project) Overview Project Aims

"Bringing young people from different social and ethnic backgrounds from Inner city and areas of high deprivation to locations in the Peak District National Park for adventure activities"

- Appreciation of environment and landscapes
- Understanding opportunities for recreation
- Appreciating the value of outdoor activity
- Sustainability - Activity/Environment
- Personal development (confidence, trust, communication)
- Skills development (teamwork, enterprise)
- Time for reflection

Sources of funding

In July 2005 £12,827 was awarded by the SDF Panel to offer exiting adventure activity opportunities for around 100 young people. The Panel were fully supportive of the project and were keen to support the project aims. Adventure Network contributed cash of £3,920 and Jane and Toby contributed an equivalent in kind cash contribution of £2,275. Although in reality this was probably double! Slater Printing Design and Printing designed and printed the leaflets free of charge which equated to £1,400. Lockerbrook outdoor centre offered a discount against their normal rate that amounted to £2040. Yomodo.com gave a discount on merchandise worth £470.

Other partners involved were:

Lockerbrook Activity Centre – activities provider
 Slater Printing – design and printing of marketing materials
 Connexions Southeast Yorkshire and Derbyshire – sourcing participating youth groups
 Bradford Enterprise College- sourcing participants
 Global Promise – sourcing participants from Bradford and West Yorkshire

Since the SDF project, the funding stream has developed to include a grant from the South Yorkshire Key Fund, private investment and sponsorship and donations from businesses and foundations operating in South Yorkshire.

Young people were from groups traditionally deemed to be disadvantaged or underrepresented in countryside recreation and where financial circumstances could be a contributory factor. For this reason these activities were provided free of charge to encourage participation.

Our aim was involve young people from ‘hard to reach’ groups, from urban and rural backgrounds in fun, outdoor activities where they were challenged physically and personally and would participate in inspiring experiences alongside other young people from different backgrounds.

As personal development, maturity, confidence, trust building, improved cooperation and communication are just some of the positive outcomes often associated with

participation in outdoor group activities, it was considered very appropriate to offer a range of adventure activities to our groups. Built into each course was an element of promoting an awareness of sustainability issues, exploring ways to take

part in future activities in the Peak Park and in their own environment.

Location, Location, Location!

Lockerbrook Outdoor Centre, in The Derwent Valley, provided AALA licensed adventure activities for the groups, and had a genuine interest in the objectives of this project. The centre is run by The Woodcraft Folk whose aims include:

“To develop self-confidence and activity in society, with the aim of building a world based on equality, peace, social justice and co-operation”.

The project was delivered over 2 weekends and four day visits. Each weekend was participated in by 16 young people, with Lockerbrook providing instruction, accommodation, all meals, safety equipment, kit and transport. The full programme of fun challenges included:

- Night Walks
- Rock Activities: weaselling, stream scrambling, climbing and abseiling.
- Caving Activities
- Mountain Adventures: an adventure walk onto Kinder Scout, descending via a river scramble.

Getting young people involved

Jane Bellamy and Gill Jones from Lockerbrook Centre met youth and community groups to deliver an exciting, engaging slide show with images of young people from different backgrounds and levels of ability experiencing adventures and group challenges previously delivered by Adventure Network associates and took some kit for people to look at and become familiar with. The events culminated in some short, fun activities and a chance to talk about their expectations or concerns.

This was seen as an essential element in being inclusive and reassuring parents, community leaders and individual participants and generating commitment to the courses.

Who took part?

The aim of the project was to involve new participants from communities around the fringes of the Peak District National

Park in outdoor activities. The target groups were:

- Young people from socially deprived areas
- Young people from BME communities
- All female groups
- Young people living within the National Park

Finding young people to participate in the activities was never a problem, but the project aims specified offering the free places to young people who would not normally have this opportunity, so contact was made with Connexions



South Yorkshire and Derbyshire, along with some secondary schools and youth and community groups.

Research conducted suggested that due to the short lead time, contacting established groups would be the most effective way to access some of the target groups. It would not, however, enable us to include some of the most hard to reach (young people excluded from mainstream education, young mothers, child carers). This was noted as less than ideal but an allowable weakness for this project and flagged for follow up.

One group came from Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College, a secondary school within a predominantly Asian community of Bradford and an area of high deprivation. The selected group was all female, to remove the major cultural barrier of mixed groups.

Another all female residential group was sourced through Sheffield Futures and this approach was considered very successful in terms of allowing the young women to relax and express themselves without the pressure of having males in the group.

Interestingly, anecdotal evidence from the project indicated that the young people least likely to have had any previous outdoor activity experience or have visited a National Park were girls from poorer white families.

No Shows

Around 20 young people (2 groups) did not participate. One group was from Derbyshire Connexions, the other from the John Barnett Youth centre in Beighton in Sheffield. The most commonly given reasons for not turning up were bad weather on the day of the visit and getting up late without parents at home. However, from our perspective it was, felt that the amount of pre course contact with their youth club and the level of commitment of staff to the project was an overriding factor. It was proposed that one solution to this problem would be to ask for a securing deposit that would be returned at the end of the visit, and following the first incidence of no show, Sheffield futures employed this idea to full effect.

Residential Visits

The first of the residential visits was by Laisterdyke Business and Enterprise College. Their activities included:

- A Fish and chip Supper – viewed as a highlight!
- Night walk
- Weaselling
- Caving
- Stream scramble
- Orienteering

Leigha: *“The best things were doing something I never thought I’d be able to do, making really good new friends, fantastic countryside and scenery and seeing my friends make it through!”*

To maximise the benefits of the weekend for these young Asian women, we invited Sajida Bashir, an Asian female who regularly climbs in the Peak District and has overcome many perceived barriers to lead groups of Asian and Black women in outdoor group activities. She shared her story in a workshop session and facilitated activities over the weekend. Feedback from the group and Head Teacher from the school suggested that it had enhanced the experience for many in the group. We were very pleased that The National Park Ranger Service was also involved, with a visit from Rangers to Lockerbrook Outdoor Centre to talk about the National Park and its recreation opportunities.

Ravinda: *“I’ve just been abseiling! It was awesome and I want to go back and do it all again”*

The following residential was also an all female group, from Hackenthorpe and Beighton, areas of Sheffield with high deprivation. The same format was followed and some valuable personal development took place for several of the group. Overcoming challenges and facing fears were highlighted and one of the most memorable comments was from a girl who stated that she had learned that “it’s ok to trust some people some of the time”.

Day visits

The day visits were participated in by two mixed groups of able bodied ‘at risk’ young people from Sheffield and two groups of young people with disabilities. These groups were inspiring to work with and were in turn inspired by their experiences. Some of the most severely physically disabled children enjoyed a walk or ‘push’ around Fairholmes visitor centre at Ladybower reservoir, whilst some had fun weaselling at Higgarr Tor. They all came back together for a picnic and to communicate their experiences to each other.

Habiba: *“I had the time of my life! I am so grateful to the whole team. Can’t wait to go stream scrambling!”*

All of the young people that participated in the visits and gave feedback said they had valued:

- Having fun
- Being in beautiful places
- Being away from home
- Doing something new
- Doing something they never imagined they could do
- Making friends
- Learning about themselves

Ayesha: *“I learned that sometimes it’s OK to trust some people, some of the time”*

Outcomes and Follow up Evaluation

The purpose of this pilot was to establish a successful model for a wider reaching project involving activity providers and groups of participants from towns and cities around the Peak District National Park. Feedback and evaluation established a high rate of success in promoting participation in outdoor activities, increasing awareness and access to a variety of activities and providing young people with practical skills and knowledge to enable them to do it for themselves, at minimum cost.

As young people from different backgrounds perceived the project to be personally beneficial to them, their way of life and their community, enabling them to see people from other backgrounds in a more positive way, The Adventure Challenge is considered to have fostered the beginnings of new connections between these groups helped them to have a greater appreciation of the value of the National Park.

Nicky: "I kept saying I can't believe I'm doing this, but I did it and I'm so happy!"

The Future

The Adventure Network has built on this project and worked with several more groups including young people excluded from mainstream education, homeless people, people from BME communities, corporate and business clients, primary and secondary schools and members of the general public.

Our aim is to reach every school age child in the region to promote the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto to schools across the area and to encourage greater sponsorship of activities within communities by local and national businesses.

Working with young people living within the National Park is still a key aim and encouraging links between these local young people and those visiting the park is the subject of future project work.

We are grateful for the initial grant from the SDF and hope to successfully deliver future projects in partnership with the National Park Authority.

A PowerPoint presentation of the project is available. The Adventure Network can be contacted on 0114 2800548 or via the website at www.adventurenetwork.org.uk

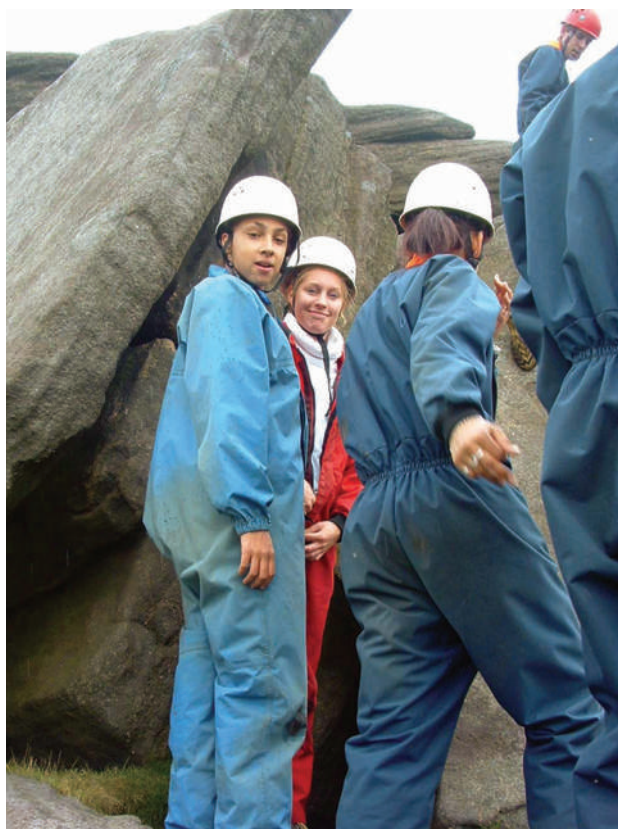
Information about the Peak District National Park Authority's SDF grant scheme can be viewed at www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/sdf

Photographic References

All photographs credited to Adventure Network

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Agency Profile

Each issue of *Countryside Recreation* will profile a relevant agency/organisation.

Countryside Access and Activities Network (NI)

Dr Caro-lynn Ferris, Director, Countryside Access and Activities Network (NI)



The Countryside
Access & Activities Network
for Northern Ireland

In the absence of a Natural England/ Countryside Councils for Wales type body in Northern Ireland; Environment and Heritage Service, Sport Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board set up the Countryside Access and Activities Network ('the Network') in 1999 to act as a co-ordinating body for the strategic development, management and promotion of countryside recreation across Northern Ireland.

The Network is an umbrella organisation that brings together groups and bodies that have an interest in, or involvement with, countryside recreation. This includes those participating in countryside recreation activities, local and central government organisations, farmers and landowners, environmental and community organisations, youth organisations and providers of outdoor education.

The Network's vision is to develop and sustain a vibrant countryside recreation culture in which responsible and well informed people enjoy high quality, sustainable and appropriate activities in an accessible, well managed yet challenging environment: where landowners and managers are welcoming and where there are accompanying benefits to local communities both in social and economic terms.

The Network currently receives funding towards its operational costs from Environment and Heritage Service, SportNI, Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Inland Waterways of the

Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and has a core staff of 6 Officers. The Network's subsidiary company is Countryside Recreation : Northern Ireland. A company limited by guarantee with charitable status, the Company is

responsible for securing funding to enable the Network to undertake practical countryside recreation projects. It can also undertake projects in its own right or on behalf of others. Although the Network has only a small team of staff, it covers an extensive range of work reflecting its key aims.

Essential to the success of the Network, is its ability to facilitate the exchange of information among all interested parties in countryside recreation. This results in greater co-operation and partnership working in the delivery of sustainable countryside recreation based programmes across Northern Ireland.

The Network also facilitates a wide range of organisations including local and central government organisations, protected area management bodies, governing bodies of sport, local clubs and community groups in their planning of new recreational facilities ensuring that the wider issues surrounding countryside recreation development are considered.

A significant element of the Network's work is to deliver on the ground a suite of countryside recreation facilities, geographically spread across Northern Ireland. During the past 7 years, working in partnership with local and central organisations, this has resulted in the development of 13 long- distance walking routes known as the 'Waymarked Ways', 4 off-road family cycling trails, 16 environmental trails linked to the sport of orienteering and a network of canoe trails (on-going). The Network also works in partnership with

the British Horse Society to develop off-road horse riding trails and to date 2 trails have been developed.

The Network also works very closely with its partners to encourage the management of countryside recreation facilities to ensure a high quality and consistent experience for all users. At a practical level this involves implementing a wide ranging visitor monitoring programme including using

electronic people counters, undertaking visitor surveys and carrying out annual audits of all trail infrastructure related to products. At present the Network is setting up a Volunteer Ranger Scheme to help it deliver this area of work.

Unfortunately in Northern Ireland, research on strategic countryside recreation issues is almost non-existent. Consequently, the Network with its limited 'in house' resources has started to undertake small research studies to help determine the future policies and programmes undertaken by ourselves and our wider membership. An Access Study of the Mourne AONB for Environment and Heritage Service was undertaken earlier this year and the recommendations made a significant contribution to the on-going debate over Northern Ireland's first proposed National Park in the Mourne and prompted the Network to set up a 'National Access Forum' for Northern Ireland. This Forum seeks to redress acknowledged issues surrounding Occupiers' Liability, access legislation and the use of public land for recreation all of which need to be tackled if we are to increase the opportunities in Northern Ireland for countryside recreation provision not only for the local population, but visitors alike. More recently, the Network has embarked on major piece of research for Environment and Heritage's Service Strategy which considers why certain communities in Northern Ireland do not take part in countryside recreation activities.

The Network also plays a key role in raising the awareness of countryside recreation and activity tourism opportunities across Northern Ireland and specifically to ensure that information required to facilitate participation in any outdoor activity is easily accessible, accurate and up to date. To help it do this, part of its marketing efforts has included the development of a series of web sites for each activity eg. walkni.com, canoeni.com and a 'one stop shop web site', outdoorni.com which details information on over 35 outdoor activities. In addition, in an attempt to co-ordinate more effectively the activity tourism industry within Northern Ireland, the Network in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has established the Activity Tourism Forum for Northern Ireland.

The Network is very conscious that if it is actively encouraging the public and tourists to use the Northern Ireland countryside for recreation, those who use it, must understand and appreciate the special qualities of the

countryside and demonstrate appropriate conduct, consistent with good practice in their activities and consistent with the management practices of landowners and managers. To this end, the Network has developed an education programme in partnership, where possible, with its southern Irish allies. The most recent education work undertaken has been the setting up of Leave no Trace Ireland Ltd to spread the message of the outdoor ethics programme 'Leave no Trace'. Leave No Trace now replaces the Country Code in Ireland

Finally, the Network also undertakes a training role for the Countryside and Access Officers of Northern Ireland's local authorities. Through conferences, seminars, workshops and study trips it works to disseminate information and best practice to those providers of countryside recreation across Northern Ireland.

So what does the future hold for the Network? Undoubtedly the Network's greatest challenge is to get the continued recognition that it deserves from central government through an on-going financial commitment to its core running costs. With the Network's current funding period finishing in March 2009, meetings with the new Assembly Ministers are already taking place in order to help them fully appreciate and recognise the importance that countryside recreation plays in the wider government policies of health and well-being, economic development and tourism.

If you are interested in finding out more information about the Network visit our website,

www.countrysiderecreation.com

or contact the Network at:

The Stableyard

Barnett's Demesne

Belfast

BT9 5PB

Tel: 028 90 303930.

Photographic References

All photographs credited to CAAN



News



BRITISH WATERWAYS

Step lightly, leave fewer footprints- Guilt free greener holiday on our inland waterways

We initially tried to identify the cost of offsetting the small carbon footprint that our boats produced through an existing Carbon Offset fund. The following were the suggested donations.

The Carbon Neutral company www.carbonneutral.com gave Ed Helps the following calculation based on an average use of 90 litres of Diesel per weeks holiday for propulsion, cooking and heating.

To offset this they recommend 2 schemes:
 International £8.40 per ton CO₂ x 0.2367 = £1.98 or
 One World £7.50 per ton CO₂ x 0.2367 = £1.75

I verified this using the www.climatecare.org offset calculator suggesting a donation of £1.78 for 0.24 tons CO₂

None of the monies from these commercial funds appear to benefit projects within the UK. We therefore approached the Waterways Trust about setting up and managing a green fund that could directly benefit the UK navigations. We have committed to pay an offset fee of £2.00 per week's holiday into it. We have also offered to collect and pass to them any voluntary donations our hirers wish to make to offset their own travel to and from the boat making the holiday even greener. We hope that other boating companies will follow our lead to enable this fund to support more green initiatives.

Step lightly, leave fewer footprints - Cruise for a week through quiet backwaters, or city centres, confident that your holiday carbon emissions will be just one twentieth of a return flight to a Mediterranean hotspot * See overleaf. UK Boat Hire which owns the Alvechurch, Red Line, Wessex and Viking boat hire companies, launches its 2008 holiday brochure today highlighting the negligible impact on the

environment of cruising our canals and rivers in a comfortable, low emission narrowboat.

Edward Helps, MD of UK Boat Hire, says: "Our reliable, quiet, smooth running diesel engines, make modern narrow boating not only one of the most relaxing and rewarding holidays but also one of the greenest. We care passionately about the wellbeing of our boaters and our waterway environment with the precious wildlife that help to make waterways holidays so special.

That's why a percentage of every holiday goes to 'The Waterways Trust Green Fund.' The Green Fund will be used by the Trust, which works to promote and protect the country's waterways, to invest in low carbon technologies and various environmental projects such as creating new wild life habitats.

We will encourage holidaymakers to make a voluntary donation of £5.00 per car to the same fund to offset their own travel to and from the boat."

British Waterways, which manages 2,200 miles of the UK's navigable canals and waterways is right behind the Green Fund and is keen to persuade users of the environmental value of holidays on the waterway.

Edward Helps concludes "We provide holidays for over 6,000 groups of families and friends each year in our fleet of modern, easy to manage narrowboats available from 11 centres in the UK. What better than to experience the slower pace of life on the historic waterways – with a clear conscience that you are enjoying one of the greenest holidays on offer."

Information www.ukboathire.com call Edward Helps on 0121 445 7484 / 07767897861 edward@abclg.com or Lindy Foster Weinreb of Castle Wharf Promotions on 01442 385581 / 07990500450 lindy@castlewharf.com

Fact Sheet

Conversion to tonnes CO2

Plane journey

Average plane journey total 1.146 tonnes CO2 per person
Average plane journey is assumed to be a two way journey from London to Palma de Mallorca, Spain which is 1343 km one way.

For one way $1343 \times 0.1304 \times 1.09 = 190.89$ kg CO2 x 3 for extra destructivity at high altitude
/ 1000 for tonnes CO2 = $0.573 \times 2 = 1.146$ tonnes CO2 per person.

Hire boat journey

For hire boat journey 0.059 total tonnes CO2 per person
Using Ed Helps' figure, average journey takes 90 litres
 $90 \times$ diesel conversion factor 2.63 = 236.7 kg CO2/1000
= 0.2367 tonnes CO2 divided by 4 for family of four per person = 0.059 total tonnes CO2 per person.

For family of four

0.2367 tonnes CO2 per family per average hire boat holiday
4.584 tonnes CO2 per family per average flight to European location
 $4.584/0.2367 = 19.37$ times more CO2 for flights than a hire boat holiday. As hire boat holidays includes fuel used for heating, lighting, cooking & travel during the holiday, which is not accounted for in the flight alone, this has been rounded to 20.

FORESTRY COMMISSION AND THE KENNEL CLUB

Walkers with dogs: good practice guide published

In partnership with the Kennel Club, the Forestry Commission has published the first good practice guide about managing access for walkers with dogs.

Building on recent research and workshops with staff "Managing dogs in the wood" provides practical advice for all land and access managers seeking to develop a more effective approach, whatever the access or landscape type. By taking a more proactive, integrated and engaging approach, the advice aims to improve matters and reduce conflict for dog walkers, other access users and land managers alike.

From December 2007, the attractive, easy to read, ten-page guide will be supplemented by on-line case studies and reference materials, featuring good practice from across the UK, on both FC land and access managed by other public and private bodies. These will be expanded and updated as research, policy and practice develop.

Given that Forestry Commission and Natural England figures show that between a third and a half of countryside visitors have a dog with them, the guide aims to promote a balanced approach to managing walkers with dogs, as one of the most frequent, year-round access users.

Whilst the UK's 6 million pet dogs provide many social and health benefits, such as making people feel more confident and motivated to go out for a daily walk in all weathers, there are also understandable concerns about problems caused by irresponsible owners.

The guidance highlights that to be effective, a vital first step is understanding the causes of unwanted behaviour, rather than just trying to suppress or displace the symptoms. To then influence behaviour, access managers need to communicate with dog owners in a way that is relevant, engaging and accessible; information needs to be clear, consistent, credible and offer alternatives.

Apart from improving dog control and compliance with restrictions, such engagement also fosters wider rapport and mutual respect, when seen to be "pro-responsibility", rather than just "anti-dog".

The guidance can be downloaded at:

www.forestry.gov.uk/england-dogs

A limited number of printed copies are also available.

Losehill Hall is again running the successful course "Managing dogs and their owners" on 8-9 January 2008, to help access managers benefit from the latest research, case studies and good practice – tel 01433 620373.

For more information contact:

Paddy Harrop – Recreation and Public Affairs Manager
Forestry Commission

Tel: 01904 696300

Email: paddy.harrop@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Stephen Jenkinson – Access Advisor to the Kennel Club

Tel: 01433 623129 Email: steve@sjacm.co.uk

LGA/ Energy Saving Trust

**Climate change: your council, your climate, your action
4-5 December 2007, Ramada Hotel, Leicester
sponsored by LRQA**

Climate change is one of the biggest topics of public debate in 2007 and councils are at the heart of finding solutions to it. This cornerstone Local Government Association/ EST conference will present key findings from the LGA's Climate Change Commission which is examining over 2007 how councils can make a step change in helping to deliver national climate change objectives at local level.

Headline speakers will include government ministers and public and private sector leaders, together with experienced



practitioners holding in-depth workshops on how to deliver action. Visit our sponsors:
www.lrga.co.uk

**LGA annual improvement conference and exhibition 2008
27-28 February, Marriot Hotel, Bristol**

This popular LGA annual improvement event will see up to 300 leaders in the improvement agenda attending a variety of plenary and workshop sessions.

We will be looking for a main conference sponsor who can help us deliver this event. As a main sponsor we will be able to offer high level branding opportunities, a workshop session as part of the main conference programme, primary exhibition space and a number of other options including a 5 minute slot within a main plenary session.

Exhibition space is always a sell out so it is advised to book early.

**LGA annual fire conference and exhibition 2008
11-12 March, Royal Court Hotel, Coventry**

sponsored by Lion Apparel
media sponsor Fire Times

Another established event now in its 12th year. Up to 300 key fire professionals will gather to discuss the latest developments in the fire community. The event will see key ministerial address' and participation from a number of other organisations. visit our sponsors
www.lionapparel.co.uk
www.mmcpublishings.co.uk/The-Magazines/Fire-Times

**LGA 2nd sustainable communities conference and exhibition future places: thriving economies and healthy environments
11-13 March 2008, Arena and Conference Centre, Liverpool -sponsored by CLG, Defra & ASC**

With high level key note speakers, mixed with a variety of workshops and a lively exhibition of up to 100 stands, the 2nd LGA sustainable communities conference will once again play host for up to 750 delegates.

Confirmed speakers include:
Government ministers
Tim Smit, Chief Executive, Eden Project
Lord Robert Winston, professor and broadcaster
Wayne Hemingway, Chairman, Building for Life
Sian Berry, Principal Speaker, Green Party
Warren Hatter, Director, Public Sector Programme, Forum for the Future
Dermot Finch, Director, Centre for Cities, IPPR
Peter Hendy, Chair, Commission for Integrated Transport
Cllr Arthur Barker, Leader, Hambleton District Council

George Garlick, Chief Executive, Stockton-on-Tees Council
Dr Fiona Adshead, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health

This is your opportunity to reach those who matter from the sector. There are a variety of sponsorship opportunities that will allow you to have your say and get your message across. We still have plenty of opportunities for your organisation to get involved.

For exhibition queries please contact Brintex at
j.coverdale@hgluk.com
For full conference details log on to www.lga.gov.uk/dscc

**LGA annual culture, tourism and sport conference and exhibition 2008
13-14 March, ACC, Liverpool**

This is an exciting opportunity to not only visit Liverpool as Capital of Culture 2008, but also to experience its stunning, brand new state-of-the-art venue, the Arena and Convention Centre.

The event planning is in its early stages, but we can promise the usual mix of plenary sessions, workshop sessions and study tours covering the broad spectrum of services and activities that come under the culture, tourism and sport umbrella.

Joining up with the final day of the LGA 2nd sustainable communities conference this will be a unique opportunity to experience both events and network with a wider audience. Exhibition stands will be for 13 March only.

We will be looking for a main conference sponsor who can help us deliver this event. As a main sponsor we will be able to offer high level branding opportunities, a workshop session as part of the main conference programme, primary exhibition space and a number of other options.

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

Making sustainability real: Sheffield Hallam University's new environmental postgraduate degrees

Making communities more sustainable has become a government priority following advice from Sir John Egan in 2004. Alongside such issues as the need for effective use of natural resources, affordable housing and transport planning Egan suggested that enhancing the environment was a key element in providing this sustainability.

Sheffield Hallam University has recently completed a radical revamping of its postgraduate Masters degrees relating to the environment.

Degrees being offered:
MSc Environmental Management
MSc Environmental Management (Business)
MSc Environmental Management (People and Communities)

MSc Environmental Management (Sustainable Rural Development)
MSc Environmental Management (Wildlife and Landscape)

Staff in the university's environment teaching team are now closely linked to colleagues active in the fields of planning, regeneration, housing and transport and the new routes have developed from new opportunities for developing inter-professional understanding with these colleagues in the sustainable communities professions.

Recent research has suggested that there is a significant skills gap in relation to the different strands of employment opportunities in the environmental 'industry'. Recognising that there are a lot of students with qualifications that include a 'management' tag in the job market, and following significant research with key employers in the field, the university have devised a suite of Environmental Management courses more directed towards these specific skills requirements.

Whilst retaining the key generic skills required by employers each route provides modules that provide technical skills more suited to that particular element of the 'industry'. For instance, the MSc Environmental Management (Wildlife and Landscape) has a module that examines and provides practical experience of surveying and evaluating species, habitats and landscapes.

The degrees all set their specialisms within the context of an overarching programme of routes related to Sustainable Communities and the Environment and all aim to provide opportunities for projects that suggest ways of making abstract concepts such as sustainability into real life scenarios. All students are expected to complete a consultancy project where they work within relevant environmental agencies. This allows them to immerse themselves in on-the-job learning whilst providing practical help to their host agency. Students are encouraged to share ideas, experiences and resources in order to develop an awareness linked issues (e.g. addressing social issues by linking them to economic and environmental initiatives). The opportunities, constraints and frustrations arising from such projects provide greater awareness of the complexities of real-life implementation.

Sheffield provides a unique setting for studies linking these environmental, social and economic factors. Following the devastating loss of its major employment in the steel-making and coal-mining industries, the area is now blossoming through regeneration of the heart of the city and the derelict and contaminated brownfield sites of its former industrial areas. Lying adjacent to the second most visited national park in the world - the Peak District - provides a contrast in terms of rural issues such as changing land use, ecological fragility, the effects of tourism, affordable housing, etc

All the routes are available to post graduate certificate, diploma and full MSc levels and as full time or part time completion. From the autumn of 2008 the degrees will also be available as distance learning. A new and exciting theme has been the introduction of the availability of individual modules for those wishing to build their credit more slowly or as individual elements of their continuing professional development requirements.

For further information and a brochure please contact the course administrator: Amanda Cook, telephone - 0114 2253188

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

Outdoor Access Event- Wednesday 5 December 2007

It is recognised that visitors with disabilities are under-represented when it comes to using the countryside and urban greenspace. The importance of tackling the barriers that prevent people enjoying the outdoors is the focus of this event. As well as looking at the implications of recent legislation, the day will be about ways Local Authorities, managers of land and outdoor visitor facilities and centres, can develop an inclusive and welcoming approach, improve services and provide useful pre-visit information.

Venue Battleby, Redgorton, Perth
Price Free

SNH and Paths for All Partnership. Lunch and refreshments provided. For reservations and bookings for all Sharing Good Practice events email: sgp@snh.gov.uk or call Karen Smith on 01738 458555. For access events call Caroline Reid on 01738 458557

THE NATIONAL TRUST

Countryside for All Site Access Evaluation The National Trust's experience and approach

The National Trust has had a specialist adviser working on access for all matters for over 25 years. So we felt reasonably well placed to take up the challenges of new disability discrimination legislation. For our outdoor sites we have developed an evaluation approach described below.

Access Evaluation is a key part of the process for assessing how we can improve the access arrangements and facilities for the millions of people who visit and enjoy our outdoor places. Improving accessibility increases opportunities for people who may have been unable to visit our properties for a variety of reasons. Improving surfaces and signage, for example, does not just benefit disabled people but also family groups, who may have young children in pushchairs.



Requirements for 'reasonable adjustments' in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the amendments made in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, do cover accessibility of outdoor areas so assessments of sites need to be made to decide where improvements can be made 'reasonably'.

To assist with finding what is 'reasonable' for any site, the involvement of disabled people in the planning and evaluation phases for improving accessibility is crucial. Building an understanding of needs and expectations from both sides will enable improvements to access at outdoor sites to be made in an integrated way as well as enhancing relations with local communities.

Workshops:

To assist the development of a process in the Trust to make our outdoor places more accessible, the Sensory Trust helped devise and deliver a series of centrally-funded workshops during 2006 and 2007 to shape a Site Assessment Evaluation process for countryside properties to use. Over 300 wardens attended the workshops and helped shape the process to make it more usable for property staff and volunteers.

The objectives of the workshops were:

- Improve knowledge of the range of disability and the relationship with providing access to the countryside
- Examine and learn from good practice in removing barriers to access to the countryside
- Provide a legal and compliance context for the Trust's provision of providing and managing access to the countryside

To deliver on these objectives, it was necessary to work in partnership with a number of organisations. This built up the sharing of experiences from outside the organisation and is also an example of good practice working itself. Partner organisations who took part include Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, RNIB, Mencap, HLF, Calvert Trust, Disabled Ramblers and some smaller local organisations and individuals.

Site Assessment Evaluation:

The Site Assessment Evaluation is designed around different 'themes' rather than a tick-box style approach. The process is supported by a reference list of relevant legal and technical guidance and a directory of organisations that can provide further advice and support.

The tick-box approach can be felt to be too prescriptive and lead people to think that once all the questions on the sheet were answered, there was nothing else to think about. It also encouraged people to try to complete the whole process in one go. The use of themes means that there is more opportunity for lateral thinking. The evaluation of a site does not have to be done all at once with this method. The themed approach allows for specific issues to be discussed as part of a main project and start to spread the

development of an inclusive design process across the Trust.

Each theme has a list of points which are often thought about and also a list of points which are often missed or forgotten when assessing particular topics. There is opportunity to record positive aspects of the site and also areas where improvements could be made.

Each theme sheet includes a reference to other related themes which may need to be considered at the same time.

The process is now available for properties to use. It is recommended that any of the theme assessments should be carried out with disabled people taking part in discussions to develop expectations and understanding. The evaluation process should be factored into property work plans to ensure an assessment of sites is carried out. The results of this process should inform property management plans to develop actions for implementing the results.

THE NATIONAL TRUST AND RIAS

These boots are made for walking...

RIAS partners with National Trust to get Britain walking! People will be stepping into their walking boots and enjoying spectacular country and coastal walks thanks to a new partnership between over 50s insurer RIAS and the National Trust.

The partnership has been announced as research from RIAS shows that as many as 86 per cent of us are failing to walk the recommended 10,000 steps needed each day to promote a healthy heart and prevent obesity. RIAS is working in partnership with the National Trust by sponsoring a series of National Trust walking guides, to encourage people to enjoy the huge number of countryside and coastal walks which the National Trust has throughout Britain. The National Trust website will feature a range of downloadable walking guides which will provide invaluable information, maps and directions for those wanting to put their best foot forward and get walking.

Janet Connor, Managing Director of RIAS, said: *"With the beautiful walks offered by the National Trust, there are lots of opportunities to clock up the recommended 10,000 steps a day. Our research shows that people are more likely to meet this target if they live in areas of outstanding natural beauty such as the Lake District and the South Downs. Through our sponsorship of the National Trust, we want to show that you're never far from a beautiful walk wherever you live in England, Wales and Northern Ireland."* the research revealed:

- Over a third (40%) of people in the 60+ bracket as well as 35% of those in their 30s or 40s, walk a worrying 10,000 or fewer steps each week, suggesting that work, family and social commitments are being prioritised over

health *

- Only 33 per cent of all adults walk the recommended daily distance during a week

RIAS selected the National Trust, which has 3.5 million members and 49,000 volunteers throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, due to its relevance to the interests of the over 50s market. As a respected and trusted brand, the National Trust fits well with the RIAS philosophy of offering quality and reassurance to their policyholders.

For more information on the RIAS/National Trust walking initiative visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/walking.

Editor's Notes:

The British Heart Foundation advise thirty minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on five days of the week is the minimum amount needed to promote and maintain health. For many people, more vigorous activity will offer even greater health benefits than moderate activity. During moderate exercise you should be breathing more heavily than normal and feel slightly warmer. (www.bhf.org.uk).

The NHS also recommends 10,000 steps a day. Research shows that walking 10,000 steps a day will significantly improve health, build stamina and burn excess calories. (<http://www.nhs.uk/magazines/women4060/Pages/WalkToHealth.aspx>)

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,026 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken 10-12 September 2007. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

* These figures were calculated from grouping those that walk 5 miles per day or less.

The sponsorship deal is being brokered and managed by Genesis Partnerships.

About RIAS

- RIAS was established in 1992 and is a specialist provider of insurance products for the over 50s age group
- RIAS negotiates with a panel of insurers to secure competitive, value for money products
- RIAS has over 880,000 customers and employs over 1,200 people across two locations - Bournemouth and Belfast
- In July 2007 RIAS' home insurance contents and buildings policies received four 'Best Buy' awards from Which? magazine

RIAS is part of Fortis (Insurance UK), a leading provider of award-winning personal and commercial lines insurance solutions in the UK and the 2007 General Insurer of the Year at the British Insurance Awards. Its customer-centric strategy has been to align its activities to how customers want to buy insurance, based on delivering high-quality products, manufactured at costs better than market norms.

Its unique multi-distribution capability enables Fortis to deliver products face-to-face, by phone (inbound and outbound), over the Internet and via SMS technology. Aligning its business activities with its partners' general insurance strategies enables Fortis to offer end-to-end white label and branded capabilities in product development, marketing, campaign management, sales, fulfilment and award-winning claims management, providing a seamless integration with partner brands.

Insuring in excess of 6.6 million customers and working with a range of partners, Fortis is recognised for delivering consistent and high-quality customer experiences. It employs 2748 people as of 31/03/07 with a head office based in Eastleigh and others in Gloucester, Bournemouth, Stoke-on-Trent and Haywards Heath. In 2006, its profit before tax was £77.5 million and its GWP was 688.3 million.

For more information, contact:

James Bishop/Louise Gough

JBA Public Relations

Tel: 020 8875 5460

Email: james.bishop@jbapr.com or louise.gough@jbapr.com

THE NORTHERN IRELAND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND ACTIVITIES NETWORK (CAAN)

Outdoor Adventure and Walking Websites Go Live in NI...

The Northern Ireland Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) have recently launched two new websites; Outdoorni.com and Walkni.com.

Walkni.com was officially launched in March 2007. Within eight months it has already become the definitive website for walking in Northern Ireland, gaining industry recognition with the runners up award at the BT Goldeneye Awards in May and has recently been short listed for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Excellence Awards.

The websites main aim is to provide a 'one stop shop' for both domestic and out-of-state visitors to access information on walking in Northern Ireland. The website provides all the information a tourist needs in order to choose and plan their holiday in Northern Ireland; information on the best walking routes, how to get to and travel within Northern Ireland and accommodation. It also offers information suited to local people who enjoy walking in Northern Ireland such as walking clubs, walking events and walking routes. The website has general information for walkers on safety, equipment, weather, access and maps. Interactive in its design, the website offers walkers the chance to 'suggest new walks' and leave feedback on walks they have



undertaken. This section acts as an effective management tool. Given the website was developed and designed within a restricted budget, it is very commendable it is visually very attractive and eye catching as well as being incredibly easy to use with excellent information.

Walkers from Ireland and further a field have also given unsolicited feedback on the site, two examples are:

"What a great website. I will certainly be spreading the word amongst friends and colleagues over here in England", Philip Johnston-Davis, England.

"..probably the best website I have seen. Can't praise it highly enough", Olive Brown, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Key Facts:

The website has received 20,026 unique visitors since March 2007

- It currently displays 241 short distance walks
- 44 medium distance walks
- 15 long distance walks

We have received approximately 40 feedback submissions on the website since its launch.

Outdoorni.com was officially launched in July 2007. This website is billed as the definitive guide to outdoor activities in Northern Ireland providing comprehensive information on a wide range of 35 land, water and air based outdoor activities.

Visitors to the website can avail of a vast array of information required to get involved in outdoor activities including how to get started, equipment needed, whether or not beginners should avail of lessons, details on the best venues for specific activities and contact details for 150 activity providers.

The search function allows visitors to search by region, activity or category enabling easy access to information.

Hannah Shields, the first Northern Irish woman to climb Mount Everest, commented at the launch of the website *"It can be time consuming to research and find out information on new activities and often it is useful to chat to individuals who are knowledgeable about the area. Outdoorni.com presents a great deal of information in an easy to navigate way, providing helpful tips and more importantly contact details for individuals within the sector."*

The website has become a valuable tool for the industry as all providers, clubs and associations can up date their own information via a trade log in area. This ensures the site is up to date and accurate. Providers can even promote special offers and events.

"...because the site is updated by the providers, clubs and associations themselves means the information is correct and constantly changing. Most importantly this means

there is always something new for the consumer every time they come back to the site." added Chris Scott CAAN Marketing Officer.

CAAN actively promote outdoorni.com at exhibitions and events therefore all the activity providers, clubs and organisations are promoted under the umbrella brand.

Key Facts:

Outdoorni.com has received 10,022 unique visitors since May 2007. The website covers

- 17 land
- 12 water
- 6 air activities

There are currently 150 activity providers registered onto the website

CAAN is supported by the Environment and Heritage Service, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Sport NI and Inland Waterways of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

WORCESTER WOODS COUNTRY PARK

Urban fringe woodland management– a successful multi-use approach event

Wednesday 30th January 2008- 9.30am –4.00pm

Nunnery Wood is an urban fringe ancient semi-natural woodland comprising of 22ha of neglected oak and hazel coppice. The wood is part of Worcester Woods Country Park and has been managed by Worcestershire County Council since the 1980's. The woodland was historically managed as coppice with standards, but fell into neglect post World War 2. The course will cover how the woodland management balances amenity, wildlife, historic interest and woodland production in a busy Country Park with over half a million visitors annually.

Topics covered during the course will include:

- The woodland management system
- Amenity and people management
- Conservation of wildlife and the historic environment
- Sustainable income opportunities and realities

The cost of the seminar is £65 but Countryside Management Association and Country Parks Network members will receive a £15 discount. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. For more information please contact Kate Mustard on 01905 766155 (kmustard@worcestershire.gov.uk)

If you would like to submit a News item for the Spring 2008 Journal please email the Network Secretariat at crn:shu.ac.uk

Summary of CRN Seminars

The Impact of Outdoor Recreation on Changing Social Behaviours

20/09/07, Priory Rooms, Birmingham

This seminar attracted 49 delegates and was chaired by Rachel Hughes from Sports Council for Wales. The seminar aimed to provide an understanding of the different forms of social behaviour; to explore the interrelationships between social behaviour and outdoor recreation; to hear practical examples of where outdoor recreation has had a positive impact on changing social behaviour.

The morning session included presentations from Dr Geoff Nicholls, Sheffield University whose presentation focus was Outdoor Recreation as a “Tool to Facilitate Behavioural Change”; Veronica Sharp from The Social Marketing Practice gave us the marketing approach of using “Outdoor Recreation to Change Social Behaviour”; Peter McGowan from Manchester PCT gave a very dynamic talk on expanding the concept of walks.

In the afternoon session Viv Carnea from Getaway Girls took a practical approach to demonstrate that adventure education mitigates violent and aggressive behaviour; Michael Watson introduced “Get Hooked on Fishing” and gave us examples of social behaviour change through outdoor recreation through his first hand case studies; Denise Bedford, Les Mos and Don Wilkinson from Safe Anchor Trust and The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award gave us example from the Voluntary Sector of behavioural change from outdoor activity

The proceedings from this event are available to purchase from our website:

www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk/publications

CRN EVENTS

Preparing for Climate Change in the Outdoor Recreation Sector Seminar

**Wednesday 30th January 2008
The Priory Rooms - Birmingham**

**Transport for Leisure Seminar
Spring 2008
More details to follow**

For further information please contact Magali Fleurot

Network Manager

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Website: www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

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For more information, please contact: Kimberley Haigh, CRN, Sheffield Hallam University, Unit 10, Sheffield Science Park, Howard Street, Sheffield, S1 2LX.

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Network Manager
Tel: 0114 225 4494
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The deadline to book an advertising space in the Spring 2008 issue of the journal is:
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