Meanings, values, and life course:
A study of participants' experiences at a Scottish outdoor education centre

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Abstract

Residential outdoor education has had a significant formal and informal presence within the education system of the United Kingdom since the 1950s. However, there is little empirical research into the experiences of participants, particularly from a long-term perspective. The present study investigates the meanings, values, and impacts that participants attribute to a five-day residential experience at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre, near Dunoon, Scotland. Participants attended the Centre as school pupils between 13 and 16 years of age. Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre operated as an educational facility under the auspices of the local authority between 1973 and 1996. Participants were contacted between 2007 and 2008, hence a minimum of 11 years after the Centre closed.

Semi-structured questionnaires ($n = 110$) and interviews ($n = 14$) were used to generate data regarding participants' experiences. These were analysed using a hermeneutic approach. Supplementary data were generated from archival documents and interviews ($n = 29$) with various stakeholders in Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre, ranging from local authority education officers to Centre managers and instructional staff. These supplementary data contribute towards a nuanced interpretive account of participants' experiences that has both breadth and depth.

The data suggest that participants' experiences at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre represented highly significant events in their school career. Principal findings relate to themes of achievement, independence and responsibility, and the development of more adult relationships. Seventy-two percent of questionnaire respondents claimed that their experience at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre continued to influence their adult lives. This influence was manifested in a variety of ways ranging from a love of the outdoor environment, to choices regarding use of leisure time, to employment choices.

Bourdieu's (1977, 1990b) theory of social practice, particularly the concepts of *field* and *habitus*, provides a framework to interpret participants' expressions of the nature of their experiences and the impact those experiences did or did not have on their lives. From this perspective Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre presented participants with a safe and authentic experience that differed sufficiently from their previous life experiences to allow for the opportunity to develop new understandings of self and the social world. These new understandings were expressed in different ways and at different times over participants' subsequent life course.

List of contents

Part 1

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Methodology

Part 2

Chapter 3: Development of residential outdoor education in the UK

Chapter 4: Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre

Part 3

Chapter 5: Theoretical framework

Chapter 6: Personal meanings and values

Chapter 7: Interpersonal meanings and values

Chapter 8: Summary of chapters 6 & 7

Part 4

Chapter 9: Influence of Ardentinny on later life

Chapter 10: Summary of findings, implications, and concluding comments

Appendices

References

Declaration of own work

I hereby declare that I composed this thesis in accordance with the regulations of the University of Edinburgh, that it is all my own work except where indicated in the text, and that it has not previously been reproduced or published in any way.

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PART ONE

Chapter 1: Introduction

1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the purpose and nature of this inquiry and provides a rationale for the choice of Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre and its participants as an area of inquiry. These issues are presented in Sections 2-4. In Section 5 I discuss the emerging nature of research in the field of outdoor education before proceeding to identify gaps in the current body of knowledge. In light of this discussion the contribution of this research to outdoor education is made. In Section 6 I explain the structure of the thesis and the reasons for the way the chapters are organised. Finally, Section 7 discusses the issue of researcher reflexivity and outlines the personal and professional experiences that have inevitably informed the way that I have carried out this research.

2 The purpose of this research inquiry

The purpose of this research is to investigate the long-term meanings and values that people attribute to residential outdoor education experiences and what effect, if any, those meanings and values have on individuals' lives. In order to explore this question the research focuses on the perspectives of participants who attended Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre, near Dunoon in Scotland between the years 1973 and 1996. Although Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre delivered outdoor education programmes to a variety of user groups this research focuses on the main user group, namely school pupils, 13-16 years of age who attended the Centre for a period of five days. This occurred most commonly in the third year of secondary education. The programmes delivered to the school pupils were residential in nature and fall into two broad categories: activity courses of kayaking, sailing, orienteering, and low-level mountaineering that focused on developing pupils' physical skills and general understanding of the activity, and fieldwork courses in biology, geography, and history. Personal and social education was an integral part of all programmes although the delivery of these aims was pedagogically less explicit. Approximately 1300 pupils per year visited the Centre.

The research focuses on the years 1973 to 1996 – the period during which Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre operated as a local authority educational facility. Renfrew County Council was the administrative body that conceived of the project to create the Centre in the late 1960s. In 1975, two years after becoming operational, a reorganisation of the system of local government led to the creation of Strathclyde Regional Council. Renfrew County Council became Renfrew Division of Strathclyde Regional Council - a constituent second-tier of local government in the new two-tier system. Twenty years later another reorganisation of local government led to the disaggregation of Strathclyde Regional Council and the creation of a number of unitary authorities. What had been Renfrew County Council and then Renfrew Division was divided into three separate local authorities: Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, and Inverclyde. As a result of these changes to local governance in 1996 Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre ceased to operate as a local authority facility in the same year. A private company subsequently took over the Centre as a going concern. Hereafter, Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre is referred to simply as 'Ardentinny' in the manner of the staff of the centre and the pupils who attended the Centre.

A wide range of educational practices are commonly understood by the term *outdoor education*. The location used for outdoor education programmes can vary from very local (the school yard or field) to very remote (a camping expedition in the Scottish Highlands). Equally, the intended learning outcomes can vary from field studies with a subject-specific curricular focus (geography or biology for example), to skill acquisition and development in specific physical activities (such as kayaking or rock climbing), to a focus on personal and social development as a result of a group experience, or a combination of all the above and more besides. In addition, outdoor education experiences are delivered by many different institutions and organisations: local authority outdoor centres, school teachers, countryside rangers, and commercial outdoor centres to name but a few. Given these broad parameters it is no surprise that the nature of outdoor education remains a topic of debate (Barnes & Sharp, 2004; Higgins, Nicol & Ross, 2006, p. 62). A number of umbrella terms are commonly used to refer to learning experiences and practices in the outdoors as a result of

different emphases being placed on the concept by different groups at different times – outdoor education, learning in the outdoors, out-of-classroom learning, and outdoor pursuits to name but a few. For the purposes of this thesis I shall use the term outdoor education to refer to the range of educational practices that take place primarily in the outdoor environment and promote an experiential approach towards a combination of personal, social, physical, or environmental learning outcomes. This is a conception of outdoor education that is widely accepted in the UK and outlined in the most recent overview of outdoor education in Scotland (Higgins & Nicol, 2008).

3 The nature of this research inquiry

The present study is investigative in nature. The aim is to gain an understanding of participants' experiences at Ardentinny and explore the influence, if any, that participants attribute to these experiences in their lives subsequently. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 6) describe the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur* using whatever strategies or methods necessary to address the subject of inquiry. The research design of this inquiry acknowledges several traditions of research in achieving its aim.

The main focus of this present inquiry is on the experience of the pupils who attended Ardentinny and engaged in an outdoor education programme. The focus on the nature of experience, using detailed descriptions to explore the meanings and values that people attach to their experience in order to arrive at a greater understanding of that experience (Moustakas, 1994), locates this research in the phenomenological tradition. However, whereas a phenomenological approach often involves working with a small number of participants this study presents the perspectives of a number of other stakeholder groups in addition to the participants. The perspectives of Ardentinny management staff, Ardentinny instructional staff, head teachers of the schools who sent pupils to Ardentinny, school teachers who accompanied the pupils, and senior staff in the local authority education department who were directly involved in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of Ardentinny also contribute to this research. Archival documents are also used to illuminate the workings of Ardentinny as an educational facility. These additional

perspectives are included in order to arrive at as rich an understanding as possible of the nature of the experience of the participants at Ardentinny. The use of these additional perspectives is characteristic of case study research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggest that,

> Case studies strive to portray 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation. Hence it is important for events and situations to be allowed to speak for themselves rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by the researcher. (p. 182)

Best (1970) refers to research that is concerned with the relationships that exist between what is now and some preceding event as descriptive research. Descriptive research brings to light the points of view, the attitudes, and felt effects that occur as a result of a previous event. Using the perspectives of participants at Ardentinny, supplemented by a number of other stakeholder groups, this research provides a detailed description of the nature of participants' experience at Ardentinny and questions whether their experience in life now has been influenced in any way by the preceding events at Ardentinny.

A hermeneutic approach is taken to the analysis of the interview, questionnaire and archival data whereby the researcher applies "the interpretive tradition ... to the empirical world by likening the world to a text which must be read" (Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker, & Mulderij, 1985, p. 22). The analysis moves back and forth between individual parts of the text and the whole text in many cycles called the hermeneutic spiral. With a hermeneutic approach the historical context of the research subject is an important element in developing an understanding of the phenomenon (Rowan & Reason, 1981). Accordingly, there is an aspect of historical research to this inquiry in the use of archival data to provide an understanding of the social and educational context that led to the creation of Ardentinny and shaped its operational aims. Cohen et al. (2000, p. 158) describe historical research as an attempt to faithfully represent a previous age in a spirit of critical inquiry that casts new light on current and future practices. In addition, it may lead to the re-evaluation of beliefs about the past. The balance of moving back and forth between the present

and the past through the different forms of data, using each to understand the other is congruent with a hermeneutic approach.

Drawing on the influences of a number of research traditions in order to create a research design most appropriate to the inquiry aim is a recognised practice in qualitative research (Becker, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Flick, 1998; Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992). The different traditions and sources of data that comprise this present research combine to create a story; the story of Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre in which the principal characters and the focus of the tale are the participants. Through an inductive process the final research design took shape resulting in a framework most appropriate to providing an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants at Ardentinny. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) comment that the use of a variety of techniques and practices has much to be recommended:

> The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. (p. 8)

The use of a hermeneutic approach to the data allows the various different strands to be drawn together in a coherent whole. The result is an analytically sound interpretive account of the experiences of participants at Ardentinny that contributes to understanding the nature and impacts of participants' outdoor education experiences.

4 The subject area of this research inquiry – why Ardentinny?

There are a number of factors that make Ardentinny and its participants uniquely appropriate as an area of inquiry. The immediate challenge in addressing the question of the long-term effects of individuals' past experiences was in finding participants in order to make the research possible. The management at Ardentinny kept records of every school and every pupil who had attended the centre during its period of operation between 1973 and 1996. For each visit the name of the school, the names of the pupils and accompanying staff, and the date of the visit was recorded. Although a name alone, which in the case of female participants in

particular may change, does not provide a direct route to locating possible participants in the research, this became a very useful resource in helping to contact individuals and verifying the dates they attended Ardentinny and the activities they participated in.

Another challenge with a research study of this scope, which aims to understand the experience of participants engaging in a programme that was delivered over a significant period of years, lies with the consistency of the programme delivery. Regular changes to the aims, content, and format of the educational experience delivered would make it very difficult to come to any coherent picture and therefore understanding of the nature of the experience of participants. In this respect Ardentinny was an ideal subject for study. Firstly, the Centre only ever had one principal. He was employed during the final months of preparation of the Centre prior to the first group arriving and remained in post until the day the Centre ceased to exist as a local authority managed facility. Secondly, only two deputy principals were in post during the lifetime of Ardentinny. The first was in post for 18 years and the second was an internal appointment with more than ten years previous service as a member of the instructional staff. Thirdly, turnover amongst the instructional staff and the auxiliary staff was also very low. This stability and continuity of the staffing allowed the study to start from a point where it was reasonable to assume that the experience delivered at Ardentinny would be consistent over time, which turned out to be the case. This staffing stability also meant that it would be possible to interview a significant proportion of staff in order to gain a good understanding of the content and delivery of the programme. Fourthly, the records showed that the programmes at Ardentinny had remained consistent throughout its years of operation.

Finally, many of the schools that Ardentinny served sent pupils on an annual basis which, in conjunction with concerted efforts on the part of the local authority education department, school head teachers and Ardentinny staff, resulted in the development of very strong links between Ardentinny and the local communities. In addition, most of the schools Ardentinny served were located within a 30-mile radius in a geographically discrete area of Scotland west of Glasgow. The combination of

these two factors suggested that locating individuals from the various different stakeholder groups involved in Ardentinny to participate in the research would be significantly less problematic than might otherwise have been the case.

5 Outdoor education research – a developing field

Outdoor education has been an established element of statutory educational provision in the UK for approximately sixty years (Cook, 1999; Higgins, 2002; Nicol, 2002a; Parker & Meldrum, 1973). Despite the effect on provision of budget cuts in the 1980s and 1990s Higgins (2002) claims that outdoor education as a whole accounts for in the region of 200,000-300,000 student days per year. More recently, and more specifically to this thesis, Spence (2006) is cited by Simpson (2007, p. 48) as estimating the provision of residential outdoor education experiences in Scotland at over 114,000 days in 2004-2005.

The political support seen in recent years for the *Manifesto for Learning Outside the Classroom* in England and Wales (Council for LOtC, 2009) and the establishment of Outdoor Learning in Scotland under the auspices of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS, 2009) demonstrate a resurgent political interest in and commitment to the potential of outdoor education in the statutory education system. In this context outdoor education has been re-conceptualised as *outdoor learning* or *learning outside the classroom* – a much broader perspective than the historical conception of outdoor education. This differentiation is discussed in subsequent chapters. However, little empirical research exists which investigates the impacts, and particularly the long-term impacts, of outdoor education programmes as part of statutory educational provision in the UK (Clay, 1999; Higgins, et al., 2006; Rickinson, Dillon, Teamey, Morris, Choi, Sanders, et al., 2004).

Although outdoor education in various forms has a strong history in the UK the establishment of the field as a discrete entity and constituent part of the education system is a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the early 1950s. The body of empirical research pertaining to outdoor education is comparatively small (Cheesmond, 1981, p. 24; Higgins, et al., 2006; Sibthorp, 2003) and that pertaining

specifically to residential outdoor education is smaller still. Putnam (2004, p. x) remarks that at the time of the production of the Hunt report *In Search of Adventure* (Hunt, 1989), which set out to provide an analysis of outdoor adventure education provision in the UK, the field was impoverished not by a lack of reflective practitioners, but by a failure to communicate those reflections across the field and engage in debate regarding the learning processes in outdoor education. The reflections of practitioners were never organised or systematically investigated and therefore remained as prevailing impressions within the outdoor education community. Keighley (1997) condemns much of the claims for the legitimacy of outdoor education as being based on "spurious statements of belief, or on anecdotal evidence and aspirations" (p. 27). Although the body of outdoor education research has witnessed significant development over the last twenty years, Higgins et al. (2006, p. 62) state that the philosophical and practical issues associated with outdoor education continue to suffer from a lack of support from empirical research.

Some have argued that there is no need to question what outdoor education is, what it is for, nor how it works (McDonald, 1997; Noble, 1995). The argument is that there are beneficial effects resulting from being active and adventurous in the outdoor environment and the truth of this argument needs no discussion and no justification; in outdoor education parlance "the mountains speak for themselves" (James, 1980). From this perspective it is a self-evident truth that outdoor education is eminently able to contribute towards the ancient maxim of a healthy mind in a healthy body and that the outdoor environment adds a dimension of educational experience on personal, social, and environmental levels that the indoor environment cannot provide. Nicol (2002a) provides a detailed account of the development of the underlying assumptions and values that contribute to this belief.

In addition to the belief that inquiry is unnecessary due to the self-evident benefits of outdoor education there has also existed a train of thought within the outdoor education community that probing too deeply into what outdoor education does and how it works might neuter its power to facilitate learning and transformative experiences. In other words, attempting to understand and explain might jeopardise,

to paraphrase William Blake, the intangible mystery of what happens when men (or women) and mountains meet.[1] Walsh & Golins (1975) argued against attempts to analyse what happens during Outward Bound programmes for the reason that, "any codification of the process tends, by its simplification, to deny access to mystery. Once the idea is delineated, its ability to move out of that mold is decreased" (p. 22). Whilst the desire to avoid learning experiences becoming a regimented production devoid of spontaneity is understandable and admirable, in the context of statutory educational provision a strategy of purposefully limiting understanding of the learning process seems both morally and practically inadequate.

Arguably, societal changes towards a lower tolerance of risk and changing perceptions of risk (Furedi, 1997, 2001; Gill, 2007) combined with a tragic kayaking accident at Lyme Bay in 1993 that led to the deaths of four young people, have also had a significant impact on the development of research in outdoor education. The public and media furore in the aftermath of the accident ultimately led to *The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995* (ACYPSA, 1995). This resulted in an extremely high priority being given to the development, implementation, and maintenance of risk management strategies that absorbed much time and energy amongst centre managers and others, arguably to the detriment of developing understanding and evaluation or research strategies in other areas in the field. Nicol (2002b) states that the tightening of safety procedures within the field of outdoor education in response to a series of fatal incidents compounded by a lack of formal recognition within the sphere of education led to a situation where, "the pursuit of qualifications became a measure of professional reflexivity for those working in the outdoors" (pp. 86-87). The qualifications that were available and ascribed value by the field were almost exclusively related to leadership and skills coaching in outdoor activities such as kayaking and mountaineering. Opportunities to develop expertise in or ascribe value to other aspects of outdoor education – personal and social development and environmental education – were far less prevalent. On a related

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[1] "Great things are done when Men and Mountains meet. This is not Done by Jostling in the street." William Blake, in Erdman (2008).

note to the effect on outdoor education research, Higgins et al. (2006, p. 62) argue that opportunities and energy to develop the nascent presence of outdoor learning experiences in the curriculum were also hindered by the overwhelming focus on safety-related issues.

Outdoor education has played a formal and informal role in the UK statutory education system for approximately 60 years. Significant numbers of pupils continue to take part in outdoor education programmes during their school career. This being the case it is appropriate that the role of outdoor education within the statutory education system should be rigorously examined. However, it is a relatively 'young' field (certainly compared to classroom research) and its fragmented nature combined with a vein of resistance from practitioners within the field, and safety-related issues dominating the landscape have contributed to a situation where the body of research and academic debate regarding outdoor education, though having made significant recent gains, could be described as being in a developmental stage.

5.1 Weaknesses in the body of research
5.1.1 Quality
Over the last fifteen years a number of meta-analyses of research on the effectiveness of outdoor education programmes have been carried out (for example, Cason & Gillis, 1994; Hans, 2000; Hattie, Marsh, Neill & Richards, 1997; Neill & Richards, 1998; Staunton, 2003; Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). The studies used in these meta-analyses are primarily focused on the development of psychological constructs such as self-concept and locus of control. Whilst these studies suggest that outdoor education can be effective in meeting programme aims the results are inconclusive and at times contradictory (Higgins et al., 2006, pp. 63-64). In their meta-analysis of Outward Bound programmes Hattie et al. (1997) point to the need to improve the quality as well as increasing the quantity of outdoor education research, stating that "In searching for articles to include in this review we were struck by the number of research papers that read more like program advertisements than research" (p. 45). Hattie et al. (1997) also referred to the fact that too many studies emphasised positive effects whilst minimising data that returned "negative" (pp. 47-49) results.

5.1.2 Lack of UK-specific studies

Despite the long history of Outward Bound in the UK Hattie et al. (1997, p. 62) highlighted the fact that too few evaluative studies of UK Outward Bound programmes existed to include in their meta-analysis. In a wide-ranging meta-study of outdoor education research Barrett and Greenaway (1995) also noted the paucity of UK research and stated that what did exist was often "isolated … inconclusive … over-ambitious … uncritical … not of a high standard" (p. 53). In a more recent review of literature pertaining to outdoor education but which focused primarily on field studies Rickinson et al. (2004, p. 56) highlight again the lack of UK-based research. Whilst findings from international studies will certainly have elements that will be applicable to the UK context it is nevertheless important to carry out research in the UK. Given that many authors have argued that the nature of outdoor education experiences is highly subjective and context specific (Brookes, 2003a, 2003b; Higgins et al., 2006; Purdie & Neill, 1999), carrying out research in the exact context that one wishes to increase understanding of seems imperative. Takano (2004) researched outdoor environmental education and noted significant differences between North American and UK programmes leading to the conclusion that it was inadvisable to overlay a model of practice from one culture and location onto another.

5.1.3 Appropriate methodologies

In addition to improving the quantity and calibre of research, a number of authors have identified a need for qualitative methodologies in outdoor education research to complement an historical bias towards positivistic quantitative methodologies. Cason and Gillis (1994) highlight the difficulties of using quantitative methods given the "host of unknown variables that may be influencing both positive and negative effects of adventure programming" (p. 46). The fluid, changing nature of the outdoor environment combined with an often intense interpersonal experience results in a highly subjective experience which poses significant difficulties to quantitative approaches using random samples and controlled variables in an attempt to assure generalisability. Chenery (1987) states that the existence of multiple realities in outdoor experiences necessitates qualitative approaches that address the area of

12

inquiry holistically and which provide rich and comprehensive descriptions of the subjectivity of individuals' experiences. The aim should be to develop an accumulation of understanding using numerous studies across a variety of settings to develop recognition of patterns of experience as opposed to attempting to discover and explain causal relationships.

In their review of research into adventure activities with young people Barrett and Greenaway (1995, p. 53) reiterate the highly subjective nature of adventure experiences in the outdoors and the lack of appropriate research designs that take this subjectivity into account. This comment highlights not only the practical issue of appropriate methodology but also a philosophical issue related to whether researchers are willing to accept the possibility of a range of outcomes. Barrett and Greenaway (1995) note the need to develop the body of literature that focuses on participants' perspectives in order to provide valuable understanding of both the process and outcomes of their experiences.

> There is a desperate need for new research which focuses on young people themselves. Young people's accounts of their outdoor adventure experiences and their views about what most influenced their learning and development are almost entirely absent from the literature assessed in this review. (p. 54)

Whilst Barrett and Greenaway's (1995) study is somewhat dated, the situation seems to have changed little with a number of authors continuing to press for qualitative approaches that investigate the experience of outdoor education programmes from participants' perspectives (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; Rea, 2008; Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 56; Warren & Loeffler, 2000; Zink, 2005).

5.1.4 Balancing input, process, and outcomes

Allison and Pomeroy (2000) advocate the need to bring more attention to what goes into (input) and what happens during (process) outdoor education programmes in order to balance a tendency within outdoor education research to use quantitative methods to focus on the question, "Does it work?" (outcomes). Logically, without being clear on input and process the more pertinent question becomes, "Did *what* work?" McKenzie (2000) notes that,

The available literature indicates that the current understanding of how adventure education program outcomes are achieved is based largely on theory, rather than empirical research. As a result, practice is grounded in assumptions and, perhaps, in an incomplete understanding of why programs are effective. It may be that some of the current theories are inaccurate, or that there are program characteristics that are influencing program effectiveness that have yet to be considered. (p. 25)

The need for studies that include emphasis on the formative and not just on the summative is echoed by Higgins et al. (2006, p. 64) who point out that an inherent assumption of outcome-focused research is that improving and refining the research tool will lead to more accurate analyses of outcomes and an improved ability to make predictions. It could be argued that focusing on more accurately measuring what has already been done with the intention of making those programmes more effective is not a great step further forward than McDonald's (1997) and Noble's (1995) argument that there is no need to research outdoor education. Both are predicated on a fundamental assumption of the positive potential of outdoor education programmes. In this light the role of research is to refine understanding and improve the effects of an accepted and established process. Allison (2006) suggests that, "Much of the work [in outdoor education research] is concerned with proving the value of a particular approach or of conducting research that confirms deeply held beliefs about how things ought to be" (p. 6). The strong implication is that research in the field of outdoor education has a tendency towards confident self-justification. Zink (2005) concurs and in setting the field a challenge suggests that a corollary of critically examining what outdoor education is will be a fuller understanding of the variety of participants' experiences:

A challenge for research in outdoor education is to explore what is, or rather the practices of outdoor education, rather than what should or ought to happen …. Exploring what outdoor education is brings the student, in the multiple and contradictory ways that the student in outdoor education is constituted, more sharply into focus. (p. 19)

Higgins, et al. (2006, p. 64) also comment that one result of the narrow focus on outcomes in outdoor education research is that empirical work has not been located within bodies of theory. This is a point previously taken up by Nicol (2001). Taking this comment in combination with that of McKenzie (2000, p. 25) above it seems

that the practice of outdoor education is driven largely by assumptions and 'received wisdom' rather than empirical research and what little empirical research exists has suffered from a failure to relate it to bodies of theory which would help to interpret its meaning. In this vein, Brookes (2003a, 2003b) deconstructs what he considers to be the enduring myth of the potential of one-off outdoor education experiences to develop personality traits such as trustworthiness, assertiveness, or maturity and proposes that human behaviour is far more dependent upon situation and context than governed by traits of character. Brookes (2003b, p. 130) suggests that a major cause of the longevity of this misapprehension is the fact that outdoor education theory has tended to overly rely on certain aspects of psychology rather than other areas such as the humanities and social sciences.

Beames (2005, p. 15) points out that Walsh and Golins' (1976) reference to the term 'primary group' appears to acknowledge the influence of symbolic interactionism in their analysis of the Outward Bound process but that no explicit reference is made to the theory. The influence of Walsh and Golins' work of 1976 – which refers to learning as primarily an individual, psychological process denuded of the influence of socio-cultural interpretations of the world – continues to resonate in outdoor education literature (Luckner & Nadler, 1997; Nadler & Luckner, 1992; Priest & Gass, 2005, pp. 148-156; Sibthorp, 2003; Taniguchi, Freeman, & Richards, 2005). However, Beames (2005, p. 14) states that symbolic interactionist theory has developed in recent years to emphasise more strongly the interdependent nature of self and society where each shapes the other in a mutually influencing relationship. Nevertheless, a model presented by Walsh and Golins (1976) to "the inquiring practitioner" (p. ii) more than 30 years ago continues to be presented unproblematically. Similarly, Seaman (2007) critiques the generally unquestioning acceptance of constructivist learning theory in the field of outdoor education. Seaman argues that this fails to take into account the social and cultural aspects of learning – an issue to which other authors have also referred (McDermott, as cited in Erickson & Schultz, 1977, p. 6; Miettinen, 2000; Quay, 2003). Seaman (2007) continues further that a tendency to perceive the connection between direct experience and learning as a "narrowly psychological" (p. 5) process renders the

activity and context of learning distinct from that which is learned – they become mere vehicles for the process with little or no influence on the outcome. Examples such as these give credence to Brookes' (2003b) criticism that outdoor education theory has developed, or perhaps has failed to develop, in isolation from advances in understanding in complementary fields.

There are notable exceptions to Brookes' (2003b) criticism that outdoor education has failed to look beyond the limits of its own field in order to inform practice and deepen understanding. Zink and Burrows' (2008) Foucauldian analysis of the indoor/outdoor binary warns against universal perceptions of the outdoor environment as context-free, as doing so denies the range of experiences that individuals bring to the outdoors and the subsequent variety of meanings that are then attached to those experiences. Case studies of the UK sail training movement by McCulloch (2002) illuminate the hidden ideologies that lie behind seemingly value-neutral traditions and practices that are characteristic of different spheres of the sail training community. McCulloch (2004) argues that the contrasting sail training practices inherent in each tradition result in participants experiencing significantly different expressions of power, authority, and control. This inevitably influences the nature and outcomes of the learning experience. Humberstone's (1987) ethnographic case study of an outdoor education centre addresses questions surrounding the means by which inequalities between the sexes are transmitted and reinforced in co-educational settings. In a subsequent paper based on the case study research Humberstone (1990) argues that in mixed sex classrooms and physical education lessons the "overwhelming evidence of feminist research data … shows that girls are marginalised by boys' behaviour and frequently denigrated by the boys themselves" (p. 208). In contrast, however, Humberstone (1990, p. 208) states that interactions between boys and girls at the case study outdoor education centre – Shotmoor –were mostly very positive, co-operative, and mutually encouraging and considered by both sexes to be an important element of the experience. Humberstone (1990, p. 212) emphasises that the research at Shotmoor is not evidence that outdoor education should be taken as a universal panacea for addressing inequalities of educational experience. It is highlighted that the particular ethos of Shotmoor, communicated at

an ideological and practical level, created a situation which facilitated collaborative relationships between boys and girls and allowed for prejudices and stereotypes regarding gender roles and behaviours to be challenged.

Further examples of research in outdoor education informed by theory from outside the field include work on gender (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Cook, 2001; Little, 2002), anthropology (Beames, 2004b; Bell, 2003), philosophy (Allison, 2002; McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006), and deep ecology (Nicol, 2001). This present research study draws on Bourdieu's (1977, 1990b) theory of social practice in order to consider the inputs and processes as well as the outcomes of outdoor education programmes. In doing so, this study contributes to the growing body of outdoor education research that refers to theory from complementary fields in order to develop understanding of the theory and practice of outdoor education.

6 Thesis structure and contribution to outdoor education research

It is clear that the field of outdoor education has made much progress in developing discourse and research over the last twenty years (Putnam, 2004, p. x). Zink and Burrows (2006) assert that researchers are more frequently asking questions of, "'What outdoor education does?'" and 'How outdoor educators know what they know?'" (p. 39) and that this is indicative of a move towards a greater level of critical thinking in the field of outdoor education. However, without continuing endeavours to challenge the assumption that it is unnecessary to research outdoor education, to examine process as carefully as outcomes, and to seek new ways or reconsider accepted ways of conceptualising outdoor education, those who work in the field risk basing their understanding of the process and outcomes on their own experiences and perceptions whilst remaining ignorant of a whole range of dimensions of participants' experiences. This study contributes towards those endeavours. The starting point for this research study was an interest in the experiences of participants at Ardentinny and what effect, if any, those experiences had on their lives after the event. As I was developing the research design for the inquiry it became clear that although I wanted to prioritise the voices of the

participants I was uncomfortable with taking a purely phenomenological approach to the participants' experiences. The words of John Muir (1911) resonated with me: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe" (p. 110). The experiences of the participants were part of a bigger whole that I felt also needed to be represented in order to best understand the participants' perspectives. This inquiry therefore evolved to become something akin to telling the story of Ardentinny in which various characters were represented and contributed to the overall narrative but the main protagonists remained the participants.

The thesis is structured to allow the narrative of Ardentinny and its participants to flow as naturally as possible. Part 1 comprises two chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the nature and subject of this inquiry and establishes its place within the body of outdoor education research. The reflexive position of the researcher is also established. Chapter 2 details the methodological basis for this study. This study employs a qualitative approach that draws on elements of phenomenological, case study, descriptive, and historical research traditions bound together by a hermeneutic analysis of the data. This provides a methodologically sound investigation of participants' experiences at Ardentinny and the nature of any impact on participants' lives subsequently. Establishing the methodological justification at this early stage allows the narrative to continue uninterrupted from this point.

Part 2 of the thesis also comprises two chapters. Chapter 3 describes the historical and educational context preceding and surrounding the establishment of Ardentinny as a residential outdoor education facility by the local authority of the County of Renfrew. The varied roots of and influences on the development of outdoor education in the UK, culminating in wide-scale provision by education authorities across the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, are discussed. Chapter 4 narrows the focus to the specifics of Ardentinny. Using a combination of archival literature and interview data a rich description of the particular context surrounding the justification for the establishment of Ardentinny and the development of its operational philosophy and

procedures is provided. The perspectives of various stakeholders – local authority education officers, Ardentinny staff, head teachers, and teachers – in the operation of Ardentinny contribute to this description. The data generated from these stakeholders' perspectives contribute primarily to a contextual understanding of the main focus of this research – the experience of the people who were pupils at Ardentinny. These additional stakeholders are not the main analytical focus of this research and for that reason are not analysed in the light of Bourdieu's (1977, 1990b) theory of social practice. Analysis and discussion of the pupils' experiences, with reference to Bourdieu, follows in Parts 3 and 4. The historical, archival, and interview data of Part 2 serve to develop an accumulation of perspectives – a process that continues in Parts 3 and 4 – that Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 7) liken to the cinematic technique of *montage*. Each individual element provides a legitimate perspective in its own right and also contributes towards a collective, meaningful whole. Thus, Part 2 of the thesis provides a rich description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 16; Hodder, 2003, p. 168) of the context in which the experiences of the pupil participants took place. This contributes towards a nuanced and subtle interpretation of the pupil participants' accounts that follow.

Part 3 focuses on the meanings and values that participants attribute to their experience at Ardentinny and introduces Bourdieu's (1977, 1990b) theory of social practice which is used as a framework to relate participants' expressed perspectives to the wider context of educational experiences. Chapter 5, therefore, provides a justification of the relevance of Bourdieu's theory of social practice to this present research inquiry with particular reference to the concepts of *field* and *habitus*. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss the main themes that developed from participants' questionnaires and interviews. These themes are grouped into two categories: personal meanings and values (Chapter 6) and interpersonal meanings and values (Chapter 7). Participants' accounts are related to relevant literature in the fields of education and outdoor education. The interpretation of the meanings and values expressed by the Ardentinny participants in the light of Bourdieu's theory of social practice is discussed primarily in Chapter 8. Chapters 6-8 are structured in this way to provide a balance between prioritising participants' voices and relating their

expressed perspectives to sociological theory and understandings of outdoor education. The decision not to embed the sociological theory and interpretation into Chapters 6 and 7 gives greater voice to the participants and is an expression of their central importance in this research. This structure reflects the sentiment of Cohen et al. (2000), referred to earlier in Section 3, that the voice of the researcher should not suffocate the possibility "for events and situations to be allowed to speak for themselves" (p. 182). Relating Bourdieu's theory of social practice to participants' expressed personal and interpersonal meanings and values in a single, combined chapter is also an acknowledgement of the holistic nature of participants' experiences at Ardentinny. The personal and interpersonal aspects of their experiences are therefore discussed as a coherent whole rather than individual and separate entities.

In the fourth and final part of the thesis Chapter 9 considers the range of influences in later life that participants attribute to their experience at Ardentinny. Chapter 10 brings the various strands of the thesis together and discusses its implications.

The review of outdoor education research in the previous sections suggests that there is a need for research that is methodologically robust and employs qualitative approaches that investigate the input and process of outdoor education programmes as well as the outcomes. It is also argued that research which focuses on participants' perspectives of their experiences is required and that empirical work should be located within wider bodies of theory in order to inform methodology and analysis. A number of authors have highlighted the need for more UK-based research, particularly that which addresses the issue of long-term impacts (Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 56). This research inquiry contributes to each of these areas in its investigation of the perspectives of participants who took part in a programme that occurred up to 35 years ago. The findings of this research are of educational significance as they relate to continued provision of outdoor education experiences for many UK schoolchildren today. Developing understanding of outdoor education experiences is necessary in order to assess the role and value of these experiences in the education system. The significant contextual detail from archival and interview

data in conjunction with the perspectives of the participants provides a balanced approach to the issue of input, process, and outcomes highlighted in Section 5.1.4. The design, execution, and presentation of this outdoor education research inquiry reflect the call by Barrett & Greenaway (1995) that "humanistic and qualitative approaches … offer a more promising way forward" (p. 53).

7 Researcher reflexivity

> Reflexivity recognises that researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching…. They bring their own biographies to the research situation…. Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research; they should hold themselves up to the light. (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 141)

Reflexivity is an important element in the process of providing a trustworthy account (trustworthiness is considered in more detail in Chapter 2). Researcher reflexivity is an explicit acknowledgement that the background, personal qualities and preferences of the researcher are unavoidably entwined and reflected in the research. The individual nature of the researcher brings a unique perspective and influence to the research from its inception to its conclusion. Brewer (2000) states that, "reflexivity shows the partial nature of our representations of reality and the multiplicity of competing versions of reality" (p. 129). Reflexivity is not an apology for imperfection but the honest acknowledgement that in everything the researcher does there will be a fingerprint – an imprint of values and perspectives from his or her world.

In Chapter 2 I clarify my methodological standpoint, outlining my ontological and epistemological positions and the ways that these influenced the direction of the research and the methods used to carry it out. In this section of the Introduction I wish to present a more personal account. As stated above, the practice of reflexivity contributes to the trustworthiness of the research. This is important for the reader but also for the researcher him or herself. Reflexivity is a process of awareness raising, of bringing one's own point of view in front of one's own eyes as well as those of the reader. It is a process that should infuse the research project from the very beginning, not an act of retrospection to tidy up the edges. With regard to the importance of

reflexivity in the interpretation of interview data Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 713) argue that it is naïve to suggest that the data speak for themselves and that the researcher is simply a neutral, invisible, and unbiased tool. Kvale (1983) argues that an integral principle of the hermeneutic approach is that "the interpretation of a text is not presuppositionless. The interpreter cannot 'jump outside' the tradition of understanding he lives in" (p. 187). These two examples refer to just one aspect of the research process. However, the action of reflexivity should be applied to all aspects from the first thoughts that inspire the initial, tentative questions to the concluding remarks.

My first outdoor education experience occurred at the age of 14 and was probably very similar to that experienced by the participants at Ardentinny. My local education authority owned an outdoor education centre in the Lake District and in the fourth year of secondary school there was the opportunity for thirty pupils out of a year group of approximately two hundred to have a 10-day visit to the outdoor education centre. My name went into the hat and I was fortunate enough to be chosen. I enjoyed very much the exciting nature and physical challenge of the activities, the environment of hills and lakes, and the less formal nature of relationships with the centre staff. I had been away from home on several occasions before so the social experience of being separated from family and home was not new. The following year there was a second opportunity to attend for a week-long course and again I was fortunate enough to be chosen. Again, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

I find it impossible to say what effect, if any, the two experiences had on me on returning to my home environment. I made some new friends that I kept in touch with for a while but I did not pursue any outdoor activities. Indeed, I do not even remember it crossing my mind that that would have been a possibility. However, a few years later I became involved with a youth group, primarily because I had heard that the group did a lot of outdoor activities. Shortly after joining the group the leader offered myself and another young person the opportunity to take part in a pilot programme for a trainee outdoor instructor's course. I jumped at the chance of taking

part in more outdoor activities. From that point, aged 17 and desperate for my own experiences in the outdoors, I became involved in instructing outdoor activities. Over time I became more interested in education through the outdoors as opposed to activity instruction and now, 19 years later, I am conducting research into the meanings and values that people attach to their outdoor experiences. During this period I have worked with all age groups from a variety of backgrounds in both residential and non-residential outdoor programmes.

I did not consciously choose to research a subject area that reflects my own experience as a young person so closely and this research is not, as far as I can reflexively make myself aware, a vicarious quest into my own experience. Experiences at local authority outdoor education centres are a very common form of outdoor education and so it is perhaps not surprising that my own experience resonates with that of the participants in this research inquiry. However, the more important point, whatever the nature of my previous experience, is what assumptions I bring to this research and how these influence the way I approach, conduct, analyse, and interpret this research. In terms of my experience as a school pupil at an outdoor centre my impression is that it was an experience that I thoroughly enjoyed and valued upon return to my home environment but that it did not influence my life in any significant way until I discovered the youth group a number of years later. It is impossible to say with any degree of certainty the extent to which my two outdoor education experiences at school influenced me to join the youth group. Again, my impression is that I would have been attracted to join the group anyway by the prospect of taking part in outdoor activities – that was the reason I was so keen to go to the outdoor centre at school. However, I do think that my previous experiences made me a little more sure that I wanted to join the group and that I would be capable within the group as a result of having done some outdoor activities already. Joining that group led to the start of a career in outdoor education that I had not previously imagined as a possibility.

Cohen et al. (2000, p. 3) state that how we come to understand the world is influenced by how we view the world. My experience as a participant and facilitator

of residential outdoor education experiences is that they are something that most young people derive significant satisfaction from. However, given that provision is not universal and therefore most school pupils have volunteered to take part, I am also aware that this is not surprising. Prior to beginning this present research inquiry my instinctive feeling was that the practical influence on life and leisure choices after an outdoor education experience are minimal and where influence is claimed it is only a contributory factor amongst many others. I view my own experience of a continued connection to working and recreating in the outdoors to be the result of a chance encounter that is very unrepresentative of most people's experience. Had it not been for a youth group with a leader who had an interest in marginally popular pastimes I would probably never have canoed or kayaked again. From a social perspective I would consider that my two teenage experiences at an outdoor education centre were contributory factors in developing a sense of social and personal independence but I do not feel that they were especially significant. In contrast, from an educational perspective I am aware that I was influenced by the experience of a different relationship with the teaching staff at the outdoor centre. This was characterised by being more relaxed yet still respectful and effective as a working relationship. This was something that I tried to model in my own practice and hope that it has been equally beneficial for others as it was for myself.

Throughout the process of carrying out this research I have endeavoured to acknowledge my own expectations and prejudices and be aware of the ways that they may have affected the research. In this section I have provided a brief biography of my experiences in outdoor education in order that the reader may also take these influences into account when considering this study.

Chapter 2: Methodology

1 Introduction

The etymology of the word 'methodology' is from the Greek *hodos* meaning 'way' and *logos* meaning 'study'. Thus, methodology is 'the study of the way'. In this chapter I account for the way of this research. A rigorous methodological account is crucial to the integrity of all research. Each researcher's understanding of the world and how to study it provide the philosophical foundations which connect the different elements of a research inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 33; Guba, 1990). Every researcher has a particular way of thinking, holds particular interests, and has particular goals. These characteristics influence the myriad decisions and judgements which combine to create and communicate research. No part of the process is immune from the subjective behaviour of the researcher. A question is not simply a question, it is a line of thinking that has its genesis in a certain way of being in the world and is predicated upon certain beliefs. The same principle applies once the research process has begun as research techniques are not simply value-neutral tools. As Hughes (1990) states:

> every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world.... No technique or method of investigation...is self-validating: its effectiveness, i.e. its very status as a research instrument making the world tractable to investigation, is, from a philosophical point of view, ultimately dependent on epistemological justifications. (p. 11)

Questions of ontology and epistemology form the philosophical framework within which a research project exists. Waltz (1979) argues that the philosophical framework underpins a research study and informs all subsequent steps of the research design:

> once a methodology is adopted, the choice of methods becomes merely a tactical matter. It makes no sense to start the journey that is to bring us to an understanding of a phenomenon without asking which methodological routes might possibly lead there. (p. 13)

Guba & Lincoln (1994, p. 105) assert that this philosophical framework should be established as a priority as this is the foundation upon which the research project rests. The first section of this chapter, therefore, describes the research design from the philosophical framework through to the choice of research approach, data

generation and analysis. The second section describes in detail the process of data generation, management and analysis. The final sections discuss the ethical considerations of this research and the trustworthiness and generalisability of its findings.

2 Research design

2.1 Introduction

In this section I describe the epistemological and ontological basis of this research and how this informs subsequent elements of the process. I also discuss potential limitations to the choice of research approach taken and alternative approaches that were considered.

2.2 Philosophical framework

This research embraces a constructivist epistemology. Broadly understood this means that human beings create and construct knowledge from subjective experience of the social world rather than through the ability to apprehend an objective, pre-existing reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 35; Patton, 2002, pp. 96-97; Schwandt, 2003). Individuals make sense of and develop understanding of experience of the social world through models and concepts that they themselves create. These models and concepts are continually revised and remoulded as a result of new experiences which in turn leads to new understanding and knowledge. This perspective considers that the patterns of human social life "are not firmly rooted in nature but are a product of our own making" (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p. 10). Additionally, the interpretations that human beings make of their experiences are not isolated, individual cognitive events but occur within frameworks of common social practices, shared language and agreed understandings. Historical and socio-cultural influences are inextricably woven into the process of interpreting, making meaning, and learning from experiences (Schwandt, 2003, p. 305).

A constructivist epistemological stance focuses on understanding the meanings that individuals construct regarding events and actions in the social world without

reference to an underlying reality or an attempt to discover one true account of an experience (Gibbs, 2007, p. 7). Constructivism does not deny the existence of an independent reality but holds the critical realist ontological position that, even if it does exist, there can be no certain knowledge of a world as it exists prior to experience (Von Glaserfeld, 1991, 1995). Knowledge, therefore, is a construction created by individuals and groups to represent experience of the world (DeLay, 1996). Accordingly, a constructivist epistemology legitimises the possibility that each individual's understanding of a same basic experience, along with the meanings and values that they attach to that experience, can vary. It also follows that all those involved in a research inquiry, to varying degrees, contribute to and co-create the understanding and knowledge that ensues.

2.3 Hermeneutic research approach

Allison and Pomeroy (2000, p. 17) suggest that a constructivist epistemology utilises approaches that facilitate understanding, or *verstehen*, of experiences. Within the field of outdoor education several authors have stated a need for research into understanding the experiences of participants (Allison and Pomeroy, 2000; Barrett & Greenaway, 1995; Humberstone, 1997). These authors point to an historical bias towards positivist designs in outdoor education research and an overemphasis on researcher-perceived outdoor education programme outcomes. This has resulted in the legitimacy of the subjective nature of outdoor education participants' experiences being ignored and denied. Warren and Loeffler (2000) and Humberstone (1997) identify the historic reliance on positivistic frameworks in outdoor education research as a problem that has hindered progress in understanding the field of outdoor education.

The above considerations led me to choose a hermeneutic approach. The origin of hermeneutics lies in the exegesis of religious texts and scriptures. However, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries hermeneutics developed through the work of, amongst others, Weber, Dilthey, and Rickert (Schwandt, 2003, p. 295) to include the interpretation of literary texts, texts of ordinary discourse, and even human action (Gadamer, 1975; May, 2001; Ricoeur, 1971, 1981; Tesch, 1990, p. 37). This

development evolved from dissatisfaction with positivist-inspired techniques of the natural sciences for understanding people and society that were dominant at the time. Hermeneutics provided an alternative approach using systematised literary interpretive skills (Olson, 1986, p. 160). Textual content is carefully analysed by moving back and forth between individual parts and the whole in repeated cycles – the *hermeneutic spiral or circle* – developing the themes of the text and eventually arriving at a coherent and rigorous interpretation.

The hermeneutic approach employs an empathetic standpoint towards research participants and a focus on deep understanding or *verstehen* (Dilthey, 1976, p. 248). Olson (1986) suggests that hermeneutics provides an appropriate approach for the human sciences because, "it faces squarely the problem of human intentionality, rationality, and subjectivity as well as the making and apprehension of meaning, as these notions are fundamental to the interpretation of any text" (p. 159). As the aim of this research is to investigate the meanings that people attach to an experience and how those meanings influence their lives hermeneutics was an appropriate choice of approach.

One of the principles of a hermeneutic approach is that the researcher should be knowledgeable about the subject under study. This is a necessary requirement in order that the researcher is sensitive to nuances in the data and the further connections to which these may lead (Kvale, 1983, p. 187). Although I was not a participant at Ardentinny, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 7, I underwent a similar experience during my secondary school education and have worked and studied in the field of outdoor education. I found it encouraging that this experience, explicitly acknowledged and appropriately applied, would be of benefit. Packer (1985) asserts that in hermeneutics the historical context is an important element in developing understanding.

> The hermeneutic approach seeks to elucidate and make explicit our practical understanding of human actions by providing an interpretation of them. It is a historically situated approach, … the giving of an account that is sensible in the way it addresses current interests and concerns, not a search for timeless and ahistorical laws and formal structures. (p. 1088)

The primary focus of this research is on the effects of pupils' experiences at Ardentinny. However, I also wished to use a research approach which would fully embrace the broader context of the historical, educational, and human background in order to inform the interpretation of their reflections on the experience and its effects on their life (Stake, 1995). This intention is congruent with a hermeneutic approach.

Finally, a hermeneutic approach also provides direction in terms of data generation and analysis. Interviews and questionnaires can be used to generate textually produced discourse for analysis whilst the hermeneutic circle provides a framework for the interpretation of the data (Howard, 1991; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998).

2.4 Reservations regarding a hermeneutic approach

One possible criticism of a hermeneutic inquiry is that it does not lend itself to producing statistically significant and generalisable results of the sort that can be "reassuring" (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000, p. 97) when attempting to understand the processes and outcomes of outdoor education programmes. Packer (1985) proposes that although hermeneutics does not conform to concepts of rigour that are traditional within the natural sciences it does not follow that hermeneutics is not appropriate within the field of social science:

> It [hermeneutics] does not provide the forms of explanation that we have been taught to consider characteristic of scientific rigor … The end product of a hermeneutic inquiry - an interpretive account - is more modest in its aims than is a formal set of rules or a causal law, but at the same time it is, I believe, subtle and complex, intellectually satisfying, and more appropriate to human action, embracing the historical openness, the ambiguity and opacity, the deceptions, dangers, and delights that action manifests. (p. 1092)

The present study is an interpretive account of the experiences of participants at Ardentinny. Through the words of pupil participants, teachers, instructors, and education advisors, and drawing on relevant literature and documentation an insightful account has been created which addresses questions surrounding the long-term impact of outdoor education experiences. The priority of this research is not to generate theory but to systematically describe and investigate (Tesch, 1990, pp. 89 - 91) in order to provide "a coherent, valid, and analytically sound 'account'"

(Halfpenny, 1979, p. 817) which leads to greater understanding of outdoor education experiences. Qualitative research of this kind, giving detailed insight into individual narratives of experience, is necessary to developing understanding in the field of outdoor education (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000, p. 97) and complementary to studies which provide results of a statistical nature.

A second possible reservation regards the historical status of hermeneutics being concerned with the interpretation of 'finished' texts whereby those who carried out the interpretive work of texts had no involvement in the creation of those texts. By contrast, in this research, in partnership with the research participants I am co-creator of the data that form the texts that I also have the dominant role in interpreting and presenting in this thesis. It could be argued that this leads to too great an influence of the researcher upon the process of inquiry (Kvale, 1983). This thorny issue of the influence of the researcher is one that has no single, satisfactory solution for all circumstances. Some person or persons will always have a more dominant role than others. In response a researcher should engage in rigorous, open, honest, and reflexive practice to allow the work to be scrutinised. The reader can then judge on the appropriateness or otherwise of the roles of researcher and research participants. This chapter provides that account.

Following on from this point one might also argue that the hermeneutic approach was originally applied to texts which were created to communicate beyond the authors' specific context of time and place. In contrast, interview and questionnaire texts are context-specific interactions and applicability to wider interpretation is limited by the fact that they are unique interactions between two individuals. However, to view all literary texts as created with an intention to speak beyond the specific seems to be a rather sweeping generalisation. It is often impossible to specify without reservation what the intentions of an author may or may not have been and this uncertainty is further complicated in texts of reported speech such as religious scriptures where access to the intention of the speaker is one or more steps further removed. To view questionnaire and interview texts as strictly limited to a specific moment and place in time is to deny the actors in the process the ability to

understand and speak to the wider context of the interaction they have agreed to engage in.

On a related point, whereas literary texts are generally well-refined expressions of meaning, interview and questionnaire texts can often be "vague, repetitious, with many digressions, in general containing much 'noise'" (Kvale, 1983, p. 188) which inhibit the process of analysis and understanding of deeper meanings. However, whilst it is undoubtedly the case that everyday human speech is not crafted in the same careful, premeditated manner as an eminent text, important understandings can be found in everyday speech and, indeed, the unrefined idiosyncrasies of spoken language offer potential knowledge creation that literary texts do not offer.

Finally, as with all research which uses qualitative interview and questionnaire data, there can be a temptation to selectively focus on the data that reflect stability, clarity, and lucidity in research participants' discourse rather than allowing for "the messiness of what it is to be a human being to be exposed and examined" (Zink & Burrows, 2006, pp. 45-46). Human experience and interaction are not simple areas of inquiry. They are complex arenas involving apparent and real contradictions and confusions. This is the nature of human interaction. Where they occurred in this research I considered the intricacies of the contributions of the research participants as an opportunity for understanding rather than an impediment to clarity which needed to be excised.

2.5 Consideration of alternative approaches

Before settling on a hermeneutic approach I considered several other options. In a similar smaller-scale study I used a phenomenological approach (Telford, 2005). Although appropriate in the sense that the focus of phenomenology is on personal experience (Van Manen, 1990), on further reflection I became uncomfortable with some of the assumptions surrounding the phenomenological approach. The assumption that experience has an essence (Colaizzi, 1978; Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989), the requirement for the researcher to "bracket" (Kvale, 1983, p. 184) prior conceptions and foreknowledge, and the greater emphasis on the

"experienced intention of the actor" (Aanstoos, 1987, p. 15) at the expense of a broader insight embracing the interpretations of both research participants and researcher, led me to search for a different approach.

Grounded theory was also an approach that I considered. Its emphasis on giving a voice to research participants and working in an inductive fashion from the data seemed appropriate but, despite Charmaz (2003) arguing that grounded theory can embrace a constructivist epistemology, the positivist undertones of grounded theory (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and its assumptions regarding building theory seemed incongruent with the aims and constructivist epistemology of this study (Chenery, 1987, p. 16).

Symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), with its focus on the interpretation of the meanings of actions and objects through the process of social interaction, was also considered as a theoretical framework. However, in order to understand social meanings and processes symbolic interactionism requires that the researcher enter into the research participants' actions and society, and observe at first hand. Usually associated with methods of participative observation, this immediately proved to be an unsuitable approach as the primary experience at Ardentinny occurred in the past and attempting to observe any subsequent lived-out meanings in participants' everyday lives would be fraught with difficulty.

2.6 Summary

In this section I have shown that a hermeneutic approach, focusing on understanding or *verstehen* is appropriate to the aims of this research. A hermeneutic approach is congruent with a constructivist epistemological position and informs methods of data generation and analysis. The use of a hermeneutic approach responds to the need for outdoor education research to give greater voice to participants in outdoor education programmes and provides an interpretive account that is appropriate to an inquiry into the subtlety and complexity of human experience.

3 Data generation, management and analysis

3.1 Introduction

The management and analysis of data is a holistic process that should not be confined to a discrete period marked on the research schedule. Stake (1995) warns against seeing analysis as "separate from everlasting efforts to make sense of things" (p. 72). Gibbs (2007) argues that "not only is concurrent data analysis and data collection possible, but it can actually be good practice too. You should use the analysis of your early data as a way of raising new research issues and questions" (p. 3). From this perspective, meaning and understanding develop as the researcher engages analytically with the data in the very earliest stages as opposed to waiting until a distinct stage of data generation is 'complete'. Thus, data generation and analysis take place concurrently as part of an ongoing process. Additionally, considering analysis as an iterative, emerging procedure concurrent with data generation allows for the possibility of early data to point to new issues worth investigating (Ezzy, 2002) and to contribute to the fine tuning of already established questions (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This provides a valuable contribution to the rigour of research methods and also ensures the ongoing contribution of research participants throughout a research inquiry. This was congruent with my intention to emphasise the voice of the research participants and also with the hermeneutic approach of this present research.

In the following sections I describe the methods and techniques employed in generating, managing and analysing the data. The process is rigorously detailed for three main reasons. Firstly, presentation of the consideration and application of the research techniques contributes to the trustworthiness of this research. Secondly, transparency allows the reader to make naturalistic generalisations from the data. Trustworthiness and generalisability are discussed in subsequent sections. Finally, detailing the path I have chosen may provide useful information for other researchers who may wish to use or adapt my methods.

3.2 Data generation

3.2.1 Restatement of research aim

This research investigates pupils' experiences at Ardentinny and the impact, if any, of those experiences on their life subsequently. The data generated provides understanding that encompasses both breadth and depth resulting in a coherent picture of the influence of the Ardentinny experience that is also faithful to the nuances of individual contributions. Several different groups of people have contributed to the generation of data from the pupils to Ardentinny staff to education advisers. A useful analogy for this approach to generating data is one of each participant in the research painting a picture of the Ardentinny experience. Collecting all the pictures together then allows consideration of each account in isolation but also collectively by overlaying the pictures on top of each other. The end result is a trustworthy interpretation of an experience that provides individual and collective representations for analysis. Denzin & Lincoln (2003) liken this approach to the cinematic technique of montage.

> Montage invites viewers to construct interpretations that build on one another as the scene unfolds. These interpretations are built on associations based on the contrasting images that blend into one another.… The viewer puts the sequences together into a meaningful emotional whole, as if in a glance, all at once. (p. 7)

3.2.2. Research participants

To achieve the inquiry aim stated above I brought together several different groups of people who were involved in the pupils' experience at Ardentinny. Firstly, there are, of course, those who attended Ardentinny as pupils. The visit to Ardentinny occurred most commonly during the third year of secondary schooling although occasionally pupils attended in the second or fourth year of schooling. The experiences of these people are the main focus of the research. Finding people who had attended Ardentinny as school pupils was a difficult and time-consuming task. Various methods were used to attract interest including printed newspaper articles (Appendix A), online newspaper articles, postings on a community website discussion board, advertisements to parents in school newsletters (Appendix B), advertising in local amenities, and Friends Reunited (Appendix C). These letters and advertisements provided information about the research, my contact details, and the

address of a website I created (Telford, 2007). The website was designed to act as a gateway for participants to anonymously access additional information about the research and, hopefully, decide to engage in the research project. Ultimately, data from past pupils at Ardentinny was generated through 110 questionnaires and 14 interviews.

Other participant groups in the research include persons who worked as instructional staff ($n = 10$) at Ardentinny, management staff at Ardentinny ($n = 3$), head teachers from schools that sent their pupils to the Centre ($n = 6$), school teachers who accompanied pupils to the Centre ($n = 7$), and local authority education staff who were involved in the creation and strategic management of the Centre ($n = 6$). Through the principal of Ardentinny I was able to make contact with the head teachers, local authority education advisors, and Ardentinny instructional staff. Names and contact details of the school teachers were gained as discussions progressed with the above groups of research participants. Prior to becoming head teachers two of the interviewees had been heavily involved in the early days of Ardentinny as education advisers. The two different aspects of their experience – as head teacher and as education adviser – are included in the relevant sections of Chapter 4. Similarly, one member of the Ardentinny staff worked as a member of the instructional team and then later in a management position. Therefore, data from that person's interview is included in two different sections of Chapter 4. The information generated from the involvement of the instructional staff, management staff, head teachers, teachers, and local authority education staff came solely from face-to-face and telephone interviews. These interviews provide rich contextual data that contribute to understanding the pupils' experience and its impact.

3.2.3. Questionnaires and interviews

Any Ardentinny pupil participant who responded through the advertisements or through the website was invited to complete a questionnaire (Appendix D). This semi-structured questionnaire performed two functions. Firstly, it provided an opportunity to generate qualitative data from a large number of Ardentinny participants which gave a broad overview of their experiences at Ardentinny and

secondly, it offered respondents the opportunity to volunteer for a more in-depth follow-up interview (Burton, 2000, p. 22). The questionnaire was available as a text document *via* email, as an online service accessible through a link on the research website (Telford, 2007), and in hard copy paper formats. From 110 usable questionnaire responses 66 people were willing to be interviewed. Fourteen interviews were eventually carried out. Ten interviews were of participants who had completed the questionnaire. The remaining four interviewees did not wish to complete a questionnaire but were willing to be interviewed. Due to participants' availability and the time-frame of the research 14 interviews was the maximum possible. A number of authors point to the value of follow-up interviews in order to provide greater detail than questionnaires are able to provide (Chawla, 1998a, p. 370; Fielding & Fielding, 1986, p. 84). The preliminary questionnaire was piloted with a small group of similar age and experience to the target population. Minor amendments were made to the wording of some questions as a result. This also provided an accurate estimate of the time required to complete the questionnaire which was useful information to provide to potential research participants (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 48; Verma & Mallick, 1999, p. 120).

The decision to use qualitative questionnaires and interviews was based on several factors. A hermeneutic approach is congruent with an expressivist-constructivist theory of language whereby language is used in various different ways to express and come to realisations about being in the world. Language is, "what allows us to have the world we have. Language makes possible the disclosure of the human world" (Taylor, 1995, p. ix). The hermeneutic perspective trusts in the medium of language to lead to meaning (Gallagher, 1992; Smith, 1997) and Blumer (1969) suggests that interviews are particularly effective in collecting empirical data on how the meanings people develop from interpretations of social situations influence and inform subsequent actions. In addition, the fact that the experience at Ardentinny had occurred up to 35 years ago meant that I considered that the social element of an interview situation would be most conducive to reviving memories of the experience and its impact (Drever, 1995, p. 15). In the event, rich and detailed data was

generated through many of the participants' questionnaire responses. This was often of a similar, or higher, quality to that generated in follow-up interviews.

Furthermore, the personal circumstances of some research participants and on occasion the travel distance required meant that a face-to-face interview was less feasible than I had originally envisaged. Therefore, telephone interviews and email conversations were also employed. For one participant in particular the questionnaire was not a convenient medium. However, a very fruitful email conversation developed which provided significant insights into this participant's experience at Ardentinny. This participant had had two significantly negative experiences at Ardentinny and without a flexible approach towards methods of data generation this valuable contribution to the research would have been lost. Esterberg (2002, p. 125) suggests email conversations are a useful tool for participatory research due to the facility they provide for research participants to engage in an ongoing shaping of their responses over a greater period of time than a one-time interview. Thus, from a total of fourteen interviews, two were carried out as an email conversation, eight were conducted over the telephone, and four took place in a face-to-face situation.

Throughout the research project there were occasions when original design plans had to be modified to suit the reality of the circumstances. In the fluid situation of the social world this is often unavoidable and requires that the researcher be adaptable to whatever situation arises. In this regard, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 3, the qualitative researcher is a *bricoleur* (Becker, 1998, p. 2; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 6) pulling together whatever range of techniques are required and creating new tools if need be.

3.2.4 Interview approach
Patterson et al. (1998, p. 428) posit that hermeneutic interviews strike a balance between two extremes. At one end of the spectrum there are standardised questions which are presented to each interviewee in the same order with no probing or prompting. At the other end of the spectrum is an unstructured discussion spontaneously flowing from a single pre-planned question. It was clear to me that for

both practical and methodological reasons the most effective approach to interviewing would be a conversation which worked around themes, rather than posing a fixed set of questions from a scripted interview protocol (Kvale, 1996; Stake, 1995). I led the discussion towards certain themes and issues but did not direct the interviewee towards specific meanings or interpretations (Kvale, 1983). I used a semi-structured and primarily exploratory interview format (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 65) as an *aide-memoire* whilst always remaining aware that the exact words used were less important than communicating the meanings of the questions (Stake, 1995, p. 66). Conversations often flowed naturally to cover areas of interest and importance thereby negating the necessity to ask the specific questions in the interview schedule. This semi-structured approach allowed for the interviews to progress as an "active emergent process" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 706) that encouraged open and spontaneous discussion whilst also providing the structure that practical considerations of time, during the interview itself and later during analysis, required. As mentioned in Section 3.1 above, thoughts and questions were refined as a result of individual interactions and informed subsequent interviews. A different interview schedule was tailored to each interview group. Appendix E shows the interview schedule used with the research participants who went to Ardentinny as pupils.

Interviews with individuals from groups other than the pupil participants either continued until all potential interviewees had been interviewed (e.g. Ardentinny management) or until theoretical saturation. Johnson & Christensen (2004, p. 500) describe this as the point at which no new understanding is being reached and thus there is no further need for data. This was easily recognised as the point at which no new and significant points were raised in subsequent interviews.

3.3 Data management and analysis

3.3.1. A qualitative research perspective

There are many different, subtly nuanced ways of analysing qualitative data. Standardisation is strongly resisted in the qualitative research field on the basis that it allows researchers to shape and mould their methods in ways that are relevant and appropriate to their particular study. Kvale (2007) comments that:

> No standard method exists, no *via regia*, to arrive at essential meanings and deeper implications of what is said in an interview. Such a search for techniques of analysis may be a quest for a shortcut in the form of a 'technological fix' of the researcher's task of analyzing and constructing meaning. (p. 103)

Tesch (1990, pp. 142-145) concurs and describes techniques of qualitative analysis as organising systems that facilitate the development of understanding about the phenomenon under investigation. Whether assistance is drawn from computer software programmes or paper-based index cards, data management and analysis procedures are simply tools that facilitate the intrinsically and unavoidably human act of interpretation (Coffey, Holbrook & Atkinson, 1996).

This present study generated qualitative data from 110 questionnaires, 41 spoken interviews, and two email interviews. Due to the holistic nature of managing and analysing such large amounts of data these two processes are discussed together under the same sub-section heading.

3.3.2 Interview transcription

Interviews were recorded, downloaded onto a computer, and then transcribed using the software programme *Transana* (Woods & Fassnacht, 2007a). The decision to use a software programme was based on three factors, two of which are related to the large volume of interview data generated. Firstly, it was very useful to have a computer system to assist with storing, organising, and filing the interviews. Secondly, *Transana* made selective transcription a feasible proposition due to the facility of digital recordings to immediately pinpoint selected excerpts. In this way selective transcribing can save time and minimise any loss of the contextual information that surrounds transcribed sections. Any ambiguities of context that might arise when reading through finished interview transcripts can easily be remedied by returning to the original audio recording to benefit from the conversation surrounding the excerpt selected for transcription. In practice, I was very conservative in the amount of interview conversation that I did not transcribe which meant that this particular facility was not greatly beneficial. However, the facility to click on a particular point in the transcription and immediately locate and listen to the corresponding point in the audio recording allowed me to listen to the

original audio recording and read the transcript at the same time. Thus, I was able to benefit from the additional verbal cues and information that is present in the spoken word but difficult and time consuming to represent in textual format. In addition, the process of repeatedly listening to the interview recordings and reading the corresponding transcripts to come to an understanding of the data contributed towards the accuracy of the transcriptions. Thirdly, the qualitative data from the questionnaires was added to the programme which greatly facilitated the integration of the two forms of data for analysis.

Gibbs (2007, p. 11) goes as far as saying that analysis direct from interview recordings without any transcription at all is a feasible option as this approach facilitates concentrating on the big picture and minimises the danger of becoming bogged down in fine details. However, I felt that part-transcription was the most appropriate method as it allowed me to winnow out parts of the interviews that were not essential (Wolcott, 1990, p. 35) and concentrate on the important data (Stake, 1995, p. 84). I was very conservative in my approach regarding what not to transcribe so as to include anything that might be important. I made the decision to only exclude general niceties and polite general discussion. Anything of likely relevance to the research subject was included. Nevertheless, over the course of 41 interviews significant time was saved. Transcription occurred concurrently during the interview stage to allow the development of ideas to feed into later interviews in the hermeneutic spiral (Kvale, 1983; Skinner, 1975).

3.3.3 Challenges of transcribing interviews
The quality of the transcription is an important but often unaddressed element in interview research (Kvale, 2007, p. 92) despite being a significant part of the process of interpretation. The translation of oral speech to written text has its own practical and theoretical issues. An interview is an event that evolves between, and is created by, two people which is then abstracted into a written format by only one of the partners. Transcriptions are a translation of the original 'real world' event filtered through many interpretations and decisions of that one partner (Scheurich, 1995). In addition, the rules and cultures surrounding the spoken and written narrative modes

are quite different (Ong, 1982). Thus, it is impossible to perfectly render spoken words into a written account; that which is created sits somewhere between the two narrative modes (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997; Kvale, 1996; Mishler, 2003).

Poland (1995) summarises the challenges to the quality of transcriptions under the following three headings: accidental alterations through mishearing and typographical errors, unavoidable alterations made when transferring from oral to written structure, and deliberate but well-meaning alterations. To address these challenges I employed several tactics. I listened to the interview recordings several times before transcribing to become familiar with the content. I carried out all the interviews and transcribed all the interviews myself. Although very time consuming, this avoids communication issues arising with the involvement of a third party in interviewing or transcribing. Close familiarity with the interviews helped to maintain the context and meanings of the original interaction during transcription (Gibbs, 2007, p. 15). This also allowed me to consider my interview technique and schedule for future interviews. All the interview recordings were retained in their entirety and transcribed sections were time-marked allowing a constant back-and-forth between transcribed text and audio recording. Where possible, member checks (discussed further in Section 5.4 below) were employed to minimise the issue of de-contextualisation when transferring from one medium to another (Poland, 1995). This also keeps the participants at the centre of the ongoing process (Ezzy, 2002, p. 68) and provides participants the opportunity to add to or clarify their comments.

Regarding deliberate but well-meaning alterations, Gibbs (2007, p. 102) suggests that participants may be sensitive to how they are perceived if the transcription is rendered absolutely literally. The nature of everyday speech is littered with hesitancy and meandering, fragmented phrases. This may be something of a surprise when presented in written form and may not be how participants wish to be represented. Additionally, a very literal transcription requires a high level of annotation. Inserting codes for pauses, intonation and various other aspects of communication that are difficult to represent in a textual form can make the transcript extremely difficult to read. Gibbs (2007, p. 14) suggests that in cases

where the concern is primarily with the factual content of conversation, as opposed to a detailed analysis of expression and language use, it is acceptable to *tidy up* the interview speech when transcribing in order to aid reading and analysis. The focus of this study is on the content of what was said and so I judged it acceptable to tidy up the interview transcripts. This was very minimal and was carried out in such a way that the feel for how respondents were expressing themselves was not lost.

3.3.4 Coding and hermeneutics

In hermeneutics researchers apply "the interpretive tradition ... to the empirical world by likening the world to a text which must be read" (Barritt et al., 1985, p. 22). The text is read as thoroughly as possible in order to identify important aspects (Packer, 1985, p. 1091). Gibbs (2007) refers to a term used in the visual arts – "intensive seeing" (p. 41) - which involves actively concentrating on even the everyday and ordinary to identify anything that is relevant or useful. In a similar vein Stake (1995) talks about seeking "to make sense of certain observations ... by watching as closely as I can and by thinking about it as deeply as I can" (pp. 76-77). This form of careful reading was assisted in this present research by developing familiarity with the data through multiple readings of the questionnaires and listenings of the interviews. Robson (2002, p. 197) draws the analogy of being close to the data in this way as akin to a parent's deep understanding of a young child's language that would probably not be available to a stranger. The process of transcription of the interviews, though very time consuming, provided an excellent foundation of familiarity with the data that contributed to the analysis.

Gaining an understanding of the interview or questionnaire data using hermeneutic principles involved a process of moving between the whole and separate parts of the text. Each part of an individual questionnaire or interview text was carefully read or listened to several times over and considered for its meaning. This meaning was then considered in relation to the whole interview and reflected upon in terms of whether this developed understanding about the whole interview. Any new understanding of the whole was then brought to bear on the separate parts again. This is the hermeneutic cycle; the meaning of the whole is informed by an understanding of the

parts, which in turn informs the understanding of the whole. With each cycle understanding is modified and developed. As well as considering individual interviews or questionnaires, analysis also took place across groups of questionnaires or interviews. This was carried out with the aim of identifying themes that transcended unique individual experiences. The process of interpretation of meaning came to an end once a good *gestalt* had been reached, that is to say "when the meaning of the different themes … make sensible patterns, and go into consistent unity" (Kvale, 1983, p. 186).

During this analytic process I reflected on the common themes from "certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, subjects' ways of thinking, and events [that] repeat and stand out" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 156) and gave these themes an identifying code. I did not explicitly create any codes prior to the first interviews as it was my intention to work inductively from the data. Nevertheless, to some extent qualitative research involves both deductive and inductive processes (Gibbs, 2007, p. 4; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). My knowledge of literature and my own personal experience regarding outdoor education unavoidably informed what I recognised as a theme and the subsequent creation of codes. Therefore, although the research was carried out principally in an inductive manner whereby conceptual themes were developed from the data rather than being established beforehand, my "own lenses and conceptual networks" (Kelle, 1997, para. 4.2) were, of course, unavoidably brought to the work. Without any conceptual network the researcher would be unable to perceive anything at all save a mass of "chaotic, meaningless and fragmented phenomena" (*ibid*). The reflexive practice of recognising the limitations of an inductive approach does not diminish its value but rather adds rigour to the trustworthiness of the research.

Coding is "a way of indexing or categorising the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 38). Using codes assisted the process of analysis in two different ways. Firstly, organising the passages that illustrated the same themes greatly facilitated examination of the large quantities of data. This provided understanding of the data at a descriptive level (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). This thematic coding made it clear, for example, that meal

times and food were important memories for a number of participants. Secondly, the list of codes created was examined as another part of the analysis, leading to further examination, conceptualising, and theorising about the project as a whole at a more conceptual level. To continue the example, reflections on meal times – such as the satisfaction gained from serving food to peers at a shared table – began to fit in to a wider picture of participants enjoying the opportunity to behave in a range of different ways that they perceived to be more adult in nature. Thus, an initial theme or code of 'food' became part of a more conceptual theme of 'independence and responsibility'. This theme, along with others such as 'freedom' and 'identity and self-knowledge', was grouped under a still higher-level conceptual category of 'adulthood and independence' (see Chapter 6).

Although codes provide a means of focusing on the data and facilitating its interpretation they are not an act of interpretation in and of themselves. It is the development of the thinking that the codes represent that is important. For this reason I created notes about each of the codes (Gibbs, 2007, pp. 40-41). The notes acted as a form of research journal that aided the coding and analysis process. Ezzy (2002, pp. 71-74) argues that this practice is important as ideas are not simply found as pearls in the data but the researcher actively creates them through internal dialogue and conversations with others. The notes included information on dates of coding or amendment, a description of the analytic idea referred to, and connections to other codes, themes or ideas. This greatly aided consistency and decision-making when considering how and when to assign particular codes. This process also contributes towards trustworthiness of the analysis (see Section 5 below) as they bear witness to the development of ideas during the analysis process. Schwandt (2001) warns of a tendency among researchers to code mostly at a descriptive level without progressing to deeper analytical levels to fully draw out the importance of a situation. Throughout the research process I made a point of using diagrams to visualise theoretical and conceptual connections in order to facilitate analysis and understanding at a deeper level.

3.4 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the element of ambiguity inherent in the process of interpreting qualitative interview and questionnaire data. From a constructivist point of view data do not represent a reality to be mined and exploited, nor can the researcher enter with certainty into an understanding of the research participants' world however appropriate, conscientious, and dedicated the research techniques. Scheurich (1995) highlights this point by arguing that an opposing, modernist conception of research not only requires the existence of an objective, apprehendable reality but also divine qualities on the part of the researcher.

> This modernist perspective situates the researcher as a kind of god who consciously knows what he or she is doing, who (if properly trained) can clearly communicate meanings to another person, and who can derive the hidden but recoverable meanings within the interview to support an abstract generalization. (p. 241)

A contrasting point of view suggests that there are uncertainties and ambiguities of language which shift and vary according to time, person and place (Berman, 1988, p. 115; Mishler, 1986; Saussure, 1983) and that there are many conscious and unconscious, explicit and implicit interests and intentions at play in the human relations of a social research inquiry. Mishler (1991) warns that the relationship between language and meaning is "contextually grounded, unstable, ambiguous, and subject to endless reinterpretation" (p. 260). Scheurich (1995) argues that the "interview interaction is fundamentally indeterminate" (p. 249) and is a process so wound up in conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings and needs that it is impossible to represent a stable reality or meaning. From this perspective techniques of data analysis and interpretation simply overlay the researcher's constructions onto something that is, in fact, fundamentally ambiguous. Attempts to reduce the ambiguity through various strategies such as prolonged interaction with either interviewee or the data, or through co-construction, or techniques of triangulation, will not lead to a more accurate interpretation because the data, by nature, is inherently non-conducive to a stable analysis and re-presentation. Scheurich (1995) argues that the myriad influences embodied in the researcher are unavoidably dominant in the research process and as a result the final written representation "is largely, though not completely, only a mirror image of the researcher and her or his baggage" (p. 249). The result is that the researcher's baggage falsely presents as

stable, structured, and knowable something that is actually shifting, indeterminate, and unknowable.

Kvale's (1996, pp. 3-5) metaphor of researcher as traveller is one that I found helpful in negotiating the element of ambiguity that always exists in the spoken or written word, however carefully crafted, coded, or reported (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 697). Data generation and interpretation, instead of a mining and exploitation exercise, become an interactive journey to which all involved with the research contribute. By this understanding, the interviewer walks along with the participants in the research and engages with them in a manner reflecting the original meaning of the word 'conversation' from the Latin 'wandering together with' (Kvale, 1996, p. 4). This post-modern constructivist perspective allows for movement back and forth between researcher and research participants as meanings and understanding develop and evolve. Data and interpretations can be reported with confidence but also with the acknowledgment that what might be confusing or contradictory is not necessarily a weakness in the data and with an eye to the possibility of alternative meanings and understandings. Indeed, as Kvale (1996) notes, "it is in fact a strength of the interview conversation to capture the multitude of subjects' views of a theme and to picture a manifold and controversial human world" (p. 7).

Language is undeniably complex and the researcher will inevitably bring assumptions and prejudgements to the process. Equally, there is no avoiding the fact that despite all imperfections, language, in oral and written forms, and the human as researcher are two of the most fundamental tools that exist for investigating the complexities of the social world. Until new imaginary ways that exceed a knowable order (Scheurich, 1995) are created they will remain so. In this research I have been as transparent as consciously possible to declare my research intentions, my methodological orientation, and as much of my 'baggage' as possible. I have acknowledged the degree of social uncertainty that exists in this research process - from the personal interaction through to analysis, interpretation and written representation.

3.5 Summary

In this section I have described how the research methods employed are appropriate to the aims and congruent with the philosophical framework of this inquiry. I have also provided a response to the challenges and limitations of the approach that I have taken.

4 Ethics

4.1 Introduction

Research into individuals' lives requires that the researcher acts in a respectful manner guided by a code of ethics in order that no harm comes to participants (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 715). Although all the participants in this research were consenting adults who had volunteered their contribution and I was confident that the content of the inquiry was very unlikely to contain sensitive material I was mindful that to some degree an interview or questionnaire will always be an intrusion of time and privacy (Cohen et al., 2000). It is important to remember that participants are active members in the research process and that the outcome of an interaction can be unpredictable. Kvale (1996) suggests three guidelines of informed consent, confidentiality and consequences as a framework of ethical practice. In this section I explain how these three guidelines provided an ethical framework to this research and consider the dynamics of power in the relationship between researcher and research participants.

4.2 A framework of ethical practice

4.2.1 Informed consent

A first basic principle was that all participants were informed of the purpose and nature of the research (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 51; Gibbs, 2007, p. 8). Depending on how the participants first became aware of the research this information was provided by email, poster, website, newsletter, verbally, or through a combination of these methods. On the basis of this information participants were able to engage in a truly voluntary manner. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw their contribution at any stage of the research process up until the printing of the

thesis at which point it would not be practicable to edit the document. I also informed participants that, in addition to the thesis, dissemination of the study results could include journal articles and presentations.

4.2.2 Confidentiality

The practice of confidentiality refers to the responsibility of the researcher to treat the contributions of research participants with respect (Cohen et al. 2000; Edwards & Mauthner, 2002, p. 20; Gibbs, 2007, pp. 101-102). This was ensured in various different ways. I asked permission from the participants to record the interviews. All participants gave their permission willingly. Interview recordings, transcripts, and questionnaire information were kept on a password protected computer. Back up disks were kept securely and only I had access to the data. During discussions with supervisors and colleagues the anonymity of the participants was maintained and data were anonymised for analysis and presentation. With regards to the presentation of primary data in the thesis, I gave all interview participants a pseudonym and extracts from questionnaires were given an identifying tag. Twelve questions from the questionnaire were of a qualitative nature. I inputted this data into the *Transana* qualitative analysis computer programme and gave each question an identifying number from 1 to 12 (Appendix F). Each questionnaire respondent also had an identifying number which corresponded to the order in which I had received the questionnaires. On the advice of more experienced researchers a final identifier of M or F was prefixed to the identifying code to make it clear to the reader whether the quotation came from a female or male participant. Thus, a code of FQ3.47 designates that the respondent is female and that the quotation is taken from the response to the third qualitative question in the questionnaire. The number 47 refers to the order in which the questionnaire was returned. This identifying tag allowed me to return easily to each respondent's full questionnaire and maintain an understanding of the fuller context of a participant's experience beyond the response to an individual question.

Mason (1996, pp. 166-167) points out that due to the depth and detail of qualitative data there are limits to maintaining absolute anonymity of participants when using

direct quotations in a research report or thesis. I made this limitation to anonymity clear to participants and none voiced concern.

4.2.3 Consequences

The researcher has an ethical duty to prevent research participants suffering any negative consequences as a result of their involvement (Christians, 2000; Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 715; Mason, 1996, pp. 166-167). Given the subject of my inquiry, the maturity of the research participants, and the voluntary nature of their involvement I was confident that any negative consequences were extremely unlikely. Eisner (1991, p. 215), however, points out the impossibility of knowing beforehand exactly what the consequences will be for the research participants. A seemingly benign questionnaire may evoke unwanted memories and in a semi-structured interview there may be unanticipated threads of conversation leading to unknown destinations. A researcher cannot foresee all eventualities but does need to take reasonable precautions for the protection of research participants. I addressed this issue by explaining as fully as I could the aims of the research and that I did not consider the likelihood of the subject matter to be sensitive or controversial in any way. I emphasised, however, that participants should exercise their right to refuse to answer questions they did not wish to respond to or disengage from the process entirely if they so wished.

The possibility of positive consequences of involvement in research should be equally acknowledged. Kvale (1996, p.36) asserts that involvement can be a rare opportunity for research participants to discuss something that is of significant interest to them and that such an opportunity to have one's thoughts and opinions listened to so attentively can be a unique and intrinsically rewarding experience. My impression was that all those whom I spoke to – whether their remarks concerning Ardentinny were positive or negative – had no negative feelings regarding their involvement and were often pleased to have made a contribution. Overall, the opportunity to reminisce, reflect, and offer opinions seemed to be a positive experience for those involved in the research.

4.3 The researcher/participant power dynamic

Edwards and Mauthner (2002) refer to the relationship between researcher and research participants as one of "asymmetrical reciprocity" (p. 26) as a way of describing the fluid power dynamics of the relationship. An equal balance of power – a symmetrical relationship (Denzin, 1997) – may be the ideal but in reality is not achievable. As with any relationship there exist imbalances of influence in different spheres of the relationship. For example, research participants have the power over what and how they contribute to the process and the researcher will usually have a dominant role in the editing, interpreting and dissemination of the data generated. As long as an ethical framework such as that discussed above is employed there is no reason why this asymmetrical reciprocity of relationship should have negative consequences for either party. I believe I was successful in achieving this.

4.4 Summary

As a final point, although the ethical aspects of research are usually primarily referred to in terms of protecting participants, there are two other aspects of an ethical approach to research that I was conscious to fulfil. Firstly, the rigorous presentation of research is the basis of an honest, transparent relationship between researcher and reader. Secondly, Gibbs (2007, p. 101) and Morrison (1996) highlight the researchers' ethical responsibility to work to the highest standards in recognition of the contribution that participants have given their time and effort to provide.

In this section I have outlined the ethical considerations relevant to this research based on the three guidelines of informed consent, confidentiality, and consequences. Before starting the inquiry I did not foresee the likelihood of any ethical difficulties arising and this was borne out in practice. Careful attention to ethical considerations contributed towards a respectful and positive relationship with research participants.

5 Trustworthiness

5.1 Introduction

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to concepts of trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability when working in the field of qualitative research. These concepts represent the rigorous practices necessary in order that the reader may trust in the merit of the research and consider interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data to be reasonable. Giorgi (1975) describes this as an endeavour to ensure that, "a reader, adopting the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he [or she] agrees with it" (p. 96). An ethical approach to the researcher's relationship with both research participants and the reader is one contribution to trustworthiness. In this section I explain further measures that I took to ensure that this research is trustworthy, credible, and dependable.

5.2 Appropriate research design

Lincoln and Guba (1988, p. 296) state that the credibility of qualitative research first depends on demonstrating that the research was carried out in an appropriate manner. The heterogenous nature of qualitative research requires that the researcher be rigorous in preparation, execution, and presentation of the methods and methodology employed (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 51; Stake, 1995, p. 15). Presenting an account of the philosophical basis and research methods employed provides the information required for the reader to judge the appropriateness of the interpretations and recommendations made (Patterson et al., 1998, p. 430). I have addressed this by detailing each aspect of the research design and process in previous sections of this chapter.

5.3 Data generation and analysis

As previously stated, all data generation and analysis was carried out by myself. No third party was involved which might have introduced confusion, for example, in different standards or methods of interviewing and transcription. The emphasis on maintaining links with the original interview recordings, as opposed to solely

working with written transcriptions, for coding and analysis allowed me to remain as close as possible to the authentic context of the original interaction. I guarded against the possibility of "definitional drift" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 98) whereby material coded later in the project is coded slightly differently than that which was done at the beginning. I did this by regularly referring to the notes that I used as a definition of the code and by comparing coded sections against each other from different chronological moments of the project. The hermeneutic principle of repeatedly working between individual parts and the whole also contributed to maintaining consistency in the analysis process.

5.4 Member checks

The use of member checks is a recognised technique of increasing the credibility, trustworthiness, and dependability of interpretations drawn from interview data (Lincoln & Guba 1988, p. 296; Moustakas, 1994; Poland 1995; Stake, 1995, p. 115). In addition to contributing towards credibility by allowing participants to verify the accurate interpretation of their contribution member checks also result in participants' involvement in the research being extended (Ezzy, 2002, p. 68). Participants are able to shape data by providing critical observations and interpretations beyond their original contribution. The approach that I took in this present research was to provide participants with the opportunity to view the chapters to which their interview had contributed. Where a direct quotation from their interview had been included this was highlighted in yellow for easy recognition. Psathas (1989, pp. 13-14) refers to the trustworthiness of research being dependent on whether findings are consistent with and faithful to the everyday world of the people whose lives are being investigated. Allowing participants to view how I had interpreted their contribution provided them with the opportunity to verify that this was indeed an accurate representation of their experience. Minor modifications were requested by two participants as a result of member checks. Member checking is also a technique that Stake (1995, p. 115) recommends should be carried out during the interview itself. Summarising what I thought the interviewee was saying and then giving the opportunity for amendment of that summary at various intervals maintained a continuous and interactive member check.

5.5 Primary data presentation

Significant extracts of primary interview and questionnaire data are presented in the discussion chapters to demonstrate the source and development of my interpretations. The use of direct quotations from the data allows the reader to develop a feel for context and overall meaning as well as to understand the relevance of a specific point.

5.6 Crystals and triangles

From a constructivist perspective there is no fixed point of an objective, apprehensible social reality to triangulate upon that allows the researcher to make absolute claims of having revealed the 'truth' of the matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8; Silverman, 2000, p. 177). Each individual perspective provides a legitimate point of view and it makes no sense to ask which is closer to the mark. However, Greene (2003, p. 599) states that although there are radical constructivists who refute the ability of any procedures to strengthen the veracity of one interpretation over another most constructivist evaluators do recognise of the existence of techniques that ensure the methodological quality and credibility of their work. Mistakes and errors are, of course, possible and a constructivist stance should not reduce the degree of responsibility of the researcher to minimise misrepresentation or misunderstanding. Interpretations of data, for example, can be "clearly biased or partial and some may even be downright silly or wrong" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 91). Accordingly, rather than being a technique of validation borrowed from the positivist tradition, triangulation in qualitative research is an alternative to validation (Flick, 1998, p. 230). From a qualitative research perspective triangulation works from a principle of searching for additional meanings that allow for a richer understanding of a phenomenon rather than one of seeking converging evidence based on the assumption of the existence of a single, valid, objectively verifiable interpretation (Flick, 1992; Stake, 1995). Obtaining different views of a phenomenon through the use of a variety of "methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers" adds depth, rigour, and complexity to an inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8) and enables the reader to judge the strength or limitations of an interpretation.

Richardson (2003) suggests that the crystal rather than the triangle is a more helpful metaphor for qualitative research. In a manner similar to that of montage, previously mentioned Chapter 1, Section 6, the crystal metaphor allows for the phenomenon under investigation to be considered as something that has an essential structure but at the same time is multi-faceted, reflects the external world, and refracts colours and images within itself (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 8). With crystallisation – as opposed to triangulation – the investigation of a phenomenon proceeds by providing and examining several different viewpoints which interact and weave together to create the crystal structure. In order to gain a rich understanding of the experience of pupils at Ardentinny I used qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews from the pupil participants themselves, interview data from Ardentinny management, Ardentinny instructional staff, local education authority officers, head teachers, and school teachers, and archival data. The purpose of creating this montage or crystal was threefold: firstly, to provide as much information as possible to inform my own process of interpretation in order to minimise misunderstanding and misrepresentation; secondly, to provide the reader with the opportunity to develop an intricate and complex understanding of the participants' experience at Ardentinny; thirdly, where inconsistencies or contradictions might arise, to allow for the opportunity "not to show that informants are lying or wrong, but to reveal new dimensions of social reality where people do not always act consistently" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 94).

5.7 Summary

Tesch (1990, p. 2) suggests that research is ultimately a process of persuasion that aims to convince the reader of the robustness of interpretations and claims made. The often very specific nature of qualitative research requires careful description of the research design and execution in order that the reader is able to make reasonable judgements regarding the researcher's claims and conclusions. The importance of trustworthiness goes beyond the individual study at hand. Other researchers should be able to "rely on the concepts, methods and inferences of a study, or tradition of inquiry, as the basis for [their] own theorizing and empirical research" (Mishler, 1990, p. 419). In this section I have demonstrated that throughout all stages of this

research inquiry I have taken steps to ensure trustworthiness both for the purpose of this individual study and as a potential contribution to outdoor education research.

A final element of trustworthiness is the clarification of the extent to which results and claims can be generalised beyond an individual study. The following section addresses this issue.

6 Generalisability

6.1 Generalisability and constructivism

A constructivist epistemology does not mean that experience of the world is an entirely individual, subjective and relative experience (Gibbs, 2007, p. 9). Stake (1995, p. 99) comments that although daily experiences are interpreted in different ways by each individual it seems that most people within a similar culture broadly share the same understanding of the world. In the day-to-day life of human existence it is possible to find commonalities of meaning from which shared decisions and actions can be made. Stake (1995, p. 99) illustrates this by pointing out that although the subjective experience of reality is an important discussion, when it comes to crossing the road most people work on the same shared assumptions of the effects of solid objects travelling at speed coming into contact with the human body.

The constructivist epistemological standpoint of this research therefore does not preclude generalising from research findings. It holds in balance the multiple individual interpretations of life experiences and the everyday reality that common or similar understandings do exist, can be relevant beyond an individual case or example, and can be useful in developing understanding of the social world.

6.2 *Petite* and *grande* generalisations

The concept of generalisability, historically linked to modernist assumptions of replicability, remains a controversial topic in qualitative interpretive research (Denzin, 1983, pp. 133-134; Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 62; Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 238). However, three areas of broad agreement are apparent (Schofield, 1993).

Firstly, generalisability in the sense of producing universal laws is not a useful, appropriate, or achievable goal for qualitative research. Crotty (1998, p. 68) suggests that "our interest in the social world tends to focus on exactly those aspects that are unique, individual and qualitative, whereas our interest in the natural world focuses on more abstract phenomena, that is, those exhibiting quantifiable, empirical regularities." Therefore, researching the social world requires a different approach from that applied to the natural world. The subjective, meaning-making "'forces' that move human beings, as human beings rather than simply as human bodies" (Douglas, 1970, p. ix) do not lend themselves to quantification and the deduction of consistent laws.

Qualitative research can, nevertheless, provide a form of generalisation. Stake (1995, pp. 7-9, 20) makes the distinction between *petite* and *grande* generalisations. *Petite* generalisations occur and build on each other throughout the course of a research inquiry as understanding is refined and developed. In the final stage the researcher, through a process of interpretation of the data, is able to draw conclusions or make assertions. These again, in small scale studies, are *petite* generalisations. *Grande* generalisations can be proffered when a number of studies together provide strong enough argument to generalise more widely. This thesis makes *petite* generalisations which add to the current body of knowledge in the field of outdoor education and point towards areas for further research.

6.3 Naturalistic generalisations

Thick description (Geertz, 1973; Stake, 2003) is important for generalisations to be made. A constructivist approach favours thick description as this allows the researcher and the reader to "climb into an intricate (hi)story and learn to know it from the inside out" (Moses & Knutsen, 2007, p. 199). This allows a reasoned judgement to be made about how much findings of one study can be used as a working hypothesis (Cronbach & Shapiro, 1982) for other situations. Thus, although the subject of study may be unique and very particular this does not prevent the possibility of commenting beyond the confines of the individual case. Schofield (1993, p. 109) suggests that generalisability can be conceptualised as a comparison

of the 'fit' between one situation and another with thick description crucial to achieving the robustness of fit. To this end I have provided detailed descriptions about the research subject and setting in addition to the individual interpretations of the various different groups of people who directly experienced Ardentinny. The detailed descriptions allow the reader not only to judge the appropriateness of claims and interpretations made by the researcher beyond the Ardentinny experience to the wider field of outdoor education but also to make generalisations of his/her own. Stake and Trumbull (1982) and Stake (1995, p. 85) refer to these as naturalistic generalisations. In this way the presentation of contextual material not only contributes to trustworthiness of the researcher's assertions and generalisations but also allows the research to be made more broadly relevant through the active engagement of the reader. As is often the case in interpretive research the subject matter of this thesis is only tentatively representative of a wider population. However, by providing thick description the reader is enabled and encouraged to make generalisations to other similar situations within her/his own specific area of expertise (Stake, 1978). In this way a qualitative research inquiry such as this contributes more widely to the body of knowledge in outdoor education research.

6.4 Summary

In this section I have argued that generalisations are appropriate within qualitative, interpretive research and are compatible with a constructivist epistemological stance. The hermeneutic approach to the analysis and interpretation of the data provides a detailed understanding of the experience of the individuals involved as opposed to an aggregated characterisation of the Ardentinny experience (Patterson et al., 1998, p. 430). This presentation of a context-specific phenomenon is not appropriate to statistical generalisation but rather rests on the concept of *petite* generalisation of findings (Stake, 1995). These findings contribute to the continued development of understanding within the field of outdoor education.

PART TWO

Chapter 3: Development of residential outdoor education in the UK

1 Introduction

This chapter provides the historical and educational context for the present study of outdoor education experiences at Ardentinny, drawing on outdoor education literature, statutory instruments, and educational memoranda. Using the outdoor environment as the physical context for an experiential approach to learning has a history of philosophical and pedagogical argument that bridges the present, *via* Rousseau and the Romantic movement, to the classical scholarship of Plato and Aristotle (Hopkins & Putnam, 1993; Wurdinger, 1997). In the UK the forms of outdoor education and the purposes to which they have been employed vary enormously. Nicol's (2002a) analysis of the development of outdoor education in the UK led him to state that, "outdoor education defies definition in terms of being a fixed entity of common consent, homogeneous over time and space" (p. 29). There is no single form of outdoor education and no single root of outdoor education from which the various forms of practice have developed. There are numerous approaches to using the outdoor environment for educational purposes with varying degrees of commonality of aims and purposes. This chapter focuses on the major influences on the development of residential outdoor education in the statutory education system.

Sections 2-5 of this chapter chart the early influences on the development of outdoor education in the UK dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Cook (1999) states that "Outdoor education is not a post-1944 phenomenon. A wide range of activities that take place 'in', 'through', or 'for' the outdoors has featured in the education of many pupils for at least a century" (p. 158). These early practices of using the outdoor environment as a learning arena are significant in understanding what would later become known as outdoor education. The relevance of the reference to 1944 is the Education Act of the same year that is commonly cited as a seminal moment in the provision of outdoor education within the statutory education system (Cook, 1999; Higgins, 2002; Hopkins & Putnam, 1993; Nicol, 2002a; Parker & Meldrum, 1973). In Scotland the equivalent legislation was the Education Act (Scotland) 1945. Sections 6-9 therefore take 1944/1945 as the starting point to

present the developments that shaped the principles and practices of formalised outdoor education in the statutory education system. The early decades of the post-World War Two period saw significant changes in mainstream education and it is in these developments that the roots of Ardentinny lay.

2 An established tradition

Use of the outdoor environment in the UK as an arena from which special educational benefits could be derived was a well-established concept prior to 1944. Rousseau's (1979) *Emile*, first published in 1762, was effectively a treatise on outdoor experiential education. The Romantic movement, seen in the works of authors such as Coleridge and Blake, developed in counterpoint to the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment period and promoted a vision of nature as a positive, spiritual, educating force rather than something to be dominated, brought to order and made productive. Hunt (1989, p. 21) points to the growth of the Nature Study Movement, the proliferation of natural history societies and field clubs across the UK in the late 1800s.

Baden-Powell's observation of young scouts in the Boer War led him to conclude that the experience of living outdoors developed positive qualities in the young boys that assisted them in dealing with the demands of war (Baden-Powell, 1908; Hunt, 1989). The formation of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in the early years of the 20th century stemmed from Baden-Powell's wish to provide the means for young people to develop similar qualities in a civilian context. Experience and understanding of the outdoors gained through outdoor living skills of hiking, camping, and nature study were considered to lead to a development of character that would stand individuals in good stead for the challenges of everyday life. The movement proved hugely popular – Scout membership grew from 100,000 in 1910 to over 1,000,000 in 1922 (Hunt, 1989, p. 24) – providing large numbers of young people with structured learning experiences in the outdoors. Baden-Powell's uniformed youth movement was steeped in the mores of the ruling-class establishment (Cook, 1999, 2001). An emphasis on physical activity, challenge, and adventure not only provided the means of strengthening the body but also of strengthening moral fibre in order to combat the

pernicious attractions of unbridled sexual impulses, tobacco, and alcohol (Baden-Powell, 1908, p. 292) that threatened the individual and, by implication, society.

Over twenty years earlier the creation of the Boys' Brigade played a similar role in developing a connection between young people, learning experiences, and the outdoor environment. Founded in Glasgow by Sir William Smith in 1883, the Boys' Brigade used camping and physical activities in the outdoors to provide respectable outlets for the energies of working-class boys. Cook (2001, p. 46) states that this was an era when it was common for well-meaning middle-class men and women to work in youth organisations with working-class children in an attempt to improve their health and promote middle and upper-class values. Smith aimed to inculcate obedience in the boys to their Brigade officers, parents, masters at work, school teachers, and above all to God (Rosenthal, 1986, p. 233). The Scouting and Boys' Brigade movements illustrate how the dominant religious and social values pervaded the use of the outdoors for educational purposes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Increasing interest in recreation in the countryside amongst the upper classes and the exploits of Victorian mountaineers, explorers and empire builders also contributed to a common understanding of adventure and physical challenge in the outdoors as having inherent value both for the individual and for society. The Romantic movement's veneration of the power of nature and its potential as a source of inspiration and understanding provided intellectual, philosophical and aesthetic support to this position. However, the power of the outdoor environment was not considered equally beneficial to both boys and girls. Cook (2001) documents the suspicion and resistance that surrounded the suggestion that girls might benefit in the same way as boys from physical activity in the outdoors. Concern was expressed that girls might lose their feminine qualities and even jeopardise their reproductive capabilities. Individual benefit was subordinate to societal benefit. In a similar way, although the original motivation of the Scouting movement was to instil qualities of leadership and independence to benefit boys in their adult lives, Cook (1999, pp. 158-159) argues that the experience of Scouting depended on a boy's social class

affiliation. Amongst the upper classes concepts of leadership were emphasised whereas this was not so much the case in troops of working class boys. Cook further argues that this reflects a similar class divide in the way schools used the outdoors for educational purposes. The 'public' schools aimed at developing qualities of leadership in their pupils whilst the government-funded elementary schools fostered an ethos of followership. Although it would be churlish to deny the charitable and benevolent intentions of the Scouts and the Boys' Brigade it is also important to note that these operated within a social framework of an underlying imperative to service the Empire with suitable and sufficient manpower at all levels and, an equally important and necessary corollary, to maintain the social *status quo*.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries there is a clearly developing theme of the use of the outdoor environment for educational and developmental purposes seen through the scientific study of nature for its own sake, a renewed fascination with the concept of nature seen in the Romantic movement, and an association between the outdoor environment, military influences and social education.

3 An alternative tradition - progressive influences

From the late 19th century progressive educational practices developed in the UK and were exemplified by such schools as Abbotsholme and Bedales (Hunt, 1989, p. 22). Influenced by the Romantic movement direct experience of nature was used as a teaching resource to inspire and release the creative potential of pupils. This stands in contrast to the traditional public school use of the outdoor environment as an arena for team games. The playing fields of these fee-paying schools were a vehicle for teaching essentially military qualities of discipline, corporate spirit, controlled aggression, and leadership. This tradition was heavily influenced by the German school of gymnastics which developed in the late 1700s in the context of Napoleon's military threat. Although Cecil Reddie, founder of Abbotsholme in 1889, rejected the cult of athleticism for a more aesthetic approach to using the outdoors as a tool for health and moral education, his intention was still to develop leaders from the social elite and prepare them for a life of service to the Empire (McCulloch, 1991, p. 25).

The educational methods may have been progressive but they still existed within the dominant socio-political paradigm of a certain form of masculine and oligarchic leadership.

Kurt Hahn's Gordonstoun School, founded over forty years later in 1934, also aimed at developing the character of young boys. Hahn was interested in delivering a holistic form of education that would produce young men of compassion able to lead and serve society (Hopkins & Putnam, 1993, pp. 22-26). More interested in the kind of person his students became than in a narrow view of academic achievement alone he believed that physical challenges in the outdoors could be used to train a young person's character. Hahn developed the Moray Badge scheme, precursor to the Duke of Edinburgh Award, as a means of making his approach to young people's personal development more widely available. Hahn included expeditions as an integral part of the formal schooling at Gordonstoun and of the Moray Badge scheme (Hunt, 1989). The combination of abilities and intelligences required in the planning and execution of an expedition fitted in perfectly with his vision of holistic education (Hahn, 1938). In addition, Hahn (1938) believed that expeditions provided an opportunity for those who were less able at athletic games to shine and for the star athletes to be provided with an altogether different physical challenge which may well leave them wanting.

> The vicissitudes of an expedition make him discover not only his 'wants' but also his unsuspected resources. On the other hand, the sturdy but clumsy games player, often humbled in face of the glories of the playing field, benefits equally by the expedition tests. Unexpected avenues of distinction open out before him; by his tenacity and care he often outshines the brilliant athlete. Thus our clumsy boy tastes that glow of importance which we would like to give to as many as possible. (Hahn, 1938, pp. 25-26)

Hahn's vision of education – to produce young men who were able to take a leading role in society – contrasted with the elite leadership espoused by the public schools attended by the upper classes. Hahn's idea of leadership was grounded in compassion and service to the wider community (Veevers & Allison, 2010). Through the Moray Badge Scheme and scholarship programmes to make places at Gordonstoun available to all boys irrespective of financial means Hahn's educational philosophy struck a distinctly meritocratic note. Flavin (1996) notes Hahn's commitment to the scholarship programmes at Salem school, which he established in

Germany in 1920 before being forced to leave the country due to his political opposition to Hitler. Veevers and Allison (2010) cite a Gordonstoun memorandum (Hahn, 1948) written by Hahn which illustrates his hopes for the form and range of educational opportunity that he hoped to provide – "We shall have demonstrated that a school of public school type need not be restricted to the well-to-do classes" (p. 7) – and also argue that Hahn hoped to influence the state education system into adopting his holistic, experiential and service oriented ways of thinking about education.

In conjunction with Laurence Holt, who provided the finance, Hahn also opened the first Outward Bound school at Aberdovey in 1941. Further Outward Bound schools opened across the UK and internationally after the war. Motivated initially by a concern to provide young seamen with the necessary strength of mind and body to survive being adrift at sea in the event of the loss of their ship the Outward Bound schools also provided the opportunity for young people to quench what Hahn believed was an innate desire to test themselves. In a similar vein to the American psychologist William James' (1906) musings on finding the moral equivalent of war to catalyse the positive qualities that he felt arose in times of conflict Hahn (1941) desired to create an educational experience that contained, "risks, supreme tests and a glamour which will make the romance of war fade" (p. 13). Although Hahn desired for young people to overcome challenges and saw a parallel of sorts with the military experience, Veevers and Allison (2010) emphasise that this was a process of education that focused on each individual overcoming personal challenges, weaknesses, and disabilities. Conquering challenges was not focused on an external foe to be left humiliated afterwards but on confronting one's own weaknesses, defeating one's own defeatism, staring down one's own fear of failure. Hahn believed that from such experiences personal growth would result leading to a more enabled individual (Hopkins & Putnam, 1993, p. 26).

Different again from either Gordonstoun or Abbotsholme was the form of progressive education delivered by the Forest School (van der Eyken & Turner, 1969). The Forest School was influenced by the Woodcraft Movements of the early

20th century which held to principles of gender equality, democracy, and non-competitiveness. First-hand contact with nature and living an open-air life in community with others was the basis of young people's education at the Forest School. Embedding these principles into a programme of education stood in stark contrast to the public school use of the outdoor environment as a refining fire for an elite who would then be equipped to provide moral, social, and political guidance to the lower classes. As well as being influenced by the Woodcraft movement, which, "viewed 'Nature' as the 'great educator' and industrialisation as stunting and distorting to the development of young people" (Cook, 1999, p. 159), the Forest School was also influenced by the writings of Patrick Geddes (Boardman, 1978). Geddes was concerned by what he believed to be a narrow view of education based on the three Rs. He advocated instead that education be based on the three Hs – Heart, Hand, and Head. Dorothy Revel was another progressive educator who taught in several progressive schools. She advocated allowing children to follow their natural instincts in the outdoor environment and decried the educational practices of traditional public schools, which she saw as preparing pupils to feed the war machine (Revel, 1934).

Although the number of schools espousing progressive ideals in which the use of the outdoor environment was a significant element was small it is nevertheless clear that progressive educators were influenced by the use of the outdoors as a medium for developing and teaching young people. The degree to which the outdoor environment was considered as simply an arena for challenge or as an inherently educative force in its own right varied significantly but as with the more establishment influenced organisations of the Scouts and Boys' Brigade it was seen as a milieu which held the potential for positive educative and life changing experiences.

4 School camps

The belief in the power of the outdoor environment holding the potential for positive change was also visible in government policy in the early decades of the 20th century. Government legislation allowed for local education authorities to establish school

camps, vacation schools, and vacation classes. Cook (1999, p. 166) notes that the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education was an enthusiastic supporter of the benefits of the Scout movement. By 1928 fifteen local education authorities in England and Wales were running school camps and by 1931 one college for teacher training included camping in the programme (Department of Education and Science, 1983, p. 2). Camp schools were increasingly established during the inter-war years and in 1939 the Camps Act led to the creation of fifty permanent camps. Responsibility for the camps fell under the aegis of the Ministry of Health, as opposed to the Board of Education, which gives an insight into the primary motivating force behind the camp schools. The camps were to provide the opportunity for children from urban areas to benefit from clean air and good food whilst continuing with their school studies for a period that often lasted up to a month at a time. The Minister of Health (Hansard, 1939) also clearly had one eye on the horizon stating that the camps would serve to bolster accommodation in the event of war-time evacuation. The fact that the government saw fit to remove large numbers of children from their home environment for the sake of their health gives an indication of the abject poverty and conditions that many urban children were living in at the time. Combined with the mass evacuation of children to the countryside during the Second World War for their safety it is easy to see how a concept of the rural outdoors as healing and health giving could develop in the firmly industrialised and embattled UK. Cook (1999, p. 168) observes that as the health of the child population improved in the years after the war the school camps were made available to local authorities and the emphasis of the type of experience provided at many camp schools began to move away from health goals towards a variety of educational goals. However, certain areas of the country that were particularly affected by child poverty continued to provide what were essentially recuperative working holidays for children from urban areas. Halls (1997, p. 12) refers to the case of the city of Glasgow which ran a number of residential primary schools whose staff first and foremost endeavoured to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the children whilst also delivering their academic schooling.

Camping with school pupils continued to be actively encouraged by the government into the post Second World War period evidenced by a number of education pamphlets: No. 11 *Organised Camping* and *Mobile Camping* in 1954, No. 41 *Camping and Education* in 1961, and No. 58 *Camping* in 1971. Local authorities were encouraged to take large numbers of pupils camping for between five and ten days at a time (Department of Education and Science, 1983, p. 2).

5 The rise of recreation

The Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937 (PTRA, 1937), which was applicable to England, Wales and Scotland, empowered the Board of Education to make grants available to voluntary organisations to assist in providing camps and training facilities for "physical training and recreation [through] the provision and equipment of gymnasiums, playing fields, swimming baths, bathing places, holiday camps and camping sites and other buildings and premises for physical training and recreation" (PTRA, 1937, Section 3a). Local authorities were also empowered to establish and run the same facilities for athletic, social or educational purposes (PTRA, 1937) and were permitted to make these facilities available to clubs, societies and organisations at their discretion. Thus, the intertwining of physical recreation and education is reflected in this legislation.

The work of the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) was important in the development of outdoor activities as a form of education. Founded in 1937 it offered support to two hundred sports bodies, individuals, and local authorities. In 1948 the CCPR in Scotland was tasked with administering Glenmore Lodge, near Aviemore, on behalf of the Scottish Education Department (Hunt, 1989). Loader (1952) states that the purpose of Glenmore Lodge was to act as a training centre which would "use the excellent natural surroundings offered by mountain, loch and forest, to experiment with forms of education which will assist the individual to discover his or her physical, mental and spiritual potentialities" (p. 14). The CCPR was also involved in establishing Plas-y-Brenin, a residential mountain training centre, in 1956. The creation of these two training centres in particular established a tradition of state support for recreational mountain activities and further strengthened

the concept of ostensibly recreational physical activities also having an educational element.

The spirit of the 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act and the creation of projects such as Glenmore Lodge represented an evolution in the mainstream understanding of the relationship between physical education and the outdoors away from instrumental military connotations. However, further expression of this progressive trend was obstructed as increasing concern regarding conflict with Germany directed the conception of physical education and the use of the outdoors back towards tests of endurance (Parker & Meldrum, 1973, p. 47). Six years later *Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools* (Board of Education, 1943), commonly referred to as the Norwood Report, reflects the priorities of the times when commenting on the vision for the physical education curriculum:

> The experience of the war has shown that the young people of this country can respond to situations demanding courage and endurance; these qualities, we should hope, will be directed during school days to activities which give them scope and which lead to occupations making the same demands in the circumstances of peace. (p. 84)

The relationship between the outdoor environment and education reflects the varied and changing social influences of the times. At the turn of the 19th century the UK was a strongly class-stratified society heavily influenced by socio-religious values with an acute military consciousness linked to the concept of Empire. Unsurprisingly, mass participation youth organisations such as the Scouts reflected contemporary social mores and practices. In the inter-war period increasing provision was made for the welfare of the general population through government initiated health and recreation programmes and progressive educational ideas gained ground. However, as the UK entered another war, the early years of which were marked by defeats and threats of invasion, the belief that contact with a challenging natural environment – whether by land or by sea – was an important physical and moral educational experience which developed characteristics of endurance, resourcefulness, self-reliance, and moral strength gained ground once more.

6 Educational reform

The 1944 Education Act instigated a major reform of the education system in England and Wales. Relevant to the development of outdoor education is the stipulation that participation in physical education at school became compulsory and that through this Act it became,

> the duty of every authority to secure that the facilities for primary, secondary and further education…include adequate facilities for recreation and social and physical training, and for that purpose a LEA…may establish, maintain and manage or assist the establishment, maintenance and management of camps, holiday classes, playing fields, play centres and other places, and may organize games, expeditions and other activities. (Education Act, 1944, Section 53 (1))

What had been enabled and encouraged by previous legislation such as the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937 (PTRA, 1937) was now made a requirement. In Scotland the equivalent enabling instrument was the Education (Scotland) Act 1945. Chapter 37, Section, 3(1) of the Act replicates exactly the English and Welsh legislation save for substituting the terminology relevant to the Scottish context. In and of themselves neither of the above Acts makes any specific reference to the provision of outdoor education and it should be noted that the provision of outdoor education that developed in the fertile post-war period was not a statutory requirement. Indeed, the concept of outdoor education as a defined entity still did not exist. However, as established in the previous section, the tradition of a connection between the outdoor environment, activities that took place outdoors, and various training, health, or educational aims did exist. Interpretation of how to implement the legislation was left open to individual local authorities and in this lay the opportunity for the development of outdoor education as it came to be understood from the 1960s onwards. It is worth noting at this point that although the provision of outdoor education became widespread to significant numbers of pupils within the statutory education system it was a form of education that was rooted in the very shallow soil of terms such as "adequate" and "may" for the purposes of "recreation and social and physical training" (Education Act, 1944, Section 53) – phrases open to wide interpretation.

Although not specified in legislation the pervading influence of what could perhaps be described as the received wisdom of the value of outdoor experiences is seen in

the literature which provided guidance for the implementation of the above mentioned Acts. For example, the document *National Schools – their Plan and Purpose*, highlights the sections of the 1944 Education Act that referred to recreation and pointed out that,

> a period of residence in a school camp or other boarding school in the country would contribute substantially to the health and width of outlook of any child from a town school, especially if the care of livestock, the growing of crops, the study of the countryside and the pursuit of outdoor activities formed the bulk of the educational provision and were handled by specially qualified staff. (as cited in Hunt, 1989, p. 28).

The Norwood Report (Board of Education, 1943) was the result of a commission in 1941 to consider the reorganisation of secondary schooling. Both Cook (2000, p. 3) and Parker and Meldrum (1973, p. 47) argue that this report influenced the 1944 Education Act and by implication it is reasonable to assert that it influenced the 1945 Education (Scotland) Act. Following the passing of the 1944 Education Act the Norwood Report provided general guidance on what to teach and how to teach it. In considering the role and form of physical education in the curriculum the Norwood Report (Board of Education, 1943) states that,

> The raising of personal performance, won through the surmounting of individual difficulties by discipline and endurance, is of profound moral significance as well as physical … we should certainly welcome carefully devised tests of endurance, of resourcefulness and enterprise suggested by the nature of the surrounding country.

> In this connection we would make mention of 'Scouting' and 'Guiding', School Camps, tours, sailing clubs, which for many boys and girls provide … an incentive and means to training in resourcefulness, self-reliance and ideals of usefulness and independence … other courses and schools and movements have been brought to our notice; their aim is to bring boys and girls in touch with sea and mountain, and in open-air tasks and ventures to build up the moral strength and create the physical endurance which come from such contact. (pp. 83-84)

Two points follow from this citation. The first is that a highly significant educational report commissioned by the Board of Education to comment and provide guidance on a major reorganisation of secondary schooling makes explicit mention of the outdoor environment as an important element in the education system. The second point is that the form of education in the outdoors that is described focuses on

development of character through physical and moral training. Liberal, progressive educational ideals are absent – although a reference to the Woodcraft Movement made in parliament on the debate on Section 53 of the Education Act 1944 (Hansard, 1944) does suggest that at least an awareness of different conceptions of education in the outdoors was evident among some MPs – and the public school ethos of forging character through endurance is to the fore. Cook (1999) states that, "Character building permeated the whole of this Report, which has been judged by McCulloch [McCulloch, 1994, p. 52] as portraying the 'darker side of the 1944 settlement, the handbrake on a generally progressive reform'" (p. 157) and describes Sir Cyril Norwood, Chair of the report committee as a strong supporter of the educational traditions associated with public and grammar schools. Other aspects of the educational reforms of the period did signal progress towards becoming a more socially democratic society. Cook (1999, p. 162) notes that various aspects of the Education Acts of 1944 and 1945 made it possible for local authorities to not only provide the facilities for outdoor experiences but also to provide the necessary clothing and to waive any fees for board and lodging demonstrating the aspiration that provision was to be universal regardless of individual financial circumstances.

In 1947 the Ministry of Education issued Pamphlet No. 9 *The New Secondary Education* (Ministry of Education, 1947). Ellen Wilkinson, the Labour Minister of Education made a significant contribution to the writing of the document which was intended to advise schools on the curriculum following the Education Act of 1944. The document suggested that the outdoors should be used for social purposes, particularly to combat juvenile delinquency. This was to be achieved through journeys or expeditions (Ministry of Education, 1947, p. 4) with school clubs and societies providing children with the opportunity to experience the world that exists beyond their home and school environment. Wilkinson also believed that the social aspect of clubs and societies, particularly through residential experiences, provided an excellent opportunity to develop personal and social relationship skills (Ministry of Education, 1947, p. 16). The contrasting guidance provided in the Norwood Report and in *The New Secondary Education* document illustrates the varied approaches to the use of the outdoors for educational purposes during this period.

The 'character-building' approach associated with the public schools and the more socially liberal approach advocated by Ellen Wilkinson are also a reflection of the societal tensions and educational differences of opinion as the country looked towards the creation of a more egalitarian society following the war. Wilkinson herself could be described as representative of a nation in transition between tradition and reform. Although a member of the Labour Party, from a working-class background, and generally liberally progressive in her politics Wilkinson disappointed the hopes of the many who desired the end of the segregated structure of secondary education which the Norwood Report had recommended be developed from its pre-war *ad hoc* status into an officially codified and administered tri-partite system. Having benefited from a Grammar school education Wilkinson felt that the system as it existed was an enabling instrument and therefore saw no need for wholesale change (Rubinstein, 1979, p. 161).

Parker & Meldrum (1973, p. 49) note that the limited finances available at the end of the war were directed towards expanding and modernising existing schools with the result that the recommendations of the 1944 Education Act and 1945 Education (Scotland) Act regarding developing facilities for physical training and recreative purposes were not immediately realisable. However, in 1950 Sir Jack Longland, the Director of Education in Derbyshire at the time, opened the White Hall Centre for Open Country Pursuits in Derbyshire. Longland was an accomplished mountaineer who had been a member of the 1933 Everest Expedition, was a board member of the Outward Bound Trust, and had connections with Abbotsholme School. It was largely due to his efforts that White Hall Centre was established. White Hall marked the beginning of a movement that would lead to the establishment of hundreds of similar centres across the UK, a process that gathered pace in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Cook (1999, p. 172) suggests that the White Hall Centre delivered an outdoor education experience that was predominantly of the character building strain, giving poor and disadvantaged pupils an opportunity to experience something of public school education, and as the first facility of its kind it provided a model of practice commonly adopted by other local education authorities as they subsequently established their own outdoor centres in the 1950s and 1960s.

As the post-war period unfolded so did an increasing preoccupation with the ways working class youth passed their leisure time. The belief in the importance of education for leisure developed in order to combat the perceived threat of juvenile delinquency and to promote socially acceptable leisure time pursuits (Hahn, 1938; Halls, 1997). Cook (1999, p. 170) comments on the book authored by F.J.C. Marshall, *Physical Activities for Boys' Schools* (Marshall, 1951), that argues for adventurous activities in the outdoors to be included in the school curriculum. Through these activities courage and the ability to overcome fears would be developed. In addition, Marshall hoped that the encouragement of a positive use of leisure time through adventurous activities would distract boys from engaging in anti-social behaviour or watching unsuitable films at the cinema. Outdoor activities were promoted as an ideal means of channelling youthful energy away from personally and socially destructive activities. The predominant conception of education in the outdoors was that a combination of the natural environment and challenging physical activities engendered experiences that were more than simply distracting, they were morally refining and purifying. Parker & Meldrum (1973) suggest that:

> By the middle 1950s…the principle of character training through exposure to an unfamiliar and hostile environment had gained a wide acceptance. Various education acts in Britain had created and continued to promote a climate of opinion which made it possible for these innovations to be copied and adapted in the public sector of British education. (p. 46)

7 Albemarle and Wolfenden

The 1960s witnessed a number of government reports that contributed to the promotion and growth of outdoor education. The *Report on the Youth Service in England and Wales* (Ministry of Education, 1960), commonly referred to as the Albemarle Report, and the Report of the Wolfenden Committee, *Sport and the Community* (CCPR, 1960), marked an increasing emphasis on making provision for young people's leisure time. Developing opportunities and structures for physical recreation in the outdoors formed an important element in government thinking.

The Albemarle Report made recognition of the value of challenging outdoor activities. The report recommended that outdoor activities should be encouraged through improved facilities, an organised coaching scheme, the establishment of regional pools of equipment and the creation of junior sections within established clubs (Parker & Meldrum, 1973, p. 50). The Wolfenden Committee Report concurred that adventure and challenge in the outdoor environment were excellent for young people. Both reports reflect a concern to direct and educate young people towards positive use of leisure time. This should be seen in the context of the abolition of national service and the intention to raise the school leaving age to 16, acts which would result in an increase of young men not yet engaged in the work force and with time on their hands. In terms of social stability this was perceived as a potentially threatening combination of events. In addition, Houllihan (1991, p. 88) states that the ideological context of the report was one of social control of young people through sport and recreation in response to a sense of dislocation as a result of post-war social and industrial changes. Playing sport was considered by the report as an antidote to the development of criminal habits, a means of improving the nation's health, and of instilling positive social values.

> … if more young people had opportunities for playing games fewer of them would develop criminal habits … [and would develop qualities] valuable both to the individual and to society such as courage, endurance, self-discipline, determination [and] self-reliance. (CCPR, 1960, pp. 4-5)

In reference to mountain sports the Wolfenden Report comments that an element of danger is often an integral and unavoidable part of the activities, indeed is part of the attraction of such activities. Interestingly, the report also specifically comments that danger is not something that is enjoyed for its own sake but that the pleasure of the activities is to be found in avoiding danger through the mastery of skill, technique and experience. This could be taken to reflect a change of emphasis away from physical training in the outdoors where physical danger is sought as a vehicle for preparation for war and towards mastery of sporting activities for their intrinsic enjoyment albeit with the strong motivation of social engineering through education for leisure. The influence of the Wolfenden Committee continues to be seen to the present day. As a result of its recommendations coaching schemes administered by

independent national governing bodies, albeit with structured links to government ministries, were developed for sporting activities. The qualifications administered by these coaching schemes are those that, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Section 4, Nicol (2002b) argued became the yardstick of professional standing against which instructors and teachers working in the outdoors came to measure themselves.

As a consequence of the Albemarle and Wolfenden Reports the link between outdoor activities, or outdoor pursuits as they were more commonly referred to at the time, and mainstream government policy was strengthened. In these two reports can be seen the use of outdoor activities, within the context of recreational sport, as a means to direct and educate young people into certain behaviours and the adoption of certain values.

8 Newsom and Brunton

The 1963 Newsom Report, *Half our future*, published by the Central Advisory Council on Education (CACE) was commissioned to consider the educational provision in England for pupils of average to below average academic ability between the ages of 13 and 16. The report endorsed the value of extra-curricular experiences and made specific mention of camps, expeditions and residential courses. Notably, a residential experience is mentioned as being significant for all pupils, not just those of average or below average ability, to whom the report specifically refers

> … an extra-curricular development which a great deal of our evidence confirms is specially significant for our pupils … is … the experience of living away from home for a short period, in a fairly small and intimate group, and in a novel environment … variously achieved through school journeys and expeditions, camps, or residential courses of different types, lasting, generally, anything from a weekend to a month … We do not doubt their value for all pupils. (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Section 149)

The report goes on to specify that,

> By introducing boys and girls to fresh surroundings, and helping them to acquire new knowledge or try their hand at new skills they provide an educational stimulus. Many pupils … seem to come back with a new zest for everything they do … For the pupils who come from difficult home backgrounds and live in socially deprived neighbourhoods, these can be opportunities of special help … For some, the mere fact of abstracting them

from their normal surroundings is of great significance. (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Sections 151-152)

Many virtues of extra-curricular activities are cited in the report: for individual pupils, the school as a community, and for teachers. One example of a progressive element of the report is evidenced by the recommendation that the sports and activities available to young people should be diversified. This was in recognition of the fact that traditional activities were not a source of enjoyment or self-esteem building for all pupils. The report notes the value of the work of outdoor pursuits in schools and organisations outside of school:

> One of the most striking developments in recent years has been the increase of informal outdoor pursuits offered to young people … these have proved to have a wide appeal … because, although challenging, they do not necessarily require the highly co-ordinated, refined skill typical of many sports and games, they may have a special value for pupils with whom we are concerned … These out-of-school extensions of physical activity would have the advantage of introducing pupils to recreational interests which can readily be carried forward into adult life. (CACE, 1963, Ch. 17, Section 410)

The reference to outdoor activities as recreational interests that might be continued into adult life is congruent with points made by the Albemarle and Wolfenden Committees regarding bridging the gap between young people leaving school and taking up membership of adult organisations. There was a concern that many young people were not continuing with any form of physical recreation beyond school and that this was negatively affecting their health and their social integration into the adult world.

The progressive nature of the recommendation in the report to broaden the range of available activities is undermined somewhat by the association made between lower academic ability and less refined motor skills. Of significance for outdoor education as an emergent discipline is the explicit statement that outdoor pursuits require a lower level of skill and co-ordination than many other sports and games and therefore is particularly suitable for pupils of lower academic performance. This demonstrates an ignorance of the cognitive and physical abilities required for outdoor activities. Parker and Meldrum (1973, p. 35) note that although the Newsom Report (and the Brunton Report in Scotland discussed below) were important in

raising the profile of outdoor education, the association the reports made between lower academic ability pupils and outdoor education can also be argued to have done outdoor education a disservice. However, the Newsom Report did make the recommendation that a survey should be carried out by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with local authorities to establish what provision currently existed, what demand there was for provision and what the cost of providing a residential experience for all pupils would be, with a recommendation that the final two years at school were a particularly appropriate time for this (CACE, 1963, para. 156).

In Scotland, a Scottish Education Department (SED) White Paper entitled *Technical Education in Scotland - The Pattern for the Future* (SED, 1961) mapped out the future of technical education in Scotland. The purpose of the White Paper was to investigate how the Scottish education system should adapt to the needs of modern industry and commerce and also to the changing face of secondary education. One recommendation of this White Paper was to set up a Working Party to look into improving links between schools and further education. This resulted in the Brunton Report, *From School to Further Education* (SED, 1963). As with the Newsom Report the focus was on pupils in the average to below average category of academic attainment who were approaching school leaving age. As noted above with regard to the continuance of sporting participation beyond school this transition age between school and work, childhood and adulthood was seen as important not only for reasons of employment and the economy but also for reasons of social harmony. The pupils to whom the report referred were considered to have poor motivation for and commitment to school and were therefore a cause of concern regarding their ability to integrate into adult and working life (Hartley, 1988, p. 64).

The Brunton Report was commissioned to recommend ways of bringing about closer links between schools, further education, and industry. The report recommended that a major way that this would be addressed was through more vocational training in schools (Richardson, 1966, pp. 97-98). This would help address the issues of social integration mentioned above and also changes in education related to the proposed raising of the school leaving age to 16. The SED (1963) recognised that a different

approach was necessary in order to ignite "interest and enthusiasm" (pp. 9-10) amongst pupils whose lack of success under the current system had resulted in negative attitudes towards education and that this negativity was impacting their adult lives and employment opportunities. The report (SED, 1963) makes specific mention of the government's concerns regarding the social implications of the inadequacies of the education system:

> As a consequence, many of these boys and girls lack a sense of security; this becomes as often as not the key to the whole pattern of behaviour, the background to their thoughts and actions, and lays them open to the less creditable influences of modern society. It also forces them often into undesirable kinds of group associations, leading into the gang with its conventions, loyalties and which can be quite anti-social. (p. 52)

As with the Newsom Report, it was acknowledged that the curriculum for these pupils had hitherto been regarded by government as virtually irrelevant and so the SED (1963, pp. 37-39) recommended the development of a curriculum that was more practical with a pedagogical approach that was more active and participatory. As in England, a greater diversity in physical education was recommended, as was a better understanding of the environment. Hopkins and Putnam (1993, p. 47) argue that the Brunton Report was influential in inspiring a significant expansion in adventure education in Scotland in subsequent years.

Other documents also bear witness to moves to promote field studies and environmental education. The *Primary Education in Scotland* (SED, 1965) memorandum and in England and Wales the Plowden Report, *Children and their Primary Schools* (CACE, 1967), promoted encouraging interest, understanding and study of the natural environment and argued that a basic acquaintance with animals and plants is an essential part of being educated. As well as being a subject of interest for its own sake the outdoor environment was promoted as a means of fostering interest in other curriculum subjects. Exploration of the countryside was recommended for both urban and rural schoolchildren.

9 The growth of statutory outdoor education provision

As the 1960s progressed the proliferation of residential outdoor education centres demonstrates the way that increasing numbers of local authorities brought together the various strands of government recommendations with regards to the value of residential experiences, outdoor activities and study of the outdoor environment. Outdoor education experienced a marked growth of provision in the statutory education system in the 1960s and 1970s, which Higgins (2002), in referring to Scotland, although the same was true of England and Wales, describes as the "heyday of outdoor educational provision" (p. 155). A survey of short stay and outdoor education residential provision in England and Wales (Department of Education and Science, 1983) refers to approximately 400 non-specific-use day and residential centres, 300 field study centres, and 500 outdoor pursuits centres administered by local authorities in addition to numerous huts, cottages, disused railway stations, village schools, and camping facilities used for similar purposes. The survey also points to the existence of a range of voluntary, private, and commercial organisations offering educational experiences in the outdoors.

Despite high levels of provision that demonstrate substantial investment in terms of finance and human resources, Nicol (2002a) provides a clear account of the somewhat confused and "tenuous statutory support" (pp. 38-39) for outdoor education during the 1960s. The jarring incongruence of high levels of provision combined with unclear institutional support can only be explained by the simple fact that it seems that this was a period when robust and explicit justifications were not required in education, or at least for this form of education. The aims or purposes of outdoor education and its exact role in a pupil's education were not explicitly documented or justified beyond the general terms laid out above. Outdoor education was generally seen as being a vehicle for a range of possible learning aims. Referring to the 1960s and 1970s the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC, 1988) notes that, "the chief concern was to introduce the skills or knowledge that would eventually lead to participants being self sufficient in leisure activities" (p. 12). Cheesmond and Yates (1979, p. 5) provide a contradictory statement suggesting that the role of outdoor centres during the 1960s in the UK was

to blend the threefold aims of providing young people with the skills to be usefully employed in leisure time along with aspects of personal and social development and some degree of environmental education. They suggest that the relative prominence of each element within the outdoor experience would vary from centre to centre.

It is undoubtedly true that Newsom and Brunton (Hopkins & Putnam, 1993, p. 47) were influential in sparking a significant expansion of outdoor education within the statutory education system, particularly in the form of adventurous activities. It is also true that these two reports firmly established the concept of using adventurous outdoor activities as a remedial treatment for a swathe of pupils classed as being of lower academic achievement. Diminishing the supposed level of intelligence and physical ability required for success and achievement in outdoor activities marked this element of outdoor education as a lesser and less important educational endeavour within the education system as a whole. Similarly, the association between outdoor activities and young people who are supposedly prone to criminality, and the classification of outdoor and residential experiences as extra-curricular – although promoting a certain value – did not establish outdoor education as an integral and indispensable element of the education system. During the 1960s and 1970s this was not problematic and outdoor education flourished (Higgins, 2002). However, the extra-curricular status of outdoor education left it in a vulnerable position when the political and financial climate changed during the 1980s and 1990s. Halls' (1997) analysis of the situation in Strathclyde provides a detailed example of the changes and cuts in outdoor education provision that occurred during this period.

The form of outdoor education that was established within local authority facilities by the 1960s was heavily influenced by traditions of character building and the need to educate young people into acceptable leisure time pursuits. This is unsurprising given the background of the majority of those in positions of influence over educational reform in the late- and post-war period. McCulloch (1994) describes the majority of officials working on the Education Act 1944 as "the self-securing elite group in ultimate control of education, imbued with common values arising from

their own public school education" (p. 14). Cook (1999, p. 157) points to the classical education of the Chair of the Norwood Committee, Sir Cyril Norwood, and paints him as a firm believer in the public and grammar school traditions. John Newsom, author of the Newsom Report, was the education officer at Hertfordshire in 1943 when Kurt Hahn's County Badge Scheme, precursor to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, was trialled in one of the county's schools (Cook, 1999, p. 171). Jack Longland was deputy education officer to Newsom at Hertfordshire before moving to become chief education officer in Derbyshire and responsible for the creation of White Hall Centre in 1950. Jim Hogan, first warden of the first Outward Bound School in 1941 had previously been heavily involved with Hahn's County Badge Scheme. At a later point he worked in the West Riding of Yorkshire promoting outdoor education in schools and residential outdoor centres (Cook, 1991, p. 171). Nicol (2002a, p. 35) traces the appointment of Ralph Blain, the first principal at Scotland's first local authority outdoor education centre, Benmore. Blain came from a background with Outward Bound and developed a programme at Benmore that closely resembled the Outward Bound model. Benmore was a Lothian local authority facility and John Cook, Lothian depute director of education who was chiefly responsible for establishing Benmore, had previously worked in Yorkshire and had been strongly influenced by Jim Hogan. Given these few examples of the closely intertwined relationships between influential actors in the emergent field of outdoor education, the historical and recent military influences on outdoor education, and a still influential establishment rooted in the traditions of public school life it is easy to see how the character training strain of outdoor education became the dominant theme in statutory educational provision.

10 Summary

This chapter has outlined the historical and educational context of outdoor education in the UK in the period preceding the establishment of Ardentinny. The common and constant thread running through the chapter is the demonstration of a belief based on observation, instinct, and spiritual or philosophical understanding amongst a range of sections of society that the natural outdoor environment is a powerful context for learning. In considering the development of outdoor education Parker & Meldrum

(1973) state that there is an underlying "awareness of the potential of the countryside as a vehicle for education in its widest sense, physical, social, academic" (p. 37). The dominant form and aims of outdoor education ebb and flow to reflect the dominant social mores and practices. Amongst other examples it is clear that in times of war the concept of using adventurous outdoor activities for character training becomes prominent and in times of social change focusing on the sporting aspect of outdoor activities as a means of controlling the perceived problem of anti-social youth behaviour comes to the fore.

This is not to suggest that the evolution of outdoor education should be considered as a linear progression, nor that more liberal and progressive influences were not still present in the 1960s. Programmes at Glenmore Lodge catered for a wide range of client groups of varying ages and provided training in field studies and outdoor activities so that individuals could "pass on their knowledge to those who have never experienced the simple pleasures of country life" (Loader, 1952, p. 26). Camp schools and residential schools with recuperative aims for pupils still existed and Nicol (2002a, p. 36) cites the work of R.F. MacKenzie as one example of outdoor educational endeavours in schools that were directly linked to subject curricula and based on an experiential pedagogy.

Having provided the context from which Ardentinny emerges the following chapter uses archival literature and interviews to consider more specifically the nature of outdoor education provided at Ardentinny.

Chapter 4: Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre

1. Introduction

As highlighted in Chapter 1 there is limited research that contributes to understanding outdoor education experiences from the participants' perspectives. Gibbs (2007, p. 4) states that research concerned with providing insight into unusual or previously ignored situations often utilises a qualitative approach and particularly the technique of thick description (Geertz, 1973; Stake, 2003) in order to provide detailed contextual information. Thick description portrays the subject of inquiry in all its complexity ranging from simple descriptions of events to insights on the intentions and strategies of the human actors. Providing such detailed contextual information facilitates understanding of the various inter-related facets that comprise the situation under investigation and provides a foundation which contributes to ensuring that the analysis process is rooted in the lived world of the area of inquiry (Denzin, 1989, p. 101). In addition, Lincoln & Guba (1985, p. 359) argue that a thick description benefits the reader by facilitating his or her ability to make connections and comparisons between the research area of inquiry and other settings. Furthermore, and in this particular case, developing understanding of the way that the experience at Ardentinny was framed for the students also provides an additional perspective when considering the reflections of the students. This chapter builds on the historical, educational, and political context established in Chapter 3 by narrowing the focus more specifically onto Ardentinny. A thick description of Ardentinny is communicated through four 'tales'. These tales are primarily structured around interview data from education officers, Ardentinny management, Ardentinny instructors, head teachers and teachers but also draw significantly on archival data and outdoor education literature. As stated in the previous chapter, all interviewees are referred to by a pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality.

Section 2, 'The education officers' tale', provides an account of the creation of Ardentinny as one element of the implementation of the Brunton Report by the County of Renfrew local authority. Interviews with Renfrew County education officers from the period who were involved at a strategic level in realising and

maintaining Ardentinny as an educational establishment, supplemented by archival documents and education memoranda provide the data to establish the details of the motivation for the creation of Ardentinny and the establishment of its operational philosophy. Section 3, 'The managers' tale', narrows the focus to provide an account from the perspective of Ardentinny managerial staff. Interviewees comprise the centre principal who was in post throughout the lifetime of the centre and the two members of staff who held the post of depute principal at different stages. Section 4, 'The instructors' tale', presents the perspectives of the instructional staff, providing an important insight into what sort of experience the instructors endeavoured to deliver and what they hoped students would gain from their time at Ardentinny. Section 5, 'The teachers' tale', uses interviews with head teachers and teachers of a number of schools that sent pupils to Ardentinny, to provide perspective on what they considered students experienced at Ardentinny and what effects, if any, they felt it had on students. The four tales add further layers to the montage of perspectives developed in the previous chapter. The rich contextual information within the tales provides an understanding of the nature of Ardentinny as an educational institution, locates Ardentinny within the field of outdoor education, and facilitates a nuanced and subtle interpretation of the participants' accounts that follow in Chapters 6-9.

This chapter makes substantial use of archival documents that are cited as personal communications. The documents cited in this way form part of a collection of letters, memoranda, educational literature, and reports that the principal at Ardentinny had maintained. When Ardentinny ceased to function as a local authority outdoor education centre in 1996 the principal of Ardentinny entrusted this unique collection of documents to the outdoor education department at the University of Edinburgh.

2. The education officers' tale

2.1 Introduction

In a discussion of subject and curriculum change in schools Goodson (1993) argues that individuals and groups play an influential role as well as historical, ideological, and political factors. Similarly, Cook (1999) points out that between the creation of legislation and policy at national level and implementation at local authority level

lies the scope for a range of interpretations. With this in mind, and having established the political, historical, and ideological influences on the development of outdoor education in the UK in Chapter 3, this section draws on data from interviews with education officers involved with Ardentinny in the years prior to and following the Centre becoming operational. The interviews, in combination with archival documents, provide an insight into the particular circumstances of the establishment of Ardentinny as a residential outdoor education centre at a time of reform in secondary education in Scotland and more widely in the UK. The education officers interviewed include the Assistant to the Director of Education responsible for implementing the recommendations of the Brunton Report, an education officer whose remit included responsibility for Ardentinny in the 1980s as part of Strathclyde Regional Council, and four education advisers involved with Ardentinny at various different times. The role of an education adviser was to advise the local authority education department on what was happening in schools, which in this context included Ardentinny, thereby informing policy development and also to promulgate good practice amongst schools.

The particular relevance of the education officers' tale, in addition to Goodson's (1993) and Cook's (1999) point is underlined by that fact that although the development of outdoor education provision can be related to the reports, education documents, and legislation discussed in Chapter 3 none of these instruments constituted a mandatory requirement for the provision of outdoor education, residential or otherwise. The documents could probably be best described as encouraging or enabling and providing general guidelines for the practice of an educational endeavour which had gained popular credence. As a result, the development of outdoor education provision and practice in the UK was not uniform at any level, neither nationally nor locally, and evolved into a loosely defined variety of practices lacking an overarching philosophy (Nicol, 2002a). Halls (1997, p. 18) notes that at the time of the creation of Strathclyde Regional Council in 1975 from six smaller councils the newly created local authority boasted more than 25 outdoor education establishments fulfilling various different aims in response to various different initiatives.

2.2 Change and reform in Scottish secondary education

The 1960s marked a period of change in Scottish education as educational reforms of the post-war period continued. During these years the school leaving age was raised to 16 years, the segregated system of junior and senior secondary schools was replaced in favour of a comprehensive system, and the teaching profession was rationalised. Although the Brunton and Newsom Reports were retrograde in certain aspects such as the association between lower academic performance and less refined motor skills, and assumptions of female pupils' interests revolving around motherhood and homemaking (Cook, 2001), much of their content was, nevertheless, progressive. The central aim was to bring focus, resources and strategic thinking to bear on the pupils who had hitherto been relatively neglected. There were other significant issues to address in Scottish education during this period, not least a shortage of certificated teachers. Whilst the senior secondary schools, into which the more academically able students were streamed, had difficulty in providing qualified teaching staff for certain subjects the junior secondary schools, for the less academically able, commonly had a high percentage of uncertificated teaching staff. This skills shortage impinged on the content that staff were able to teach and therefore the curriculum that the school was able to offer its pupils. There was, therefore, a move towards raising standards by creating a general teaching council to oversee teacher certification and qualification. In 1965 the General Teaching Council for Scotland was established as a result of the Teaching Council (Scotland) Act. In addition to these changes the publication of Circular 600 by the Scottish Education Department in 1965 began the reorganisation of Scottish secondary schools into a comprehensive system and the Brunton Report initiated the raising of the minimum school leaving age to 16.

It seems that in the midst of such change and seeking of a new direction for education there existed significant opportunity for innovation. The record of the Commons Sitting of 17th February 1965 (Hansard, 1965) states that twenty-nine of the thirty-five Scottish education authorities had submitted proposals for implementing the Brunton recommendations and it is noted without prejudice that some of the proposals were of a more 'experimental' nature. Nicol (2002a) refers to

the post-war period up until the late 1960s as a "rich seedbed for sowing new ideas about education" (p. 40). Initiatives involving outdoor education took firm root during this period.

2.3 Renfrew County, the Brunton Report, and Ardentinny

Hugh Fairlie was promoted to Director of Education of Renfrew County in 1964 after having served seven years as Deputy Director of Education in the same department. He remained in post until 1975, the year that Renfrewshire, along with a number of other local authorities, were aggregated to form Strathclyde Regional Council. In Fairlie's obituary in the Independent newspaper Member of Parliament Tam Dalyell remarks on the Director of Education's reputation for commitment to good teaching for all pupils regardless of academic ability and provides the following comments on his leadership during the years following the Brunton Report.

> That Renfrewshire made some of the most effective arrangements in Britain for rendering the raising of the school leaving age worthwhile was largely due to Fairlie's conviction that every child, however academically endowed, had rights. Fairlie focused the minds of his colleagues in developing comprehensive schools of a kind to suit the needs of the predominantly working-class communities in the shipbuilding areas of the west of Scotland … In the Fairlie years, Renfrewshire became famous for its outdoor educational centres. (Dalyell, 14th July, 1993)

Dalyell's comments not only refer to the nature of the individual directing education in the county and therefore the ethos one might expect to see reflected in provision and practice, but also on a point that might easily be overlooked forty years later. Raising the school leaving age from 15 to 16 created a range of issues related to resources and buildings to accommodate the extra students but it also raised a bigger question; what did these young people need and how was that to be effectively taught? To implement the recommendations of the Brunton Report the County of Renfrew took the step of offering the Deputy Head of one of the county's secondary schools a three-year secondment to the post of Assistant to the Director of Education. This post became active in 1965. Interview data from discussions with the holder of the post, referred to hereafter as Alan, illuminate the process and philosophy behind the creation of Ardentinny.

2.3.1 Outdoor experiential learning in the school curriculum

Prior to moving to a comprehensive system, secondary schooling in Scotland consisted of a bipartite system of junior secondary schools that had no curriculum or examined leaving certificate, and senior secondary schools that had a curriculum and examinations that allowed for progression to university and professional occupations.

> Alan: The junior secondary schools had no end result, no certificate at the end so the curriculum was left to the individual schools to devise. There was a great mixture. Some were very good, some were not so good and the Brunton Report really was about how to address this problem, how to make a more relevant curriculum for these people.

The pupils of the junior secondary schools whose education the Brunton Report addresses are estimated by Jacobson (1962, p. 208) to account for 70% of the Scottish school population at the time. One of the ways this significant task of developing a more relevant curriculum was addressed was by gathering examples of existing good practice and disseminating these amongst schools with encouragement to implement similar practices. Cook (1999, pp. 167-168) provides an example of how outdoor education was often integrated as part of project learning with pupils at secondary modern schools – the English and Welsh equivalent of the Scottish junior secondary school. Basing lessons around a school canoeing and sailing club led to integrated projects in woodwork, metalwork, needlework, mathematics, geography, history, English, art, science, and technical drawing. This experiential and integrated approach reflects recommendations made in the Hadow Reports of 1926 and 1931 to make schooling more experiential and cross-curricular. It also reflects the aspirations of *The New Secondary Education* (Ministry of Education, 1947) regarding the ability of secondary modern schools to create the most interesting and interactive ways of working.

Alan describes the development of cross-curricular project learning in Renfrew County as a response to the Brunton Report.

> Alan: A number of schools, they were building dinghies or canoes so we … tried to spread that idea around … there's no point in building a dinghy or a canoe unless the kids could sail it so we had to find people who would act as

instructors, we had very often to train teachers in these skills ... PE [teachers] we said to them, "Work with [the] technical [teachers]". So we organised courses for the PE teachers to get qualifications to take these kids out. You know, some of the PE people [then] said, "We would rather do other things with them." So they get into orienteering, hillwalking and so on.

From this extract it is evident that before the establishment of Ardentinny a form of outdoor education provision, as part of an evolving, integrated, experiential programme of work within the junior secondary schools already existed within schools. This approach to learning is congruent with Dewey's (1938) definition of experiential education wherein the foremost priority "of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (p. 28). Dewey (1938) conceived of good education as being a continuous process where each individual learning experience "arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future" (p. 38). Experiential learning is commonly accepted within the field of outdoor education as the most desirable pedagogical approach (Barnes & Sharp, 2004, p. 5; Higgins, Loynes, & Crowther, 1997, p. 6). In the case of the example given above pupils are faced with the challenge of building a boat which then leads naturally into a subsequent episode of learning the necessary skills to sail or paddle that boat. It is notable that Alan remarks on the self-evident logic of this continuity of educational experiences that is congruent with Dewey's (1938) philosophy of experiential education and illuminating in terms of Alan's approach to his educational responsibilities in Renfrewshire. Wurdinger (1997) suggests that application of learned principles – in this case sailing or paddling the boat – whether using an experiential or traditional pedagogy is crucial to successful learning.

2.3.2 Developing high quality outdoor education provision

The extent of the proliferation of outdoor education provision in the UK during this period is quite remarkable. A number of local examples underline this point: Edinburgh City Council opened Benmore Outdoor Centre in 1966 and began work on a second centre, Lagganlia, near Aviemore in 1969; Ayrshire converted Glaisnock

from an agricultural college into a residential centre in 1973; in 1974 Dunbartonshire opened Arrochar Outdoor Centre and Glasgow City Council opened two centres, Blairvadach and Faskally. These centres, all inspired by the concept of education for leisure (Halls, 1997, p. 16), were in addition to numerous pre-existing residential centres. Alan states that one of the main justifications for the establishment of Ardentinny was a commitment to providing a high quality learning experience for the pupils involved in already existing outdoor education programmes.

> Alan: It was felt that if we were taking people away for canoeing and so on ...
> with, well it was well-intentioned amateurs you could call it, I mean they were
> … it was a secondary thing in canoeing qualification [that the teachers had], it
> wasn't a very high qualification … [so it was felt that] we'd better have
> somewhere they can go so we persuaded the committee to look for an outdoor
> centre.

Recognising that schoolteachers were not able to provide the expertise necessary to support the learning in outdoor activities Alan persuaded the County of Renfrew education committee to support the idea of establishing an outdoor education centre. Although support was given to the project in principle the committee was unable to provide any financial backing. This was eventually sourced from a reluctant Scottish Education Department.

> Interviewer: How did you manage to persuade the Scottish Education
> Department to the importance of it [the creation of Ardentinny]?
> Alan: Well, I was there to implement Brunton, Brunton was a SED [Scottish
> Education Department] report. Brunton didn't mention much about outdoor
> education centres but he did mention widening the curriculum and giving a
> wee experience of outdoor life so I said, "Well you've put out this report,
> you've recommended it, can you not do it as a pilot scheme? See what we learn
> out of this and we'll do a national report at the end so that other people could
> learn from it. That report was never asked for at the end but that's how it was
> done, how I persuaded them.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1945 made no explicit mention of outdoor education, indeed the term had not been coined at the time, yet is considered as the legislation that provided the opportunity for outdoor education to develop and flourish (Cook,

1999; Nicol, 2002a). In the same way the Brunton Report made no specific mention of outdoor education but the report's general terms relating to the use of the outdoors for educational purposes were used to persuade the Scottish Education Department to release the funds necessary to create a residential outdoor education centre.

After a fruitless period searching for a suitable building to purchase and convert into an outdoor education centre – a common practice among local education authorities wishing to create residential outdoor education facilities at the time – a plot of land owned by a local farmer became available for sale in the village of Ardentinny. The decision was made Renfrew County education committee to purchase the land and build a purpose-made outdoor education centre. The final construction consisted of a typical 1970s style, rectangular shaped flat-roofed building. The long side of the building faced the shore of Loch Long approximately 100 metres away. The driveway led from the shore-side road to a parking area in front of the building and a centrally placed entrance way. Windows, bracketed above and below by wood panelling, lined the building on each side giving a view out across Loch Long to the Rosneath peninsula approximately two kilometres away. To the north east, the aptly named Loch Long stretched away for close to 20 kilometres to come within touching distance of Loch Lomond – separated only by a narrow land bridge. To the south the loch opened up into the Firth of Clyde with the populated areas of Renfrew County bounding its southern shore. Behind the Centre rose the slopes of Stronchullin Hill and Beinn Ruadh to heights of 548 metres and 664 metres respectively. Inside the Centre the ground floor consisted of day-use rooms such as the dining room, recreation rooms, classrooms equipped for field studies, and staff rooms. Above, the first floor was effectively divided at the central point into two wings – the girls' dormitory on one side and boys' dormitory on the other. Each bedroom accommodated four pupils in two bunk beds. The base of each bunk bed had two large drawers to store clothing and personal effects. The Centre was built into a small rise in the land which allowed for a basement with walk-in outdoor access to be included in the design. This area was created to be the access point for students returning from activities outdoors. Equipment and clothing could be washed, hung, dried, and stored here in order to reduce the wear and tear on the main floors above.

Overall, the building was thoughtfully designed to function as an outdoor education centre and provide a comfortable level of accommodation.

Outdoor education formed only one small part of a raft of initiatives to implement the recommendations of the Brunton Report in Renfrew County. Other examples include the creation of teacher centres to develop curricula and produce teaching resources, the creation of careers programmes with dedicated careers advisers for students, and the implementation of work placement programmes. Outdoor education was one element of a much larger evolving programme aimed at improving the educational experience of the Brunton Report target pupils and Ardentinny was one element of that commitment to outdoor education experiences. The establishment of Ardentinny as an outdoor education centre was not an isolated venture – it was integrated into a wider pedagogical vision.

2.3.3 Education for leisure and outdoor activities

In further considering the reasons and motivations behind the establishment of Ardentinny a number of connected aims linked to the use of outdoor activities as a form of education emerge. The previous sub-section outlines how outdoor activities were used in curriculum initiatives inspired by the Brunton Report. However, outdoor activities were also seen in terms of the education for leisure mandate espoused by the Education (Scotland) Act 1945 and more explicitly the Wolfenden and Albemarle Reports. In conjunction with the point made above by Alan regarding the desirability of high quality outdoor education instruction for pupils it was considered that to promote leisure time participation in outdoor activities students would need more than a limited experience of paddling a kayak or sailing a dinghy as part of a boat-building project in a technical class in school. It was envisaged that a residential outdoor centre would provide the opportunity for high quality experiences of outdoor activities over a substantial and continuous period of time.

> Alan: We wished to encourage people to carry on with outdoor activities, not just flavour it and then walk away and forget about it. We were trying to get them convinced that this was a good lifestyle, something you should be involved in [and to do that] you've really got to expose them to the very best …

> if you're going to expose people to it [outdoor activities] you want them to be 24-hours a day involvement. A week, well four and a half days really, that gave them the experience.

The architect's brief (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 1969), drawn up by the County of Renfrew Education Committee in March 1969, lists the objectives of Ardentinny:

> To introduce young people to a wide choice of outdoor activities and provide them with adequate opportunities to assist them to find enjoyment in outdoor activities of their choice which they may pursue during their leisure.
>
> To provide for young people pursuing courses in outdoor activities in their club, organisation or school a source of intermediate and more advanced instruction.
>
> To encourage all organised youth groups to introduce their members to the outdoors through camping on an organised basis.
>
> To provide a centre of residence for organised groups of adolescents and adults who wish to participate in specialist courses of instruction which may be organised from time to time, e.g. Pre-university study groups, County Youth Orchestra section tutorials, In-service Teaching courses and also leisure time courses such as canoeing, sailing, mountaineering, fishing, field studies, etc.
>
> In all aspects of the work carried out at the Centre, quality rather than quantity will be the important factor.

The architect's brief, evidently drawn up prior to building work beginning, gives an insight into the expectations of the role Ardentinny would fulfil. At this point it seems that the primary role was to be one of education for leisure whilst making provision for other educational uses such as the project learning schemes mentioned earlier. Included elsewhere in the architect's brief is a statement referring to the increasing number of education authorities using and establishing residential outdoor centres. It is noted that such centres can "add a new dimension to the lives of those who have attended courses" (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 1969), and remarks that there exists two broad categories of centre – field studies centres and adventure activities centres – whilst acknowledging that it is possible for a single establishment to perform both functions. From the objectives listed above it might appear that Ardentinny was earmarked to operate in the latter category. However, a conversation with Alan (personal communication, February 14, 2010), the Assistant to the Director of Education, clarified that it was always the intention that Ardentinny would have a substantial provision of field studies. The funds to

implement this element were not available in the early planning stages of Ardentinny which explains the minimal reference to field studies in the architect's brief. However, as the planning process unfolded from 1969 onwards, the integration of field studies as an integral part of the objectives of Ardentinny evolved. Despite the rather prosaic language of this document the reference to adding a new dimension to young people's lives seems to hint at expectations that residential outdoor education would provide experiences beyond simply learning a potential leisure time activity or fieldwork skills.

Two other examples, both of which include outdoor activities, demonstrate the commitment of Renfrewshire to the concept of education for leisure. Firstly, prior to the establishment of Ardentinny, a wide programme of physical education had been established. In the third or fourth year of secondary education, students engaged in physical education during the last two periods of a particular school day each week. Students were able to choose from a variety of activities that expanded on the traditional range of team sports normally associated with physical education, the hope being that this would increase the chances of finding something that interested them and to which they might develop an enduring attachment. It is notable that decades later this same principle of broadening provision beyond traditional team sports (HMIE 1995; 2001; Scottish Executive, 2004) is promoted as crucial to widening participation in sporting and physical activities. *Sport 21 2003-2007: The National Strategy for Sport* (Sportscotland, 2003) identifies widening participation as the primary strategic aim of the Scottish government with regard to sport. However, not all schools were enthusiastic in implementing this initiative as some head-teachers were less inclined to consider such initiatives as educationally important.

> Alan: You've really got to … convince your head-teachers that this is part of education because there are a number that are very narrow focused. There are others that have got great vision … We managed to persuade all the junior secondary schools and then we got the senior secondaries involved … So we had football, hockey but in addition to that they had bowls, golf and other activities. Some in Greenock went down to the Royal West of Scotland Boat

Club and did dinghy sailing and there were canoes as well we got down there eventually.

Secondly, Renfrewshire developed a system of organised extra-curricular sports participation, often referred to as the 'centralised schemes', which pupils from across the county could access. Coaching in a range of sporting activities from swimming to volleyball to skiing was available to school pupils at minimal cost. Depending on the activity coaching would take place on week-nights, weekends, and whole weeks during the summer holidays. These schemes were staffed primarily by teachers on a voluntary basis although a nominal retainer fee was paid. Halls (1997, p. 17) states that these schemes were supported by the Community Education Service and the local authority education department, and were founded on a sports development ideology. This consisted of the two-fold aims of facilitating continued participation beyond school and facilitating social integration into the adult world. Older students were encouraged to help with the coaching of younger students and where possible the use of venues was timetabled such that adult sports clubs would use the same venues immediately after student groups in order to encourage socialisation across age groups and facilitate the transition into adult club participation. Although Ardentinny was not formally integrated into this sports development structure the hope was that there would be cross-fertilisation between the two initiatives and efforts were made to ensure that links were maintained. For example, Ardentinny regularly hosted training courses for teachers involved in coaching centralised scheme activities and Ardentinny staff members regularly contributed to several of the coaching schemes. The education adviser for science (Neville) at the time of the creation of Ardentinny suggests that, although informal, the level of intentional integration between Ardentinny and other areas of educational provision was unique.

> Neville: Renfrewshire at that time had a very good set-up of Saturday morning recreational activities … So there was a strong tie-up between that and Ardentinny. If schools were involved in any outdoor activities on their own account [the Ardentinny principal] would act as an advisor about safety and organisation and so on ... So I think Renfrewshire at the time was pretty far ahead of the field. I don't think any of the other outdoor centres in Scotland run

by local authorities had anything like the depth of planning as went into Ardentinny.

A Working Party Meeting Report of 19th February 1973 (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 19th February, 1973) further describes the intended connection between Ardentinny and the centralised schemes. The report states that pupils would be advised on leaving Ardentinny to speak to their head teacher if they were interested in continuing with an activity they had experienced there. The head teacher would then endeavour to facilitate the student's continued participation through the centralised schemes. The report acknowledges that the options on offer were limited to sailing or canoeing as no structures for mountaineering or orienteering were established. This document also muses on the impact of increased interest in the centralised schemes as a result of visits to Ardentinny. It is calculated that if 5% of students per year attending Ardentinny were to show an interest in continued participation this would result in an additional 75 pupils involved in the schemes. Although the document gives no indication of whether the local authority would be able to absorb this increased level of interest it does give an insight into the estimated rate of success as regards students being inspired to continue with an activity.

Derek, a senior education officer in Renfrew Division of Strathclyde Regional Council during the 1980s refers to the particular importance of education for leisure within Strathclyde.

> Derek: A big part of the Strathclyde interest in outdoor education was of course that we're very much an urban place and we were trying to expose young people to rural pursuits, if you like … in terms of outdoor education that was one of the things we were trying to do, was to, you know it wasn't just fresh air, it was a matter of getting them out there and seeing what you can do in the countryside in terms of hills, in terms of nature activities, in terms of water activities and so on.

Derek makes an oblique reference to one of the aims of the camp schools when he refers to getting young people into the countryside for fresh air. He clarifies that

Ardentinny's aim was not to provide a recuperative facility but, amongst other objectives, to broaden pupils' awareness of the possibilities for leisure pursuits.

The implementation of initiatives as a result of the Brunton Report in the County of Renfrew indicate an approach to education that was broad and holistic echoing Geddes' (Boardman, 1978) adage of head, heart, and hand and reflecting principles of experiential education expounded upon by Dewey (1938) – the identification of educational experiences which arouse students' curiosity and which lead naturally to subsequent learning episodes. As noted above not all headteachers were enamoured by such an approach, whilst others, referred to by Alan as being of "great vision", were more sympathetic.

2.4 Ardentinny - a residential social experience

> Alan: The brief when we started, having spoken to a lot of people about what we should include … because of Renfrewshire being so close to the river and the lochs it was sailing and canoeing that were obvious candidates, [and] because of all the hills map reading and orienteering [were obvious also]. Then we started talking about things like field studies, which was a natural [obvious] choice, and we saw that as combining the biology and the geography and things like that together so these were the sort of core subjects we saw initially.

A residential centre is a significant financial investment both in capital outlay and in running costs. It is not the only model of provision that could have been employed to provide expertise to support curricular development related to the Brunton Report or programmes of education for leisure. For example, Lothian Region created a model of outdoor education provision (Cheesmond, 1979; Higgins, 2000) whereby schools had resident outdoor education teachers working with pupils during the school day and who were able to access equipment from a centralised resource base in the city. The resource base was also used to run clubs that operated in the evenings and at weekends. Four residential centres complemented this provision. The relatively low estimate of 5% of Ardentinny participants being inspired to join the centralised schemes, the fact that only two of the activities that Ardentinny delivered were represented in the schemes, and the example of other models of provision which

97

could equally address the aims previously stated, begs the question of why a local authority would invest in a residential centre. Alan described the rationale for a residential outdoor education centre in the following way.

> Alan: The residential education has got something I believe that day school doesn't have. It gets people to mix on a different relationship from a classroom. The instructor … the ethos an instructor gives is totally different from the ethos a teacher gives. They treat the youngsters differently and so you see another side to kids. Kids which in school might be a problem, he [the pupil] goes there and suddenly he's not. So, we always insisted that two teachers went with them… and that was important because these teachers saw the youngsters in a different light.

A number of education documents of the period espoused the benefits of a residential experience for personal and social development: *National Schools – Their Plan and Purpose* (as cited in Hunt, 1989, p. 28), *The New Secondary Education* (Ministry of Education, 1947, p. 16), the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963) and the Brunton Report (SED, 1963). Alan suggests that the benefits of different relationships engendered in the residential context are not restricted to the pupils but extend to teacher/student relationships also. The inference is that this leads to improved relationships and an improved educational atmosphere on return to school.

In July 1971, two years prior to the opening of Ardentinny the Scottish Education Department (SED) issued an education memorandum, Circular No. 804: *Outdoor Education and Outdoor Centres* (SED, 1971), to education authorities and other managers of schools. The document is supportive of outdoor education and acknowledges the "increasing recognition of the importance of outdoor pursuits and curricular field studies in education" (para. 1). Despite the supportive tone, the document acknowledges that demands on resources prevent any great expansion of outdoor education provision and clarifies that the recommendations should not be read as an invitation to embark on an expansion of provision. The intent, instead, was to reinforce the concept of outdoor education in schools and in residential centres as an integrated element of education at all stages of primary and secondary schooling. One point of contention that is raised in the document, based on a survey of outdoor

education facilities by HM Inspectorate, relates to a concern that less attention had been paid to social education at outdoor centres than outdoor pursuits or field studies – a balance of priorities that would reverse over the decades to come (Nicol, 2002b). The importance of "combining curricular, recreational, and social experiences in a progressive programme of outdoor education" (SED, 1971, para. 1) is strongly emphasised. It is asserted that if outdoor education is to make a meaningful contribution to pupils' education it requires structure and planning to provide a "continuous and progressive outdoor experience as an integral part of their whole educational experience, including, if possible, at least one period of residence at an outdoor centre" (SED, 1971, para. 2). An outline of what the SED meant by "continuous and progressive" is sketched out in subsequent paragraphs. It is suggested that primary pupils may be given experience in the immediate surroundings of the school and further afield on half-day or full-day field trips. It is suggested that upper primary and lower secondary pupils may benefit socially and personally from the experience of living away from home in a group and recommends that any such stay be long enough for pupils to "settle into new surroundings, study a new environment, and participate in new social experiences" (SED, 1971, para. 3).

Circular 804 (SED, 1971) is a clear indication of the SED's position on the role of outdoor education. Outdoor education is presented as encompassing outdoor activities, fieldwork, and social education and is conceived as being integrated through a progressive programme of delivery in primary and secondary schools. Nicol (2002b, p. 85) states that the document's importance lies in its explicit support for outdoor education and its contribution to a definitional understanding of outdoor education as comprising the three different elements. It is also significant in its firm statement that outdoor education, if it is to make a meaningful contribution to education, must comprise a progressive programme that is structured and integrated into students' school careers. Thus far outdoor education had not been conceived of in these terms and as Nicol (2002b, p. 86) notes this statement establishes a precedent contradicting previous conceptions of outdoor activities as being intrinsically worthwhile, a tool for building character, or a means of delivering

education for leisure. At this point it seems that the educational establishment no longer considered it sufficient to send young people out into the hills to find adventure and come back a better person or more able to use leisure time profitably; a more considered approach was required.

In sympathy with the intention of the Brunton Report to facilitate the transition between school and the work place Circular No. 804 (SED, 1971) outlines the ideal of a holistic, integrated educational experience which, it proposes, a residential experience is well placed to provide:

> In the middle years of the secondary schools the curricular, recreational and social aspects of education have too often developed separately, and there is a need to give all pupils at this stage a real experience of community living in a setting where the connections between the curriculum, recreative activities and relations with other people combine naturally. (para. 4)

Circular No. 804 (SED, 1971) points out the advantages of the greater organisational flexibility in an outdoor centre compared to a school, the benefit of smaller student numbers in encouraging less formal student/teacher relations, and the benefit of a rural location where relations between the outdoor centre and surrounding environment are more immediate and less complex than in an urban environment. The result of this combination of factors is argued to bring new meaning to living in a community. The language is reminiscent of the excerpt from the Newsom Report which follows:

> There is little doubt that many pupils benefit from these experiences in their personal and social development. This is partly the direct result of living continuously in a small community: the less able and the more diffident pupils under these circumstances are encouraged and even obliged to play a more significant part than may normally be possible in the much larger community of the whole school. And in residential, even more than in other out of school activities, pupils and teachers enjoy a closer companionship. For the pupils who come from difficult home backgrounds and live in socially deprived neighbourhoods, these can be opportunities of special help. Girls, in particular, are often desperately anxious for guidance in matters of speech and behaviour, in dealing with everyday social situations and personal relations. For some, the mere fact of abstracting them from their normal surroundings is of great significance. (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Section 152)

The following excerpts from three of the education advisers correlate closely to the statements of the two above documents. In the first instance Gary is referring to

specialised courses in geography fieldwork which would comprise of pupils from a number of different schools.

> Gary: First of all it's probably the first time they'd been away from home - giving them some sense of independence and working socially with other people in the residential situation and having to mix socially and not always get their own way but be part of a group, learning to live with other people is important, then mixing with people from different social backgrounds ... Although the comprehensive school does give you this to a certain extent … but very often the school's located in different parts of the town where there's a predominance of one particular social class … so all these kids were getting together and mixing together and you're getting bright kids from a socially poor background mixing with bright kids from the middle class background mixing together and becoming friends with each other and that was important.

As well as learning from a different peer group there was also the hope that learning would occur as a result of contact with a different sort of authority figure within the educational sphere.

> Neville: We were hoping that youngsters would … get very good role models from the instructors … and they would be taught, not to become mountaineers, but how to enjoy the outdoors ... they'd be taught all the safety techniques so they'd come away from Ardentinny with a basic introduction to outdoor activities of one sort or another or fieldwork and they'd also have had the experience of living together in a residential background. There's no distractions round about so it was very much they were thrown in with themselves ... they would just live together for a week and for some youngsters who hadn't been away from home much it would probably be quite an interesting and informative experience ... Basically we wanted people to learn to get on with each other ... it's all part and parcel of helping them to become mature people, able to take sensible decisions … So it was all part and parcel of making better-rounded people really.

The two excerpts above provide examples of intended learning outcomes of the explicit content of the outdoor activity and fieldwork programmes. There were also

examples of the intended personal and social education outcomes through the teaching of group living skills.

> Derek: If you were at the end of the table you had to clear the table over to the hatch and the staff would take it. That was all planned in as part of the [educational experience]. And if you were at the end of the table for one meal you wouldn't be at the end of the table for the next meal. And if you were at the other end of the table you were the one who went up to the hatch to collect the food. It was all that sort of stuff ... the residential aspect of it was as carefully planned from an educational perspective as the outdoor activities. I mean if somebody went there and learnt to canoe that would be all very nice but if somebody went there and learned how to co-exist with their peer group that would be as important if not more important to [the principal] and his team … in the sleeping arrangements, the eating arrangements, how you would be responsible for some of your peers in the place and so on. The whole thing had a whole theory behind it.

The comments of the education advisers connect directly to the points made in the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Section 152) and Circular 804 (SED, 1971) quoted above such as the importance of separation from the home environment to an area with few distractions, the benefits of living and working together in a relatively small group, and the possibility of different relationships with teachers. In all of the language there is a sense of faith in the inherent potential of a residential experience to benefit pupils, to become, in Neville's words, "better-rounded people". The personal and social developmental benefits of a residential experience are referred to in general terms and the process of learning is Aristotelian in character – by living together students will learn to live together well (Aristotle, 1962). The experience also seems to be predicated upon the assumptions that personal and social learning will occur and that it will be a positive event.

2.5 Field Studies

During the planning phase of the creation of Ardentinny an advisory committee comprising HM inspectors, deputy directors of education, advisers of education,

head teachers, community education workers and Ardentinny staff was set up to develop the policies which would govern the workings and strategic direction of the Centre. Minutes from a meeting in late 1972 (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 27th November, 1972) show general agreement amongst the committee that:

> The majority of courses should be heavily biased towards outdoor activities but leave room for some studies work.
>
> The calendar for the Centre should contain some periods which would be set aside for specialised high-level courses in field studies.
>
> That general and specialised [field studies] courses could be held at the same time …
>
> That all specialised courses (which would form a minority of the courses offered) should contain an element of outdoor activities and would mainly be for older pupils.

As mentioned in Section 2.3.3 above, the architect's brief of 1969 refers to the provision of field studies in the context of a variety of courses that would be only occasionally provided. The four points listed above taken from the meeting minutes of 27th November, 1972 (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 27th November, 1972), bear witness to Alan's assertion that there had always been the intention that field studies would figure substantially in Ardentinny's educational provision. An advisory committee memorandum in early 1973 (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 31st January, 1973) states that "The main function of the Centre will be outdoor pursuits. Field Study activities will form an important but minor role at Ardentinny as a separate entity". Minutes from a meeting of the Advisory Committee one month later (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 13th February, 1973) state that:

> … it is proposed that twenty places should be allocated every week for [field studies], but this would not get under way until 1974 after a proper survey of the area had been carried out … the idea was for an honours graduate to take responsibility for this activity with a view to working for a Ph.D. under the academic guidance of Paisley College of Technology.

Twenty pupils represents one third of the maximum capacity of Ardentinny at any one time. This level of allocation, in conjunction with the intention for the post-holder responsible for the field studies to be a PhD candidate demonstrates the

attachment of a significant level of importance to the delivery of field studies even though field studies would remain a junior partner to the outdoor activities.

2.6 Outdoor education for all

As with the physical education programme detailed above in Section 2.3.3 the local authority intended that Ardentinny would be an experience that all pupils had the opportunity to benefit from. A maximum capacity of 60 pupils at the Centre meant that only approximately one third of a school year cohort would actually be able to attend but the point of principle established was that all schools would be allocated time at Ardentinny and were obliged to offer pupils the opportunity to attend if they wished to do so. This came up against opposition from certain schools which considered that an outdoor education experience was inappropriate for their pupils. These schools, mainly those that had previously been senior secondary schools before reorganisation to the comprehensive system, considered that Ardentinny was not academic work and therefore were not going to send their pupils. Alan describes how this situation was rectified:

> Alan: I spoke to Hugh Fairlie, the Director [of Education], and got him to back me - and I told every secondary head teacher that they had to go for a three-day course to Ardentinny. "Oh, no!" There was two or three heads of secondary schools, the big ones like Eastwood High, Paisley Grammar, Greenock Academy, they weren't going to be there. That wasn't for their pupils, they hadn't enough time in the day for their curriculum as it was so they were against it, but they had to come. So [the principal of Ardentinny] had a course devised. The fit and able he had them out sailing, some of them in canoes even. The ones who were less able he had orienteering or he had visits for them and then every night, I went for the three days too, we had a what we called a seminar down at the pub. And it was just talking and once people started talking to one another we never looked back after that. Secondary schools couldn't get enough weeks, you know it was just a complete change. It was just [the Ardentinny principal's] idea of getting them there, pushing them into it.

During the 23 years that Ardentinny operated under auspices of the local authority – Renfrew County and then Renfrew Division of Strathclyde Regional Council - Eastwood High pupils attended Ardentinny on 27 occasions as did Greenock Academy pupils and Paisley Grammar sent pupils to Ardentinny on 25 occasions. Clearly, the 'Ardentinny seminar' was very successful, and perhaps evidence that Hahn's (1965) belief that "it is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences" (p. 3) might equally be applied to the not so young. Alan and Gary describe how the local authority intended that Ardentinny would be closely integrated with schools in the manner of the vision of outdoor education laid out in Circular 804 (SED, 1971):

> Alan: As an [local] authority you had total control of it. And it meant that the principal had total access … David visited all the schools. We encouraged him to go to the schools and meet people and talk to them.
>
> Gary: the way it was organised here, they didn't want it to just be, "We're here, schools are here, schools decide we'd like to send kids to them for an outdoor experience. They [Ardentinny] were coming to schools and they were working hand in glove with each other so it was tailor made to the schools … So it wasn't, "Would you like to come?" Each school was allocated a week, I think it was important that it was organised that way.

In addition to all schools being required to offer the opportunity to go to Ardentinny to their pupils they were also required to ensure that attending groups were balanced in their social and academic mix of students.

> The Committee felt that the Centre should offer the facilities across the board and were adamant that it should be as even a mix socially and academically as possible. In practice most schools offer it to a particular year group and ballot for places, trusting to the law of averages that they will have a fairly equal social mix. The sex mix is 50/50, i.e. 25 boys and 25 girls. (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 13th February, 1973)

For this same reason the decision was taken that the standard field work courses would not comprise more than one third of the places available on any given week as it was felt that field work groups tended to be comprised of the more academic pupils.

In the first two years of operation prior to regionalisation, at which point the County of Renfrew as an independent local authority was subsumed into the Strathclyde Regional Council, a returnable deposit of £2 was charged to students. Following regionalisation a non-returnable charge of £2 per day per person was instigated although students on free school meals were charged 50p per day and even this could be waived completely at the discretion of the head teacher if it was felt that the sum would be a barrier to a pupil's participation. The cost to students gradually increased over the years eventually reaching approximately £15 per day by 1996.

2.7 Quality in all things

Point 5 of the architect's brief (Section 2.3.3. above) states that in all aspects of the work at Ardentinny quality rather than quantity would be the guiding principle. This rather unusual statement does appear to have been a guiding principle in the operation of Ardentinny. One example of this can be seen in the unusual step that Renfrew County took in advertising the post of Centre Principal on the open market and not restricting it to applicants from within the sphere of education. This was a controversial decision which encountered opposition from various quarters in particular Scotland's largest teachers' union, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). However, the SED did not object and so the decision was made to advertise for experience in outdoor activities, leadership skills, and wide experience of working with young people. The appointment would be made on the basis of the best candidate for the job regardless of whether he or she was a qualified teacher.

> Alan: All the centres up to then had qualified teachers. The EIS said it's a teaching activity therefore you must have a teacher in charge. And we fought that, we wanted the best person we could get in charge. So we interviewed four people, two were teachers and two were not teachers - two were people with a lot of outdoor experience. [The successful candidate] … just inspired us, one of these interviews where you have three people and one outstanding one; there was no debate about who we should pick.

Gordon, a guidance adviser in Strathclyde Regional Council who used Ardentinny as a venue for teacher professional development courses describes the leadership of the centre principal.

Gordon: [The principal's] stamp was on everything at Ardentinny, absolutely everything. I mean he had no sort of rank order of priorities. There was only one priority and that was priority one - and everything had to be done to that standard! Honestly! I mean you just needed to talk to him for 10 minutes … I just realised that he was exceptional ... I knew lots of heads of outdoor centres … [some were] salt of the earth and then there were some who you know were ... not of that calibre! Shall we say! But [the Ardentinny principal] was like a captain of industry transported into an outdoor education centre. And he brought all his standards and ways of working with him.

The emphasis on and achievement of quality in the operation of Ardentinny is a recurrent theme in the accounts of the various stakeholders' represented in this chapter.

2.8 Summary

The education officers' tale depicts Ardentinny as an integrated element of the wider programme of secondary education in the County of Renfrew. The momentum for Ardentinny had its roots in the Brunton Report (SED, 1963) and a general belief within the educational sphere that outdoor education and residential experiences could provide a worthy contribution to young people's education. Ardentinny was established to achieve a number of aims directly related to the Brunton Report such as supporting curricular project learning and providing a group experience in the final year of school which would be an opportunity to develop social skills in preparation for working life. However, the County of Renfrew education department also had a clear vision of what they wanted the Centre to achieve. A circular letter from the principal of Ardentinny to head teachers of Renfrewshire schools in 1977 (Ardentinny, personal communication, 1977) clarified Ardentinny's objectives in the light of the first few years of operation:

The first objective spelled out to us [by the local authority] was that children coming to Ardentinny would come primarily to benefit from a residential, social experience, the vehicle for which would be Outdoor Pursuits and Field Studies. To this end the whole structure internally of the Centre is geared to the close relationship between students and staff in such matters as dining, and daily contact in small groups of a ratio rarely more than one to ten, and on average one to five.

It would be wrong to think that the educational factors and the outdoor pursuits factors were a minor role. It is only in the order of priority that the emphasis is made.

These aims are congruent with the recommendations of Circular 804 (SED, 1971) a document which Nicol (2002b, pp. 85-86) highlights as being significant in the appropriation of the term 'outdoor education' as a collective title for a range of educational practices in the outdoors. It is notable that neither the education officers nor the archival documents employed language reminiscent of the Norwood Report with its emphasis on discipline, endurance, and moral and physical training (Board of Education, 1943). Although the Brunton Report was a motivating force Ardentinny was accessible to all secondary pupils and the local authority employed a proactive policy of ensuring a number of places for male and female students and a balanced mix of social background and academic ability.

3. The managers' tale

3.1 Introduction

In developing the montage of interpretations the managers' tale builds on the above account of the education officers. The managers' tale is comprised of interviews with the principal of Ardentinny who was employed from September 1972, in the final year of preparation before Ardentinny became operational, until the Centre closed in 1996. Two depute principals were in post during the lifetime of Ardentinny. The first was employed between 1973 and 1990 before moving to become adviser for outdoor education in Strathclyde Regional Council. The second depute principal took over the post until the end of operations in 1996 having previously been employed as an instructor since 1976 with a one year sabbatical to complete a teaching qualification. As explained previously the development of outdoor education in the UK occurred in a rather *ad hoc* manner with only general principles for guidance and significant

freedom for outdoor centre managers to interpret them as they considered best. Therefore, the managers' tale is important in providing insight into the operationalisation of those general principles at Ardentinny.

3.2 Education in the outdoors

In the following passage Ardentinny's principal (Paul) comments on his and his staff's approach to outdoor education when the Centre became operational in 1973.

> Paul: Nobody had thought about outdoor education being education in the outdoors which is how we viewed it ... we developed methods of teaching in the outdoors, techniques for teaching in the outdoors. In other words, you can't speak to more than 15 kids outdoors, you can't speak to 15 kids outdoors if two or three of them have got the sun in their eyes, you know, simple, silly little things but if you want to teach in the outdoors you've got to understand the outdoors and you've got to know how to be able to motivate children in the outdoors without losing them … everything we did we wanted an educational outcome.

The message that Paul communicates in this passage is that the first and foremost purpose of Ardentinny was to provide education. Ardentinny's purpose was to deliver education in the outdoor environment in the same way that schools delivered education in an indoor environment. Education was the first consideration and the outdoor activities and fieldwork were the vehicles. The aim was not to provide distracting, unusual, and exciting activities that may or may not lead to pupils learning something useful – it was not an outdoor *activity* centre. Paul considered that Ardentinny existed to deliver specific educational outcomes using fieldwork and physical activities in the same way that teachers in a school might use scientific experiments, television programmes, group discussions, or any number of different teaching approaches to deliver particular learning outcomes in the indoor environment. The purpose of Ardentinny was to be an outdoor *education* centre.

In the historical context of the evolving understanding of the nature of outdoor education the approach taken at Ardentinny can be considered as ahead of its time. As mentioned in Section 2.4 above, the 1970s was a period during which the first

attempts at clarifying the nature of outdoor education were made. In a treatise that expounded for the first time in print on the aesthetic element of outdoor education in the UK, Drasdo (1973), comments that, "Not only do we lack any broad explanation of the activity taking place; but also, more seriously, the partisans of some approaches, including that advertised here, have never thought it important to offer their ideas in print" (p. 6). Hopkins and Putnam (1993, p. 45) state that the Dartington Conference in 1975 was the first attempt to identify the principles and practices of outdoor education. The Dartington Conference Report (Department of Education and Science [DoES], 1975, p. 1) differentiates between an all-embracing understanding of outdoor education, which includes all education that takes place out-of-doors, and one that refers more specifically to a variety of activities which involve living, moving, and a degree of self-reliance in the outdoor environment and which are generally related to learning outcomes in the domain of attitudes and relationships rather than cognitive learning. The report (DoES, 1975) takes the latter as a working definition of outdoor education and identifies the aims of outdoor education as being related to developing an awareness and respect for self, others, and the natural environment.

In contrast, contemporary developments in the consideration of outdoor education's role in the statutory education system have led to a broad conception of outdoor education more in keeping with the former definition in the Dartington Conference Report (DoES, 1975) and a change in terminology to reflect this. In Scotland, the *Taking learning outdoors. Partnerships for excellence* (LTS, 2007, p. 5) document defines the outdoor classroom as the setting, outdoor education as the process, and outdoor learning as the result. Thus outdoor education is:

> A teaching approach which can enhance and integrate a broad range of core experiences across the whole curriculum … The outdoor classroom can be found in a variety of locations: school grounds, outdoor residential centres, urban spaces, zoos, farms, parks, gardens, woodlands, rivers, coasts, moorland, mountain, in the sand, up a tree, in a puddle and more. (LTS, 2007, p. 4)

In England and Wales 'learning outside the classroom' has become the umbrella terminology. The *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* (Department for Education and Skills, 2006) defines learning outside the classroom quite simply as:

"The use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning" (p. 1). The *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* goes on to state that learning experiences outside the classroom are often deeply meaningful and memorable, facilitating links between feelings and learning: "They stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence our values and the decisions we make. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside to the classroom and vice versa" (Department for Education and Skills, 2006, p. 1). In contrast to the Dartington Conference Report (Department of Education and Science, 1975) which chose to focus on learning through the traditional outdoor activities such as canoeing and hillwalking, the current consensus is of an all-embracing understanding of outdoor education which begins the moment teacher and pupils leave the indoor classroom and enter the outdoor classroom. It is this contemporary conception of outdoor education that the principal intended to be the guiding ethos at Ardentinny. In the following passage the first holder of the post of depute principal (Mike) talks about his determination to make sure that Ardentinny was up-to-date with the most recent educational memoranda and developments. The difficulty he expresses in achieving this is indicative, despite the range of supporting documents previously referred to, of outdoor education's vulnerable position on the margins of the educational establishment. Mike recounted his determination to make sure that anything Ardentinny did was:

> Mike: … in line with the law, in line with the educational objectives … these were authoritative documents in their particular way so [everything] was based on these … Just like any head teacher, who had to make sure that they got every single thing that was issued concerning their school by the SED, you'd pick it up. But of course it bypassed [outdoor] centres because if the SED produced something it was sent to directors of education and heads of schools but I would have to go and look for it … So whenever a document came out the first thing you'd do is you ripped it right the way down to find where it referred to out-of school activity.

The management believed very strongly that Ardentinny should be an integrated element of mainstream education as expressed in Circular 804 (SED, 1971).

> Mike: We set about trying to set up a programme which was educational and met curriculum needs, which would have a biological element, a geographical element, historical element, and a physical element that related to what was possible in the immediate environment.

Mike acknowledged the influence of the Education (Scotland) Act 1945 and the Brunton Report (SED, 1963) in the motivation to create Ardentinny but reiterates the point made earlier that access to Ardentinny was not to be restricted to a particular section of the school population. Despite funding having been secured on the basis of a connection to the Brunton Report, which focused on pupils of average and below average academic achievement, and signs in the early days that some schools were planning on granting students access based on academic or behavioural achievement Ardentinny took the position, in line with the observation in the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Section 149), that residential outdoor experiences were of value to all pupils and would therefore be available to all pupils.

> Mike: We set out right from the word go to say that there wasn't going to be any selection by ability, it was going to be selection by whether their parents wanted them to come or not. And the director [of education in Renfrew County] said every school would send a group to Ardentinny every year in proportion to the school population … and this will be an adjunct, or an extension of the opportunity [that] the kids have in school … it was about improving their quality of life, increasing the range of experience they had, contributing as far as they could to their education … [and the teachers] who came with the kids used to participate in the activities with the kids and they got to know their own staff ... reinforcing the school ethos, reinforcing the sense of belonging to a community of people.

The expressions of the principal and depute principal portray the aims of Ardentinny as congruent with the advice contained in Circular 804 (SED, 1971) which encouraged the integration of work done in schools and outdoor centres and emphasised the importance of combining curricular, recreational, and social learning in a natural way. Thus, both the fieldwork and the outdoor activities were a form of curriculum enrichment. The fact that they were the vehicle for personal and social

education, the main priority of Ardentinny, did not reduce the standards aspired to in these two domains.

> Paul: We were probably the forerunners in the fieldwork side ... we set up a high quality [fieldwork element] … and we deliberately set out to recruit an academic, with an interest in the outdoors to spearhead ... the academic activity … we wrote into the job spec that it would be possible for that person to do a PhD. We actually put it in from the word go because we thought that we would get considerable spin-off from … somebody doing a PhD on our staff, we would gain expertise from the academic institutions.

In the event, a collaboration developed with Paisley College of Technology (now Paisley University) through which a member of staff completed a PhD and, as the principal had hoped, other benefits accrued.

> Paul: Paisley University did a survey for us, a biological survey. We surveyed all the rivers, all the habitats and we realised that this area is not a complicated habitat and so it's very simple, from a teaching point of view it was excellent - it wasn't overcomplicated ... We then took on a geographer … we found that again the area was ideal for geography because the glen here is a perfect illustration of a river system … another thing we did was history ... we had a very good budget for books and we bought a lot of historical books for this area … And we could illustrate this to the children so we could tie geology to biology to human settlement to human history and we could demonstrate to children that all these subjects were illustrated on the ground, standing there in that, up in that glen.

3.3 Adventure, risk, and education

With regard to the role of outdoor activities at Ardentinny Mike describes the nature and extent of the experience delivered.

> Mike: At first we depended on the local waters but increasingly as we got to know more and more about what was accessible in time we were using places as far away as the Tay and the Awe [rivers used for kayaking] and sea canoeing all over the west coast … And we were sailing, if the weather lent itself, we were cruising right the way down to Largs and round to the Kyles of

Bute and things like this. It became pretty adventurous but slowly and
gradually needing more people with more qualifications to carry this out.

Although Mike refers to the adventurous nature of the activities he asserted that
Ardentinny was not delivering 'adventure education' in the mould of Mortlock
(1973, 1978, 1984) which was based on the premise of an inherent human desire for
adventure and its power to facilitate transcendent experiences of self-discovery.
Mortlock (1984) proposed that 'frontier adventure', a situation when an individual's
ability to cope safely with the challenges faced is in the balance, provided the
greatest satisfaction and reward. Mike considered this approach to outdoor education
as irresponsible and, in contrast, succinctly describes his intention at Ardentinny.

Mike: My first objective was to set up something sensible, where the kids did
sensible things.

Mortlock (1973, p. 4) defines adventure as a state of mind that begins with feelings
of uncertainty. This feeling of uncertainty is defined as a fear of physical or
psychological harm – although this may only be an inaccurate perception on the part
of the participant – without which there would be no adventure and from which
flows learning related to self, others, and the environment (Mortlock, 1978, p. 13).
These statements are qualified to some extent by the assertion that frontier adventure
is only justifiable for educational purposes if there is "virtually no real danger for
inexperienced young people" (Mortlock, 1978, p. 10). However, if an individual
perceives danger, as far as he or she is concerned that danger is real. The fact that an
instructor is confident no physical harm will arise does nothing to prevent
psychological harm from occurring. Loynes (1998, p. 36) provides an alternative
view of adventure using an illustration of personal childhood experiences exploring
on an old bike and scrambling on the sides of the Cheddar Gorge searching for rare
flowers; exhilaration rather than fear was the essence of the adventure. Hopkins and
Putnam (1993) define adventure as implying "challenge coupled to uncertainty of
outcome" (pp. 6-7). It is within the realms of the latter two conceptions of adventure
where the purposeful eliciting of fear is not a definitional requirement that Mike
intended the work at Ardentinny to reside. It is worth highlighting that none of these
conceptions of adventure have received any empirical study and are not based on any
educational or psychological literature.

In November of 1971 a party of school pupils from an Edinburgh school were involved in a tragedy in the Cairngorm mountains of Scotland, and a number of the pupils and an accompanying leader died. In December 1972 the SED issued Circular 848, *Safety in Outdoor Pursuits* (SED, 1972). This was aimed primarily at those involved with mountaineering expeditions and other activities involving risk and hardship – recognised by SED as being increasingly popular with Scottish pupils – and suggests basic safety advice. Mike describes how the Cairngorm tragedy changed the face of the developing field of outdoor education overnight.

> Mike: The fallout from that was [that it] imposed safety as the primary goal of outdoor education; not education. Now, education should be safe as a precondition of it being education. You can't ask the parents to hand over the child to the school and then say, "By the way they're going to be a lot less safe in school than they are with you".

Mike was determined that there would be no risk of such an incident befalling any pupils at Ardentinny and was therefore rigorous in implementing strategies for safety: a detailed programme of maintenance, the use of high quality equipment, ensuring the proper use of equipment, ensuring that all appropriate clothing and equipment was provided for the pupils. More important than these details, however, was the philosophy guiding the educational process at Ardentinny – a social residential education experience incorporating a programme of curriculum enrichment directly related to mainstream education goals. Ardentinny was distinctly not aiming at 'building character' in the Outward Bound style critiqued by Roberts, White, and Parker (1974) through placing pupils in situations demanding courage and endurance (Board of Education, 1943) or purposefully placing pupils in situations of physical or psychological fear (Mortlock, 1984). Mike's intention was that in its teaching of outdoor activities and field work Ardentinny would be more closely aligned with elements of the Scotch Code 1874 referred to in a report on environmental education by HM Inspector of Schools (SED, 1974) which referred to pupils gaining knowledge of their local area through direct experience and observation in order to encourage knowledge and love for their neighbourhood and an understanding of its life.

3.4 Education for leisure

The principle of skills development as education for leisure guided the approach that Ardentinny took to the teaching of outdoor activities. Paul gives an example of the way they endeavoured to provide students with the skills necessary to pursue an outdoor activity during their independent leisure time.

> Paul: If it was mountaineering we always … included a residential trip away from the centre - either camping, youth hostel or bothy … we were heavily criticised. [People said,] "Why are you bringing children to a residential centre and then sending them out to camp outside?"

The night spent away from the Centre was described as part of a progressive programme that began the moment students arrived on Monday. Clothing was provided and instruction given on how to use it. Navigation methods, basic weather interpretation, nutrition, simple mountaineering strategies were all taught and practised. Following the teaching of the basic skills:

> Paul: … we would prepare them on Thursday for a night out … if it was a youth hostel there was an added bonus … because we wanted to introduce them to an organisation that they themselves could use individually on their own in another few years' time … If it was a bothy you could prove to them that anybody could camp and bothy in the middle of winter with the right technique ... and that equipment wasn't thrown into the corner, that you decamped [back at the Centre] properly, carefully, hung things up, looked after it, dubbined it and it was all ready then for the following week. So there was discipline in the whole thing.

The outdoor activities were carefully planned to provide a progressive programme of learning that, in a relatively short space of time, would provide students with the skills and knowledge to make it possible to pursue the activity independently. This description of outdoor education is the antithesis of the *Adventure in a Bun* that Loynes (1998) warns against where outdoor education is reduced to providing activities that guarantee excitement and the outdoor environment is more a playing field (Hogan, 1992) than a classroom.

As outlined in Section 2.3.3 it was intended that Ardentinny and the centralised schemes would be mutually supportive endeavours. Mike confirms this relationship and emphasises the fact that the centralised schemes, and by implication Ardentinny, were concerned with skills development for leisure but also with social integration.

> Mike: … all we were really doing was trying to raise the skills of people so that they could enter the schemes with advantage ... So, [for example] by coming to Ardentinny people got a grip of orienteering and would go to an orienteering event and therefore they could build on that … It gave them access … the coaching through the centralised scheme formed that ideal avenue that meant that you participated in a sport and it led you into the adult society with an adult community.

Aware of the best intentions of the centralised schemes and Ardentinny's support for them through the outdoor activity provision at the centre Paul, however, describes the reality of the situation as regards facilitating students' further participation.

> Paul: Generally speaking [it] was a school that had to do it because no child, very few children of 13 or 14 are going to have the get up and go and just wander down to a sailing base. You really need the PE department or someone to say, you know, "We're going down there this weekend." So very often it was generally the people [teachers] who were taking part in the scheme buttonholed the kids and said, "We've got this on, do you want to come down?"

As discussed further below the reality was that involved teachers were not spread equally amongst the schools in Renfrewshire with the effect that students did not have equal access. The centralised schemes fell prey to budget cuts (Halls, 1997, p. 17) from 1990 onwards and to some extent to the teachers' actions over pay and conditions of the mid- to late-1980s (Metcalf & Milner, 1993, p. 81). For Heather, depute principal from 1990 onwards, the greatly reduced opportunities for further participation in outdoor activities beyond Ardentinny made the personal and social development aspect of the week even more important.

> Heather: … [it was] primarily a personal, social development [experience] ... even though it had been a skills-based week because where's the back-up when they come home? ... there was various teachers' actions going on during my time at Ardentinny … I really feel that kids, yes there are school sports for

them, they tend to be the mainstream school sports, football, etc., but for a

child to participate in outdoor activities it's [going to have to involve] clubs in

some way or another … If they can get into the club scene they will stay, much

more likely to stay within that sport.

However, Heather's impression was that commonly schools did not or were not able to follow up pupils' experiences at Ardentinny in order to encourage continued participation. One possible reason for this is the fact that a limit of approximately 50 places meant that only one third to one quarter of a year group were able to attend Ardentinny. Thus, although there was the will to develop pupils' skills under the banner of education for leisure there was also a realistic assessment of the likelihood of pupils continuing on with an outdoor activity on their return home.

3.5 Inspiring learning

As well as the intention to teach content – fieldwork and outdoor activity skills – the management staff also referred to wanting to facilitate an experience where pupils could learn about the process of learning and in doing so find new motivation. The principal refers to the way that they attempted to make the fieldwork interdisciplinary and directly relevant to the pupils' lives.

> Paul: We could tie geology to biology to human settlement to human history
> and we could demonstrate to children that all these subjects were illustrated on
> the ground, standing there in that, up in that glen. That makes history live, you
> see. The other thing was there was a lot of these people in this glen possibly
> were the forefathers of these children – because they all migrated to the
> industrial area of Greenock in the cotton, tobacco, and shipbuilding. So it's
> quite possible, you know we said to them, "Probably your mum and dad started
> here and they migrated to Greenock to get jobs in the 1750s to 1800s after the
> '45 [Jacobite rebellion].

Ardentinny acquired historical maps and in conjunction with RAF overfly prints from the 1940s pupils were able to work at identifying the likely location of abandoned settlements in the area.

> Paul: So we could tie up things from old documents to things on the ground
> and so what we did then for the history was not the [curricular] subject *per se*

but the technique of history, the technique of finding things. That's what we demonstrated to kids … "This is your personal issue, this is where you come from, your parents are part of all this."

Creating a learning environment where teachers are not expounding on a topic "completely alien to the existential experience of students" (Freire, 2000, p. 71) facilitates the possibility of students becoming intellectually involved in the learning process. From Freire's perspective one might argue that this not only provokes interest but also allows the learner to have a sense of belonging to or ownership over the subject thereby redressing the balance of power between learner and teacher. In addition, Carver (1996) suggests that authenticity – whereby learning activities are relevant and meaningful to students' lives – is one of four salient features of experiential education. Active learning is another of those salient features where active can refer to a physical and/or mental state. Physical movement alone does not address the issue of learner passivity in education – the "banking concept" of education (Freire, 2000, p. 72) – it requires activities that students wish to intellectually engage in. Roberts (2002) warns against the trap of simplistically equating experiential education with "learning by doing" which only leads to activities which have little or no significance beyond the moment of participation.

Mike felt that the fact that each small group of students was engaged in a different task or outdoor activity was an important element of the experience.

Mike: One of the strongest things was they weren't all doing the same thing. So, if somebody was learning to sail over here, that wasn't the same thing as somebody learning to canoe over here.

Mike felt the result of this was that it created a different learning environment for pupils compared to the structures they were accustomed to in school:

Mike: … [where pupils were] rank ordered by learning ability and hardly knew what they learnt, they only knew they weren't as good as the person at the top; over here were doing things where they were self-evidently learning things in a memorable period of time … primarily the kids recovered their recognition that they were learning machines and were going forward and doing new things and were capable of doing new things and that was a strong point, I thought.

Heather commented that in her opinion, particularly in the case of students of lower academic achievement, students' learning in school generally consisted of small chunks which did not really require much determination or stamina to digest or confront and as a result students were never really faced with a situation where they had to demonstrate persistence and determination in order to be successful. Ardentinny provided students with that challenge.

> Heather: They made a judgement as to what they were going to do. Yes, they could change within reason sometimes when they arrived but then they stuck with that for the week. And that I think was something that made them realise … you do meet barriers when you're learning things but it is actually possible to overcome those barriers and I think that was a very, very important part of the philosophy of it that … you know if you try something for a short time it's usually ok but then when you're trying to build on your skills and build them up and get to the plateau and you can either fall off the edge or you can stick at it and carry on up ... the programme was structured very much that way and the staff were made aware of the fact that, yes, at the end of the week the child will be an independent learner therefore they will be able to take their own kayak down the [River] Awe under supervision.

Heather expressed that at times encouraging the pupils to be independent learners and thinkers created extra work, but that Ardentinny was keen to take that approach to teaching and learning as long as pupils were not just challenging or questioning in order to be disruptive.

> Heather: that's what you want to do, make an impact, get them questioning and making decisions.

In an analysis of the conceptions of the role of experience in education Roberts (2008) takes issue with a trend that he identifies as 'neo-experiential' whereby standardised, one-off courses of short duration based on a business model of efficiency lead to a situation where the "'means' of experience become secondary to the dominating 'ends' of economy, efficiency and control" (Roberts, 2008, p. 30). Roberts argues that what remains is a superficial form of learning where curriculum content and learning objectives are achieved but the teacher's and the learner's

freedom to inquire and question meanings and values – of the curriculum content for example – are curtailed. Warnings against a simplistic view of experience leading to learning (Chapman, 1995; Roberts, 2002) echo Dewey's (1938) oft-quoted statement in outdoor education and related fields that "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative" (p. 34). An experience may be non-educative (Roberts, 2006, p. 16) or mis-educative, which Dewey (1938, p. 25) defines as impeding or negatively affecting further experiences.

Creating learning situations where students are required to demonstrate persistence and encouraged to question ties in with notions of responsibility in learning (Higgins, 2009). Rubens' (1997, 1999) research presents two conceptions of adventure in outdoor education: a 'narrow' view and a 'broad' view. The former is associated with short timescales, challenges which usually evoke a degree of fear or anxiety, the requirement of minimal or no effort on the part of students, and minimal or no responsibility devolved to students. The latter is associated with longer timescales of several days or more involving living and working with others, multiple and varied challenges which may not be thrill-inducing, and the requirement of effort and a measure of responsibility on the part of the participants. Rubens argues that this latter concept of adventure is conducive to a mastery rather than a performance approach to learning, which research in psychology suggests leads to students being more persistent in the face of failure and that this persistence generalises across tasks (Dweck, 1986). In addition, placing value and praise on performance (where success is related to natural ability) as opposed to mastery (where success is related to effort) has been demonstrated to be detrimental to individuals' sense of self-worth and diminishes the level of achievement in set tasks (Kamins & Dweck, 1999).

3.6 Social residential education

Adaptation to new structures and procedures was considered as fundamental to the main policy aim of a social residential experience. In practice this related to both personal and social learning outcomes. Mike recognised that many of the procedures

121

and patterns of living residentially at Ardentinny were quite different from students' home environments and saw this in itself as an important lesson.

> Mike: I saw myself as creating a new environment for kids into which they had to learn to fit in order that when they left school, they knew that when you go to a different place you do as the Romans do.

This comment relates directly back to the Brunton Report (SED, 1963) and the concomitant raising of the school leaving age. It also relates directly to the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Sections 151-152) with its references to the value of pupils experiencing a different social environment. It was recommended in the Brunton Report (SED, 1963) that a residential experience during the extra year of school would provide students with a maturing experience that would assist them in their transition to further education and the adult world. The first depute principal (Mike) admits that some of the practices, such as the enforcement of quiet after a certain time at night, might have appeared very strict to some but that everything was done for a reason. His opinion was that learning to adjust was an important lesson in itself but it was also necessary in order for the students to be able to fully participate and therefore fully benefit from the week. By the end of the week he suggests that the students were happy to go to bed at the required time because they wanted the sleep and knew they needed it.

For students from the least affluent backgrounds Ardentinny was different from home life in other ways. Mike describes how he wanted to integrate some of the principles of the residential and camp schools tradition where students benefited from a standard of living that they did not enjoy at home. He suggested that pupils attending the residential schools would often not have had a bed to sleep in at home or access to clean clothes and good food which the residential schools were able to provide.

> Mike: [It] was mind changing it was absolutely, you know it was like going to fairyland. It was unbelievable and I tried to create that at the centre. And I remember one girl sitting there in bed in tears and I said, "What's the matter?" And she said, "Oh, this is so lovely, so beautiful. This is the first time I've ever slept in a bed." I mean it's gobsmacking isn't it. That's 1983, '84? And

throughout the whole of that period about one third of the school population was in receipt of free school meals and a clothing grant.

Although Mike did not suggest that the incidence of extreme poverty that motivated the creation of the camp schools was comparable in the pupils attending Ardentinny there were, nevertheless, students for whom the quality of care and levels of comfort at Ardentinny were a significant step up from that experienced in their home life. The provision of free school meals is made available to children whose parents have a low level of income and are entitled to means-tested government benefits. Croxford (2000, p. 318) suggests that free-meal entitlement is an uncertain measure of poverty as, amongst other factors, parents may avoid applying for the entitlement due to a perception of a stigma being attached to receiving free school meals – a problem that existed during the period Ardentinny was established (Hansard, 1971). Thus, assuming the accuracy of Mike's statement it is possible that the incidence of poverty of the pupils attending Ardentinny was higher still.

Daily domestic life was also structured to be a learning experience for students. Heather refers to the novelty for some of the students in the basic routine of eating meals together:

> Heather: I think that the routine and regime, and eating together at a table - not canteen service - with staff, because there was no separate staff table, was something that was outwith many of their experience. Some of them had never used a knife and fork. Things they were bringing from their home and community life into the centre contrasted with the centre quite often.

Commenting further on the significant aspects of the residential experience Heather mentioned the importance of separation from family and also having an enforced routine. This was considered to provide a sense of security or a removal of a source of stress at being responsible for making certain decisions all the time. For students coming from difficult home environments where there would not have been much structure or routine this was considered to be particularly important.

> Heather: … away from mum and dad, or mum or whoever they happen to be staying with and also I think the fact that they have a routine there [at Ardentinny] and I think so many of them now are living without a routine. I

think they actually like a routine in many ways, but they don't want to have it necessarily when they're at home and they're doing everything to escape it at home but in many ways once they get it, you know, so many decisions are made for them whereas if they don't have the routine they're having to make decisions all the time.

A change in environment was also seen as important in creating a context for new learning activities to take place that facilitated other aspects of personal and social learning. Mike commented on the changes in the way that students perceived each other using an example of the relationships between male and female students. Previously established male student attitudes were challenged as female students demonstrated competence in the outdoor activities. For most students the activities were an entirely new experience and therefore represented a more 'level playing field' less affected by already established competencies. This created an opportunity whereby students' perceptions of each other were vulnerable to change.

> Mike: Children were getting the status of the children changed in amongst their own peer groups. For instance, "girls can't do this", and then girls quite demonstrably could and the girls could become very, very skilled canoeists very quickly, skilled skiers, had no difficulty with the sailing side [of things] and usually were maturer and therefore more capable of handling formal information than some of the boys as the boys would run around daft, you know? So, all kinds of status relationships changed.

In discussing issues of equality in and access to the outdoors for women Humberstone (2000) discusses the power of sport in general as a conveyor of cultural messages, in particular masculine hegemony, and suggests that the particularly physical nature of outdoor education and adventure recreation provides the potential, through female participation, to challenge a dominant masculine culture in sport and recreation. From Mike's perspective it would seem that the particular circumstances of Ardentinny provided that opportunity.

The majority of schools and pupils attending Ardentinny came from the urban areas of the County of Renfrew. Therefore, although relatively close to Ardentinny in

terms of distance – a maximum of 50 miles – the sense of difference would have been stark for many. Situated on the Cowal peninsula, the most direct and fastest route to Ardentinny involved a short ferry ride from Gourock to Dunoon – a crossing of just twenty minutes. This increased the sense of separation for students who, though still on the mainland, commonly assumed they were on an island. For many the contrast between their very urban home environment and the rural, isolated feeling of Ardentinny was striking. An unfamiliar environment, often remote from home, is a common theme in many theories of outdoor education as it is claimed to contribute to the creation of a sense of dissonance and disequilibrium in the emotions of the learner (Nadler & Luckner, 1992; Priest & Gass, 1997; Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). In discussing the Outward Bound approach Walsh & Golins (1976, p. 10) refer to this process as an anxiety resolution model. The assumption is that by positively adapting to the situation that is causing dissonance, or anxiety, the individual undergoes a beneficial and rewarding learning process. The principle of unfamiliarity has been illustrated in several different ways above and depending on the individual the effects would have varied considerably. In terms of the geographical unfamiliarity Mike did not want Ardentinny and the local surroundings to be an environment that was completely alien to the students. Information regarding the local history of the area from the Norse influence through to industrialisation and the present day was used to help make connections with the students' own family history and experience in a similar way to that referred to by the principal in Section 3.5.

> Mike: So that was a strong element [of the educational process at Ardentinny] of what I call familiarising themselves … we're expanding the land from the vicinity that they knew and then structuring the ground slightly further out and slightly further out. It wasn't just sort of, [like they'd] been taken from here and dropped in space to a completely exotic environment. So, that was a strong element too.

3.7 Instructional team

The report of an inspection of Ardentinny by HM Inspectors of Schools in 1990 (SED, 1990) confirms that the policy regarding instructional staff at Ardentinny was

125

to have a balance in age, marital status, and include at least two females. The principal at Ardentinny considered that a balance of this nature in the staff team was vital to the atmosphere and operation of the Centre. Mike supported this belief and stated that this created an atmosphere and balance of abilities and approaches to working that was quite unique for an outdoor education centre which were often overwhelmingly staffed by men.

Staff were required to offer a specialism but also be able to teach all the activities at the centre which comprised: sailing, canoeing, mountaineering, orienteering, angling (in the earlier years but discontinued). Field studies included a range of biology, geography, history, and art. All members of staff were therefore trained to be able to deliver any of the programme areas. This was beneficial for staffing and timetabling but as Mike explains below it was also beneficial for staff relations.

> Mike: I didn't believe you could have staff who, sort of ... "I'm the mountaineer, I'm the sailor, and I'm the canoeist" … an endless competition as to who was the most important.

Significant investment was made in the instructional team who were expected to reach levels of expertise in their field. A personal and ongoing interest in the outdoor activities that they instructed was expected and encouraged in order that staff were able to attain and maintain high levels of competency. The time-frame that the principal considered appropriate for a member of staff to become fully trained reflected the high expectations and the concomitant high level of commitment to the instructors on the part of the management.

> Paul: We wanted people who were into [personally committed to] the sport so that if you got somebody on Stronchullin Hill, 2000ft up … if you have a white-out on top, that person [the instructor] has been there before, he knows what to do ... You've got to make sure he's going to make the right decision … I didn't expect to get a fully trained, rounded instructor in under 7 years because it's experientially-based and you just cannot get that experience, physically cannot get it, in less than that time. It doesn't matter how competent you are, to get the rounding of sea kayaking, river kayaking, mountaineering,

orienteering and also the fieldwork expertise, 7 years at least to get, you know, to the top of the profession.

3.8 Summary

The primary aim of the management team at Ardentinny was to provide a social residential experience that was developmental for students on a personal and social level. The fieldwork and outdoor activities that comprised the explicit programme were a vehicle for personal and social learning that was expected to occur both during the structured sessions and as a result of the communal living situation. Safety standards were monitored very closely and the acknowledgement of the, at times, adventurous aspects of the activities did not extend to a policy of purposefully exposing students to physical or psychological risk as a developmental aim. The core programme of outdoor education offered to schools included: geography fieldwork, history fieldwork, biology fieldwork, orienteering, sailing, kayaking, and mountaineering. Each course lasted a full week and, unless there were exceptional circumstances, students were required to commit to a course for the full duration. The nature of the outdoor education provided at Ardentinny was congruent with the recommendations of Circular 804 (SED, 1971) which championed the benefits of an experience in which recreational activities, academic learning, and communal living combined in a natural manner. The Centre policy stated that all students, irrespective of sex, academic ability, or social background would have the opportunity to participate at Ardentinny. The standards expected of students and Ardentinny staff were high, reflecting the intention from the outset that one of the guiding principles of Ardentinny would be that of quality. Although the field work and outdoor activities were secondary in importance to the personal and social development of the students this did not detract from the high standards that the management endeavoured to deliver in these areas. Through the field work, outdoor activities, and residential experience the management aspired to provide opportunities for personal and social development, curriculum enriching field studies, education for leisure, and to develop students understanding of their abilities as learners.

4. The instructors' tale

4.1 Introduction

As the individuals who delivered the programme of outdoor education to the students the instructors' perspective is an important element of the montage. The instructional staff delivered the programme content but through their direct contact with students also communicated values and meanings about that content. The main focus of the interviews with the instructors revolved around what sort of experience they believed they were delivering and what they were hoping students would take away from the week at Ardentinny. Ten instructional staff were interviewed. Their accounts cover the full period, 1973-1996, that Ardentinny operated under the management of the local authority. The full-time instructional staff complement at Ardentinny numbered eight. The range of interviewees represent approximately half of the staff complement at any one period. With one exception, instructional staff were employed by the local authority on APT & C (Administrative, Professional, Technical, and Clerical) contracts rather than teachers' contracts. This allowed for the flexibility of working conditions necessary at a residential outdoor centre. One instructor, who had particular responsibility for fieldwork, was employed on a teacher's contract. However, of the instructors interviewed five were qualified teachers before being employed at Ardentinny and a sixth became qualified during a year's sabbatical from the Centre. The term 'instructor' is used to represent all the staff involved in delivering programmes of fieldwork and outdoor activities whether or not they were qualified as teachers. The term is used for the sake of clarity to differentiate the Ardentinny staff from the schoolteachers who accompanied students and does not reflect any value-based judgements regarding the role or skills of the instructors.

4.2 Professional environment

A strong theme that emerged from the instructors' accounts related to the positive working environment at Ardentinny, particularly in terms of personnel management. Although not directly related to the experience of the students at Ardentinny this is an important element in representing the overall atmosphere in the Ardentinny montage.

> Kevin: When I went to Ardentinny I saw an organisation where the highest priority of all was given to the biggest resource that the centre felt it had, which was the staff. I've never seen managers who cared about the staff, who cared about the staff development, who cared about the staff motivation more than at Ardentinny.

One area in which the instructors felt the benefit of good management was in what they considered to be a particular pitfall of outdoor education work – becoming stale. They perceived that a number of different strategies were employed by the management to mitigate against this. For example, instructional staff were trained to teach across the full range of fieldwork subjects and outdoor activities thereby allowing for the instructors to be rotated around the different areas of teaching. Where appropriate, two groups might be timetabled to work together thereby creating the opportunity for team teaching. Ardentinny also maintained strong links with a local sailing club where they kept a couple of boats to be used for staff development - racing on weeknights and weekends. This was one example of the way that staff were encouraged to maintain a love of a sport for its own sake both for their personal benefit and satisfaction and for the benefits this was perceived to have on their teaching.

> Simon: It's very easy to go stale if all you ever do is teach an activity in the same [way], at the same old venues to the same old kind of programme. It does get a little bit familiar and you go stale. But if you're still participating in the sport for yourself, and developing, that can keep that enthusiasm going and there's no doubt that it feeds back into your everyday teaching.

Instructors also referred to the high degree of autonomy they felt they had in their jobs. Although the basic structure of the courses was fixed there was felt to be considerable room for independence within the overall structure. This autonomy was seen as giving a high degree of job satisfaction as instructors were not tied to one way of doing things or one venue but there was still the security of a managed safety structure. Plans for the day would be discussed in morning meetings which provided a forum for advice and feedback and allowed any potential difficulties to be

considered. Bob suggested that discussions in morning meetings were a helpful, if sometimes vigorous, forum:

> Bob: The other great, great thing about it … was Monday morning staff meetings. They were always thorough, good debates, good discussions and arguments … That was really, really excellent.

The combination of teaching a single activity for a full week and significant autonomy to structure the teaching was considered an uncommon situation in the field of outdoor education and highly valued by the instructors.

Barry described the principal as having great organisational and personnel management skills. Neither the staff nor the work was neglected at the expense of the other and all members of staff, whatever their position, were valued.

> Barry: It was such a talented group of staff right down from … the principal right down to our cooks and our janitor, you know. Because Ardentinny was not seen as a group of instructors, it was seen as an organisation, who, the lowliest member of that organisation was just as important as [the principal] or any of the other staff.

The instructors portrayed the working environment at Ardentinny as a place where staff were unstintingly supported professionally and personally by the management team. The instructors did not deny that, as in any work environment and perhaps particularly in the close working relationships of a residential centre, there were differences of opinion and clashes of personality at times. These, however, were described within the context of a very positive working environment the tone of which was set by a management team who were highly regarded by the instructional team.

> Barry: [The principal] set the mark very high. He expected a lot from the kids who came, he expected a lot from his staff and his staff appreciated that and gave the best that they had.
>
> Sarah: [The principal] was amazing and he drove the good ship Ardentinny and he was very, very, good. Very wise man. Very, very kind, loving, wise man.

4.3 Teaching and learning aims

Numerous documents over the post-war period (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Sections 149-152; Department for Education and Skills, 2006, pp. 4-5; LTS, 2007; Ministry of Education, 1960, Ch. 5; SOED, 1992; SOED, 1993) have referred to the conditions particular to residential experiences that are conducive to personal and social development or education. The national guidelines for personal and social development in Scottish education prior to the recently implemented *Curriculum for Excellence* (LTS, 2010) expressed that the "different rules and conventions" (SOED, 1993, p. 24) of the residential experience make it a particularly effective learning medium. The learning aims that the Ardentinny instructors hoped the students would experience were discussed in a very interconnected way reflecting the holistic nature of using a residential outdoor education experience for personal and social education. The creation of categories is therefore a somewhat false separation but allows for clarity of presentation. To this end, after Gardner (1993), learning that is primarily associated with understanding others and how to exist cooperatively with them is referred to as interpersonal learning and that which is associated with understanding oneself and learning how to operate effectively as an individual is referred to as intrapersonal learning.

4.3.1 Outdoor activity and fieldwork courses

As stated earlier, the majority of courses at Ardentinny consisted of sailing, mountaineering, kayaking (sea and river), and orienteering. Geography, biology, and history fieldwork courses completed the programme available. The instructors were all firm supporters of the programme structure which, in contrast to most outdoor education centres, involved students engaging in one activity for the full week. The programme consisted of four and a half days – starting after arrival on Monday at approximately mid-day through to departure on Saturday morning. The decision to concentrate solely on one activity was based on a number of justifications.

Firstly, it was felt that the gains made in skill acquisition in a single outdoor activity or course of fieldwork far outweighed the benefits of students having introductory sessions in a number different activities.

Sarah: You could actually get a long way with the students in a week because you'd see the same students every day … a lot of centres would just … do a day of hillwalking and a day of kayaking and a day of orienteering … but when you did it at Ardentinny you did it for a whole week for one activity so if you're orienteering for four days by the end of four days you're doing fantastic courses, you know?

Simon: With the sailing … we would quite often sail down to Dunoon or sail up the holy loch [both 7 miles away] and have a picnic and sail back or go for a day trip on Beatrix, the big boat that we had there. So, they were really getting to grips with the whole idea and ethos behind sailing or mountaineering or kayaking or canoeing.

The staff felt that concentrating on one activity was more likely to provide the foundational skills, sense of achievement, and therefore confidence and motivation to allow pupils to continue with an activity subsequently than providing a number of shorter experiences on the basis of allowing students to discover an activity they particularly enjoyed. In a review of outdoor education centres the Department of Education and Science (1983, pp. 14-17) commented that a common weakness in provision was insufficient time for students to develop competence and although there was scope for students to achieve a degree of success, expectations were low and the educational value was limited. Furthermore, it is noted that very few opportunities existed for pupils to access any follow-up experiences in order to develop their skills beyond an introductory level. The Ardentinny policy, set by the local authority, was that all secondary schools were allocated a number of places at Ardentinny in proportion to their school roll and allocated a week's time slot approximately 18 months in advance. The allocated week would fall in the summer or the winter months on an alternate basis. This policy meant that there were no full weeks available for follow-up or advanced courses. It was accepted that the centralised schemes and school clubs fulfilled this function and the trade-off was that students did not suffer in the ways described above by the Department of Education and Science. Kevin emphasises the depth of experience he felt that the students at Ardentinny experienced in comparison to an introductory session. Italics have been

added in the following quotation to reflect the emphasis that Kevin placed on the word 'became'.

> Kevin: When they walked through the door they *became* a mountaineer for a week, they *became* a kayaker for a week, they *became* a geographer for a week and what you are able to do then is really let them go away with a skill level. Kids would go away from a river kayaking week having been down a grade two river, where they'd never sat in a boat on Monday. That's a big difference between having had half a day's session – 'cos we all know how much achievement you get out of a half-day session. You will have fun, you probably will get wet, you'll also be pretty frustrated because it's the hardest two hours of canoeing of your life ... So you were looking to give them the best possible experience and getting the child … as far up the ladder as you could … pushing everybody a bit further than they were expecting to go.

Kevin's emphasis on the word 'became' reflected the intention of the instructional staff to provide an in-depth experience of an outdoor activity that went beyond students developing skilful performance. The aim was that students would experience the activity at a deeper level, to immerse themselves in an activity, to encounter the ethos and traditions that inform an activity – to experience not just what kayaking is *like* but what it *means to be* someone who kayaks, or sails, or does fieldwork.

Secondly, in addition to the pedagogical argument of allowing students to really get to know the sport and providing sufficient time for learning that high expectations of student achievement could justifiably be asked, another instructor, Bob, argued that the financial commitment of a residential outdoor education centre demands that the education provided is not something that could be provided at school.

> Bob: You're spending a lot of money maintaining a centre like that, maybe a quarter to half a million quid a year and a lot of the centres now do things you could do in a local park ... if you're going to spend that money you need to provide something they can't get at home or very locally …

A third perceived benefit of the week-long courses was that being with one instructor, or at most two, for the entire week allowed for the development of

authentic, trusting relationships between students and instructor. This was considered an important element of the social educational experience.

> Neil: That's why we didn't do taster courses; real relationships could be built amongst kids and with the instructor.

Fourthly, there was the feeling that from a safety perspective there were significant advantages to students developing beyond an introductory level.

> Simon: It avoids the diary of disasters or catalogue of catastrophes that you … can potentially get … where you might go out sailing and get hit on [by] the boom and end up with a sore head but haven't learned to sail; or go out kayaking and you find out how to scare yourself capsizing but haven't actually managed to make the boat go in any particular direction that you wanted it to go.

There was a recognition among some instructors that more could perhaps have been done to enable students to carry on with activities after leaving Ardentinny. One instructor felt that formalising the achievements of the pupils in some way so that they could better understand what it exactly was they had achieved and have something concrete to show for it would have been beneficial. Simon felt that although the centralised schemes existed more could have been done to directly link the outdoor activities in with school as was done in the field studies courses, which were strongly linked to curriculum objectives. There was also an acknowledgement that the existence of centralised schemes and clubs did not equate to access. A number of barriers, from transport, to clothing, motivation, culture, and particularly a personal connection were referred to:

> Kevin: I think opportunities for almost all children are entirely linked, 99% is linked, to [whether] there [is] a teacher with the interest and the motivation in their school who knows [the interested pupil(s)]. You know there's nothing more motivating for kids and nothing makes it easier to facilitate them getting involved in something than if they've a teacher in the school that does it, and is keen about it and is actively recruiting kids.

As the centralised schemes were staffed voluntarily, and primarily by teachers, the result was that involved teachers were not equally spread out across all schools. They

tended instead to be concentrated in a few schools with others scattered more intermittently. Heather acknowledged that for many of the students what they experienced at Ardentinny was very outwith their culture so they were not very likely to continue with the activities but was absolutely sure that they would talk about it for a long time afterwards. A qualitative study of Year 6 and Year 9 students' out-of-school activities (Wikeley, Bullock, Muschamp, & Ridge, 2007) found that involvement in organised clubs and activities led to significant developmental outcomes such as an acceptance and understanding of the importance of rules and roles in learning, greater self-control, and a changed perception of adult authority legitimised by knowledge and passion for an activity or subject rather than by a seemingly arbitrary need to control. However, the study also found that students from less affluent backgrounds were less likely to be involved in organised out-of-school activities and that this differential was higher in the older age group. The key factors affecting the difference in participation were related, logically, to cost but also to a lack of knowledge and confidence in accessing activities and, related to Heather's comments regarding culture, students' perceptions of themselves as participants in the activities.

4.3.2 Interpersonal learning

The routines and everyday procedures of residential life were considered as fundamental to students' interpersonal learning and development.

> Kevin: The way we sat down and ate meals together as a group of adults at the table … in the formal sense - you know, people served food for other people - they all had a social purpose, there was a social education going on. I would sit next to 14-year old children on a Monday who'd never used a knife and fork and they'd be like, "Which one do I use, sir?" Education on that level was going on all the time ... There was a fairly rigid timetable regime that they had to follow. But [unlike school] it extended outside the school day. It involved getting up and washing and being at meals and all this sort of stuff and there were service elements required of them in relation to their own space and the public [communal] spaces … they [the kids] loved that, they loved that whole sense of purpose and community that was there.

It was not only in the residential experience that interpersonal learning was believed to take place. The outdoor activities and fieldwork were valued in their own right for the explicit purposes of education for leisure but they were also valued for their potential as vehicles for developing skills such as care for others, cooperation, and empathy.

> Kevin: My belief is that a sport like mountaineering, kayaking, any of them actually develops all of those things simply by participation and learning … the social aspects, the leadership aspects, the joint responsibility for others … the environmental responsibility, I think these things emerge.

The issue of how to facilitate personal and social learning in outdoor activities has attracted much debate within the field of outdoor education. At the heart of the debate are issues concerning the nature of experience, how experience is assimilated, and what changes occur as a result. Rusty Baillie, an Outward Bound course director, coined the phrase "Let the mountains speak for themselves" (James, 1980) in a reaction against trends within Outward Bound to increase instructor facilitation of group processes. In a similar vein Drasdo (1973) argued against integrating outdoor activity experiences more closely into mainstream education and justified this with the assertion that "the most valuable and profound experiences in life are often those that stand out with most definition and least overlap, characterised by their freshness and unexpectedness" (p. 27). Neil, who worked at Ardentinny from 1973 through to the mid-1980s suggests that it was an era in outdoor education when the process, or even content, of social education was simply not examined in detail.

> Neil: The actual social aims of what we were doing were less worked out than they would be now … we were just at the beginning of concepts in education like teamwork and … what do we mean by social skills, what do we mean by transferable skills and the role that schools have in delivering these? I think back in 1973 it was a very, very much woollier set of concepts and it was, you know, allowing young people to make the best of themselves ... There was also a feeling that, sort of getting out there into the hills and onto the lochs was something that was 'good for people', again in an ill-defined sort of Drasdo-esque kind of a way and overtones of Outward Bound, you know, it would make you into a better person if you did this kind of thing … So we were

trying to make the kids better, happier, fitter, more motivated people. We were
trying to make them work together and with each other in teams … but not
really doing any of the overt teambuilding stuff. No ropes courses and things
like that and it sort of just came through the activities.

More recently a number of authors (Gass, 1990; Greenaway, 1993; Priest & Gass,
1997) posit that some form of guided reflection is required for meaningful learning
to occur. Priest and Gass (1993) outline a taxonomy of facilitation styles ranging
from allowing the experience to speak for itself through to framing the learning
expectations of an experience and reinforcing the results through reflection.
Although the more *laissez-faire* approach represented by Rusty Baillie and Drasdo
(1973) may be criticised as being haphazard and leaving learning to chance, the more
formalised verbal approaches to drawing learning from experience are not without
complication either. MacLeod (1996) draws attention to the difficulty of verbalising
the meanings of certain experiences and the validity of less-than-conscious bodily
knowledge. This raises the questions of whether a) it is possible to formally review
certain learning experiences, b) it is necessary to review certain learning experiences,
and c) who and what the review is actually for – to maximise the student's learning
or to reassure the teacher/facilitator that learning has actually occurred? In an
analysis of experiential learning theory Webb (2003) raises important issues
regarding assumptions relating to experiential learning theory that the field of
outdoor education has long regarded as unproblematic, not least of which is Kolb and
Fry's (1975) commonly referred to learning cycle which Webb (2003) describes as
"scientifically, philosophically, and epistemologically refutable" (p. 71).

As pointed out by James (1980), whether or not formalised review sessions take
place it is likely that, consciously or unconsciously, instructors are shaping and
guiding students' experience. The very presence of an instructor is a mediating
influence on the experience and each action or inaction, each word of encouragement
or brief conversation has its effect. Beames (2004a) suggests that "people can largely
process their own experiences, given enough time to reflect on their own and enough
time for informal dialogue with others" (p. 211). This conclusion was drawn from a

case-study of a ten-week Raleigh expedition to West Africa involving 14 young people between 17 and 25 years old. There are, therefore, conflicting opinions regarding the details of experiential learning theory. Beames (2004a, p. 211) suggests that further research could usefully consider the appropriateness of the more informal approach to reviewing with regard to outdoor education programmes of shorter duration. I would add to this that consideration of different age groups and learning preferences could also provide useful insights.

Among the interviewed instructors, as exemplified by Kevin and Neil above, personal and social learning was primarily considered to occur as a result of participation in the activities without formalised reviewing or reflection. However, there were variations in approach amongst the instructors to the issue of drawing learning from experience. For example, Sarah, who worked at the Centre between 1994 and 1996 – a period when, arguably, reviewing was a more accepted practice than in the earlier days of Ardentinny – was more proactive in taking the time with the students to review their experiences in an attempt to maximise the learning.

> Sarah: I was well aware that individuals could gain a sort of maturity and ability to appreciate each other for what they were and their own strengths and be kind to each other ... in the week you could see that they were able to empathise, admire, ... think about being in other people's shoes ... I can't really remember how I did it but we'd always have quite a long time discussing what we'd done and what each person felt about others in the group … so I tried to do quite a lot of that at the end of the week, and through all the things you do during the week you'd obviously try to encourage and support and provide new experiences.

Although there were variations in approach the common underlying principle was that the interpersonal learning was dependent upon students taking part in meaningful and authentic experiences (Carver, 1996).

> Simon: It was a great model because it worked, it was so effective. When you've got a shared purpose like, you know, you've got a fieldwork exercise to do, it doesn't matter who in the group that you're put with, whether it's a boy or

a girl, you know because you've got this shared outcome that you're trying to achieve. Or it could be with a canoe group, you've got to load the canoe trailer - you've got to work together. And all the embarrassment about doing things with girls if you're a boy or vice versa, they seem to, they suddenly become minor considerations in terms of achieving the objective. And that kind of removed a lot of the inhibitions I think that a lot of the kids may have had if it wasn't structured in that way.

This point of view is supported by Sibthorp's (2003) research of a three-week adventure programme for adolescents which found that tasks requiring physical and social skills in an authentic context – such as sailing a boat together – was a significant factor in the pedagogic value of the experience.

4.3.3 Intrapersonal learning

Although the focus of attention when considering learning in a residential setting might instinctively fall upon interpersonal aspects of learning the experience of group living was also described as providing opportunities to explore intrapersonal learning. Kevin described how the internal layout of Ardentinny was structured in such a way as to provide for the different individual needs and preferences of students during their free time and also to facilitate peaceful social interaction.

> Kevin: There wasn't a games room, there was a series of places you could play different games … we didn't want 50 kids in one room knocking hell out of each other and basically starting stuff. We wanted them quietly getting on with what was good for them. If they liked to play snooker they played in the snooker room, if they wanted to watch telly they watched telly, if they liked to play chess or sit in the library … they had a library to sit in.

As with the first depute principal, Mike, the instructors also expressed awareness that for some students the domestic comfort and calmly controlled social atmosphere contrasted with the reality of their home lives and provoked internal reflection.

> Kevin: You know there were many kids who came from difficult circumstances for whom this was [a new experience] – comfy chairs, colour telly, chat with your friends, have a really nice room, nice bathroom.

The sense of satisfaction, achievement, and confidence as a result of overcoming challenges and uncertainty was considered by the instructional staff to be an important part of students' learning.

> Barry: they had this perception of what they could manage when they arrived but when they left their boundaries had been expanded hugely … by this progression through a particular activity they were constantly being faced with a new, bigger challenge and each day they overcame that challenge ... not only had they achieved the technical ability … but they were actually enjoying it as well. So, it was great to see that progression and that blossoming of that person and their confidence.

> Bob: at the end of the week you'd see them going through the white water on the Awe and the smile on their faces, the achievement! It's brilliant! … So that's what it does to people, they achieve, there's a sense of achievement, an opportunity to achieve that they wouldn't get [anywhere else].

Concepts of risk, challenge, and adventure are common areas of discussion in outdoor education and opinions vary as to their nature and their relative importance. As previously discussed above (Section 3.3), Mortlock (1973, p. 4) considered feelings of physical or psychological harm as defining elements of adventure and therefore, by extension, to adventure education. Miles & Priest (1990) propose that adventure education includes "processes that involve risk in some way" (p. 1) and that this risk may be related to physical, social, or spiritual consequences. Loynes (1998) argued for the consideration of the exhilaration of exploration as adventure. Central to the various points of view is uncertainty of outcome. Dewey (1917) suggested that even a process of reflective thinking involves risk as the outcome of the process is uncertain and that lack of certainty is "the nature of an adventure; we cannot be sure in advance" (p. 174). Thus, at one end of the spectrum adventure requires body and/or mind to be placed in the lion's mouth whilst at the other end of the spectrum adventure can be found with pipe, slippers, comfy chair, and an enquiring mind. The necessity of the potential for physical and/or psychological harm was not given emphasis in the instructors' accounts. The instructors primarily referred to a gradual learning process where students were encouraged to successfully overcome each day's challenge of developing their skills and knowledge

resulting in feelings of satisfaction and achievement. There was recognition that there were times when students were nervous in the face of certain situations. The potential presence of physically and psychologically intimidating situations in outdoor activities was acknowledged as was student exhilaration at overcoming those situations but this was not the focus of the learning experience that instructors were aiming to provide.

In contrast to the assertion in the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Ch. 17, Section 410) that outdoor activities do not require the refined skills of team sports the instructors recounted that a great deal of student satisfaction came from developing the skills that allowed them to progress in their chosen activity. Developing these skills was recognised by the instructors as requiring determination and commitment. These were considered by the instructors as important learning outcomes – not in an abstract sense of building 'character' or moral fortitude as expressed in the Norwood Report (Board of Education, 1943, pp. 83-84) but as directly related to successful learning.

> Kevin: They weren't just learning an activity they were learning how to learn. They were learning … a new skill to a decent level requires, you know, a child to concentrate, to listen, to practise, to genuinely take an interest and really apply themselves and at times that's tough.

Instructors also highlighted the fact that students were not always enthusiastic about the challenges they faced. Challenges were often not of the kind requiring skill but rather of overcoming discomfort or feelings of discouragement. There was no intention to create hardship as a learning experience but there was a recognition that students did often find value from having made decisions or been encouraged to make decisions to do things they did not really want to do at first.

> Sarah: Something they didn't really want to do especially but managed and were a bit surprised by, you know, perhaps a little bit of discomfort ... possibly coming through some low moments ... you don't want them to have them but … when you're pushing yourself up a hill or something that's not easy and comfy and [at the end of it] you have an achievement. So I really, really, want

everyone who has come to feel they have achieved something that they didn't expect to achieve.

> Kate: … [they] maybe learnt a few things … about themselves … that they'd challenged themselves, they'd coped with situations that they didn't necessarily think they'd be able to cope with or they'd managed to put up with so-and-so for the week because normally they couldn't stand that [person].

Instructors appeared to value students' realisations that unusual and seemingly unachievable tasks could be overcome as much as students' satisfaction in the achievement itself. In an overview of literature on the successful characteristics of adventure education programmes McKenzie (2000) points to outdoor education literature that supports the incremental increase of level of challenge which allows students to experience mastery and success – a point of view supported by Rubens (1997). Bandura (1997, p. 80) comments that the experience of success contributes to a sense of personal efficacy and that challenges which require perseverant effort to be successful develop resilience in an individual's sense of efficacy.

The experience of going to Ardentinny was recognised by the instructors as being different from students' home lives in a number of different ways. Particularly for the students coming from the more urban areas the contrasting environment at Ardentinny was stark.

> Simon: I think part of the impact that Ardentinny had is that, you know, it was only an hour and a half from Paisley but it's such a completely different world because you are very much in the Highlands and a fjordal landscape. It does have a very different landscape to Renfrewshire and yet it was not actually very far away at all. And a lot of the kids would often go away thinking they'd been to an island because they'd gone on the ferry and come back on the ferry and hadn't realised they were still on the mainland.

As is common in many outdoor centres in Scotland, Ardentinny had a number of English instructional staff. Sarah points out that this in itself would have been an unusual experience for many students. Sarah suggested that at an age when young people are often looking to conform to group norms the social contact with people

from outwith their usual sphere who had different accents and an unusual fashion sense had the potential to be a thought provoking experience.

> Sarah: English accents would be strange to them, many wouldn't have ever travelled very far, all their school staff would probably be Scottish. The Ardentinny staff looked a bit weird to them too probably, lots of guys with beards, strange patterned Troll [climbing equipment manufacturer] trousers.
>
> Bob: I always saw it as probably one of the greatest education situations you could have really, in the broadest sense – life. Meeting people, experiencing different places, stretching their imaginations, giving the opportunities to escape from wherever they might be. Just showing them a different world, a world that was accessible as well … So we did open some horizons to people and I guess that's what I wanted to do and share something that I loved passionately with other people.

At the same time as recognising the benefits of the elements of Ardentinny that were unusual to students, the instructors, in common with Mike's comments above (Section 3.6), referred to efforts to make connections between the experience the students were having at Ardentinny and their home lives. In this way they hoped to prevent students' experience at Ardentinny being so strange that it would have no relevance or application to their home lives.

> Sarah: The other thing I liked to do was to relate where we were to where they lived. We would try and see their houses from the hills and hopefully that would help them make a connection to thinking about being able to do this stuff themselves later on 'cos they're not so far away.

For groups coming from the most disadvantaged areas food became an aspect of the students' learning experience. Staff would try to educate the students' tastes in food – an endeavour which sometimes required an element of bribery.

> Barry: the cooks used to try and produce all these fancy meals for them for these particular client groups - so they would make them steak and so we said, "Right, if you eat steak tonight we'll maybe try and get you fish and chips the next night." … So they would try the steak and the next night they would get fish and chips … And that seemed to work. So we were exposing them to

different cultural influences, you know, but you had to kinda bribe them a wee bit!

4.4 Summary

Instructors expressed the view that working at Ardentinny was a highly satisfying experience. This was attributed primarily to the high quality of leadership which provided clear strategic direction, excellent personal and professional support, and allowed for significant professional autonomy within defined boundaries. The programme of week-long courses in single activities or field work subjects was strongly approved of by the staff. From a personal point of view this was considered to be far more satisfying than teaching short duration introductory sessions. From the point of view of the students' learning and development this was considered to be superior to a multi-activity week on a number of different levels. Whilst the teaching of outdoor activities and field work was considered important in its own right the instructors agreed that the main aim of Ardentinny was to provide a social residential experience. This was considered to include learning in interpersonal and intrapersonal spheres. Instructors primarily considered this learning to occur as a natural result of residential living and participation in the courses of study and were described in fairly general, non-specific terms.

> Simon: It was very much an opportunity to, just to try and share the outdoors and make people aware of what was out there to broaden their experiences and help them develop ... Plus, a great love for wildlife and that side of things.

5. The teachers' tale

5.1 Introduction

Six head teachers and seven teachers representing 11 schools were interviewed. The amount of time that the head teachers spent at Ardentinny with their students varied. Two were not able to join their students at all, whilst the other four stated that they would usually be able to spend one day at Ardentinny during the week their students were there. The time-period during which the head teachers were in post and responsible for sending pupils to Ardentinny ranged from 10 to 23 years. Each

school would normally send one male and one female teacher to accompany their students. This tended to be a popular opportunity for teachers and so the privilege would be rotated amongst the staff. The teachers interviewed in this study accompanied groups to Ardentinny anywhere between once and five times. Four of the teachers were regularly involved with Ardentinny as a result of their involvement with the centralised schemes. The fifth teacher accompanied a group on a biology fieldwork course. The sixth teacher worked with students who were struggling to remain in mainstream education and were following an alternative curriculum programme at their school. The final teacher interviewed was involved with the week-long art courses that took place at Ardentinny. Their contact with students before, during, and after Ardentinny allowed interviewees to discuss what they considered to be the nature of the experience for students and whether or not they perceived that it had any impact on students.

5.2 Widening horizons

Interviewees defined one of the most significant aspects of Ardentinny as widening the students' outlook on life. The use of this axiom related to benefits seen to arise from three main areas: a different environment, different activities, and different relationships with 'authority' figures. These areas are broadly in accord with documents such as the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Section 152) and Circular 804 (SED, 1971) that espoused the importance of residential experiences in terms of separation from the home environment, the benefits of living and working together in a relatively small group, and the possibility of different relationships with teachers.

A strong feeling existed that travelling to, and experiencing, a new and significantly different environment was developmental in itself, particularly for students whose home backgrounds provided a limited range of life experiences. John, whose school was in a particularly economically depressed area, felt that his pupils were very territorial as a result of not having many or any experiences outside a relatively small area. Even travelling to Glasgow, just 12 miles away, was like going to a different

world. Travelling to Ardentinny, which involved taking a ferry across the Firth of Clyde to a small rural village, was more different still.

> John: Linwood was a semi-industrial desert with a car factory at that time. Some of these kids had never seen the water, and to go across on a boat to Ardentinny, it was like going overseas for some of these kids. So, it was that sort of new developmental experience ... Ardentinny wasn't all that far away, I mean how many miles? 50 miles or something like that … it was still a special experience ... it was very close geographically but it was light years away from our normal experience of life. Linwood to Glasgow is almost like going to Outer Mongolia, again, 25 years ago it was! … So it's against that background that you've got to place what happens at Ardentinny. It was an amazing concept for [our students] ... The Centre helped to break some of that down, not a lot, I mean they were only thirty kids [at a time] but it made them see there was more available than kicking a ball in a park in Linwood.

Head teachers placed a lot of store in the simple fact of students having the opportunity to leave their everyday environment and experience a different geographic environment. It was acknowledged that the impact would vary as students from more affluent backgrounds may have had a wider variety of leisure opportunities or might have travelled further from home. But for the less advantaged students it was considered a genuinely mind expanding experience.

The activities that students took part in were considered as providing an opportunity to experience particular forms of leisure pursuits that they may not otherwise have had. There was an additional nuance of perspective to this provision of opportunity that related to students' perceptions of what school and education represented. The experience at Ardentinny provided the opportunity for students to experientially know that there were aspects to life and education that they may have been unaware of. Henry considered it vitally important that schools provide a diversity of experiences in order to maximise the possibility that all students experience success and have positive experiences in school life. The choice of words he uses to illustrate his belief highlights the possibility that the lack of opportunities to find meaning and success can result not just in a neutral attitude towards school but a powerfully negative attitude.

Henry: I've seen many youngsters who weren't hacking it in school … I've had youngsters write to me afterwards to say how much they got out of these schemes where they were successful ... there … was a chap … who I taught in Greenock Academy, he wasn't academic, he's now the head of housing in Inverclyde and he said it, canoeing, canoeing gave him the lifeline in school to keep going and say that school is not just a hateful place. To let them [students] see that school is more [than academic work], you're developing the whole person and there are people who are interested in you.

As well as the different environment and activities there was also a feeling that the different relationship that students were able to have with the instructors at Ardentinny was a developmental experience. Although still figures of authority and indirectly connected with school the less formal relationship between students and instructors was considered to be important in developing students' perceptions of and attitudes towards learning and adult figures of authority. The instructors were highly skilled practitioners in an aspect of education that most students attending Ardentinny were interested in. This was seen as important.

Hal: You know the only experts that they were coming up against were teachers. Now if they're coming up against other young folk, the instructors very often were just in their late teens or early twenties and they could relate very, very well to these youngsters. So I think socially it's a time of great, it's a time to try to expand their horizons, between 12 and 16 and that was very, very important.

Wikeley et al.'s (2007) research into students' out-of-school activities emphasises the different way students perceive involved adults in comparison to school teachers even if the adult involved is also their teacher. In out-of-school activities adults were seen as "contributing their expertise … as opposed to their 'adultness'" (p. ix) and even if their role involves instilling order or discipline they are still considered in a much more positive light – more as a peer and less as a teacher.

5.3 Interpersonal learning

As well as the perception that students were benefiting from being challenged in their perceptions of figures of authority there was also a strong feeling that Ardentinny facilitated improved relationships between accompanying teachers and students. James refers to the unwritten social codes that shape behaviour at school in terms of the way students relate to teachers but also to the fact that being away from school in an environment like Ardentinny makes it possible for teachers to relate differently to students. There seems to be an acknowledgement from both sides that the social structure of the experience is different which allows for changed interpersonal relationships between students and teacher.

> James: When they're in here with the big crowd there's unwritten rules that they just follow whereas away like that you can be a lot more relaxed with them, they've not got the hang-ups about being friendly with a teacher or you know, even being friendly with each other. … when they're away like that they'll do these things that normally they might not consider doing or they'd make a big fuss [about it].

This different relationship was considered to carry over into school life after Ardentinny and impact more widely upon the social atmosphere of the school.

> Fred: You knew most of the kids anyway roughly in terms of abilities and behaviour and different things but then [at Ardentinny] you see them in a different light and there is definitely them seeing you in a slightly different atmosphere in the evening throughout the place. That definitely made it a stronger bond between, the relationship between pupil and teacher. That definitely carried on when you got back ... there was a combination of working hard and socialising that made the place the unique experience that it was. I'd used it for volleyball groups as well. We did ... a whole week coaching. It was a tough, tough week ... but again the socialising in the evening was part and parcel.

> Neville: The rapport they established with their teachers who had shared the experience was very important in contributing to social cohesion in the school. They could see the teachers in a different environment, could see them as human beings, they weren't just 'Sir'! And consequently, behaviour in the

classrooms with kids who had shared something with a teacher like that was much better than it would otherwise be … Also, it gave them a chance to see teachers as learners too in a situation like that and I used to try myself as head teacher to go and spend a few days with them on each trip so they could see me in a different environment.

Wikeley et al. (2007) support Neville's assertion that being able to see teachers as co-learners is an important element in facilitating better relationships between students and teachers and that this relationship transfers back to the school environment. The improvement of relationships between teachers and students is supported by Rubens (1997, p. 49) who emphasises the importance of students and teachers sharing experiences and suggests the type of activity is possibly less important than the fact that both parties are doing it together. In addition, an Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) survey of outdoor education practices in 33 schools (Clay, 1999, p. 18) suggests that another benefit of the direct involvement of accompanying school teachers is that the level of the students' learning experience is enhanced as a result of the combination of the Centre staff's specialist knowledge and the teachers' detailed personal knowledge of the students.

The interviewees in the present study were realistic in their assessment of the degree to which change in student/teacher relationships occurred. Ardentinny was not considered a 'magic wand' to bring about guaranteed or immediate change. One head teacher felt that it was impossible to say whether any immediate changes resulted from students' experience at Ardentinny but nevertheless regarded it as an important and positive opportunity.

> John: I couldn't say there was a noticeable difference, a lot of them might express gratitude that they had been able to undergo the experience but I wouldn't say that they became well behaved children from rascals overnight, or anything like that. But it just gives them an extra dimension to their lives that I think they were grateful for … it was just a different special experience for them. It was almost as if you were casting your bread on the waters and hoping that something would come back into their adult lives as a result … It certainly

did not do them any harm and it was a very positive experience for a lot of industrial based children that I dealt with.

As stated earlier the policy of Ardentinny was for groups to be balanced in terms of sex, social background, and academic ability. A blind ballot was the most common method of achieving this in combination with head teachers ensuring that certain students whom they thought would particularly benefit from the experience were able to secure a place. As a result the group of students that attended Ardentinny, representing approximately one third to one quarter of their total year group, would consist of students from a range of different peer and friendship groups. Students were therefore presented with a very different social group than the one they would normally be a part of at school. Geoff, a head teacher whose school was primarily attended by reasonably affluent pupils with approximately 10% of students from poorer backgrounds, considered Ardentinny a very powerful experience in breaking down barriers of social class and encouraging of social bonding across previously static social groupings. At school students tended to socialise in groups that shared a similar socio-economic background whereas at Ardentinny Geoff felt that those differences were left behind and that the social cohesion experienced at Ardentinny filtered into school life afterwards. The value of a diverse group for developing social skills and positively challenging prejudgements is supported by Beames (2004a) and Sibthorp (2003).

Having referred above to the changes in social dynamics between students and teachers James described how similar changes occurred amongst students. The unwritten social codes that applied at school were often relaxed at Ardentinny allowing for the accommodation of different personalities within the group and better relationships between girls and boys.

> James: You know, there'd be certain kids who maybe would get, not even necessarily get picked on but ignored but in that environment [a residential experience] they're part of the group … Boys and girls played together as well, that was a big thing because that's not going to happen here [at school] really. Boys are out there playing with the boys and the girls are [doing the same] and

apart from just annoying each other really there's not much interaction but
when you're away like that they do.

The exact process by which the improved relationships occurred amongst the
students was expressed with difficulty but was related to the nature of the activities.
Fred referred to the students' experience of a feeling of dependence on each other –
being relied upon and being able to rely on someone else – as a significant part of the
experience.

> Fred: I think the sort of looking after each other, [there can be a] real need to
> be able to look after each other if you're out in the wilds.

In a study of social and intellectual development in American high schools,
Collinson and Hoffman (1998) argue that the high school system continues to
struggle to engage young people's interest and support successful achievement
because it artificially separates intellectual achievement from social development.
This echoes the statement in Circular 804 (SED, 1971) of the need for greater
integration of the different aspects of learning in secondary school that a residential
outdoor experience is well positioned to provide. Collinson and Hoffman (1998, pp.
11-13) suggest that authentic responsibility, within a safe context, is something that
young people particularly desire. From Fred's perspective it seems that aspects of the
activities provided students with the opportunity to experience responsibility in
different ways whilst being able to turn to an adult for support if necessary.

John implied in Section 5.2 that young people's sphere of experience from the home
environment nowadays may well be wider than in the 1970s. However, Hal provides
a counterpoint suggesting that the proliferation of personal entertainment systems
and devices over the years means that a social experience like Ardentinny continues
to be an important social learning experience.

> Hal: Remember we're talking here about kids between the ages of 12 and 16
> roughly. It's at a time when their whole attitude is developing and I think many
> of them especially nowadays don't go outwith their own family terribly much,
> you know the entertainment is a lot in their own home. You know with their
> iPods and televisions and Playstations and all that sort of thing and to go and
> live with another group of people is socially very important … the fact that

they've got to live with other people for a week and get on with other people for a week.

5.4 Education for leisure

The teachers and head teachers acknowledged the education for leisure aspect of Ardentinny as being valuable in giving students an experience of the outdoor environment and the opportunity to develop skills they may be able to use in the future.

> Andrew: I would hope it gave them a great love of the outdoors and a wish to follow it up. Some of them, hopefully, would use the skills they got maybe in sailing or canoeing; hopefully some of them would follow that up in later life.
>
> Hal: The experience and the qualifications of the staff, that was what we couldn't offer in the schools … that could be offered up there … it offered a level of expertise that they couldn't have got elsewhere ... I hoped it would also open their eyes to other opportunities for them in terms of leisure activity

Andrew and Hal both used the word 'hope' suggesting that they did not consider it very likely that students would continue any interest in outdoor activities beyond Ardentinny. A range of reasons was given for this. Three of the head teachers cited a lack of clubs or centralised schemes activity in their area resulting in Ardentinny being a unique, one-off experience for most of their pupils – the antithesis of the message contained in Circular 804 (SED, 1971). In keeping with the managers and instructors, Henry highlighted the crucial importance of the contribution of teachers giving up their personal time to facilitate students' participation in the centralised schemes. Tony who was very involved in organising the centralised schemes reiterated this.

> Tony: A lot of it got down to the staff that you actually had. If there was a member of staff working in one particular school then they would recruit from inside that school and if you didn't actually have a member of staff who was interested … [for example] we always had trouble getting people from [school x] because there was no teacher [there] who was part of the skiing system, who would actually go out there and put the notice board up and get the kids to come into it.

152

There was, nevertheless, a belief expressed amongst the head teachers in particular that the experience at Ardentinny may have sown a seed which would come to fruition in adulthood when the individual's circumstances and ability to express greater self-determination had developed. The possibility that the experience may have come at a time that wasn't suited to the individual's level of maturity – socially, emotionally, or physically – was also mooted.

> Hal: I think for some of them it might have just kindled an interest and it can lie there dormant while they're discoing and all the rest of it! And then maybe later in life...

The inference that the effects of a residential outdoor education experience may materialise in later life highlights the need for research, such as this present study, which takes a long-term perspective.

5.5 Intrapersonal learning

Tony provided another perspective on the effect of Ardentinny on students. He felt that the experience provided students with something more important than an interest in a particular activity or fieldwork subject.

> Tony: Ardentinny was wise enough to see that if you get people sufficiently motivated in something, anything, whether it was stamp collecting or art it didn't matter. If they were sufficiently motivated [in one thing] then the chances are they could become motivated in another thing and another thing and another thing … I doubt very much if Ardentinny created too many biologists … but what did happen was it created a group of people who then realised that they could then set themselves an achievable goal and do it. And that was the difference. You came out of Ardentinny with this attitude that, "I can do things."

Tony's perception of the transferable benefits that students gained from Ardentinny is congruent with Rubens' (1997, 1999) argument regarding a broad conception of adventure, which would be an appropriate categorisation of Ardentinny's programme, and transferability across tasks (Dweck, 1986). At first, Tony was of the opinion that a sample of a variety of different activities – closer to a narrow

conception – would have been preferable but changed his mind after seeing the way students responded at Ardentinny.

> Tony: The sampler would have given them a very short hit at sailing, canoeing, orienteering or whatever. At the end of that week what would they have achieved? And this is, on reflection, this is why Ardentinny was so successful. It actually took people from nothing to something and it gave them a real sense of achievement. "I did that, I can do this." And it wasn't a one wee shot at it and that was it, move on, "What's next tomorrow?" And never actually become good at anything.

Ardentinny was also considered to be an experience that developed self-reliance, independence, and responsibility for self.

> John: It wasn't a case of keeping them fit or anything like that because they played football like a religion in Linwood, they were pretty fit. There were certain things they could get from Ardentinny I thought that they couldn't get anywhere else. You know, that sort of feeling of self-reliance.
>
> Fiona: Part of it was living and working together as a team and doing the chores. They all had their chores … and they had to be in bed for a certain time and it was a regime that they went on really with all these activities. And they had to make their own sandwiches … in the morning and … the staff made sure that everybody made up something because they were going to be working hard and had to feed their bodies and that was very much this is, "you've got to feed yourself, you've got to make sure that you're well looked after and have your flask of whatever" ... it was teaching them a self-sufficiency, an independence and things like that that they'd maybe never had before, in a controlled environment, you know it was very controlled, they were very well looked after.

With regard to the daily timetable the students were provided with a lot of structure but in other ways they were given a lot of responsibility for themselves. Students were issued with clothing and equipment at the start of the week for which they had to be responsible – for example, making sure it was hung up, tidied, or put in the drying room at the end of the day. Students made their own sandwiches for lunch at

breakfast time, took turns in helping with serving the meals, and were required to keep rooms tidy. Simple, communal chores and areas of personal responsibility such as these were seen by the teachers and head teachers as an aspect of Ardentinny that students, in the main, responded to very positively.

In the areas of personal responsibility there were obvious and immediate consequences to the decisions students made. If they did not hang up their clothes in the drying room properly they would still be wet the next day. These were viewed as meaningful learning experiences that, as Fiona points out above, took place within a supportive environment. The hardship as a result of poor choices would never be severe but there would be real, felt consequences. It is possible to argue that a similar situation exists in the school environment – there are consequences to not fulfilling behavioural expectations or to not studying for a test. However, Tony used the outdoor activities as an example to illustrate how he felt that the qualitative difference in the nature of the challenge or expectations at Ardentinny and the associated results or consequences was key to the particular value of the experience.

> Tony: The point of when you do it at school is to pass an exam, the point of when you did it at Ardentinny was so that you became self-fulfilled at the end of it. At the end of that week you could say, "Oh, that's what I did! I did that!" Right? Whereas when you pass the exam it's maybe too esoteric, you can't actually touch what you've done. But at the end of the week they could say, " I did [that], I couldn't do that before and I can do it now! The reason I can do it now is because of the process: learning to get on with people all these other people helping me to do it, all the other staff did this, that and the next thing.

Wurdinger (1994) points out the misapprehension that an experiential learning pedagogy is necessarily employed in the use of outdoor activities for personal and social development and that, in fact, a 'traditional' approach is very common. An experiential approach would involve the students engaging in a situation where they independently experiment with solutions to a particular problem, observe the results, reflect on future action and then implement those actions. A traditional learning approach involves information being dispensed which the student assimilates with the assumption that application will occur at some later date but in reality the

application phase rarely happens. Wurdinger suggests that the traditional approach, which tends to predominate in classroom learning situations, is not inherently inferior but crucially lacking the important final step in the learning process – application. For example, at Ardentinny students were instructed to make sandwiches and given the reasons why this was necessary. An experiential approach to learning whether or not nutritional sustenance was required during the day would have been irresponsible. Students were, however, able to apply the information that had been communicated to them and reflect on its relevance for future experiences. Drengson (in Wurdinger 1994) states that information becomes knowledge only through personal interaction, relation to previous knowledge and insights, and application.

Separation from home and family was considered important in contributing to students' feelings of independence and adulthood – a belief that is congruent with Beames' (2004a) research into Raleigh International expeditions.

> Andrew: It was a very different experience from going abroad with your parents, you were away from your parents, you were with your peer group and you were doing things that you'd probably never done before ... Being away from their own homes, which as I say, was the first time for some of them. Being with their peer group, doing activities with their peer group at a time in their lives when they're just changing into early adulthood. I think it was a very important time for them to have that experience

Interviewees made a clear connection between students' separation from home and family (personal) and his or her integration with a peer group in a residential setting (social). The combination of personal and social learning in this manner was strongly linked to the concept of transition to adulthood – leaving the familiar security of home life and childhood to an environment where more adult behaviours were required. The adjustment and learning required was compounded by the nature of the social group, many of whom would have been outside of each individual student's normal friendship or peer group.

5.6 Time and intensity

Circular 804 (SED, 1971, para. 3) recommended that secondary school students would benefit from residential experiences of sufficient duration that students are able to settle in their new environment and social milieu. This is suggested as being anywhere upwards of a few days. The justification and perceived benefits of dedicating a whole week to the outdoor activities has already been discussed. James, a biology teacher, and Peter, an art teacher, strongly emphasised the importance of the continuity and concentrated effort that a residential experience at Ardentinny afforded to their disciplines.

James referred to the importance of being able to spend concentrated amounts of time on practical work and contrasted this with the time restrictions at school where even doing basic sampling was almost impossible within the 50-minute class period. He argued that the effect of the latter is that students are not as focused because they know the session is being artificially rushed and they do not have the time to properly engage in practical experiments. Time is the key. James also acknowledged the easy access to the non-urban environment and the laboratory facilities at Ardentinny but felt that the biggest advantage was the time available – not least because it allows for the important stage of application which Wurdinger (1994) suggests is so crucial to the learning process.

> James: If you spend a morning on something then they [students] see the value of it. When you rush experiments through the value is lost. If you have time you can plan something well, they understand the reason for doing it and then they're able to carry it out and get a result. Without the time you often end up demonstrating for them so they don't get into it and understand it or enjoy it 'cos they know they're not going to have the time to follow something through.

Peter, who worked with students on art courses at Ardentinny, expressed similar feelings. Continuity as a result of the time available and uninterrupted focus as a result of living and working together were considered fundamental to providing students with the opportunity to be really challenged and develop their skills and knowledge.

Peter: You're up in the morning, you're sitting at breakfast, you're having full-on art talks about artists … Just the idea of intensive study, almost forced study with likeminded people … you know you're just going in and all it is is shweeoo ... and it sparks something special. When you go home at night and they switch on their telly or their iPod or whatever else, it takes them away, whereas when you're there all the time you're saying, "Go and get your sketch book. Look at the way they're sitting." And it's all art… and just the sheer intensive aspect of it, it can't be, can't be beaten ... It can be done [at school] on an *ad hoc*, "Right, today we'll do this, right, away home, do a wee bit of work." [But] you don't, you're so tired, you just go and beach out. And you lose that, you lose the impetus of total focus, [the students say] "I cannae be bothered".

5.7 Summary

The teachers and head teachers interviewed considered students' experience at Ardentinny as an overwhelmingly positive opportunity. Although they recognised the inherent value of the specific content of the outdoor activities or the field work other areas of learning were referred to as being more important to the development of the students and as having more impact on the students. Foundational to the learning and development from the teachers' perspective was the fact that students travelled to a place that was different geographically and socially, and that the courses the students undertook were different to what they had experienced at school. The purposeful creation of difference or dissonance in students' experience is a common theoretical basis for learning in outdoor education (Nadler & Luckner, 1992; Priest & Gass, 1997; Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe 1988; Walsh & Golins, 1976) and resonates with Dewey's (1938, p. 79) assertion that unfamiliarity is essential to stimulate thinking and growth. Growth, or learning, was generally observed to occur in terms of changed relationships with peers and adults. On an intrapersonal level learning was considered to occur in terms such as self-reliance, sense of achievement, and experiencing the consequences of one's own actions. The extended period of time focusing on one activity or fieldwork course was considered very important in creating an authentic learning experience.

Two teachers who regularly accompanied students to Ardentinny attempted to sum up what it was that they considered made Ardentinny such a positive experience for students.

> Fred: It was the staff that did it. You could say it was the programme or the building or the environment or whatever but it wasn't, it was the way that the staff did it that made the difference ... It was just quiet, exceptional competence … absolute competence. And they understood that getting the children to appreciate what the children themselves could actually do with their lives was really important … It's just the staff and you can't get away from it, [the principal was a] stunning manager. Just brilliant. He knew exactly how to get the best out of people ... [all the other staff] just really supremely competent.
> Tony: you started to realise just the effect that it had on people. People would go away from this week and come back and it was just, that had been the highlight of their life so far, that week at Ardentinny. It was just so many things that they did, so many experiences that they had … it was the experience of being there, being with a group of people, having to get on with a group of people, understanding how everything operated.

6. Summary

Ardentinny was created at a time of change, reform, and innovation in education. The Brunton Report (SED, 1963) provided a policy foundation on which to build a residential outdoor education centre, the philosophy and aims of which developed significantly beyond the elements of the report used to justify the capital start-up funding for Ardentinny. Ardentinny opened its doors in 1973 with the policy aim of using outdoor activities and fieldwork courses as a vehicle to provide a residential social experience. Although personal and social learning was the first priority it was only a matter of degree by which education for leisure through outdoor activities and curriculum enrichment through fieldwork were considered to be of secondary importance. In the day-to-day life and work of the Centre the aims were closely intertwined and considered to be mutually enhancing.

Hartley (1988, pp. 64-65) contends that although on the surface the Brunton Report was a progressive, pupil-centred approach to addressing educational shortcomings it contained a strong undertone of social engineering. The basis of Hartley's argument is that in recommending a more active and participatory pedagogy and practical curriculum (SED, 1963, pp. 37-39) Brunton was falling back on a questionable and regressive categorisation of lower academic achievers as 'concrete' rather than abstract thinkers. At a policy level this is a justifiable accusation of both the Brunton (SED, 1963) and Newsom (CACE, 1963) Reports which significantly influenced education of the period. However, between policy and implementation lay significant opportunity for interpretation. It is apt at this point to return to Dalyell's (1993) assessment of Hugh Fairlie's execution of his post as Director of Education in Renfrew County, under whose tenure Ardentinny was envisioned and created.

> [Fairlie] challenged a prevalent opinion that it was hardly worth teaching maths to less able pupils. On the contrary, Fairlie believed that since a grasp of basic mathematics was the pre-condition of a capacity to cope with so many jobs, there was a solemn obligation to teach maths properly to every pupil.

The evidence from interview and archival data suggests that the educational experience at Ardentinny was a genuine attempt by all involved to provide a positive educational experience for students of all abilities that was predicated on encouraging abilities and potential rather than working with students who were considered in deficit of an ability to think abstractly.

The guiding principles by which Ardentinny operated strongly reflect the recommendations of Circular 804 (SED, 1971). Ardentinny aimed to provide an authentically integrated experience combining curricular, recreational, and social learning. It also aimed to provide an experience that would continue beyond students' stay at the Centre. Fieldwork courses were closely tied to curricula and significant efforts were made to create and maintain links with the centralised schemes. Although never explicitly referred to in any of the tales there are clear links between this approach and Dewey's (1938) experiential pedagogy whereby a fundamental aspect of successful learning is that it leads to further learning experiences. In the case of the outdoor activities there was also a strong social integration agenda. Through Ardentinny's links with the centralised schemes and the

schemes' links with activity clubs in the community it was hoped to facilitate young people's social integration into the adult world. The twin aims of personal skill development and social integration contrast markedly with traditions of using outdoor activities to instil discipline and build moral character (Board of Education, 1943). The degree to which the local authority – County of Renfrew and then Strathclyde Regional Council – considered the form of outdoor education embodied at Ardentinny as beneficial to students is seen in the unusual situation where all schools were *required* to make the experience available to their students.

Freeman and Zabriskie (2002) state that three themes emerged from a qualitative study of the meanings seven families attributed to a residential camping experience: creation of an alternative culture, developing a sense of community, and an active experiential component. These three themes were considered to constitute the fundamental structure of the residential experience which was credited with having facilitated improved family relations. These three themes find significant common ground with expressions of support for residential education experiences in a range of documents in the post-war era and with the perspectives expressed in the four tales of this chapter. An alternative culture was established through the geographical and social separation of students from their everyday lives. Routines, expectations, activities, peer group, and significant adult figures were all different at Ardentinny. Through the process of living and working together both residentially and in the daytime content a sense of community was forged through new and developed friendships and also in changed relationships with adults. The final component is some form of experiential activity which at Ardentinny was provided through fieldwork and outdoor activities. Implicit in these three themes is a component that emerged in both documentary and interview data: time. To create an authentic alternative culture, develop a genuine sense of community, and engage in a meaningful and challenging way with a task or activity requires time. The duration necessary was not specified.

A final theme that emerged from the four tales, which is difficult to define but fundamental to the experience that Ardentinny delivered, is that of ethos. Education

161

officers, Ardentinny staff, and teachers all pointed to the Centre principal as the lynchpin of Ardentinny and placed great value on his leadership. Culture can be destructive, communities can damage their members, and activities can be meaningless. The Ardentinny principal was seen as creating and exemplifying a positive ethos of care, passion, and professionalism that "drove the good ship Ardentinny" (Sarah).

> Fred: I tried to figure out exactly what experience it felt like when [the principal], he was just a special type of person … what I put it down to eventually was it was as if it was his house and they treated you as if you were a guest in his house as opposed to being at his Centre and it was just that feeling you know, "Come in here, use this, use that, feel free to...", you know and that's the sort of experience it was.

PART THREE

Chapter 5: Outdoor education and Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus

1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the field of outdoor education has suffered from a lack of empirical research that is both robust and critically located within bodies of theory from complementary disciplines (Brookes, 2003b; Nicol, 2001; Higgins, et al., 2006, p. 64; Seaman, 2007). Deciding on a theoretical framework for this present study that would assist in understanding the wider meanings of the data from participants' questionnaires and interviews was a process that developed as the research evolved. In the following paragraphs I describe the process by which I arrived at Bourdieu's theory of social practice as an appropriate theoretical framework. Section 2 provides an outline of Bourdieu's theory of social practice, with particular attention paid to the concepts of habitus and field. Section 3 explains the particular relevance and addresses potential criticisms of Bourdieu's theory of social practice as a theoretical framework in researching residential outdoor education experiences.

As discussed in the previous two chapters, educational policy documents from the last 60 years reveal a fundamental belief in the potential of residential experiences to facilitate personal and social development. Phrases such as "[contributing] to width of outlook" (*National Schools – their plan and purpose*, as cited in Hunt, 1989, p. 28) and emphasising the significance of removing children from their everyday surroundings (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Section 152) recur frequently. Such common-sense, axiomatic intimations are similarly represented in the four tales of the previous chapter, exemplified by Neville's (education adviser for science) comment: "It was all part and parcel of making better-rounded people really" (Chapter 4, Section 2.4). Statements such as this seem to have entered cultural consciousness in the UK to the extent that a residential outdoor education experience is considered almost without question to be a positive experience which leads to personal and social development. But what is it about the residential experience that leads to such confidence? Policy documents hint at a potential line of investigation. The Newsom Report emphasises the importance of a novel social environment (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Sect. 149), Ardentinny's Architect's brief (County of Renfrew, personal

communication, 1969, Appendix C) quotes from Circular No. 550/64 in referring to residential outdoor education experiences as adding a new dimension to young people's lives. More recently Scottish education guidelines referred to the "different rules and conventions" (SOED, 1993, p. 24) of residential outdoor education being particularly appropriate and valuable in delivering all intended learning outcomes of personal and social development. The common thread is clear; there is a belief that residential experiences provide a social environment that is qualitatively different from normal school life. This is the basis of Walsh and Golins' (1976) theorising of the Outward Bound process whereby students are placed into new situations that require them to adapt which in turn requires learning. Yet, if all that is required is novelty a residential experience hardly seems necessary. Indeed, Orion and Hofstein's (1994) research into geological fieldwork suggests that novelty may well be a distraction to learning. However, the reference to "different rules and conventions" (SOED, 1993, p. 24) suggests that there is something structurally different about the social environment of residential experiences that contributes to their potential as learning experiences that goes beyond mere novelty of task or location.

In addition to considering the nature of residential outdoor education experiences at a macro level of social structure I was also intrigued by the meanings and values that participants attribute to residential outdoor education experiences and how this affects them – both at the time of the experience and in later life. A small-scale, retrospective study (Telford, 2005) of a residential outdoor education experience that had taken place 17 years previously suggested that participants placed most meaning and value on the personal and social aspects of the experience. However, despite the strength of feeling that many expressed regarding the significance of the experience participants often had difficulty in expressing why it was significant. For example, although the majority of participants expressed high levels of satisfaction in taking part in outdoor activities during the residential programme only a small minority subsequently engaged regularly in outdoor activities, and those who had not engaged at all after the fact found it difficult to explain the reasons for this. Thus, an experience that a majority of participants in the study referred to as significant

seemed to have little obvious impact on their lives. The following quotation (Telford, 2005) helps to illustrate this point:

> Matthew: Although you've got watersports centres on your doorstep and we're only 15 miles from the coast, when you're sort of 14 year old or however old we were when we went, it's just not feasible to do it is it? (p. 37)

The context of this excerpt is that Matthew is discussing how he would never have taken part in sailing or windsurfing had it not been for the opportunity to visit an outdoor education centre with his school. This raised several questions. Why did he consider it unfeasible to go to a watersports centre but feasible to go to an outdoor education centre? Why, with facilities on the "doorstep" did Matthew not continue to participate in any way subsequent to his experience at the outdoor education centre? Explanations involving finance, transport, or proximity to amenities did not provide wholly adequate answers to the issue of continued practice in outdoor activities. Nor did such explanations help to understand how an experience could be considered significant 17 years after the event and yet have little, if any, obvious continued influence on participants' lives. Accordingly, questions such as these which pertained to social life at the micro level of individual lives and an interest in the macro level social structure of residential outdoor education experiences led me to Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a, 1990b) work on social practice. The interplay of the concepts of habitus and field offered a framework for analysing the social structure of a residential outdoor education experience (macro level) and the impact, or not, of that residential experience on returning to everyday life (micro level).

In summary, this present study grew from an interest in participants' experiences of residential outdoor education and whether those experiences subsequently affected participants' lives in any way. The consideration of concepts of social structure and human agency as relevant frameworks for interpreting the results of this present study derives from two areas of thought. Firstly, the long-standing belief in the UK of residential outdoor education as a positive personal and social development experience; and secondly, participants' expressions in an earlier study (Telford, 2005) which stated the significance of their experience at the same time as having difficulty in expressing exactly what was so significant or how it had impacted their

lives. The combination of this interest in what was influencing participants' social practices during the experience and after the experience led to Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a, 1990b) work on social practice, in particular the concepts of habitus and field. In addition, from a methodological point of view, Bourdieu's (1988) emphasis on the interdependence of theory and empirical research is also particularly apposite given the intention of this present study to contribute towards addressing the lack of outdoor education research located within wider bodies of theory (Higgins et al., 2006).

2 Bourdieu's theory of social practice

2.1 Melodies and musical scores

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field developed from the desire to overcome the traditional social science dualism of subjectivism and objectivism. In *The Logic of Practice* Bourdieu (1990b) states that: "Of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism" (p. 25). Bourdieu contends that neither subjectivism nor objectivism alone provides a sufficient explanation of the complex dynamics of social practices. At one end of the spectrum is the subjectivist view that human beings possess the ability to think, perceive, and act freely without being influenced by other individuals, groups, or social expectations. Each individual is a wilful human agent creating and determining his or her social experience.

> [Subjectivism] asserts that social reality is a 'contingent ongoing accomplishment' of competent social actors who continually construct their social world via 'the organized artful practices of everyday life'… Through the lens of this social phenomenology, society appears as the emergent product of the decisions, actions, and cognitions of conscious, alert individuals to whom the world is given as immediately familiar and meaningful. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 29)

Webb, Schirato and Danaher (2002, p. 32) suggest that the stereotypical Hollywood action hero provides a useful illustration of subjectivism. The hero tends to be in full control of his or her thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and behaviour and is extremely skilful at perceiving and resisting external influences from society and bureaucratic structures. These influences are generally rejected as oppressive, corrupting and deterministic. Fortunately, due to an unusual strength of mind and body, the heroic character is able

to manipulate his or her social environment rather than succumb to its influence in the manner of lesser mortals. This heroic parody illustrates the extreme form of subjective awareness and related social behaviour that Bourdieu refutes.

At the other end of the theoretical spectrum is a social world dominated by objective, structuring regularities which are, "the unwritten musical score, according to which the actions of agents, each of whom believes she is improvising her own melody, are organised" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 8). This structuralist vision has no place for individual subjective consciousness guiding behaviour. In its stead laws, systems of relationships, and cultural norms shape and determine human behaviour (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 26). Structuralism provides a deterministic explanation of human behaviour whereby social practices are reproduced as a direct result of objective, regulatory structures.

In attempting to provide a framework for understanding social behaviour Bourdieu charts a path that aims to avoid what he considers to be the traps of either deterministic mechanism or deliberate, conscious intention as a sufficient explanation (Jenkins, 2002, p. 66). Hollis (1977) describes this duality thus: "Where Plastic Man [sic] has his causes, Autonomous Man [sic] has his reasons" (p. 12). Bourdieu (1977, 1990b) proposes an interdependent relationship within which human agency (subjectivity) is an important element in social practices but works within the limits made available by objective social structures (objectivity).

Individual creativity (subjectivism) allows each person the potential to create unique melodies but those melodies are a product of, and limited by, the same guiding structure of the musical score. To illustrate this in another way, although all vehicle drivers understand the information communicated by traffic lights, exact responses to this regulatory structure vary. A complete stranger to the system, after observing driver behaviour, might well be confused as to whether an amber light following a green light is an instruction to speed up and cross the junction as quickly as possible or to decelerate and come to a halt (Webb et al., 2002, p. 36). The decision to speed up or to slow down, to take a risk or to play it safe, or any other number of

improvised behaviours is a choice available to drivers. However, whatever choice is made it will, unavoidably, take place within the context of a regulatory structure.

2.2 Habitus

Bourdieu (1990a) contends that observation of any culture or subculture reveals patterns of conforming behaviour that suggest the existence of objective social structures but which do not appear to be grounded in compliance to explicitly stated or agreed rules: "I can say that all of my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules?" (p. 65). The two examples given above provide an imperfect illustration of Bourdieu's synthesis of the antinomy between subjectivism and objectivism. The synthesis is not one of freedom within defined constraints, which would suggest a finite number of possible improvised behaviours, rather it is more akin to a living feedback loop. Bourdieu suggests that through lived experience, particularly the formative experiences early in life, individuals appropriate objective social structures into their way of being at an unconscious level that in turn influence the nature of their subjective autonomy as conscious social actors. This results in, "a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.56). Individuals, therefore, do not live and act within the binding patterns of social structures, in a sense they become those regulatory, constraining structures through their social behaviour. In this way social actions are regulated without conscious compliance to externally imposed frameworks. Bourdieu conceptualises the accumulation of instinctive values and behaviours as the habitus.

> The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to functioning as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 53)

Thus, habitus comprises the values, dispositions, and ways of being that are unconsciously adopted by individuals from structural, formative contexts such as the family, the education system, and the socio-economic environment. Habitus represents a form of instinctive knowledge that people come to possess as a result of living in a particular culture or subculture (Layder, 1994, pp. 143-144) and which imbues them with an inherent appreciation of appropriate social practices within that particular culture. The values and dispositions of the habitus are manifest not only at the macro level of social practice but also at a somatic level, the micro level of bodily behaviour. Habitus is exhibited in every aspect of an individual's life. Interpersonal relationships, life expectations and choices, speech, gait, and manner of dress all stem from and reflect the habitus. Habitus is "the site of the internalization of reality and the externalization of internality" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 205) and is "an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95). People who grow up in a particular culture or sub-culture will possess a similar habitus. They will share what Bourdieu terms *doxa* – foundational, unconsidered cultural beliefs which encourage not only the acceptance of the way things are but, moreover, a sense that the way things are is the way they ought to be (Jenkins, 2002, p. 156). Thus, habitus is fundamental to the reproduction of structures within the social context that an individual predominantly exists in or has been influenced by and due to its instinctive, unconscious nature is carried with the individual as he or she navigates across other social contexts and environments.

Yet, variations in social practice exist within cultures, and cultures experience evolution and, indeed, revolution. How is it possible to account for human behaviour which seems to embrace both unconscious self-regulation and expressions of creative individuality? Although the robust nature of habitus contributes to the maintenance of the *status quo* it is flexible and therefore does allow for changes to both individual habitus and wider social structures. One way this occurs is through exposure to new or different forms of social practice. Moving through or into different fields creates the opportunity for new values and dispositions to be incorporated into the individual's habitus (Webb et al., 2002, p. 37). For example, immigrants to a new

country will tend to appropriate values and norms of their new home even if at a conscious level their intention is to hold on to their indigenous culture. Habitus is also vulnerable to challenge and change at a conscious level. Objective structures and categories of meaning contribute to the creation and maintenance of habitus as long as they are accepted or unexamined. Bourdieu calls this "the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second natures of the habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 78-79). Most people most of the time do not question the meaning and significance of every action they take, the time implications mean that the simple matters of physical and social survival do not permit it. To an extent, therefore, there is a survival necessity that demands that social practices and the assumptions they are predicated upon be taken for granted most of the time (Jenkins, 2002, p. 71). However, although powerful, socio-cultural structures and categories are contextually created, not universal, and are therefore susceptible to examination and challenge. There are times in social life when fundamental questions are posed and these can lead to changes which impact upon the habitus. Finally, although durable, habitus is practical. If certain dispositions and attitudes cease to contribute to an individual's status or prosperity then they will be vulnerable to change:

> … dispositions, knowledges and values are always potentially subject to modification, rather than being passively consumed or reinscribed. This occurs when the narratives, values and explanations of a habitus no longer make sense … or again, when agents use their understanding and feel for the rules of the game as a means of furthering and improving their own standing and capital within a cultural field. (Webb et al., 2002, p. 41)

Although the instinctive values and dispositions of the habitus are open to modification this tends to be a very gradual process as "responses are always largely determined – regulated – by where (and who) we have been in a culture" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 37). Nevertheless, an individual's habitus is not so rigid or controlling as to prevent improvisation and evolution in the way he or she acts and responds in the social world. Through habitus Bourdieu portrays the interdependent relationship between objective social structures and subjective consciousness as the former is taken into the 'being' of the latter and the latter contributes to the production of the former.

Thus the dualistic vision that recognizes only the self-transparent act of consciousness or the externally determined thing has to give way to the real logic of action, which brings together two objectifications of history, objectification in bodies and objectification in institutions (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 56).

2.3 Field

In the previous section the term *field* was used in the context of the development of an individual's habitus as he or she navigates different social environments. Bourdieu uses the term *field* or *cultural field* to refer to identifiable and relatively autonomous, structured, social contexts that are comprised of an amalgam of rules, positions, practices, and institutions and which engender particular ways of being and thinking.

> To think in terms of field is to *think relationally* [original emphasis]… I define a field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (Wacquant, 1989, p. 39).

Bourdieu contends that the more technologically complex a society the more socially differentiated it will be and therefore the more fields that will exist within that society (Wacquant, 1989, p. 39; Jenkins, 2002, p. 85). Sport, education, religion, art and politics are examples of fields. Each field has its own specific logic, traditions of necessary behaviour and networks of relations that are created and maintained by both individuals and institutions. It is within these objective structures of cultural fields that habitus develops as a product of what is accepted as logical, appropriate, and relevant within that field.

As outlined in the quotation above an essential feature of a field is the form of capital – that which is designated as being of value – within the field. Social agents within a field act and strategise in such a way as to maintain or improve their standing in relation to the capital that defines the field. Bourdieu states in an interview with Loïc Wacquant (Wacquant, 1989) that, "Each field presupposes, and generates by its very functioning, the belief in the value of the stakes it offers" (p. 36). For Bourdieu the

concept of capital includes all the resources that function as social relations of power, that is to say the things that people consider to be of value and endeavour to attain (Swartz, 1997, pp. 73-74). These resources fall into four main categories: social capital (interpersonal relationships which provide social networks of influence and support), cultural capital (knowledge, skills, and aesthetic preferences), symbolic capital (prestige and social recognition), and economic capital. The internal dynamics of a field are structured by individual and group struggles for the preservation of, and access to, the relevant forms of capital. Fields, therefore, are fluid entities defined not only by the existence of but also by the interactions between rules, practices and institutions caused by individuals and groups within the field (Webb et al., 2002, p. 22). For example, on the one hand one might argue that economic capital defines the field of business. By this definition success is measured in proportion to monetary profit realised. On the other hand, one might argue that social capital is the defining feature of business with success being relative to the contribution that a business makes to networks of social support within a community. To continue the example, given that cultural capital varies within and across fields a company may promote different aspects of its operations, its economic or social capital, in order to appeal to different cultural preferences or to establish dominance in a particular sub-sector of a field (Wacquant, 1989, p. 39). The amount of power a person or group has in a field is dependent upon the capital possessed. In consequence, the greater the capital possessed the more influence a person or group has to influence what is considered to be of value. It may be that by becoming financially dominant a company is able to use the respect and influence gained from its economic capital to bring about change in perceptions of what is considered to be the dominant capital in the field of business.

Although fields are discrete entities which, by and large, do not overlap with each other they are subject to influence from each other. Webb et al. (2002) state that fields are, "not autonomous, or uninfluenced by other fields … fields are fluid and dynamic, mainly because they are always being changed both by internal practices and politics, and by their convergence with other fields" (p. 28). External influences from other fields combined with internal struggles and interactions result in a degree

of fluidity and dynamism within fields. Taking this fluidity in combination with the ways by which the habitus can change and evolve it is possible to see how a field is both the cause and the effect of habitus which is, in turn, both created by and creator of fields. It is in this relationship between field and habitus that Bourdieu proposes to have transcended the dualism of subjectivist and objectivist approaches to social practice.

> [Social] practice is always informed by a sense of agency (the ability to understand and control our actions), but … the possibilities of agency must be understood and contextualised in terms of its relation to the objective structures of a culture (Webb et al., 2002, p. 36).

2.4 Summary

Habitus and field exist in symbiotic relation with each other. A field is produced and maintained by the individuals and institutions in it and habitus results from the absorption of the structures of the field into the individuals' ways of being – in thought and action. Individuals' understandings of the nature of the world and their place in it are learned through the practice of everyday life. Thus, individuals' understandings "are about *doing* as much as they are about *knowing* … only insofar as one does things is it possible to know about things" (Jenkins, 2002, p. 69). Thus, knowledge is always constructed through the habitus, not passively recorded. Habitus is subject to change, however, the foundational cultural experiences formed primarily in early socialisation experiences (Swartz, 1997, pp. 103, 107) are most influential in shaping an individual's practices and instinctive ways of being.

3 Application to residential outdoor education research

3.1 Outdoor education as a sub-field of education

Fields are relatively autonomous, structured social systems composed of individuals and institutions. Between those individuals and institutions exists a system of forces – relations of power – which defines the internal structure of the field (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990, pp. 7-8; Jenkins, 2002, p. 85). Within a field there may exist numerous sub-sections and each sub-section may hold a distinct position regarding what constitutes 'authentic' capital – whether social, cultural, economic, or symbolic

– within a field or sub-section of a field. Webb et al. (2002, pp. 26-28) use professionalism within sport as an example to illustrate sub-sections within a field. The two codes of rugby – rugby union and rugby league – are differentiated by significant variations in how the game is played, but possibly the most significant delineating factor between the two codes until the mid-1990s was that rugby union was, in theory, a strictly amateur game. Rugby union espoused the purity of sport for its own sake whereas rugby league and its supporters embraced professionalism as a badge of honour which distinguished their sport and its working class roots from its rival code. Thus, two diametrically opposed forms of symbolic capital, each considered as the true, or authentic, form by the opposing rugby codes, defined a sub-field of sport. Webb et al. (2002, p. 28) develop the illustration further by pointing out that even in sports where financial factors are acknowledged and welcomed, athletes are still generally expected to espouse values such as passion for the sport for its own sake or loyalty and commitment to a particular club rather than financial motivations. This results in a situation where doxa – the core values and discourses which surround the sport – are in contradiction to the reality of the sport as it is practised. A field, therefore, may be composed of numerous sub-sections, each holding conflicting values and even within sub-sections themselves struggles for legitimation and authenticity of various forms of capital occur.

This present study is situated within the field of education and more specifically within the sub-field of outdoor education which is differentiated from the main field of education by the symbolic capital it attaches to the use of the outdoor environment for facilitating learning. Circular 804 (SED, 1971) proposed that residential experiences combine curriculum, recreational activities, and communal living in a more natural way. As previously mentioned, Collinson and Hoffman (1998) suggest that one of the major weaknesses of education in the United States is a failure to recognise the importance of social capital (developing and maintaining peer relationships) in students' high school life. Focusing solely on cultural capital (passing exams which provide passage to employment) creates a learning experience which students find unnatural and de-motivating. From this perspective a residential experience can provide a balance between competing forms of capital that is

appropriate to students' needs. The nature of focusing on one activity at Ardentinny also differentiates students' experience from their normal learning environment. The change to a continuous, intensive pattern of learning allows for students to demonstrate abilities of persistence and effort in learning rather than performance (Rubens, 1997) in ways that are clear to him or herself, to peers, to adult figures of authority (Ardentinny staff), and potentially to accompanying school teachers as well. The nature of the learning content also allows for the authentic demonstration of social skills such as encouragement of peers that a maths lesson, for example, does not lend itself to quite so easily. Wikeley et al.'s (2007) research into educational relationships outside school supports the observations of interviewees in the previous chapter that the relationships between students and Ardentinny instructors are an important factor in the experience. Wikeley et al. (2007) suggest that students tend to perceive such adults as role models who gain their status as experts (symbolic capital) in certain activities rather than by the mere fact of being an adult. It is through structural elements such as these, which convey and maintain different cultural messages from the school environment, that residential outdoor education can reasonably be described as a sub-field of education.

However, as outlined in Chapter 3 the nature and purposes of outdoor education have developed from a variety of directions and continue to be contested and debated (Barnes & Sharp, 2004, pp. 1-5; Nicol, 2002a) with the result that various groups and individuals within the sub-field of outdoor education promote a range of values as authentic capital. For example, depending on the institution in question the symbolic capital that accrues from being recognised as a highly experienced and competent mountaineer may outweigh the cultural capital attached to being a certified teacher. The effect of the relative power dynamic between these two forms of capital will influence aspects such as promotion and staff seniority, further embedding and normalising the value ascribed to personal mountaineering skills and teaching skills respectively.

This reflection on the nature of residential outdoor education is based primarily upon evidence from this study of Ardentinny and therefore can only be tentatively

generalised to the sub-field as a whole. In addition, this analysis is based on values defined by those who are employed in and administer outdoor education. They do not necessarily tell us anything about what students as participants in outdoor education – who are the main focus of this present study – define as capital. The presentation and discussion of participants' accounts in Chapters 6-9 provides this account.

3.2 Field, habitus and learning

Accepting outdoor education as a sub-field of education provides a framework for examining the basis of claims made about residential outdoor education experiences. From this perspective, when students engage in a programme of outdoor education, and particularly residential outdoor education which involves separation from home-life and an emphasis on group living, they experience more than just novel subject matter, social group, or environment within the usual cultural framework. Instead, students enter into a structurally different cultural sub-field of education, the "different rules and conventions" (SOED, 1993, p. 24) of which engender significantly different relations of power, behavioural norms, and forms of authentic capital. Habitus, although robust, is vulnerable to change and one of the ways this occurs is as a result of moving through or into different fields which provides the opportunity for different values and dispositions to be incorporated into the habitus. Jenkins (2002) states that "the habitus is inculcated as much, if not more, by *experience* as by explicit *teaching* [original emphasis]' (p. 76). The nature of residential outdoor education where group work is integrated into authentic tasks students have chosen to participate in and the unavoidable realities of everyday communal living – sleeping, eating, washing, or just being together in the same space whether something is happening or not - allows for students to *do* group living.

> The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus* [original emphasis], which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions. (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 52)

For the residential outdoor education experience to be successful requires certain personal and social skills. Authentically living the experience allows these ways of doing and being to impact upon the habitus.

A number of authors have suggested that a diverse group is beneficial (Beames, 2005; Sibthorp, 2003) to students' personal and social learning on outdoor education programmes. The change of cultural field as part of a group that is distinct from an individual's normal peer group in everyday life, contributes to the structural differences of the cultural field that students experience. The forms of capital that are relevant at home may not be relevant with a new peer group. For example, the social capital associated with certain friendships, the symbolic capital of being the funniest or gaining the best test marks, or the cultural capital of owning the best MP3 player may no longer apply in the new group leading to the individual adapting to these new conditions. Such changes in the structure of the field may also act as a catalyst for students to examine assumptions and ways of being at a conscious level, thereby leading to practical or pragmatic decisions to change their behavioural practices to those which are more profitable in terms of improving their standing and increasing relevant forms of capital.

The concept of habitus provides a sociological lens for considering the impact of outdoor education experiences. In comparison to the stock of instinctive knowledge, values, and dispositions that individuals have developed over many years it is clear that a short outdoor education experience is only going to have a small effect on the habitus. In addition, when considering what effect a residential outdoor experience has on students after they return to their home environment it is important to remember that the habitus, "is always of the moment, brought out when a set of dispositions meets a particular problem, choice or context. In other words, it can be understood as a 'feel for the game' that is everyday life" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 38). Therefore, when students return to the game of everyday school life, it is by the rules appropriate to that game that they will tend to play.

Brookes (2003a, 2003b) draws from research in the field of psychology to suggest that outdoor programmes that claim to be able to change participants' behaviours irrespective of situational context have either found a "magic key" (2003a, p. 51) or misunderstand the nature of human practice and psychology. There are suggestions in outdoor education research that such optimism regarding the existence of a magic key does exist. In a summary of findings from a meta-analysis Hattie et al. (1997) state the following: "It is clear, however, that adventure programs are not inherently good. There is a great deal of variability in outcomes between different studies, different programs, and different individuals" (p. 77). In a summary of three meta-analyses Neill and Richards (1998) comment that "Outdoor education programs are not panaceas as evidenced by the fact that a number of evaluation studies reported negative outcomes" (p. 7). Although both statements are couched in negative terms the fact that such universal terms as *panacea* and *inherently good* are used at all suggests that it is a point of view that exists. Applying the concepts of habitus and field to outdoor education experiences helps to cast light on Brookes' (2003a) argument that "The fact that an individual is honest in one situation tells *very little* [original emphasis] about whether that person will be honest in a different situation" (p. 49).

Habitus and field explain behaviour as contextual because fields and sub-fields have their own specific structures which encourage certain behaviours and social practices. Individuals are instinctively aware of the rules of the game appropriate to a particular context and adapt their behaviour accordingly using the stock of knowledge contained in the habitus. For example, a student may learn that co-operation is the most effective way to succeed at a particular task whilst on an outdoor education course but he or she will be equally aware of whether co-operation has any value in, for example, their home peer group. If it does not, if such behaviour has low symbolic capital because it is associated with weakness rather than strength then the student may well choose not to display co-operation in the home peer group setting. To expect the student to do otherwise is to deny the structural reality of that particular situation and the individual's ability to assess that reality. The ability to instinctively understand the behaviours that are most appropriate to a particular

179

social context – to have a feel for the game – is fundamental to Bourdieu's theory of social practice. Bourdieu (1990a) describes this ability as, "the practical mastery of the logic or of the imminent necessity of a game – a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which works outside conscious control and discourse (in the way that, for instance, techniques of the body do)" (p. 61). Thus, the fact that a student does not display certain abilities or qualities on return to the home environment does not mean that those abilities were not learned or that the student is incapable of utilising those skills at another point in the future. The student may simply be demonstrating an accurate assessment of the rules of the game in a different context. To assess the success of a programme based on behaviours in a different setting may simply be an inappropriate means of assessment. On the other hand, the student may have assessed the home peer group as a profitable place to employ the newly learned skills of co-operation but, again, to assume that this means the student will act co-operatively in all situations is to ignore the importance of the role of the social context.

Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus provide a theoretical framework for interpreting the nature and impact of a residential outdoor education experience. Comments which refer to the ability of such experiences to "add a new dimension to the lives of those who have attended courses" (County of Renfrew, personal communication, 1969) can be understood from the perspective of students incorporating new values and dispositions into the habitus, thus allowing them to draw from a wider variety of values and dispositions in the future. Comments regarding the relevance of abstracting students from their usual environment and exposing them to the "different rules and conventions of residential experience" (SOED, 1993, p. 24) can be understood in the light of the different structural influences immanent in a different cultural field. To return to the analogy of harmonies and musical scores – changing the musical score creates new possibilities for accompanying harmonies which, again, are incorporated into the habitus.

3.3 Addressing criticisms of Bourdieu's theory of social practice

3.3.1 Habitus as overly restrictive

One criticism of Bourdieu is that the concept of habitus does not accommodate human agency in any meaningful form. This seems somewhat incongruous for Bourdieu whose professed aim has been to return agency to human actors from the hands of structuralist thinkers. In an interview with Honneth, Kocyba, & Schwibs (1986), Bourdieu states that, "My intention was to bring real-life actors back in who had vanished at the hands of Levi-Strauss and other structuralists … I do mean 'actors' not 'subjects'. An action is not the mere carrying out of a rule" (p. 41). Yet, Jenkins (2002, pp. 82, 90) suggests that Bourdieu's proposed relationship between the subjective aspects of habitus and the objectivity of the social world could easily be construed as a closed feedback loop which denies the human actor any real agency. The crux of the issue centres on the conscious and unconscious nature of habitus. Bourdieu describes social practice as a product of both conscious strategising and unconscious, instinctive behaviour. However, whilst people act reflectively and strategically those reflections and strategies are unconsciously limited in scope by the habitus. As a result, acting outside the promptings of the habitus is almost literally unthinkable and therefore rarely happens. Certeau (1984), however, argues that behaviour outside the habitus may be impossible to articulate but that does not mean it is unthinkable. By this understanding an individual may act strategically in a way that appears to others to fit with habitus whilst at the same time knowing that the intention of the act is contradictory to the cultural norm (Webb et al, 2002, p. 60). Certeau (1984) suggests that people possess a greater degree of freedom of action than is described in Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus due to the ability to,

> 'navigate' among the rules, 'play with all the possibilities offered by traditions', make use of one tradition rather than another, compensate for one by means of another. Taking advantage of the flexible surface which covers up the hard core, they create their own relevance in this network. (p. 54)

Certeau (1984, p. 56) challenges the primacy of unconscious habitus in Bourdieu's theory of social practice and the resultant lack of human agency, arguing that this explanation of behaviour provides the human agent with no options to choose from and no ability to reassess the social world, or elements of it, on the basis of new or

improved information. This renders any form of strategising impossible and leaves only an acceptance of the world as it is – a repetition of what had come before.

From Bourdieu's perspective social practice is neither wholly conscious nor wholly unconscious. Human beings are eminently able to strategise but equally the process of strategising must be influenced to some degree by an unconscious "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, pp. 62-63) expressed as a result of the habitus otherwise this only leaves room for wholly subjectively conscious human agency. The dispute seems to come down to a matter of degree and in the end both Certeau and Bourdieu conclude that it is impossible to ever really know what has motivated an individual's social practice. Bourdieu (1990a) concedes as much when he admits that resistance to expected norms of behaviour "takes the most unexpected forms, to the point of remaining more or less invisible to the cultivated eye" (p. 155).

3.3.2 The role of social indeterminacy

Layder (1994, p. 157) argues that the role of habitus is overemphasised in the attempt to synthesise agency and structure and as a result not enough emphasis is given to the indeterminacy of situations – the complex dynamic of the interaction of several different actors which can lead to unanticipated outcomes. The interaction between social structures and the creative ability of individuals does not explicitly account for this. Giddens (1984) describes this *interaction order* as a domain in its own right and provides more freedom to the individual to transform and create their social environment – they have the ability to make a difference, to exert power – this is what makes them social agents. However, it is difficult to ascertain the level of subjectivity that Giddens (1981) attributes to social actors as he states that "we create society at the same time as we are created by it" (p. 14) and later that "it is not the case that actors create social systems: they reproduce and transform them, remaking what is already made" (Giddens, 1984, p. 171). In addition, Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration rejects the idea of an objective world in favour of a world of situated behaviour which Layder (1994, p. 156) argues leaves the context of social actors' reasons and motivations poorly defined.

Giving greater emphasis to the indeterminacy that arises from the complexity of social situations is a position that I am sympathetic to, particularly in the context of this present research. As established in the previous chapter, conscious efforts were made to ensure a mixed demographic of pupils attending from each school, each small activity group was made up of girls and boys, and the instructors represented a quite different form of authority than pupils were used to. The importance of social complexity to understanding the experience of participants at Ardentinny is one of the reasons that I considered it important to include the range of stakeholders in Ardentinny as contributors to this research.

4 Summary

The main focus of this present study is to investigate the experiences of participants at Ardentinny. Questioning the nature and effects of the experience at Ardentinny led to the use of Bourdieu's theory of social practice, in particular the concepts of habitus and field, as a framework for interpreting the wider meanings of participants' accounts. A number of authors (for example, Brookes, 2003b; Higgins et al., 2006; Nicol, 2001) have argued the importance of locating outdoor education research within wider bodies of theory in order to develop understanding in the field. Understanding outdoor education as a sub-field of education that is structurally different from a sociological point of view and viewing the experience as impacting upon students' habitus can help cast light on why programmes may or may not be significant for students and why evidence of learning may or may not be visible on return to the home environment. Although there are valid criticisms of Bourdieu's theory, which does not throw off the shackles of his early days as a "blissful structuralist" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 9) student of Levi-Strauss as much as he would perhaps claim, his concepts of habitus and field nevertheless provide a means of addressing the thorny subjects of structure and agency.

> To be able to see and describe the world as it is, you have to be ready to be always dealing with things that are complicated, confused, impure, uncertain, all of which runs counter to the usual idea of intellectual rigour. (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron, & Krais, 1991, p. 259)

The concepts of habitus and field relate directly to an individual's socio-cultural experience of residential outdoor education and as such provide an appropriate theoretical framework for this thesis and as a contribution to the body of outdoor education research.

Chapter 6: Personal meanings and values

1 Introduction

This chapter presents the meanings and values that participants attributed to their experience at Ardentinny which relate primarily to themselves as an individual. The meanings and values are drawn from data generated through 14 interviews and 110 questionnaires. All interviewees have been assigned a pseudonym in order to maintain confidentiality. Excerpts taken from questionnaires are prefixed with an identifying tag. This tag identifies the questionnaire respondent as male or female, specifies which of the 12 qualitative questions (Appendix F) the excerpt is taken from, and the order in which the questionnaires were received. The first questionnaire extract below is identified as FQ1.7. This means that the questionnaire respondent is female, the extract is taken from the first of the 12 qualitative questions in the questionnaire, and the data from here questionnaire occupies the seventh line in the database.

2 Achievement and satisfaction

A sense of satisfaction and achievement was a theme evident in participants' accounts of their experience at Ardentinny. This related to three main areas: meeting challenges, retrospective satisfaction, and new opportunities for success. The latter aspect was often voiced by participants who felt that the experience of success at Ardentinny contrasted with a lack of success or opportunity to be successful at school.

2.1 Satisfaction in meeting challenges

The outdoor activities provided participants with an opportunity to engage in activities that they perceived as exciting and challenging. Kate, for example, states that she purposefully chose the activity that seemed to be the most exciting.

> Kate: I was a strong swimmer, I liked anything to do with the water and just I'd never really had the opportunity to try anything what I had perceived as quite exciting like that before and I thought it seemed out of all the choices it seemed like the most exciting thing to do, and it was exciting you know so I really

thought, "Right, I'm going to go for the kayaking" so it was really good [to be able to do that].

Other participants made similar references to the importance of excitement with regards to their experience at Ardentinny.

> FQ1.7: I remember on another trip climbing up the side of a waterfall and then jumping in, it was freezing but exhilarating. There was a feeling of achievement when reaching your goal. I had never done anything like this previously and thoroughly enjoyed it.

> MQ2.22: 1st time away from home, made some new friends who were doing canoeing and I really enjoyed the danger of the white water canoeing, I had never done anything like this in the past.

> FQ2.63 I did enjoy the biology but was desperate to get the gear on and do exciting stuff. The landscape was amazing it was great just to get out doors and get fresh air.

However, other aspects of activities that were less physically oriented, such as that described below, were also described as exciting.

> FQ1.19: Although we did several walks during our week long stay, the one that stands out more than anything was when we stayed out overnight. We walked during the day to what we thought was the middle of nowhere and stayed in a bothy overnight. No water, no electricity, no toilets, hardly even a door to keep the sheep out. We all (I think 10 of us) slept on the floor in the same room. We had to wash our dirty pots and pans in the stream. We had miners' lamps on our heads and it was quite scary when the light lit up the sheep's eyes. How terrifying that was! In the morning we got up and walked back to the van, which was in fact just over the hill - so much for the middle of nowhere!! Great fun was had by all. I still remember some of the ghost stories we told whilst huddled together in that room.

For many participants Ardentinny seemed to provide an outlet for an adventurous enthusiasm. Mortlock (1984) suggests that this desire is inherent in all humans and unless it is channelled in positive ways – such as described above – in young people in particular there is the risk that it will be manifested in anti-social behaviour. However, the evidence from this present study as outlined below suggests that

186

interpretations of what is exciting and adventurous vary widely. Some participants were not seeking, or discovered they did not wish to seek, physically oriented excitement and adventure.

In addition to the 'in the moment' enjoyment of the physicality of activities participants also reported strong feelings of satisfaction in the physical tiredness that ensued as a result.

> FQ1.5: The canoeing was great had never tried it before. We canoed down rivers - one had a section called the washing machine! I was shattered at the end of every day but it felt great!

> FQ1.20: I had never climbed before but was very excited … I can remember feeling exhausted but feeling very positive about myself

> MQ1.71: My first trip was spent canoeing and I remember nearly drowning while being taught to roll out of the canoe! … I remember being tired and happy at the day's end.

> MQ1.75: The mountaineering … was exciting, knackering, miserable and brilliant, all at the same time. The final part was a long hike across hills through mist and deep snow to a bothy on the edge of Loch Striven, which had a massive oil tanker sitting in the middle of it. It was cold wet and miserable when we arrived, but great fun.

> FQ2.58: Canoeing as an experience was fantastic - feeling exhausted and exhilarated at the same time.

> MQ2.73: Activity - hard but rewarding. Breaking the ice at Inverary with the canoe – cool. Capsizing on a frozen river, even with wet-suit on - not fun and long way from a warm cup of tea.

> FQ2.109: It was long hard days but everyone was thrilled to be there.

The significance of a physical challenge and the satisfaction that is derived from the resultant feelings of tiredness is a finding that is consistent with Beames' (2004a) research on Raleigh International expeditions and McKenzie's (2003) research on Outward Bound courses.

One respondent who was unsuccessful in being assigned her first choice activity – orienteering – was assigned to the mountaineering group. Despite not enjoying the mountaineering she nevertheless reported satisfaction at having summitted a 'Munro' – a commonly used term for a Scottish mountain with a height over 3000 feet.

> FQ1.13: Despite the weather and my hatred of outdoors - I climbed the Munro, which I am pleased to this day that I have bagged a Munro.

An expressed hope amongst the instructors was that students would achieve things that they would not have imagined possible at the beginning of the week when they arrived. This is a concept commonly associated in outdoor education with Kurt Hahn and is reflected in the motto of Gordonstoun school which he founded: "*Plus est en vous* - There is more in you (than you think)" (Gordonstoun, 2009). The words of another participant, below, support this statement and suggest that the discovery of unknown ability or strength also leads to feelings of motivation although she does not say what in.

> FQ1.81: [I remember] the motivation and sense of achievement at succeeding in the tasks some of which I felt I could not achieve.

Statements such as these give credence to Hahn's (1965) assertion that "it is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences" (p. 3) as individuals are not always able to accurately assess their capabilities. With carefully judged encouragement (impelling), as opposed to coercion (compelling), it would seem that positive results can ensue.

It was not just in the activities but also in the domestic sphere that students seemed to appreciate and feel a sense of achievement as a result of the demands made of them. A common memory of participants was of themselves or others being removed from their dorms at night for making too much noise and being required to spend the night sleeping elsewhere in the building. One participant humorously recalled the offenders' 'walk of shame' as they returned to their dorms in the morning. Although these memories were recalled with the impression that the punishment was perhaps a little extreme and probably not acceptable practice in today's educational climate, the majority of such instances were recounted without any negative feelings. In fact, for many participants they were very positive memories associated with acceptable, if

very strict, demands of a new environment. Adapting to these demands seemed to be considered as part of the value of the experience. The humour of friends being disciplined and the value of the stories which these experiences created continued to be held as valuable narratives many years later. The retelling of these stories of shared experiences within peer groups over the years acted as a means of maintaining bonds of friendship. The justification provided by staff members for the strict enforcement of silence after a certain time of night – that students needed sleep to fully and safely make the most of the week's activities – was not recalled by any of the participants.

> Q3.27 I do not have any bad memories of Ardentinny. Even having spent a night sleeping in the walking boot supply room and another in the dining hall for giggling when we were meant to be sleeping all seemed like part of the fun!

> Q2.11 We were so excited we made so much noise that we were taken out of our sleeping dorm and split up to sleep in different areas of the building. Me and one of my friends slept in the library - while we were being a nuisance the staff treated us very well and were very tolerant.

2.2 Satisfaction in retrospect

One of the head teachers (Hal) represented in Chapter 4 recounted a story that had vividly remained in his memory for twenty years or more. As he stood on the loch shore observing his students, one of the boys emerged soaking, cold, and tired at the end of the session and walked up the beach towards the Centre to get showered and changed. As the student passed his head teacher he said, "You know, when I look back on this I'll have enjoyed it."

The ability to delay gratification is considered to be a basic psychological requirement for mature human functioning and even a foundational requirement of civilised society (Mischel, 1996, p. 198). The inability to delay gratification is believed to be linked to a range of personal and social problems and harmful behaviour patterns (e.g. Bandura, 1986; Bandura & Mischel, 1965; Mischel, 1966,

1968, 1990). Participants often referred to instances of hardship which although unpleasant at the time were outweighed by positive feelings after the event.

> FQ1.60: I can't remember the month we went in although I do remember that when we went hillwalking the snow (for at least part of the way) was up to thigh level. I remember that we stayed in a bothy overnight which was freezing and that in the morning the instructors told us when we were getting changed into the day before's freezing wet clothes that a good tip was to sleep with the wet clothes in your sleeping bag so at least in the morning they were body temperature - would have been nice to have been told the night before! I remember being thoroughly miserable during the day's walking but on a high when we stopped to rest at the end of the day. This is a feeling that I always get when I'm hillwalking even now. I remember the huge sense of achievement once we had finished.

Another student's comments reflect a similar situation during a different winter and also demonstrate the integration of outdoor activities with fieldwork – geography in this case.

> FQ1.50: It was January or February and one of the worst winters I remember. There was 3 ft of snow and we had to walk in it all day (up to our thighs) and it was a challenge to take soil samples out of the frozen ground. I didn't do very well with the walking bit but it made going back to the home made food even better!

Although the participant who made the comment below did not specify what it was about Ardentinny that he did not enjoy at the time – it is perhaps related to having to do orienteering rather than his first choice of canoeing – he, nevertheless, considers the experience to have been positive in a developmental sense. In subsequent comments he related how he encourages his own children to take any opportunities such as Ardentinny that are offered to them and still feels that his experience at Ardentinny has a positive influence on his life.

> MQ3.83 I really didn't enjoy it at the time! [But] It was (in retrospect) great to be away from home and be taken out of your 'normal' life.

A slightly more idiosyncratic example describes a situation where students were fishing from a sailing boat. Carrying out one of the less pleasant tasks associated

with fishing led to a very positive outcome from a personal and social point of view for one female student.

> FQ2.65: When I caught a trout the old sea dog that was teaching us made me take it off the hook. He made me hit it with the back of a knife and gut it. At first I didn't hit it hard enough and he scolded me for being too lady-like. I hit it again so hard one of its eyes squashed out and flew over the crowd of classmates watching me. [A] Highlight – [though] not really at the time, but so many people came back and told me how well I handled it. Even the boys were impressed! For a shy 14 year-old that meant a lot.

Ardentinny provided opportunities for students to experience an aspect of psychological maturation – delayed gratification – that is considered essential to both personal and societal functioning. The accounts, of course, report complex social situations as opposed to controlled experimental situations. As such, there is unavoidably a degree of uncertainty regarding to what extent students were self-motivated to perform actions that were difficult or unpleasant or were extrinsically motivated by peers or an adult authority figure. Clearly, it is the former which demonstrates the greater maturity. However, the fact that participants' reports suggested that the post-event satisfaction outweighed the discomfort or effort required during the event at the very least indicate an awareness of the potential benefits of an essential psychological ability. In the case of the participant who made the comment FQ1.60 above this is an awareness that underpins her continued practice of hillwalking to this day. There is no suggestion that Ardentinny was the experience through which participants first learned the important ability of delaying gratification. However, the accounts do suggest that Ardentinny provided students with an opportunity to practise or further develop that ability through participation in activities which, for the most part, they had volunteered to take part in. Roth and Lee (2006) describe authentic learning as that which involves the free choice of students to be involved and make a contribution. It seems logical that such authenticity can only be of benefit in learning situations where the rewards are sometimes felt most keenly, or even uniquely, after the fact. In addition, given the current concerns surrounding increased levels of physical inactivity in society and the associated

detrimental effects in personal and social spheres (Physical Activity Task Force, 2003; Scottish Executive, 2003), encouraging opportunities for young people to experience an association between physical activity and positive feelings would seem to be particularly valuable. The fact that Ardentinny provided this opportunity at an age where the incidence of physical activity begins to decline – particularly sharply amongst girls (Bromley, Sproston, & Shelton, 2005, p. 84) – would appear to be of added value.

2.3 Satisfaction in success

Whilst the physical challenges were of importance in participants' accounts the satisfaction gained from successfully learning specific skills was also evident, particularly with reference to orienteering.

> FQ1.2 Was disappointed to do orienteering originally - everyone wanted to do canoeing but they had to draw straws to see who got their first choice. In the end I loved orienteering... terrified at first but soon realised I was good at it - found out I was much better at running than I thought I was and I could beat some of the real sporty (i.e. skinny - not like me) kids because I was good at the map reading too.

> FQ1.54: Winning the orienteering competition which was brilliant as I had never won anything before.

> FQ1.65 Orienteering - This was fantastic. I really wanted to do canoeing but ended up being placed in the orienteering group. I had no idea what I was signed up for and I couldn't even spell it. It turned out to be so much fun. I did really well at it and loved the map reading and got a lot of satisfaction out of navigating around the map and finding the main punches with higher points.

The reasons why orienteering was strongly associated with feelings of successful achievement was not clear although several possibilities may be drawn from the data. A number of participants expressed disappointment at being placed in the orienteering group. This is perhaps an understandable reaction amongst adolescent students who, in my personal experience, are often drawn to activities such as kayaking which are perceived as more exciting. It may be, therefore, that as a result of the contrast in feelings between initial disappointment and subsequent satisfaction

participants in orienteering have more vivid memories of success. Another possibility is that the precise nature of orienteering provides students with very clear feedback as to their progress. The sought control point (a point on the map they are asked to find, where they punch a card to show they have been there) is either found or it is not. In contrast, hillwalking, sailing, and kayaking perhaps do not provide the same degree of precise feedback at the level of performance that is achievable within one week. It is also possible that a perception of orienteering as a more cerebral activity – and possibly the reason why it is often less popular – is the reason for greater satisfaction.

However, it was not only in orienteering that students found great satisfaction in successful learning and achievement.

> MQ2.18: The feeling of satisfaction on completing the tasks and learning new skills that had been set for me helped mature me.

> FQ2.25: Highlights were completing the course and being able to sail ourselves on the last day.

> MQ1.103: Abseiling was great, only I and another made it to the summit of the mountain we proceeded to climb so that still is pleasing … I discovered I was a great map reader.

> FQ1.76 We had a great time in our canoeing group, started off at Dunoon pool learning the basics then out on the water, and at the end of the week were going through rapids known as the killers or something! Had a great time!

Halls (1997) notes that the late-1980s to early-1990s in Strathclyde witnessed a reduction of secondary school pupils attending outdoor education centres as a result of industrial action by teachers. Outdoor centres solicited groups from primary schools to bolster their bookings and adapted their programmes to suit. Halls (1997) further notes that teaching outdoor activity skills to secondary school students gradually came to be replaced by a prevalence of group-work and team-building exercises with primary school pupils. Ardentinny, and the nearby Benmore Outdoor Education Centre, maintained their practice of catering to secondary school pupils. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 4 Section 2.4 and noted by Nicol (2002b) the

pendulum had swung from the situation in 1971 where Circular 804 (SED, 1971) voiced a concern on the part of government that not enough emphasis was being given to social education to one where personal and social education was the primary focus with far less attention being given to skill development as education for leisure or to environmental education. It is notable that in the present study much of the satisfaction that participants express in terms of feelings of achievement and success relate to engaging in a sustained programme of learning and skill development. However, the lack of any data from programmes which focused on group-work and team-building with primary schools prevents any direct comparison between the two approaches. Nevertheless, the declarations of satisfaction by participants combined with statements by teachers in the previous chapter regarding the effects they saw in many pupils on return to school provide support for the claims of the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Ch. 6, Sections 151-152) that acquiring new skills and knowledge in the residential context can imbue students with an educational stimulus and new zest for everything they do.

Sibthorp (2003) states that many outdoor education programmes are not principally interested in students' ability to retain technical skills beyond the end of the programme but rather are interested in the transferable life skills that students have learned such as tolerance or personal awareness. As discussed in the previous chapter the veracity of the claim that such skills are transferable is a contested point. Sibthorp (2003) acknowledges that the issue of learning transfer is "a complex and controversial subject" (p. 155) and suggests that outdoor education programmes should provide learning situations which are perceptually similar to the environment to which students will be returning to. Whilst this seems very reasonable, given the accounts of participants above it seems that feelings of satisfaction and achievement were directly related to the practice of specific activities. Therefore, perhaps it is equally beholden of outdoor education programmes to deliver programmes that involve learning in subjects or activities that students will have the opportunity to continue with on return to their home environment. Although the extent to which this is achievable will vary there is perhaps a case to be argued for working towards this

194

as a principle rather than attempting to create perceptually similar contexts from which learning can be transferred.

3 Adulthood and independence

The concept of outdoor education experiences as a tool for working with young people as they undergo transition to adulthood was referred to in the Teachers' tale of Chapter 4. Outdoor education as a rite of passage is a well-established theme in outdoor education literature (Andrews, 1999; Beames, 2004a, 2004b; Bell, 2003; Venable, 1997). The anthropologist van Gennep (1960) first coined the term *rite of passage* and described it as having three stages: separation from the home social structure, a stage of transition, and incorporation back into the home structure. Van Gennep (1960) observed that rites of passage occurred on several different occasions throughout life marking important events – one of which was commonly the transition from childhood to adulthood. Beames (2004b) considered the applicability of the concept of a rite of passage in relation to Raleigh International overseas expeditions and concluded that significant elements of the second and third stages were not present in the expedition experience. In the anthropological settings that van Gennep (1960) observed the rites of passage were fundamentally embedded within social structures of belonging to a community and steeping oneself in the history and traditions of that community. Beames (2004b) noted that Raleigh International overseas expeditions were not embedded in the home community in this way. For example, during the transition phase expeditioners were not educated about their own culture or the new role they would adopt upon return. With regard to the incorporation phase the rite of passage needs to be collectively recognised as a valid symbol of transition by the society left behind in order to ensure that those undergoing transition are treated as adults upon their return thereby allowing them to inhabit their new role in society. This was not the case for Raleigh expeditioners and indeed many expeditioners did not return to their homes following the expedition.

There are clear problems regarding the applicability of the principles of rites of passage to modern-day post-industrial societies. However, it does not follow that outdoor education cannot provide developmental experiences related to the transition

to adulthood simply because they are not congruent with an anthropological definition of rites of passage. Participants in the present study strongly reported themes related to adulthood and independence. These are discussed below.

3.1 Away from home

Separation from the home environment is by definition an integral part of a residential experience and it is this element of the residential experience that is commonly linked with transitions to adulthood or, as mentioned above, rites of passage. The simple fact of being away from home was fundamental to participants feeling more independent and more adult. Although there were some references to feelings of apprehension the dominant emotion expressed was one of excitement and of welcoming the experience.

> Kate: For a lot of people, to go away from home for that amount of time, it was a full week … I just think there was a lot more to Ardentinny … apart from the outdoor education side of things … and these things are obviously really important you know.
>
> MQ1.72: It was exciting being away from home and being treated as more of an adult by the staff at the centre.
>
> MQ10.18: It was my first time away from home and I recall my experiences when encouraging my own daughter on her school excursions.
>
> FQ2.38: The adventure from being away from home with a group of peers was a great feeling.
>
> MQ2.80: The atmosphere was excellent, most were away from home for the first time and was a good opportunity to stand on our own two feet.
>
> MQ2.83: It was (in retrospect) great to be away from home and be taken out of your 'normal' life.

The authenticity of the feeling of separation was enhanced by the impression that many students had of being a long way from home. Although in terms of distance and travelling time Ardentinny was very close to most students' homes the perception for many students was that they were significantly beyond the bounds and the influences of their everyday home life.

FQ2.95: I really enjoyed being away from home and also getting to know others in my year group ... at the age of 12 it felt like we were a million miles from home.

FQ2.100: I found the whole experience immensely enjoyable and still think of the time spent there fondly - was really exciting to be away from home for a whole week without parents - first time ever! And although it wasn't that far away from Greenock it felt like it was very remote.

Even students who were used to travelling well outside their home environment on occasion felt that there was something different about Ardentinny. Rachel used to travel to a rural area of Ireland every summer to stay with relatives yet still found the experience at Ardentinny to be significant.

Rachel: It was like going to another country almost. I don't know why I feel like that because we had to take a boat to Ireland, had to have a very lengthy bus journey, maybe it was because I had felt I was going with my peers as well, it was different and that's why I felt differently about it.

The Newsom Report (CACE, 1963) comments that,

For the pupils who come from difficult home backgrounds and live in socially deprived neighbourhoods, these can be opportunities of special help … For some, the mere fact of abstracting them from their normal surroundings is of great significance. (Ch. 6, Sections 151-152)

Section 5.2 of Chapter 4 refers to the way that teachers saw Ardentinny as particularly beneficial for certain students in the fact that it provided an opportunity to experience a different place and a different way of living. Commonly referred to as broadening or widening one's horizons it is a developmental claim that is difficult to define or quantify. The participant below gives an insight into what it meant to him.

Phil: It sorta give you mair a different view away from what I always thought was home, if you know what I mean, it was like a sort of different, a different sort of world.

Interviewer: Was it a different atmosphere, was that part of it?

Phil: Yeah, a different atmosphere, I mean when you're going from your daily school life and home life into something that gets you away from that totally, it

just gives you a different sort of perspective really. Even if you don't realise it at the time, you know, it's a sort of looking back thing that says, that did sort of show you something a little bit that was something outside that wasn't all dull grey.

For some students the experience at Ardentinny provided a brief interlude in a life that did not seem to have much to offer. It is interesting that Phil says that it is in retrospect that he realises the significance of Ardentinny. Whether or not this realisation could have been apprehended at the time if the reviewing of experiences at Ardentinny had been more systematically employed is impossible to say. However, it does suggest that, in line with Beames' (2004a, p. 211) findings, the potential for learning is not lost if it does not occur immediately. Individuals are quite capable of drawing meaning from experiences without the aid of a facilitator.

The suggestion that a student's background had a particular though not exclusive influence on the meanings that he or she drew from Ardentinny is supported by Bourdieu's (1990b) concept of habitus.

> The *habitus* which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limits defined by their power of selection, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to members of the same class. (p. 60)

Thus, it might be that where one student sees the opportunity for taking up canoeing as a hobby following Ardentinny another simply sees that there are possibilities in life beyond his or her limited experience so far. Whereas Phil struggled to pinpoint exactly what it was that was different about the atmosphere or experience of Ardentinny, Perry identifies the contact with adults who were quite different from anything he had encountered before as one aspect of the way that Ardentinny was so different to his previous life experiences.

> Perry: They were quite, they were perceived to be quite eccentric because at that stage as kids, men and women that work out in the countryside and have beards and woolly jumpers … when you come from a, quite a suburban school you don't really have much to do with these people … they took on nicknames pretty quickly, they were mimicked pretty quickly. You know, you'd one guy giving us a lecture at the start about the perils of wearing deodorant and anti-

perspirant because of the metals that can get into your body and stuff like that … he wasn't telling us in an imparting of information kind of way, I always felt as if he was trying to terrify us into having b.o.! … By the end of the week … the end of [week] disco or whatever you would call it … he was the guy that was the DJ! Some guy who had bits of cornflake in his beard at the start, you know at the end he thought he was Vanilla Ice or something like that! You know, just a bit bizarre.

Perry clarified later that the strangeness of the instructional staff at Ardentinny was a positive aspect of the Ardentinny experience even if at the time the contrast of cultures was very apparent.

3.2 Independence and responsibility

Collinson and Hoffman (1998) suggest that the extended time frame of contemporary compulsory education means that students of upper secondary school age exist in a world where they are no longer children but the nature of the education system restricts their ability to develop the aspects of adulthood such as independence and responsibility that they desire and which are necessary to their development. As a result students often become disenchanted with an education system that they do not consider as relevant to their developmental needs. Collinson and Hoffman (1998) therefore suggest that schools should design curricula that engage with students' desires to become adults. The authors suggest that, "What students value and remember are the rites and rituals that act as markers of independence on their journey toward adulthood" (Collinson & Hoffman, 1998, p. 20).

As the following participant highlights Ardentinny provided an opportunity for students to experiment with aspects of adulthood.

FQ4.100: I learned how to survive away from home and get along with others … independence and responsibility for yourself added up to an unforgettable experience.

Participants frequently remarked upon the expectation of personal responsibility and independence.

Kate: I think the thing about it was you had to be quite, you turned up on the day for the kayaking, you were told what to do and all this … you had to be sensible and stuff but the thing that kind of struck me was you had to have a bit of responsibility for your own kit and looking after your own kit and getting it out the drying room and being responsible … you weren't mummied, do you know what I mean? … you know I remember somebody turning up once without their buoyancy aid … and [the instructor] going absolutely mental and you know he had to take his off and give it to the kid … but I think it was good because it taught you how to kind of look after things and they were really strict about the kit, about you looking after it and not abusing it … and everybody did buy into it you know.

This expectation was seen not only in aspects of the experience that might seem exciting, novel, or glamorous to the students such as kayaking but also in aspects that might be considered much more mundane. Students at Ardentinny were expected to contribute to the running of the centre through performing a range of duties from serving food and clearing tables at meal times to keeping dormitories clean and tidy. The responsibility for carrying out functions such as these, which might reasonably be assumed to be resisted in the home environment, was reported as a positive aspect of Ardentinny.

Lee: The experience did make you feel grown up because you had to do these little things [chores and responsibilities] yourself.

FQ2.86: Everything about it was great. Helping out with duties (breakfast, lunch and cleaning up, etc), being away from home, sharing with all your friends.

FQ4.27: We were taught to work together in teams, we also had to do chores when we stayed in the youth hostel which was a new experience for some. It taught us how to grow up and take responsibility.

This positive perspective may be due to the fact that performing these duties was part of a wider experience in which students felt independent and responsible for themselves. From this perspective the duties were considered as an authentic and necessary part of a wider picture in which they enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy than in the home environment.

FQ4.105: [It was] Just a generally good experience of being away from home and gaining a little independence from you family.

FQ4.111: [I learned] How to look after myself. Loved the freedom and it helped me grow up a bit.

MQ4.1: I learned a bit about my schoolmates that you don't get at school. I took another step along the road of becoming independent.

FQ2.81: We stayed out overnight in a barn and went on a night orienteering trip which was both fun and exciting. Also made me feel more mature and able to look after myself and was a great self-confidence boost at 12 yrs of age when it is needed.

In both the residential and activity aspects of Ardentinny students were expected to assume responsibility for themselves. Participants reported that this was a particularly meaningful aspect of the experience that they not only accepted but also enjoyed.

Mark: The independence of being left to get on with things was an enjoyable aspect of the residential both from looking after your kit, washing, eating and fending for yourself to then getting on with activities.

Beames (2004a, p. 164) refers to self-sufficient living as a critical element of the expedition experience – primarily a reference to cooking, sleeping, and cleaning. In a study of secondary school students on a 3-day outdoor education programme in Singapore, Tay (2006) concluded that lighting a fire and cooking food on it was more educationally worthwhile and more challenging for students than more 'exciting' activities such as ropes courses which are commonly used in outdoor education. In a similar vein many Ardentinny participants referred to making their own sandwiches or serving food at meal times as a meaningful aspect of their experience.

FQ2.79: I loved the whole experience from making my own sandwiches and thinking it would be smart to put Nutella [chocolate spread] on my sandwiches, and then tasting it and having no dinner that day as I didn't like it.

FQ1.24: I remember making my own peanut butter and cheese sandwiches! I remember being volunteered to dish out the trifle because no one else would do

it. I remember being really proud of myself for dishing out all the trifle to everyone ... [and] feeling generally proud of myself for achieving all the things they asked me to do.

FQ2.50: I loved the mealtimes and being able to make your own lunch which gave me my first taste of independence … We learnt to take turns at serving food and to tidy up after ourselves.

FQ5.25: We all worked together at mealtimes setting and clearing the table. We also made our own pack lunches for the day.

FQ5.46: The disco on the last night, evening activities, clearing breakfast tables, making our own packed lunches.

Beames (2004a) relates the sense of satisfaction and achievement that the expeditioners in his study derived from self-sufficient living to mastering new skills (Walsh & Golins, 1976), adapting to a new environment (Kaplan & Talbot, 1983) where there is compatibility between what is necessary to do and what is desirable to do, and fulfilment of satisfying basic needs (Maslow, 1968). The older age group and different demands of an international expedition with an organisation such as Raleigh International suggests caution when making direct comparison between Beames' (2004a) study and the present study. Nevertheless, it is informative to observe that although the skills and adaptation related to self-sufficient living were arguably of a much lower level at Ardentinny students nevertheless derived similar feelings of satisfaction. In an article summarising the results of a national assessment of experiential education Conrad and Hedin (1981) stated that participants' feelings of autonomy was a significant factor in contributing to personal development. The accounts of participants in this section demonstrate that Ardentinny provided students with a level of autonomy that students found satisfying and contributed towards feelings of being more adult.

3.3 Freedom

A third theme related to feelings of adulthood and independence is that of freedom. Rachel felt that it was not really the activities or the outdoor life that had the greatest impact on her as she was accustomed to being and working out of doors on family holidays to Ireland.

Interviewer: And one thing you said that interested me was that you said you felt very grown up there. Did you feel that, was that because you had more responsibility or ... what was that feeling about?

Rachel: I think it was because I was, perhaps allowed to have a say, and allowed to join in and kind of make choices about things, and, perhaps, as I say, wording very carefully here, I love my mother to bits but you know that wasn't the kind of family life we had. So I felt as if it was an adventure. And I have thought about that, I thought why did I feel differently about that. Because I went to Ireland and experienced that kind of thing before. So maybe it was just about me and my upbringing and what it brought to me.

Rachel felt that the freedom provided at Ardentinny for young people to voice opinions and experience the freedom of having a greater sense of self-determination was an important moment in her transition to adulthood. Rachel associates her newfound sense of freedom and self-determination with feelings of adventure. This perception of adventure is congruent with the definition suggested by Loynes (1998) which is characterised by the exhilaration of exploration – although in Rachel's case it is more an exploration of personal responsibility than a physical journey – rather than the possibility of physical or psychological harm. It is also consistent with Hopkins & Putnam (1993) who refer to "extending our being" (p. 6) as being fundamental to adventure. It involves a venturing out into something new or unknown. Higgins (1996a, 1996b) suggests that outdoor education experiences are a particularly suitable method of facilitating young people's exploration of the greater independence and consequent responsibilities of the adult world.

Collinson and Hoffman (1998) point out that although adolescents are seeking experiences of independence and self-reliance they also still rely on and appreciate (although this may not always be apparent) the safe framework that adults are able to provide as they journey towards adulthood.

FQ2.104 The people were really nice and made us feel soooo welcome. They taught us skills on teamwork and being organised. They also gave us freedom to speak freely. They could be firm when it was needed and that made the experience just as good as no one got to spoil anything for anyone else.

FQ4&11.111 Loved the freedom and it helped me grow up a bit ... I always associate it with a period of growth, a sense of freedom and respite.

FQ5.23: It was simply unforgettable. The freedom, the young people, the beautiful surroundings, the smell of the outdoors … Coming home to discover that my 10 month old baby brother had learned so much in that week! But then so had I.

The observation that Ardentinny provided a safe environment for students to experiment with aspects of adulthood was also supported by one of the accompanying teachers, Fiona.

Fiona: It was teaching them a self-sufficiency, an independence and things like that that they'd maybe never had before – in a controlled environment – you know it was very controlled, they were very well looked after.

It appears from participants' accounts that the framework provided by Ardentinny staff allowed a form of freedom that felt different from that which students were used to at school. One participant reported that one of the highlights of the experience for him was:

MQ2.41 Being given more freedom with no teachers defining everything for you and some taste of responsibility for your self.

3.4 Identity and self-knowledge

The final theme relating to adulthood and independence is that of Ardentinny as an experience in which participants developed a greater understanding and awareness of who they were and what they were capable of. Trevor recounted how, despite experiences in the Scouts, he was not particularly interested in outdoor activities prior to Ardentinny. However, as a result of Ardentinny he began to see himself as 'an outdoor person' and felt more confident to engage in subsequent outdoor opportunities available in the Scouts and in school.

Trevor: As I say I had been in the cubs and the scouts but I was not overly keen on the camping or hillwalking aspect. I don't know if it was 'cause I was younger and a lot of them were older … I think after Ardentinny I suppose I got a real confidence about myself in an outdoor sense … and I was a lot more at ease doing a lot more outdoor stuff after that and as I say it wasn't that I

hadn't tried it before I just never particularly got onto it. Whereas I think you could really place it to after that and certainly as I got to the older section of Scouts that I really started to do a lot of that stuff in a lot of detail whereas I'd never really taken to that aspect of it before. So certainly it was my, I did have the most fantastic experience at Ardentinny whereas any kinda Scout camps I never really particularly enjoyed to be perfectly honest with you. It was just, it was amazing how one week could change that.

For Rachel, Ardentinny did not lead to continued engagement in outdoor activities *per se*. She intimated some regret that she had not subsequently taken part in any outdoor activities but suggested that what Ardentinny had provided was an opportunity to understand a little more about herself and gaining that insight allowed her to develop a better understanding of the ways that she would prefer to spend her time. In comparison to Trevor above, Rachel's account provides a contrasting yet similarly successful example of education for leisure through outdoor education. The fact that Ardentinny is relatively close to her home has allowed her to maintain a connection with the area.

Rachel: I think it widened my thinking about perhaps who I was and the type of things I enjoyed, probably today I could, you know I love my garden. I do love to go walking. I probably, you know there's lots of things I think I want to do … I want to do this and that and the other, you know, but you never quite get round to it, but it's probably much around that same type of thing you know … I love going and having that freedom of walking about and to be honest, you know Dunoon, if somebody said to me, "Where will we go for a weekend?" or whatever, I go over to Dunoon quite often, and I certainly go round to Ardentinny all the time. So I've kind of kept that connection, and there's a wee bit in my head thinking I want to retire to Dunoon.

For other participants Ardentinny provided an opportunity to discover abilities that they did not know they had. In the first two excerpts below the effect this discovery had is less explicit than in the third, yet the fact that reference is made to the social relevance of their ability (comparing self to skinny people and to sister) suggests that similar feelings of validation were experienced.

FQ1.2 I was disappointed to do orienteering originally - everyone wanted to do canoeing but they had to draw straws to see who got their first choice. In the end I loved orienteering. [I was] terrified at first but soon realised I was good at it - found out I was much better at running than I thought I was and I could beat some of the real sporty (i.e. skinny - not like me) kids because I was good at the map reading too.

FQ1.3 I also remember learning to draw landscapes (from a geography point of view) which I didn't think I would be able to do, because I was not the artist of the family (that was always my sisters forte).

FQ4.65 I loved learning about how to read a map and then being able to test it by running around the hills and forests, it was great validation for a young person who didn't think she was good at anything.

Whilst outdoor education experiences are often associated with the discovery of hidden depths of talent or determination as espoused by Hahn's (Gordonstoun, 2009) exhortation that there is more in each of us than we are aware,

FQ4.59 [I learned] that I was capable of far more than I had thought I was at that time. And if I put my mind to it I could do it.

A number of participants expressed that Ardentinny helped them to learn what is perhaps an equally valuable, and possibly overlooked, lesson – discovering what we are not or what we do not wish to be whether we are capable of it or not.

FQ4.49 [I learned] that I wasn't very fit and although I was very driven academically I wasn't interested in pushing myself in a physical situation.

MQ4.1 I took another step along the road of becoming independent. Learned I was not as tough as in my imagination.

FQ4.13 I am not made for outdoor life. Looking back on it 20 years later I was glad to have gone it showed me that I can do things if I really want to – except for abseiling.

FQ10.50 I am an artist so going on the art courses there (and at Culzean Castle) helped me see that I was not the only girl who was good at drawing in the school!

Peter went to Ardentinny on two occasions. The first time he took part in an outdoor activity course and the second time he went on an art course. Students on the art courses were selected by ability from schools across Renfrew County with usually no more than two coming from each school. Therefore the social group was very diverse and it was quite possible that a student would not know any of the other participants – even if there were two students from the same school. Peter describes how this new social environment provided an even greater freedom than on the standard courses to experiment with concepts of identity.

> Peter: When I then went as a pupil, as an older pupil and it was art … That was great because you could be there and be somebody that nobody knew who you were, and just that being out of your environment and being perhaps who you wanted to be and not who everybody thought you were was great. Which is the good thing about the residential aspect, being away from it, you could be the worst mass murderer in the world and all of a sudden you don't need to be. You can be who you would have liked to have been had fate not dealt you a shitty hand so that aspect of being completely away from … your safe [home] environment is a great experience. And it doesn't ever leave you, doesn't ever leave you.

Ardentinny provided students with an arena in which they were able to experience aspects of developing self-knowledge and considering issues of identity. These experiences were varied and multi-faceted. Participants expressed the implications of these experiences in a number of different ways: a changed or clearer understanding of how they wished to spend their leisure time, a more accurate understanding of personal skills, abilities, and capabilities that impacted upon how they saw themselves in relation to others; a changed awareness of personal identity – in becoming an 'outdoors person' or no longer being the "worst mass murderer in the world" (Peter).

4 Environment

The experience at Ardentinny led to a change in many participants' understanding and perception of the outdoors. This was regularly expressed in terms of appreciating the beauty of the landscape.

> MQ4.75 I learned that Scotland really is amazing, and that you can see it if you make the effort.
>
> FQ4.108 I learned that we have some really beautiful countryside in the west of Scotland.
>
> FQ2.56 The hiking was great, the scenery was really beautiful.

It was also expressed in terms of a change in feelings or relationship towards the outdoor environment.

> FQ4.58 [I learned] the joys of being outdoors.
>
> MQ4.110 It introduced me to the outdoors in a way I had never experienced before.
>
> FQ12.104 It was an opportunity that has made me appreciate the outdoors and I'm now an avid walker.
>
> MQ4.37 [I learned] that being outdoors really was great fun - also that it was a great place to learn about teamwork & getting on with your peers .
>
> FQ4.5 I learned that the outdoors was not as scary as I thought, that even if you are frightened initially having a bit of courage and perseverance can see you through.

For those on field studies courses there was also the development of a more formal, cognitive understanding of the outdoor environment.

> MQ1&4.90 Field study aside, this place really opened my eyes to the beautiful scenery on my doorstep. I enjoyed being on the beach, in the glen and on the hill. I will never forget the view down to Loch Eck! I was already a keen outdoors person, but Ardentinny broadened my horizons ... [I gained] a better awareness of the countryside - how it was formed, how it is used and, most importantly, how to respect it.
>
> FQ4.97 I was amazed to learn how many different types of trees there were.

Many participants referred to an increased awareness of the beauty of the natural world as something they attribute to their experience at Ardentinny. Discussions with Ardentinny instructors did not reveal any overt educational aims to develop an increased sensitivity towards the natural world. Instructors made reference to raising awareness of commonly held principles of respect for the countryside (e.g. not dropping litter, closing farm gates), to the importance of understanding the outdoor environment in terms of safety when engaging in outdoor activities, and, to a lesser degree, of taking the opportunity to pass on information regarding biology, geography, or human history when the occasion arose. Of course, the fieldwork courses were explicitly focused on developing understanding and knowledge about the processes of the natural world. Thus, in terms of the environment the learning seems to have been characterised principally as being 'through' the outdoors and 'about' the outdoors as opposed to 'for' the outdoors (Cooper, 1999). Neil, the instructor responsible for the fieldwork at Ardentinny when the Centre opened, stated that perhaps one of the weaknesses of Ardentinny was that it did not evolve as much as perhaps it should have in terms of pedagogical practices relating to environmental education. Although he integrated some aspects of more progressive environmental approaches (e.g. van Matre, 1972; van Matre & Johnson, 1988) towards the end of his 14-year tenure this did not extend as far as embracing deep ecology perspectives (Naess, Drengson, & Devall, 2008) which focus more on the interconnected relationships between humans and the non-human world and addressing a perceived disconnection between humans and the non-human world that is detrimental to both parties.

Rickinson et al. (2004, p. 6) and Cooper (1991, 1999) note that evidence of a positive link between outdoor adventure activities – such as those practised at Ardentinny – and environmental understanding and values is not strong. This is supported by Haluza-DeLay (1999) who suggests that unless environmental awareness and values are specifically addressed an outdoor experience does not automatically lead to greater environmental sensitisation. However, Allison (2002) reports a strong connection between an expedition experience and developing a deeper appreciation

of the natural world, and the accounts of participants in this present study support that position.

> Erin: They took us out [on] a really long walk, we were out for hours away walking up and just the views and just the actual surroundings were great cos we were right out in the outdoors so it was really, really good.
>
> FQ1.21 I can't even remember the names of the hills we climbed but I remember the views were breathtaking.
>
> FQ1.3 Ardentinny was the first time I went so far up a hill that I was looking DOWN at the clouds. I remember being so amazed at the sight.
>
> MQ2.61 One morning we drove by this loch which was completely still and calm. There was a buoy in the middle of the loch, with the loch being calm it was like a mirror and the reflection of the buoy made it look completely round, floating in mid air and with the reflection of the hills in the back ground it was magnificent, a sight I have never witnessed since and one that I have always remembered.

However, a deeper appreciation or increased aesthetic awareness of the natural world does not equate to environmental commitment or action (Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 6). The scope of this present study does not allow for further investigation of this point but it does demonstrate that even where outdoor education programmes are not explicitly directed towards environmental sensitisation participants do report significant feelings of appreciation and awareness of the natural world. This would logically seem to be an appropriate place from which to develop deeper environmental understandings and, potentially, behaviours.

> Q1.58 It was a brilliant experience. Swimming in Loch Long in February, canoeing down the River Tay and staying in a bothy. Being out on the water at sunrise with the mist over the Loch and no sound other than the splash of paddles. Laughter when we learned new skills - and got it so wrong and capsized more times than not. Instructors who treated us with respect and not like children from the 'smoke'. Being outdoors and loving it!

5 Skills and knowledge

As detailed in the letter from Ardentinny's principal to head teachers in 1977 (Chapter 4, Section 2.7) although personal and social learning through a residential experience was the first priority at Ardentinny, the outdoor activities and field studies were not mere vehicles to this purpose. The teaching of the various outdoor activities and field study subjects was given a very high level of attention. The evidence of the involvement of Paisley College in developing the field studies, the development of a field studies post which included an opportunity to complete a PhD, and the investment of both time and finance in training staff in all areas of teaching (Chapter 4) bear testament to the standards that Ardentinny endeavoured to maintain. In practice the field studies and outdoor activities were given equal weighting to the residential social aspect of learning. As is evident from The Managers' Tale and The Instructors' Tale (Chapter 4, Sections 3 and 4) a great deal of the personal and social learning was considered to arise through the learning involved in the activities themselves whether that was through a personal sense of satisfaction and pride or an altered perspective of others in the group. Despite participants' experiences at Ardentinny occurring anywhere between 12 and 35 years ago, many of the recollections of their learning experiences were recalled with an evident sense of satisfaction and pride. These accounts covered the full range of outdoor activities and fieldwork courses delivered at Ardentinny.

> FQ1.25 My friend and I did the week's sailing course. We were interested in learning to sail ... I was very nervous before I went as I was not a great swimmer … I managed all the activities and by the end of the week we were sailing our own boats in teams of two in a race. That day a storm was brewing and some boats capsized and had to be rescued. I think my boat was okay.
>
> FQ1.62 I thoroughly enjoyed the canoeing. I could still confidently go out in a canoe and do an Eskimo Roll.
>
> MQ1.64 I remember the safety drill in the loch which consisted of capsizing, banging the bottom of the boat before exiting, then getting out and pulling the boat in. I remember being taught the basic of white water kayaking, ferry gliding, using eddies and stoppers, reading the water.

MQ2.15 Our instructor … played Pink Floyds dark side of the moon during every trip in the minibus. I was involved in … [the] canoeing club at the high school and Ardentinny was a fantastic opportunity to take canoeing to another level.

MQ1.28 We did a number of different orienteering challenges over the week, which built up in difficulty during the week. It was extremely informative, as orienteering is not an easy subject to explain, I had done it before without much success, but the instruction I got was excellent. I even came top in overall scores during the week!!!

FQ4.65 I'm still the best map-reader I know (don't tell my husband). I loved learning about how to read a map … Years later, at University I travelled through the US with 3 other women and I swear we wouldn't have left Michigan if I hadn't been there to map read and navigate us around the country.

FQ1.67 I remember hiking, learning how to read maps, understanding trig [triangulation] points, first aid and rescue procedures, appreciating our beautiful country

MQ4.28 Despite being shown numerous times previously, it was at Ardentinny I learned to read a map!

MQ1.8 We were given all the waterproof and warm clothing for the walks over the hills, which to this day sticks in my mind, that when going outdoors if you wear the right clothing you can go a lot farther.

FQ1.11 I remember identifying types of trees, rocks, reading maps. I can still identify a Douglas fir to this day!

FQ4.100 I learned loads of historical info about ancient forts and how people used to live and also the landscape.

FQ4.63 I did learn loads more about biology, which helped with schoolwork and did build my interest in biology, although I don't remember anything about biology now.

Although, as one might expect, the outdoor activities and associated learning tended to be recalled more vividly and with a little more enthusiasm than the field studies but it is evident nevertheless that participants gained a great degree of satisfaction from the field studies courses as well. Neil, one of the instructors, suggested that

because of the 'competition' for students' attention and enthusiasm from the outdoor activities and the approach taken to delivering the courses the field studies avoided the trap of becoming sterile. For example, Neil pointed out that if the lesson involved analysing soil samples the students would not be tasked with taking them the quickest way, they would take them in the most engaging way which might well involve hiking long distances. The aim was to make learning enjoyable and engage students' enthusiasm.

> Neil: One of the most important things was that they should always have enjoyed it but that they should have enjoyed it on our terms … we should have structured the week for them so that what they enjoyed was the activity they were doing … not what happened in the evenings not anything else but that what should have sparkled more than anything else was the stuff they did with us during the day. I knew enough about residential experience from previous experience and from concurrent experience while I was at Ardentinny to know that that wasn't always the case … essentially if you are providing a meaningful educational experience the end point should be planned. Even if it's not what the kids thought they were coming for it should have been one of your [instructor's] specific aims and I think that enthusiasm, enjoyment and fun, discovering that [in] doing the kind of stuff we were asking them to do which was often hard work - even in field studies we still walked bloody miles, deliberately, to do things!

Paul, the Ardentinny principal (Chapter 4, Section 3.2) stated that at the core of every experience should be an educational outcome. From the accounts of participants it is clear that skills and knowledge were developed through the various activities and field work courses at Ardentinny and that students valued, and continue to value that learning. A particular aspect of the learning that students remarked upon at Ardentinny was its experiential nature. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (1990, p. 3) notes that in the 1970s outdoor education was associated with moves to make education more experiential. This is reflected in the accounts of the participants.

Rachel: I felt it was, although it was very educational there was something different about it ... If you're sitting at school and you're reading a book and you've got a teacher saying, you know, these are the kind of trees we have in Scotland … it's not the same as actually standing there and looking at a big huge tree and saying, "Oh, that's a whatever", you know? You felt as if you could go back with something to say to people, you know like, "Oh I know about a Scots Pine" or whatever. You know, being able to identify things. So it was different in terms of the kind of education that you felt you were receiving. It was more interactive. You weren't just having, you know, education given to you, you know, you were allowed to engage in it as well without, there was time constraints to it but you know you were maybe walking along and talking as you went along and pointing things out and asking, "What's that?" So again it's the freedom of being able to do that where again at school it's very time-limited, you have to get through a curriculum and if you've got everybody asking questions it's a bit of a pain for teachers, if it's not exactly what's in their mind to teach at that point.

Fliss: Well it was different [from school] because you're living there and you had to do chores and things like that, you know you don't just go there and get information pumped into you, you were actually out in the field finding out information and it probably made that bit of information more interesting to me and you know when you were doing experiments finding things out for yourself, so you were sort of brought into that, it was a bit more hands on...

Rachel and Fliss's point that information was not being fed to students is pertinent to Freire's (2000) criticism of the banking concept of education referred to in Chapter 4, Section 3.5 whereby learners are perceived as empty vessels into which information is inputted. Their observation is that as a result of this approach they felt more engaged, involved, and interested in the learning process. Other participants recounted similar experiences.

Perry: As a child I used to go on holiday every October up to Aviemore for a certain period of time, obviously there's a lot of nature up there and you know my dad would point things out and you'd just be engaging with it from a kind of an observer's point of view, you know a holiday-maker's point of view, you

know … being told, where mostly the difference between that and Ardentinny was when you were studying it we were looking more closely at it and had a real possibility of, you know we set live traps for voles, you know the excitement of going back the next day to see if anything had actually been caught in the live trap. It was probably more of the hands on experience, something you actually, getting in there and you know, doing something, you're not just stuck behind a desk at school with a 20-year old text book and some girl cracking gum in your ear, you know? You're actually getting out there and getting your hands dirty.

FQ1.23 I remember mini bus trips up into the hills, disembarking into the freedom of the great outdoors where we sketched bracken, studied plant life, peered into streams and generally learned in a way I found fascinating – seeing, touching, experiencing the things we were learning about. So much better than sitting with a text book in a classroom using our imaginations as a source of reference. I remember being interested in learning and soaking in the things we were being taught … I learned that being able to see and touch and smell the things we were supposed to be learning about has no substitute (we even sketched the bracken). I learned that learning really could be good fun.

MQ1.96 It was one of the first times I remember feeling a connection with nature and biology as something more than something that was studied in a text book.

Accounts such as these that underline the importance of personal involvement in the learning experience are consistent with Dewey's (1973) assertion that, "I assume amid all uncertainties there is one permanent frame of reference: namely the organic connection between education and personal experience" (p. 507). The references to the time available that allowed students to discover things for themselves are redolent of the comments made by teachers in Chapter 4, Section 5.6 of the value of a continuous and concentrated period of time for creating valuable and powerful learning experiences. They also recall criticisms of overly-programmed 'neo-experiential' education programmes (Chapman, 1995; Roberts, 2002, 2008) that are entirely antithetical to "fluent, embryonic, vital" (Dewey, 1973, p. 472) experiential education.

6 Negative experiences

Hattie et al. (1997) commented on a tendency in outdoor education research to concentrate on positive results and ignore negative results. Little mention is made of negative outcomes or the absence of positive outcomes in outdoor education research. However, some examples do exist. A retrospective study of the long-term impact of Outward Bound courses in Singapore by Gassner and Russell (2008) notes the presence of slightly negative impacts. These were not significant enough to show up in statistical analysis however the authors (Gassner & Russell, 2008) suggest that future studies should address the issue of negative impact. A study of the effects of a wilderness therapy on the resilience of male youth-at-risk (Gillespie & Allen-Craig, 2009) found that of the ten developmental objectives considered in the study, two – locus of control and goal setting – demonstrated a negative effect. These negative results were described as "surprising and perplexing" (Gillespie & Allen-Craig, 2009, p. 47) and deserving of further research. Zink and Burrows (2006) draw attention to the 'messiness' of the social world which is often at odds with the search for coherence and universal themes that has characterised much outdoor education research. A guiding principle of this present study was to investigate the full range of experiences that participants underwent at Ardentinny which, of course, includes the possibility of negative experiences. Ringer (2007) highlights the potential for negative experiences involving adventurous activities and emphasises the level of awareness that is required on the part of facilitators and instructors to carefully manage potentially harmful situations.

A number of participants reported low points or negative feelings that could be categorised as superficial. Examples of this would be not liking the food, struggling to remove wetsuits, or not being successful in getting a place on a preferred activity course. In the latter case this was often qualified by an admission that they had thoroughly enjoyed the course they had done. The significance of other comments were harder to judge.

> FQ3.2 I wasn't really into discos and they had one on the last night - I remember hating it and spending most of the evening down by the sea with my mate.

Without knowing further details it is impossible to assess the severity of this individual's experience. It may have been relatively insignificant, on the other hand, given the importance of peer groups and social integration during the teenage years (Collinson & Hoffman, 1998), the impact of this event may have been felt for some time afterwards.

Many participants reported the satisfaction and pride at their achievements during their time at Ardentinny but it would be unrealistic to assume that every single student attending the Centre enjoyed such a positive learning experience. One participant on an orienteering course reported negative feelings as a result of her lack of success.

     FQ1.38 I was hopeless and felt stupid.

However, despite this she also reported experiencing no low points during the week. Feeling hopeless and stupid is hard to reconcile with a statement of having had no low points. It is possible that positive experiences at other times during the week outweighed the negative feelings or that the passage of time has reduced the impact of the negative experiences leaving the participants with an overall positive response. Similarly another participant reported strong feelings of homesickness but still felt that the experience was positive overall.

     FQ3.43 I was particularly homesick but did not tell anyone and do not feel this stopped me from enjoying myself.

In Section 2.1 of this current chapter I discussed the satisfaction that students felt as a result of meeting challenging experiences. However, there is always the possibility that students are not able to meet the challenge to their satisfaction or are aware that they are less capable than others.

     FQ3.50 I didn't do very well in the cold and wet and often struggled in the deep snow when walking. I was always last in the line, so in hindsight, it was probably best that I wasn't doing the orienteering I had wanted to do! There must have been other bad points but they are forgotten now over the good times.

Similarly, the strict bedtime rules and the consequences of breaching them that some participants interpreted as exciting and adventurous (see Section 2.1 above) were experienced less positively by others.

> MQ3.80 The instructors were particularly authoritarian. No noise after "lights out" was tolerated, which meant people being moved from their dorm to sleep elsewhere.

> MQ3.113 I found it cold, and the instructors quite hard. I think our mob became infamous, doubtless with good reason, which may have brought out the authoritarian in the staff.

Whilst a number of participants appreciated the 'no-nonsense' approach of some instructors others found it intimidating.

> MQ3.74 Being away from home and strangers shouting at me - many with English accents. Army like approach from some. "I'll let this thing capsize if you don't pay attention" still rings in my ears.

Real life experiences are rarely one dimensional – fitting neatly into a positive or negative category – as the following statement outlines. A situation that is distressing at the time can be rationalised as a positive experience in retrospect.

> FQ3.59 I wasn't keen on one of the orienteering trips, as they took us to a point in a van and dropped us there with a map and a compass, and told our group to find our way home, we were a little worried about being left on our own. We didn't know until we got back that there was a couple of staff watching us the whole time to make sure we were safe. At the time I was unhappy, but again once we had returned home, I found it a great achievement. And still do today.

> FQ1.13 We could choose which activity we took part in during our stay - I chose orienteering which was cancelled and I was put into the hillwalking/mountaineering group. I don't like heights and hated most of the things about the week - especially the overnight camp (5km hike in traditional Scottish weather - very, very wet) is not my cup of tea! It put me off camping in tents for life. Wasn't able to step off for the abseil and it made me more wary about heights than I was before.

Even the participant who made the latter comment was able to rationalise the experience into a positive, or at least neutral, learning experience. Later on in her account she expressed that while she had not enjoyed the activity side of the experience at Ardentinny there were aspects of the social residential experience that had been very positive. Her overall reflection on the experience was that she had learned more about what she liked, did not like, and was or was not capable of.

> FQ7.13 I learned that I am an indoor book person - outside halfway up a cold wet hill is not fun in my book.

Of the 110 questionnaires and 14 interviews two participants reported significantly negative experiences at Ardentinny. The first participant gave few details beyond describing it as a horrible experience.

> FQ3.94: the people were horrible, the dorms were horrible, the food was horrible!!!!!! Not to mention the ridiculous disco on the last night we had to attend – embarrassing!!!!!!!!

Unfortunately I was unable to contact this participant for a follow-up interview to find out in more detail what had made his experience so negative. The second participant (hereafter referred to as Niamh) visited Ardentinny on two occasions and unfortunately both were negative experiences. The first occasion Niamh was on a kayaking course and the first day consisted of a journey across the loch.

> Niamh: About half way across I was really tired and I told the instructor this. He just told me to keep going. Our group was made up of me, two boys, and a much stronger girl - none of whom I knew before the trip. I was way behind everyone else and I just felt lonely and isolated and exhausted. When we got to the other side we then had to turn round and go back without stopping for a break. What we then realised was that the wind had been behind us on the way across and it was now blowing at us for our return journey. We made it back ok but it was a really horrible, scary and exhausting experience. I still cannot believe that the instructor could have taken us on such a long, tiring trip before he really knew our abilities and that he could make the mistake of our return journey being into the wind, especially when he was aware of how tired we were.

The social isolation of not knowing any of the other participants appears to be a compounding factor in the distressing nature of the experience. Although Niamh was allowed to change to a different group which she found more appropriate to her abilities and to be led by more sympathetic instructors this was only agreed upon after a protracted process of negotiation with staff which made her feel guilty and ashamed.

> Niamh: It seems to me looking back on it as an adult that there was an air of bullying by the staff - kind of like the perception of old-school PE masters. The larger group had female instructors who seemed to have more of a caring attitude towards us.

Two or three years later, on the second visit to Ardentinny Niamh was taking part in a geography field studies trip. A request from Niamh's father that he did not wish Niamh to do any field work that involved her being on her own as he was concerned about the presence of the American Navy based nearby was ignored by the instructor in charge of the group although subsequently her geography teacher arranged for a friend to accompany her on her site surveying task.

> Niamh: Once we were back at Ardentinny we had to find out more about the land uses and one of the instructors completely humiliated me in front of the whole class about something to do with phoning up the American Navy to ask about the way the land was being used. I just remember the embarrassment and the tears - not the full reason for them.

Niamh's account of her experiences clearly expressed the depth of emotion she still felt after 30 years.

The meanings that participants attribute to their experiences at Ardentinny represented in this section demonstrate the power of outdoor activities and the group environment to elicit negative experiences.

7 Summary

This chapter has presented the meanings and values that participants at Ardentinny attached to their experience. For many participants the outdoor activities at Ardentinny provided the opportunity to experience strong feelings of satisfaction. These feelings related to engaging in challenges of various different kinds, of looking back on experiences that had been difficult and arduous, and of enjoying being successful in tasks that had been set. For many students Ardentinny was an experience which allowed them to explore concepts of adulthood and independence. Being away from the home environment for an extended period of time in a different social environment provided students with the opportunity to behave and interact in ways that were more adult in nature. The feelings of independence, personal responsibility, and freedom that were associated with these more adult behaviours were strongly valued by the participants. For many participants the outdoor aspect of the learning at Ardentinny was an important element of the experience and led to a greater appreciation of and connection to the outdoor world. References to the skills and knowledge that participants gained at Ardentinny was a strong theme and reflects the intention of the staff that students would be taking part in a serious educational endeavour. Finally, the chapter relates the negative aspects of participants' experiences.

Chapter 7: Interpersonal meanings and values

1 Introduction

The potential of residential outdoor education experiences as a medium for developing social relationship skills within mainstream education in the UK dates back to the post-World War Two educational reforms (Ministry of Education, 1947, p. 16). The subsequent decades have witnessed a continued belief by UK governments and their agencies that the experience of living in a small group away from the home environment and engaging in outdoor activities or field studies is beneficial to the social development of young people (CACE, 1963; Department for Education and Skills, 2006; Department of Education and Science, 1975; LTS, 2007; SED, 1971; SOED, 1992, 1993). The particular nature of the small group living and working in a new environment is considered to provide learning opportunities that are not available in the everyday school context. Hopkins and Putnam (1993, p. 13) posit that such experiences provide an opportunity for young people to explore concepts of self as discussed in the previous chapter and also to explore social relationships, social roles, and experience the support of living in a small community. This chapter presents the meanings and values that participants attached to their experience at Ardentinny that related to themes of understanding others and learning how to exist cooperatively.

2 Communal living skills and confidence

As outlined in Chapter 6, Section 3.1 Ardentinny was the first time that many participants had been away from home without their parents. Being confronted with having to adjust to existing side by side with their peers, many of whom they did not know at all or did not know very well was, for many, a watershed moment in their lives.

> Kate: being with people other than your family and having to share the dorms and all this type of thing. You know eating with a big group and all these [sorts of things], I just think there was a lot more to Ardentinny … apart from the outdoor education side of things, you know, there was a lot of social [things] that you learned and a lot of team work.

FQ4.100: I learned how to survive away from home and get along with others.

FQ4.104: I learned how to live and share facilities with others.

Participants in a small-scale retrospective study of residential outdoor education experiences (Telford, 2005) expressed similar opinions of the importance of the simple everyday acts of living such as eating together, sleeping in the same room, sharing washrooms. The exact significance of these acts seems to be difficult for participants to explicate but there is an awareness that somehow they contribute to a sense of togetherness and community. Meal times at Ardentinny were purposefully structured to create a group experience. Each table would be allocated the relevant food in large dishes which would be collected from the kitchen by one student from each table and returned by another student from the same table. Acts of service such as these were designed to contribute to a sense of community living and to provide students with an opportunity to be responsible, even in a small degree, for others.

FQ2.24: I remember being really proud of myself for dishing out all the trifle to everyone.

Although referring to expeditions with young people, Kennedy's (1992) comment that the small group social setting provides opportunities for participants to experience greater responsibility towards their peer group or community and thereby reassess their role within that community is relevant to residential outdoor education also. Beames (2004a, p. 154) notes the importance that Raleigh International expeditioners attached to the basic acts of group living and cites the comments of one expedition participant who pointed out that it was imperative that the group was successful in negotiating sleeping and food arrangements for the group to successfully exist. It is possible that an awareness of the same fundamental nature of the basic acts of human survival – sleeping, eating, washing – underlies the feelings of significance that students living together on a residential outdoor education programme attribute to those acts, even though in the residential setting there is no chance of anyone being denied such basic human needs.

Perhaps there are, however, enough possibilities of those basic needs being threatened for their importance to be clear to students, albeit at a less than conscious level. At the meal table there is always the possibility that food will not be shared out

equally or, perhaps with more mature groups, according to individual need. If students were not aware of the possibility for the group living process to turn into a negative situation perhaps the learning of how to act cooperatively would be lessened. As Perry recounts below aspects of the group living process did not always run perfectly smoothly.

> Perry: I shared a room with three other guys, two of them were real rogues, I remember getting dragged out of bed at three o'clock in the morning 'cos they were still having a laugh and I was lying sleeping. We were forced to go and sleep on the mat underneath the bar football table down in the wet area, fucking freezing, you know you've been knocking your pan in all day doing whatever you had to do, you've been playing all evening and you go to bed at 10 o'clock and you're supposed to be sleeping and at three o'clock in the morning here's these fuckin idiots are still going. [A member of staff] come in, "Right, get out, get out, get downstairs." And having to do the walk of shame back through the place in the morning when everybody's [watching] ... You know things like that, you never lose that because it's very different to what you ever had before. And then when the opportunities and the experiences change you change - you're a wee bit older.

Although clearly less than impressed with the implications of his roommates' antics Perry nevertheless views the incident as a learning experience which he felt helped him to mature.

3 Beyond peer groups

Sibthorp (2003) notes the development of what he refers to as life skills through the interaction of students from a variety of backgrounds leading to a "better appreciation of and tolerance for different personality types and reduce the propensity to make snap judgements about others" (p. 154). This is supported by Beames (2004a, p. 152). The excerpt below follows Perry talking about the value of the stories that he and his friends still share about Ardentinny. When asked whether Ardentinny was an experience that deepened already existing relationships with friends he made the following comments:

Perry: I made [new] friends and I did have a certain affection for some guys that I wouldn't have had anything to do with had I not gone to Ardentinny. You know some of the kids that … went there they weren't part of my kinda peer group or my immediate group of friends because you were thrown together with folk that you weren't necessarily best mates with at school ... and I'm not pals with any of them now but at the time when we went back to school I found, you know, I had that little bond with them, you had that connection because of your anecdotes from 4 days you were away … you know, somebody had won the table tennis tournament and they'd beat you in the final or you know a bit of carry on because somebody heard you talking about one of the girls or you know, snogged somebody at the disco or whatever, you know that kind of stuff.

The fact that Ardentinny was made up of a diverse group of students created the opportunity for new friendships to develop. As Perry states, these friendships did not last in the long-term but they did continue on return to school. This scenario is consistent with James' (teacher) comments in Chapter 4, Section 5.3 that in a residential environment students who might be ignored or on the fringes of more dominant peer groups are more able to integrate. This also recalls the comments of the Newsom Report (CACE, 1963, Chapter 6, Section 152) that more diffident pupils are able to play a more significant role than is possible in the larger school community.

Given that students had to volunteer to go to Ardentinny and that places were only available to approximately one third to one quarter of a year group it was possible that many students would not be accompanied by their close friends.

Trevor: No, a lot of my pals actually didn't [go] ... there were some kids in my year that I got quite pally with when I was there that, you know, not for any explicit reason [that I wasn't friendly with them] but again because we had quite a big year, there were certain classes that you never really mixed with. So even if you were in the same year with some kid you don't actually know them because you've never been in their class, so I got to know quite a lot of kids there [Ardentinny] … So some of my best pals didnae actually go, they didnae

actually fancy it … it was amazing how you got talking to a lot of these kids that you actually didn't really know … I suppose it sounds like quite a small thing now but it's quite a big thing to go and ... because you're put in a room with three other boys and you know it was an amazing thing that they had to take you out of school to let you get to know boys and girls that were in your own year, but it was a great experience to do that.

Other comments reiterate the importance that students attached to the diverse nature of the group.

FQ2.58: [A highlight of the week was] becoming close friends with people from school who I really hadn't noticed before.

FQ4.2 [I learned] that I didn't have to be friends with just a few people, I could get on with lots of different people.

FQ2.42 It was fantastic being with all my school friends and also getting to know other people in my year whom I had never spoken to before.

MQ1.41 I think it was fairly challenging and took people out of their comfort zone, I remember everyone really enjoying it and wasn't the usual inter-group cliques that existed within the school environment.

The comments from participants that the residential experience led to new or improved relationships with students outside of their normal peer groups are congruent with findings from other empirical studies (Amos & Reiss, 2009; Johnson & Wattchow, 2004).

4 Team/group work

A number of participants were able to recall specific instances that occurred naturally during activities that led to an increased sense of teamwork or group cohesion.

MQ2&4.70 As well as the theory and practicalities of sailing, I'd say that teamwork was one of the important lessons learned there ... One positive aspect was learning to work with others as part of a team, i.e. crewing a small sailing dinghy, or the larger longboats. This was something that we probably did not realise we were doing at the time, but became self-evident when on a particularly gusty day, our dinghy almost capsized. The three of us on-board reacted just as we had been taught to do, and righted the dinghy before it

226

managed to turn over, although I do recall the tip of the mast reaching the water. I'd say that by the end of the week, those of us on the sailing course were really starting to gel together.

The following two participants highlight testing times, which could potentially be interpreted as negative experiences, that required the group to come together and work as a unit and elicited a strong sense of group solidarity.

FQ2.67 I still vividly remember Ardentinny as being one of the most enjoyable weeks of my life. I can still remember the leader for our group ... We all thought he was wonderful. I still remember us all being lost in thick fog and although you may think that this should be under the negative aspects, looking back it was a wonderful time of togetherness staggering through the hills with our hand on the shoulder of the one in front! I remember camping out overnight in a bothy and enjoying every minute of it.

FQ3.81: The whole experience was superb. Even when one of the team hurt her ankle out on one of our walks without a leader to test our abilities and the group split up and we got a bit lost due to having to alter our course for the sore ankle and it was starting to get dark and we were hungry the team spirit helped us be positive and try our best to achieve our target of getting to the rendezvous point which we did two hours late but we achieved it which made us all feel very proud.

Authentic, unplanned events such as those presented above present students with real life situations that require resolution. In each of the three cases safety networks were in place (respectively – a sailing safety boat, adult instructor, arranged rendezvous point). These did not negate the feelings of nervousness or anxiousness or negate the sensation of cold, wet, and shock upon capsizing but within that framework of safety students had sufficient freedom of action that meant their response to the situation had real consequences both for themselves and for their group. Higgins (1996a, 1996b, 1997) argues that education needs to provide safe opportunities for students to experience the consequences of their actions. Through basic tasks such as pegging out a tent – which can either lead to uninterrupted sleep or the need to get up in the middle of the night to rectify earlier mistakes – or making sure a wetsuit is properly hung up so that it is dry to put on the next day, outdoor education is able to provide

experiences which deliver immediate sensory and cognitive feedback. Johnson and Wattchow (2004) found that adolescent students engaging in an eight-day outdoor education programme in Australia considered such imminent and real learning outcomes significant. Tony (teacher) in Chapter 4, Section 5.5 suggested that this theme of visible or felt imminence and immediacy was a contributory element in the success of Ardentinny with students. Although specifically talking about achievements rather than consequences his supposition regarding the esoteric nature of academic work and success seems relevant here also.

In other, less specifically detailed references to teamwork and group cooperation, participants referred to learning the benefits of working as a group rather than as individuals, developing the ability to accept the opinions of others, learning to work with new people, and learning to adjust preconceptions about other people that they thought they knew. Thus, as well as the skills of cooperative working, students also developed more subtle interpersonal skills of perceiving and understanding others and developed the maturity to be able to adjust previously conceived notions and internally formed structures of their social world.

> FQ4.81 [I learned] the importance of working as a team to achieve objectives and to appreciate others skills and knowledge in different areas. It also helped people to develop better relationships with others [students] outside the school environment - to see people for who they are not what they appeared to be or judged by the friends they kept.
>
> FQ4.4 I know that I learned to think independently; listen well to others; work in partnerships and groups.
>
> FQ4.18 I learned how to work as part of a team and acknowledge others' views and opinions.
>
> MQ4.74 I learned that teamwork is better than [working as] individuals.
>
> MQ4.77 We learned teamwork especially on the sailing where we all relied on the skill we had been taught.
>
> FQ4.87 [I learned] how to work in a team. How to adapt to meeting new people.

Walsh and Golins (1976) proposed a group size of between 7 and 15 participants as the optimum number for creating the "unique social environment" (pp. 5-6) that formed an essential part of the Outward Bound process. This size of group is considered large enough to allow for diversity and potential conflict yet small enough that cliques cannot form and difficulties can be resolved. Within the Outward Bound course structure outlined by Walsh and Golins the aim of the group is to provide a forum within which individuals can make decisions whilst at the same time being supported by and supporting the group – individuality within a cooperative framework. McKenzie's (2003) research on the learning process at Outward Bound Western Canada suggests that the traditional process model (Walsh & Golins, 1976) may lead to participant learning outcomes that are more individually oriented and less socially oriented than is compatible with a foundational ethos of self-denial and social compassion. The Ardentinny principal's letter to head teachers in 1977 states that, "the whole structure internally of the Centre is geared to the close relationship between students and staff in such matters as dining, and daily contact in small groups of a ratio rarely more than one to ten, and on average one to five" (Ardentinny, personal communication, 1977). Activity group sizes at Ardentinny mostly ranged between four and ten students and as stated previously each group would work with the same instructor or instructors throughout the week in order to allow for the development of strong relationships. Thus, whilst the group structure at Ardentinny is similar in some ways, and possibly for similar reasons to those expressed by Walsh and Golins (1976), it is also noticeably distinct. As well as providing for individual learning and social learning within the context of each activity group Ardentinny was also expressly aiming at inter-generational social learning outcomes as a result of interactions between the student groups and adult staff at the Centre – both during the formal day-time teaching content and the everyday aspects of residential living.

5 Adult relationships

A recurrent theme in participants' accounts of their experiences at Ardentinny was the more adult nature of relationships with the staff at Ardentinny and with

accompanying school teaching staff. Participants' references to this theme fell broadly into two categories which are discussed below.

5.1 Being treated more like adults

Rachel, who in the previous chapter spoke of feelings of adventure and freedom with regard to the personal autonomy that students were accorded at Ardentinny, describes below the more relaxed nature of interactions with Ardentinny staff and school teaching staff whilst at Ardentinny. This added to the sensation of feeling more grown up.

> Rachel: I suppose I felt kind of grown up because: one, it was an adventure; two, I had freedom; and three, there was a lot of interaction from grown ups and things and you know you didn't feel sort of restrained in any way. Within boundaries obviously … And then there was another teacher there who … was really nice and … he encouraged discussion and he was dead open, and there was another male teacher who went round with us and again the same thing, really nice, encouraged discussion, you know put up with that bit of banter as well and things and so as I say it was all very relaxed, it was very open. And I can remember I suppose those three [school teaching] staff that were there, you felt very relaxed with, and I think for everybody we enjoyed it.

Trevor reiterates this point but also clarifies that there were clear boundaries that students were aware of. As Collinson and Hoffman (1998) suggest, the existence of these boundaries in the context of greater freedom seems to have been perceived in a positive light.

> Trevor: I remember one of them [instructor] I'm sure had been in the army … [they were] very, very good with us you know, it was a kinda mixed [ability] group cos it was a mixed school but they'd a really good style about them you know, it was different from school but they still you know, it was a properly structured thing we went through. It was quite high level stuff we ended up doing and I think they helped give a lot of us the confidence to go on and do it …I was dreadful on the first day but by the end of the week I was, you know, coming top out of the [group] ... I remember all the kids got a real good response off the instructors, they both had a lot of time for the kids ... It was

probably more relaxed [than school] in a lot of ways, I suppose it was slightly more informal but it was informal up to a point, it still had a structure. It wasnae you know sometimes if you talk about a relationship being informal it means that anything goes, it certainly wasnae [that at all].

When asked whether students related to instructors in the same way as they did to teachers at school Fliss responded in the following manner.

Fliss: No, no, I think it was more relaxed cos teachers were always trying to ... I mean instructors they were taking you out doing interesting things whereas poor teachers were left with you in a classroom day to day. But it [Ardentinny] was something new, and I think cos you know they have a slightly different job as instructors they can be a bit stricter with you but still be your friend whereas that doesn't really work very well in school.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is?

Fliss: I think it's just the whole school attitude sort of thing, perhaps cos those people lived there and everything you saw them all the time so you realised that was their life whereas when you're at school I think you presume that your teacher that that's her life and then you get a bit of a shock when you see them outside. You think they kinda disappear [into thin air] at 5 o'clock!

Wikeley et al.'s (2007) research into educational relationships in out-of-school activities draws attention to the different relationship that students enjoy with adults involved in these activities in comparison with teachers in school even if it is the same adult that performs both functions. Although in certain instances the activities included in Wikeley et al.'s research involved strict discipline this was generally received without complaint and was perceived as being different from the behaviour management that was imposed in schools. Despite some adults in the clubs being strict and demanding, they were still "much more likely to be described as friends and the predominant word used was 'fun' in relation to both the adults and the activities" (Wikeley et al., 2007, p. ix). Significant learning was observed to take place in the out-of-school activities. In combination with the acknowledgement of the presence of discipline and demands made upon the young people the research

suggests that the descriptors 'friend' and 'fun' should not be interpreted in such a way as to undermine the educational content or value of the out-of-class activities.

> Lee: The atmosphere was great at the Centre. The instructors made you feel welcome and treated you as a friend rather than a student.
>
> Mark: [One of the main highlights was] possibly the opportunity to be recognised as a young adult rather than a pupil. There was a slightly more dignified approach by teachers, instructors, etc. so there was probably that element of maturity [amongst students] that slowly begins to set in.
>
> MQ1.72: I remember being treated as more of an adult by the staff at the centre.
>
> FQ2.88: Highlights were spending the week away from home with friends, being treated as adults by the staff (as long as we were behaving!), having so much fun out in the wilderness.
>
> MQ2.90: The staff were fantastic and were very careful to treat us like adults which was greatly appreciated by me. The staff were firm, but fair, when required (which was only once in my experience).
>
> FQ12.38: I think being away from home and to an extent being treated like an adult was a positive experience.

Although participants tended not to remember very much in the way of specifics about individual Ardentinny staff members or even their own accompanying school teachers they strongly recalled the general atmosphere that Ardentinny and the adults there created. In this way the different expectations of behaviour and ways of living that are part of a residential experience (SOED, 1992, 1993) provided the opportunity for more mature relations to develop between students and adults.

5.2 Changed perceptions of adults

A number of empirical research studies have shown that residential experiences encourage a different relationship between adults (usually accompanying teachers) and students. Christie (2004) evaluated an Outward Bound 5-day residential programme in Scotland which formed part of a broader programme aimed at raising school achievement. The results from quantitative data regarding the impact of the residential programme on raising school achievement were inconclusive. However,

qualitative data demonstrated that some students felt that the residential experience had, amongst other outcomes, developed their ability to communicate with peers and teachers and also felt that this might lead to a more positive attitude towards academic work. One of the main findings of a pilot evaluation of a residential outdoor education programme in London commissioned by the Field Studies Council found that:

> The vast majority of students maintained or built new positive relationships with each other, with teachers, and with centre staff. The positive interactions between teachers and students were attributed to the relaxed, informal atmosphere created at the centres. (Amos & Reiss, 2004, p. 17)

Cramp (2008) argues that the increasing level of constraints on the practices of classroom teachers means that outdoor education experiences in general and residential experiences in particular are one of the few opportunities left for pupils to come to understand their teachers more fully. Cramp's (2008) small-scale study of a residential experience demonstrated that the more fluid nature of the out-of-class context naturally allowed for teachers to display their personality more fully and facilitated a wider range of student/teacher interactions which led to improved relationships. Teachers felt they had more time to interact with students, and students expressed more interest in developing their relationships with teachers. Dismore and Bailey's (2005) study involving nine schools and 671 students reported similar results. In an ethnographic study of teachers and students sharing a residential experience Humberstone (1986) concluded that the informal, relationship-focused teaching approach employed was a significant factor in contributing to the value of the experience for students.

In Section 5.1 directly above Fliss referred to seeing instructors in a different light in comparison to school teachers whom students did not perceive as existing outside the confines of the school grounds. The following quotations demonstrate that students also began to perceive their accompanying school teachers in a different light.

> FQ1.62 You got to see a different side to the school teachers and began to appreciate they were human too.

FQ2&4.2 I loved the orienteering, the instructors were great fun, and I connected with a few of the teachers also. I learned that teachers are people too!

FQ2.52 We all enjoyed our time away from family it seemed exciting. The teachers were more human and the instructors interesting.

FQ1&4.68 My most memorable day would have been when we went abseiling basically because our teacher was terrified of heights. Although at school this particular teacher was not popular this allowed us to see him in a new light. I had never been abseiling before but was willing to give it a try. We all came together and encouraged the teacher to do it and with our support he managed. I'll never forget his face. It was like role reversal and from that day on we all had more respect for him as he had conquered his fear. I always remember this when I am fearful of doing something. People aren't always what they seem. Teachers are human.

MQ4.73 I learned that outside of school people gel better. [And that] Adults can be good fun.

FQ2.19 I remember the instructors being great fun and also how 'normal' the teachers were away from the school. Each and everyone of us had a great time.

FQ2.20 I also remember the disco on the last night, also the teachers from school being different away from school, also how good the staff were to all of us.

The frequency with which participants refer to discovering that teachers are 'human' is notable. Cramp's (2008) research suggested that the benefits of the relational improvements experienced on residential visits translate back to school. The participants in this present study did not comment specifically on whether improved relationships continued after Ardentinny. Pollard (1996), however, asserts that a change in the power dynamic between students and teachers which creates a situation where students feel more at ease, "is likely to make experimentation possible and to encourage risk taking which is a necessary part of engaging with new learning challenges. The social character of different settings, in other words, has an important influence on opportunities to learn" (p. 91).

6 Summary

Participants' accounts of their experience at Ardentinny generated a number of themes relating to interpersonal meanings and values. The communal nature of the simple acts of everyday living such as eating and sleeping were considered as important and meaningful events. The fact that Ardentinny encouraged pupils to integrate with peers from outside their normal friendship groups was also seen as an important element of the social experience. This required the young people to forge new relationships and allowed them to see others in a new light. Although these friendships did not necessarily continue on returning to the home environment the social process of adapting to a new social grouping at Ardentinny was considered an important experience. The team work that was often integral to the outdoor activities at Ardentinny was considered a valuable aspect of the experience. Finally, for many students the different relationships that they felt they had with adults whilst at the Centre was a particularly significant aspect of their stay. The following chapter considers the meanings and values presented in Chapters 6 and 7 in the light of Bourdieu's (1977, 1990a) theory of social practice.

Chapter 8: Summary of chapters 6 & 7

Chapters 6 and 7 present the meanings and values that participants attached to their experience at Ardentinny. These meanings and values fall into two broad categories: personal and interpersonal. The expressions of the participants are congruent with the intentions that were foundational to the establishment of Ardentinny: to provide a personal and social development experience, to provide education for leisure, and to provide curriculum-enriching fieldwork. The overwhelming majority of the meanings that participants attached to their experiences were positive. One respondent's two negative experiences at Ardentinny stand out as a stark reminder, however, that great responsibility lies in the hands of those charged with the care and education of the visiting students. The positive accounts lend credence to the belief, primarily based on observation and intuition, that has prevailed for over 60 years that residential outdoor education experiences provide unique and powerful opportunities for learning in academic, personal, and social spheres. Clearly though, powerful experiences have the potential to be mis-educative (Dewey, 1938) as well as educative and the social environment can cause anguish (Ringer, 1997) to rival that which can be caused by the fear of physical harm when engaging in outdoor activities (Mortlock, 1984).

This present study has two main aims. Firstly, to gain an understanding of participants' experiences at Ardentinny and secondly, to explore the influence, if any, that the experience subsequently had on participants' lives. The discussion of the meanings and values in Chapters 6 and 7 goes part way to achieving the first aim. It is evident from the participants' accounts that Ardentinny was a powerful experience from which students learned a great deal about themselves, about others, about the activity or fieldwork course they were engaged in, and about the changing nature of their role in the world as they grew towards adulthood. It is worth emphasising at this point that 59% (n = 62) (see Appendix G) of the questionnaire respondents and 7 of the 14 pupil participant interviewees fell into the 41-50 year-old age category. Close to two-thirds of questionnaire respondents and one half of the interviewees were therefore talking about the meaning of a one-week experience that

took place an absolute minimum of 25 years previously. Given this fact, the depth of feeling and the value that participants' attach to the experience seems to be a significant finding in itself.

However, as stated in Chapter 2, Section 1.5, when considering how to engage with the data I came to the conclusion that taking a purely phenomenological approach to understanding the participants' experiences was inadequate, as amongst other reasons, it would over-emphasise the subjectivity of the participants at the expense of a broader perspective. Using a hermeneutic approach allowed the creation of a montage which represents the experience at Ardentinny from a number of perspectives whilst still prioritising the participants' voices. The hermeneutic principle of moving back and forth between the various forms of data (Howard, 1991; Patterson et al., 1998) led to an understanding of the participants' experiences that also took into account the wider historical, educational, and social context. Although the literature previously referred to in Chapters 6 and 7 helps to elucidate some of the meanings and values that participants attribute to their experience at Ardentinny, Bourdieu's (1977, 1990b) concepts of field and habitus provide a broader perspective which facilitates understanding the personal and social developmental aspect of participants' experiences by drawing together the subjective and objective influences immanent in the experience.

McKenzie's (2000) review of literature relating to adventure education (which in this case might also justifiably be read as outdoor education) programme outcomes notes the prevalence of the theory that an unfamiliar physical environment is a major contributory factor (Kimball & Bacon, 1993; Nadler, 1993, Walsh & Golins, 1976). The assertions which are generally provided to support this theory suggest that an unfamiliar environment facilitates: the ability of participants to generate new perspectives on their lives, the experience of a constructive level of anxiety which when successfully overcome leads to benefits such as enhanced self-concept, and the freedom to explore concepts of identity and psychological strategies. Whilst the three outcomes listed above are evident in the participants' accounts of their experiences at Ardentinny I would argue that the assertion that an unfamiliar physical environment

237

is a contributory factor is a very superficial explanation. McKenzie (2000) comments that, "Although a number of sources suggest that the physical environment is important to achieving adventure education program outcomes, little, if any, research has explored this relationship" (p. 20). I would argue that it is not only a lack of research but a lack of a range of complementary research approaches which is perpetuating a situation whereby little more is understood about Walsh and Golin's (1976) claims of the relevance of an unfamiliar environment in outdoor education programmes today than 30 years ago. A tendency towards over-emphasising reductionist approaches which attempt to identify and isolate all possible variables in the hope of arriving at the 'golden formula' for successful programmes leads to the ironic situation where, for example, "The theoretical literature indicates that the challenges in activities should be holistic in order to maximize program outcomes (Gass, 1995; Kimball & Bacon, 1993; Walsh & Golins, 1976)" (McKenzie, 2000, pp. 20-21) yet much of the research attempting to understand the processes at work are antithetical to holism. Whilst I do not deny that investigating what impacts an urban, semi-urban, wilderness, or semi-wilderness physical environment may have on an outdoor education programme could be informative, I would argue that a more holistic approach to understanding the nature of individuals' experiences is also important. Seeking to analyse each aspect of an outdoor education experience in isolation falls into the ruinous trap of accepting the artificial divide between subjectivism and objectivism (Bourdieu, 1990b).

For example, as alluded to in the introduction to Chapter 5, focusing on the unfamiliarity of the physical environment in isolation from other aspects of the experience would appear to be inadequate. If novelty was sufficient then one might suggest that instead of a wilderness expedition or a stay at a residential outdoor centre an arrangement could be made where two locally situated schools simply exchange students for a week. If a diverse group is also argued to be necessary then an arrangement could be made where in addition to a school exchange students are randomly assigned into new class groupings. Considering students' experience at Ardentinny from the perspective of a change of social field provides a framework for understanding the nature of their experience from a more holistic point of view.

Students at Ardentinny experienced a sub-field of education with distinctly different values and relations of power from their normal school environment. The evidence of the participants' accounts suggests that one of the major differences at Ardentinny was that the symbolic capital that adolescents attach to demonstrating and practising their growing sense of independence and maturity (Collinson & Hoffman, 1998) was not only possible to be expressed but positively encouraged. In this respect the physical environment in which the students are located is relatively immaterial. Therefore seeking to quantify whether a wilderness environment or a semi-urban environment is more effective in facilitating student concepts of autonomy is perhaps not irrelevant but not of overwhelming importance. What is important is that the individuals (e.g. parents, teachers, older siblings) and institutions (e.g. school, family, peer groups, religious affiliations) are not present to impose the normative values and expected behaviours upon students. Thus, students are freer (though still influenced by the individuals and institutions of their home life through the habitus) to explore aspects of adulthood or their sense of identity. Accompanying school teachers also enter into this different social field. No longer influenced by the objective structures of, for example, the highly delineated, academically performance driven school day, teachers are able to engage with students in a different way. From this perspective it is not just the fact that students are engaging in novel activities that allows teachers to see their students in a different light. Once more, if that were the case then it would be far simpler to find some new activities to learn in the school classroom than to visit an outdoor centre. Rather, it is the fact that the social field in which students and teacher exist during the outdoor education residential is qualitatively different in terms of expectations, values, and power relations and leads to a situation where students are able to behave and perform differently and teachers are able to interpret that behaviour differently. The unwritten and unspoken social codes of everyday school life that James (teacher) refers to in Chapter 4, Section 5.3 no longer apply. Other unwritten and unspoken social codes are present instead.

> James: When they're in here [the classroom] with the big crowd there's unwritten rules that they just follow whereas away like that you can be a lot more relaxed with them, they've not got the hang-ups about being friendly with

a teacher or you know, even being friendly with each other … when they're away like that they'll do these things that normally they might not consider doing or they'd make a big fuss [about it].

As the objective relations of force between positions changes so do the strategies of behaviour of individuals:

> As a space of potential and active forces, the field is also *a field of struggles* [original emphasis] aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of these forces. Concretely, the field as a structure of objective relations of force between positions undergirds and guides the strategies whereby the occupants of these positions seek, individually or collectively to safeguard or improve their position, and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favourable to their own products. The strategies of agents depend on their position in the field, that is, in the distribution of the specific capital. (Wacquant, 1989, p. 40)

The numerous references that students made to perceiving teachers as more human suggests that a more equal balance of power was prevalent between adults and students at Ardentinny. Students were less inclined to see adults simply as enforcers of arbitrary rules (Wikeley et al., 2007) and more, in the case of accompanying teachers, as co-learners or in the case of instructors as experts in an area of learning that interested them.

Similarly, as the normative structures of school life are removed students are also able to see each other in a different light. That might be as in the example provided by Mike in Chapter 4 where boys were impressed by girls' ability to acquire technical skills in outdoor activities, or simply as a result of sharing a dormitory and being able to see another student as an individual rather than as the person they are defined as at school. However, as Brookes (2003a, 2003b) points out, a change of context does not equate to permanently changed individuals – a point supported by the following participant's comment.

> MQ1.113 It was mostly loch kayaking [that my group did], with very little on rivers, let alone rapids. I don't think we were a particularly impressive bunch. What was interesting was that some of the 'hard' men from the school turned out to be quite afraid of the water, while wimps like me found we weren't afraid, at least speaking for myself. A leveller, then, at least as long as we weren't on dry land.

The turn of phrase of the final line in this quotation perfectly illustrates Brookes' point and illuminates the relationship between habitus and field. Although a change of field can encourage different behaviours and provoke the consideration of different values and behavioural norms the impact of this has to be realistically considered in the context of an individual's accumulated stock of knowledge and instinctive ways of being. Just because the "hard men" (MQ1.113) were nervous of the water and some of the "wimps" (MQ1.113) were not it does not necessarily follow that the changed dynamic experienced on the water will revolutionise peer relationships off the water. Bourdieu (1977) refers to the influence of "yesterday's man [sic]" (p. 79).

> In each of us, in varying proportions, there is part of yesterday's man [sic]; it is yesterday's man [sic] who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet we do not sense this man [sic] of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we are led to take no account of him, any more than we take account of his legitimate demands. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79)

As such, the "hard men" (MQ1.113) could quite possibly see no inconsistency in re-establishing their status of hardness once back on dry land. Such a point of view is therefore less optimistic about the degree of influence which an outdoor education programme is able to have on an individual than Kimball and Bacon's (1993) suggestion that "because personality is formed and shaped largely through our contact and involvement with others, it can be reshaped through this same intimate contact" (p. 21). Through the lens of field and habitus one would agree that instinctive behaviours and ways of being (habitus) are shaped through social contact. Importantly, however, this perspective suggests that it is naïve, and contradictory to psychology research into personality (Brookes, 2003a, 2003b), to think that a short-term experience can have a significant impact on an individual in a way that will be manifest across different social contexts.

Habitus develops most strongly through the experiences and socialisation of early life (Jenkins, 2002, p. 78). Subsequently, as time passes the habitus becomes more resistant to adjustments as a result of life experiences (objective structures of reality) due to the long build-up of unquestioned, appropriated values and behaviours. A

241

number of instructors and teachers referred to participants at Ardentinny being at a pivotal age in their development when they were finding their place in the world and questioning the sort of person that they wanted to be. This being the case, it seems that this particular age when young people are commonly questioning who they are and their place in the world is an excellent opportunity to provide them with experiences, within a safe social framework, that allow them to experiment with new ways of being.

> FQ5.65: What a blast it was. I had so much fun and such happy memories. In school I would hide and sink into the background. At Ardentinny I couldn't hide, I was forced (in the nicest way) to do things I didn't think I wanted to do, or could do. I'm not saying Ardentinny changed my life, but I think it played a part in bringing me out of my shell.

An experience of moving across into a different social field, as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 2, and experientially living and working in that field provides an opportunity to impact upon the assumed, instinctive values and ways of being of young people. At Ardentinny this occurred at an age generally considered to be pivotal in an individual's discovery of self during their transition from childhood to adulthood. The following chapter presents participants' accounts of whether or not Ardentinny affected them in later life.

PART FOUR

Chapter 9: Impact of Ardentinny on later life

1 Introduction

This chapter presents the perceived influence, or lack of influence, of Ardentinny on participants' subsequent lives and the reasons for this. Questionnaire respondents were asked to state whether they felt Ardentinny had no influence, a temporary influence, or a continued influence on their life. The responses to this question were as follows:

a. No influence – 9% ($n = 10$)
b. Temporary influence – 19% ($n = 21$)
c. Continued influence – 72% ($n = 78$)

Of the 110 questionnaire respondents only one respondent did not answer the question. The interviewee who recounted the two significantly negative experiences previously mentioned in Chapter 6 did not fill in a questionnaire. However, from the information provided by this participant it is clear that Ardentinny continues to have an influence on her life. The impact of her experiences are discussed in an additional category – continued negative influence (Section 5).

2 No influence

The ten respondents in this category gave a variety of reasons as to why Ardentinny had not had any influence on their later life.

A lack of further opportunities was noted by several of the respondents.

> FQ6.76 I enjoyed the canoeing but haven't had the opportunity to do anything like that since, Greenock isn't exactly famous for it.
> FQ6.99 [Ardentinny had no influence] mainly because I didn't get the chance to ever do anything like it again.

Although the following participant stated that she had recently taken up canoeing (she took part in the mountaineering course at Ardentinny) she did not attribute the desire to do this to Ardentinny.

FQ6.48 I never really had the chance to do anything like that again as a child although I am now learning to canoe at the age of 46 something I was too nervous to try then.

Three participants stated that they had enjoyed Ardentinny at the time but it simply seemed that it had not been a very significant experience for them.

FQ6.47 I remember the good times that I had there but it was around 30 years ago, so I can't really remember that much about it.

FQ6.49 It's so long ago I really can't remember much about it.

FQ6.51 I do not feel that I learnt anything during my stay, while I was in a group that took part in mountaineering it was more hill walking.

Two others had not particularly enjoyed the experience. The participant immediately below referred to Ardentinny as 'a horrible experience' – although she did comment on having thoroughly enjoyed caving and gorge walking. Aside from stating her main motivation for going to Ardentinny was that she had felt pressured into it by her family she did not provide any further detail on what had made it a negative experience overall.

FQ6.94 It was a horrible experience all in.

MQ6.113 It wasn't a particularly enjoyable experience, and I didn't do anything like self-actualise halfway up a mountain or anything. I guess I learned I wasn't afraid of water, but having learned to swim in the sea I sort of knew that anyway.

The following participant stated that aspects of the experience had been very positive and that she had learned how to get on with people that she did not know. However, her friends had not attended Ardentinny with her. The inference appears to be that the social life of her peer group at home did not provide any opportunities for her to pursue potential interests related to her time at Ardentinny.

FQ6.21 My friends hadn't been chosen for the trip and I went on it with people I didn't know very well.

The final participant in this category stated that Ardentinny had no impact because physical outdoor activities were something she already took part in at home with her family.

> FQ6.43 My family were sporty and regularly walked so being outdoors was normal.

The combination of the low number and varied nature of the responses make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about this category.

3 Temporary influence

This section is divided into two parts. The first part presents the areas in which the 21 participants who stated that Ardentinny was a temporary influence believe that their experience at Ardentinny was influential and why. The second part represents participants' accounts of why they feel that Ardentinny no longer influences their lives.

3.1 Areas of influence

3.1.1 Physical activity

As established in Chapter 4 the delivery of outdoor activities as education for leisure was one of the main aims of Ardentinny. Several participants attributed a temporary interest or engagement with outdoor activities following their Ardentinny experience. The following participant classified Ardentinny's influence upon him as temporary, as injury has curtailed his enjoyment of hillwalking – a leisure pursuit which he attributes to Ardentinny. Although he still enjoys gentler walks in the country he associates this more with life influences that occurred before Ardentinny.

> FQ7&8.7 I still enjoy long countryside walks, I used to enjoy hill walking but can no longer do this due to injury. Up until that point [Ardentinny] what I knew of outdoor pursuits were car journeys to pretty areas of Scotland and having picnics. Ardentinny opened my eyes to what was available to me.

In addition to encouraging an interest in a leisure pastime the account below also points to experiences such as Ardentinny providing a broader perspective on life.

MQ7&8.10 Ardentinny and other activity trips gave me a love of canoeing and outdoor activities in general which I don't really get the chance to do anymore. Where I lived when I was in school there was not much chance for any outdoor activities so any trip like Ardentinny had an impact on the way I saw the world at the time.

MQ7&8.71 For a time it was part of an active period in my teenage years, especially while a member of the Boys' Brigade. I canoed in the BB because of my experience of Ardentinny. I'm less active now (a round of golf and walking the dog!) but would have no hesitation in recommending these sort of activities to my sons … When I saw the link to your questionnaire it brought back good positive memories but I don't think it's had a huge influence in my life.

FQ7&8.97 I used to do some hill walking and orienteering. I found that I became more interested in nature and the environment [after Ardentinny].

3.1.2 Confidence

Barry (instructor) referred to the pleasure he gained from seeing students' perception of what they were capable of expanding whilst at Ardentinny. He referred to the "blossoming of that person and their confidence" (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.3) which is reminiscent of Loader's (1952) comments on the purpose of Glenmore Lodge as being, "to experiment with forms of education which will assist the individual to discover his or her physical, mental and spiritual potentialities" (p. 14). Participants referred to the experience at Ardentinny having increased their self-confidence in a number of ways.

FQ7.2 I took part in far more school activities and was not nervous about staying away from home.

MQ7&8.41 Somehow confidence on striding out on my own. No fear of doing anything new. Understanding that everyone is likely to have the same fears so do not put yourself at a disadvantage of thinking you might not be as confident as others.

MQ7&8.85 Not to be scared to try something new. Able to face all new challenges and dangers head on.

FQ7&8.106 Probably gave me confidence to try new things. I would at least go [apply] for promotions, work off-site, and team building exercises.

MQ7&8.72 Outdoor activities helped in influencing my decision to join the army. I had a relatively successful career for 16 years, reaching the rank of Sergeant. Helped me feel more grown up and independent. I realised that I could do things that I thought were out of my comfort zone, which made basic military training easier to adapt to.

FQ7&8.95 [Ardentinny] gave me some confidence when I was starting out at high school which can be a difficult time. It pushed us to try things which we hadn't done before and didn't get the opportunity to do.

3.1.3 Broadened horizons

As with the participant in Section 3.1.1 above the following two comments relate to Ardentinny as having provided a new perspective on life. The comments of these two participants are in contradiction to Brookes' (2003a, 2003b) position that one-off outdoor education experiences do not impact upon participants' general disposition towards the world. In the sense that a new experience in a different field has impacted upon their values, they support Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus but given that the experience at Ardentinny was only one week in duration they also suggest that perhaps the habitus is not as robust, certainly in adolescence, as Bourdieu suggests.

MQ7&8.22 It just opened my horizons a wee bit to life other than a housing estate. A few years later having seen what life was like, I think it encouraged me to go away to college 100's miles from home, and to seek challenges.

FQ7&8.26 At one point I worked in a yacht chandler's. I have always enjoyed activity holidays since then. It showed me there was more to life than just going on beach holidays.

3.2 Why no longer influential?

3.2.1 Passage of time

For many participants the simple passage of time meant that Ardentinny no longer has the influence on their lives that it used to.

FQ9.2 Too long ago!

MQ9.71 Prefer less energetic pursuits now.

MQ9.73 It was 30 years ago. I am now an overweight project manager with little time nor energy for outdoor pursuits – except golf, and lots of it!

Although Ardentinny was considered by the following participant (who in the previous section referred to going away to college) to have been instrumental in broadening his horizons in terms of life's opportunities he now considers that as a separate chapter of his life. Ardentinny was a springboard to other things but no longer plays that role.

MQ9.22 Twenty-odd years ago, it gave me a kick start from a Linwood housing scheme, where most of my friends still are, to where I am today, the owner of a successful software consultancy.

The following comment displays very well the difficulty of attempting to attribute causation to one experience in life.

FQ9.24 I just haven't thought about Ardentinny for so long that I don't think of it as being an influence now but I suppose if it changed me then I'm a continuation of that and it might have changed the course of events.

3.2.2 Other influences and interests

For some participants Ardentinny seemed to be associated with childhood and dependence and had therefore become irrelevant now that they were an adult.

MQ9.74 The context has changed. I'm an adult – no more teacher/child, father/son stuff.

MQ9.106 Too old now, well established in own successful business.

FQ9.69 Very independent now, have my own family.

Taking a slightly different perspective the participant making the comment below considered that Ardentinny had contributed to feelings of self-confidence in the past but other, subsequent experiences had become more influential.

MQ9.41 Other trials and tribulations in life have come along to strongly reinforce those ideas [of self-confidence] and probably are more recent so a bit more impactful.

Joe reflected on Ardentinny as an enjoyable experience but did not consider outdoor activities as something that were part of his lifestyle. Although he did canoe a few times after Ardentinny it did not develop into a hobby or regular pastime. Joe's reflections were particularly interesting as he seemed to describe his outdoor experiences with a great deal of affection yet discounted the possibility that they might be a more regular part of his life. The following account is of one canoeing experience with a friend with whom he was working on a summer camp a few years after Ardentinny. He and his friend borrowed two canoes and a van and went canoeing on a local loch for the day.

> Joe: We went to this loch and it was a gorgeous day and got the canoes out and the only place we had canoed was at Ardentinny and we went on to this loch and the mountains at the side of the loch were really high and you're at water level and what an afternoon we had! Just going about the loch finding wee places, finding wee houses, so from the kid at the first day [at Ardentinny] where I was concerned about not being able to roll out of the canoe properly, a few years later I was very happy to get a canoe, get onto a loch, just me and my pal, and go. So I certainly had the confidence for that.

This experience, along with Ardentinny, was considered as a one-off experience that, whilst highly enjoyable, was extraneous to his normal life.

> Joe: I mean I have various passions which, my football, you know, watching football now, and watch my kids play football is a big passion of mine. And golf, I love golfing and I don't play enough golf [as I would like to] so these take up enough of my time. I really can't afford any more [hobbies] so, and [I need to] spend some time with the good lady, you know. So, I know people who, you know, ski and that takes up an awful lot of time and resources, money-wise you know, and sailing [and other things]. I've never been, I'm more a traditionalist you know. Give me my football on a Saturday and hopefully a round of golf at some point and those are kind of my main hobbies.

Whether Joe's experience is simply a case of preferring football and golf to canoeing or something more related to habitus and a sense of what is culturally acceptable for a 'traditionalist' was difficult to ascertain from the conversation. Bourdieu (1990b) argues that, "agents shape their aspirations according to concrete indices of the

accessible and the inaccessible, of what is and is not "for us," a division as fundamental and as fundamentally recognized as that between the sacred and the profane' (p. 64). This statement implies that Joe discounted the possibility of developing an interest or hobby in canoeing because he instinctively felt it was not a pastime that someone of his background would or should participate in. Knowing this, Joe therefore subconsciously convinced himself that he did not really want to do more canoeing in the future and that he was more interested in football and golf. Another explanation which may work in tandem with the former explanation proposes that Joe's choice regarding canoeing is primarily influenced, not by the time or cost involved in participating in another pastime, but by the way that participating in canoeing would be perceived by his peer group, family, and others in his primary social field. What influence would being seen as someone who canoes have on his social status? If the symbolic capital of being considered a football and golf loving 'traditionalist' is valuable enough to Joe then he will discount the possibility of a different hobby whether it was pleasurable in itself or not (Bourdieu, 1978). Unfortunately it was not possible from the interview to ascertain whether such motives were at play in Joe's experience. Of course, another explanation is quite simply that Joe preferred football and golf.

4 Continued influence

The overwhelming majority of participants (72%) felt that Ardentinny continued to have an impact on their lives. The impact was considered to be evident in a range of different ways.

4.1 Physical activity

Higgins (2002) states that, "There is little information on the relationship between outdoor education and outdoor recreation (Higgins, 2000) but it seems likely that there is one" (p. 164). It seems strange that after 60 years of outdoor education in mainstream education that so little is known about the effects of the 'education for leisure' aspect of outdoor education. Neill's (2008) synthesis of outdoor education literature – both theoretical and empirical – regarding the development of life-skills reveals a striking absence of references to the development of skills and strategies to

encourage physical activity. Where physical activity is mentioned it is primarily in terms of physical or psychological restoration or therapy rather than an ongoing practice of everyday life contributing to long-term physical health outcomes. Neill's (2008) research is symptomatic of a tendency within outdoor education towards exclusively observing and measuring meta-skills such as self-confidence and task-leadership and psychological constructs such as self-concept and self-efficacy. It is possible that the field of outdoor education has sought to raise its profile and respectability by moving away from associations with physical activity *per se* as Nicol (2002a, 2002b) notes occurred in the UK in the 1970s. In addition, it is also possible that by associating outdoor programmes with psychological constructs such as self-concept and self-efficacy practitioners are aiming to position themselves as relevant to the widest possible market of potential clients. A fuller analysis of the reasons for this trend lies outside the scope of the present study. However, it would appear from an examination of outdoor education research literature that the incongruous situation of outdoor education becoming relatively disassociated from, or disinterested in, the physical exercise and activity that, to a greater or lesser degree underpins its practice, has become the norm.

Participants' accounts in the present study point to Ardentinny as influential in creating or furthering an interest in using the outdoors for recreational activities. Erin described herself as someone who was already interested and active in the outdoors as a result of her doing things with her parents and on holidays. However, Ardentinny allowed her to take her skills and experience to a new level. This inspired a passion for hillwalking and mountaineering which she participates in regularly.

> Erin: Well, like I said, I am very outdoorsy, I do like it, I go hillwalking, and do all my mountains and that kind of thing, so I don't know if a lot of that came from that [Ardentinny] because before that like I said I'd been on holidays and different things like that but … this was the middle of winter that we went [to Ardentinny] and obviously our week should have been spoiled by the bad weather but the way the instructors made it, it wasn't, it was fantastic. We got to go out, we were … following trails and things through the woods and all that through the snow, it was just sorta something different and I guess maybe that

probably has influenced me because my friends think I'm nuts when I come in and show them pictures of me up a Munro in 70mph winds and through the snow and the hail and it doesn't bother me it's just what you make of the situation and I think from that week that's what it was. It probably should have been spoiled because what we'd planned to do we couldn't do and it wasn't [spoiled] … the instructors were really good and changed it and gave us something else ... that was really good.

For others, like Kate, who had no prior experience of outdoor activities Ardentinny was the experience that first sparked an interest.

Kate: It's [Ardentinny] given me a love of the outdoors that I probably wouldn't have now if it hadn't been for that because my parents never took me to any, never did any of these outdoor type things with me … it's given me a love of the outdoors that I don't think I'll ever really lose. And I'm not a great [kayaker], don't get me wrong, I'm not out there every weekend but I like going kayaking with [a friend], we do a couple of trips a couple of times a year, take tents and the sea boats and off we go. Occasionally he'll persuade me on to a river and we'll do something on the river. You know I've tried various other bits and pieces, I can crew for somebody on a yacht or, and I'm not great and I've not got any great talents but I think it's just given me a love for the outdoors and I really appreciate that, I really appreciate it. And I wouldn't have had that if I hadn't been to Ardentinny.

Accounts such as these were very common, as evidenced below.

MQ1.16 I continued to climb for another 20 years after leaving school. I still ski and kayak. It led me onto other outdoor activities such as caving and mountain biking.

MQ1.75 I can honestly say it opened my eyes to the outdoors and hill walking in particular, which is something I have done ever since.

MQ11.33 I am presently an active kayaker (having returned to the sport 4 years ago after a 10 year gap) and also am an active rock/ice climber, having been so since the early 1980s. I have a daily exercise habit. I have no doubt that the introduction to a specific activity (kayaking) at Ardentinny played a significant role in allowing me to pursue this activity in later life as the technical skills I

gained were not readily forgotten. On a wider perspective, I feel that the experiences and encouragement I had at Ardentinny introduced me to a new way of thinking about outdoor activities and exercise generally, and have played a significant role in my choice to continue existing and develop new interests and perhaps most importantly, a lifelong exercise habit.

FQ10.42 It has influenced my free time. I now live just round the corner from Ardentinny and regularly go hillwalking at weekends.

FQ10.54 I like to spend time in the environment, love passing that knowledge onto my kids and still love to share that experience with other people. I love to walk, climb, sail, kayak, and watch wildlife.

FQ10.60 I do a lot of hillwalking and when I started out I definitely had more confidence due to trying it out at Ardentinny.

Trevor's head teacher observed the interest and enthusiasm that a number of the boys who went to Ardentinny had as a result of their orienteering course. Together, the head teacher and the boys started an informal orienteering club. For Trevor this also led to further experiences in the Scouts which he felt able to involve himself with as a result of the skills he had already developed.

Trevor: We done a kind of school [orienteering] thing later on and it kinda came up from talking to the guys and the head teacher at our school … he was talking to us about it and got us into a couple of things at senior school, and then latterly in the Scouts because I'd learned a lot of the skills you know I put myself forward for orienteering stuff later on.

It is also noteworthy that people did not necessarily develop an interest or hobby immediately following Ardentinny. For a number of participants their interest resulted from a change in their life that presented an opportunity, which, because of their previous experience at Ardentinny they were more inclined or felt more able to pursue.

Q10.40 I now do hillwalking - this is mainly influenced by my partner but I was willing to embrace it due to my experience at Ardentinny

Q10.45 It did influence me in my first job when I left school. I started work in a bank and thereafter joined their hillwalking club which took me to all sorts of

places in Scotland which I probably would not have thought of visiting. I spend a lot of free time outdoors, either going to Arran to discover the island or just walking along beaches.

Thus, as stated in Chapter 5, Section 3.2, the fact that immediate changes in behaviour or social practices are not observed following an outdoor education programme does not mean that a change in an individual's ability and disposition to benefit from the experience has not occurred and will not be useful in the future. As Brookes (2003a, 2003b) argues, context is a vital consideration. However, to develop Brookes' (2003b) argument it is not only in, "maintaining, or at least periodically returning to, the changed circumstances" (p. 130) that individuals are able to benefit from an outdoor education experience. There are many other contexts in individuals' lives where opportunities may arise to employ the benefits of their original experience. Gassner and Russell (2008) and Roberts (2002) contend that the delayed effects of outdoor education programmes may be due to participants requiring a long period of time to come to a realisation of the significance of their experience. This may be true but it also seems to be the case that students may be fully aware of the significance of what they have experienced but without a change to the structure of their everyday social world they are unable to explore that experience further.

4.2 Job/career

4.2.1 Choice of job/career

Ardentinny was claimed by a number of participants as being influential in their choice of job, either presently or in the past.

> MQ10.1 I was keen on Scouting before Ardentinny, and continued with that. I worked and continue to work in sail training since then, and worked in development training with Fairbridge. It was a small [influence] part of a trend towards working in training in the outdoors.
>
> FQ10.4 I got a temporary job as a Countryside Ranger with Strathclyde Regional Council.
>
> MQ10.30 Job - as I'm now a Biology teacher it must have had a pretty big influence on me!

MQ10.33 I used to spend part of my working life in the outdoors, and I have no doubt that my visits to Ardentinny, the experiences I had there and the staff, as models of successful outdoor instructors influenced this choice.

FQ10.108 In 1977 I moved to Ardentinny and stayed there for 4 years. I still live in Cowal, 5 miles from Ardentinny, and for the past 4 years have worked as an administrator in an outdoor centre run by a local authority.

FQ4.54 It shaped what I wanted to do and did with my life. I ended up becoming an outdoor instructor and walking up and down corridors checking on sleeping children just as it had happened to me. It also sparked my interest in the environment and I then went on to become a Countryside Ranger and now run my own consultancy carrying out environmental surveys specialising in Bats! I really love my job and also went back to college/university to gain a degree, not something my school ever encouraged me to do as they focussed on achievers and not on students like myself.

4.2.2 Approach to job/career

For a number of other participants it was not the choice of job or career that the experience at Ardentinny influenced but the individual's approach to the job. Two teachers and an addiction rehabilitation worker referred to their efforts to try and integrate outdoor education experiences into their workplace.

Kate: The impact that it had on me was so positive that I want to go out my way now to make sure that children get that opportunity. So for example I've got a group that I run … and it's called 'Healthy Lifestyles' and I run this class twice a week, kids volunteer, it's the first year it's run, I've only had four boys but I said to the boys at the start, "We're going to do this, we're going to do an environment project, we're going to do a health project, health project for you and your fitness, we're going to do this and we're going to get a residential experience." And we applied to Awards For All and got the money, nearly a thousand pounds, actually believe it or not for four kids and two staff and we went to Benmore Centre and we did a weekend there - Friday night to Sunday night - and it was fantastic, you know really good, just absolutely brilliant. A lot of team building, a lot of challenging things for these young boys you

know, and a lot of them hadn't had an experience like that before. So it's motivated me to look for opportunities to put kids that are in my care into that opportunity.

FQ10.62 I am a primary teacher and love getting children excited about new activities [i.e. outdoor activities]. The transfer of passion is key to learning.

FQ10.11 I have incorporated what I have learned in trying to encourage others to also think beyond their own immediate environment in the course of past work. As manager of a an alcohol/drug rehab I took service users and their children to Dunoon for a long weekend and took them to areas I remember visiting and experiencing walks, gardens etc.

For others, the influence of Ardentinny to the way they approached their job was related to the interpersonal skills they feel they developed at Ardentinny and which now help them in their work environment.

FQ10.6 I work as a manager and interaction with my staff is very important. Back in the days of Ardentinny I was quiet and felt good with the sense of belonging within the team [at Ardentinny]. Now I watch out for the quiet folk to ensure they get the most out of being in a team.

MQ10.73 I'm now a manager and some of my people skills come from my experiences with the group under quite difficult circumstances on icy rivers, but all under good safe controlled fun.

4.3 Appreciation of outdoor environment

In referring to fieldwork and educational visits Rickinson et al. (2004, p. 24) state that it is 'naïve to think that short excursions to 'the environment' will become significant life experiences.' References are made to one-day and five-day courses but no clear definition of what is meant by a short excursion is provided. For many participants at Ardentinny – who were engaging in both fieldwork courses and outdoor activity courses – their five-day experience was influential in changing the way they perceived the outdoor environment. Participants reported becoming aware of the beauty of the outdoor environment, feeling more comfortable in the outdoors,

finding an enjoyment in the outdoors, and becoming more aware of nature and wildlife.

> FQ10.11 [Ardentinny influenced] my interest in wildlife, what I try to take in on a daily basis and enjoy – flowers, birds etc.

> MQ10.28 I think it influences my love of the outdoors, which I continue to have interest in. My job also contains a one-day outdoor teambuilding day with pupils, which takes me back to skills learned at Ardentinny

> FQ10.54 My life! I like to spend time in the environment, love passing that knowledge onto my kids and still love to share that experience with other people. I love to walk, climb, sail, kayak and watch wildlife. All of which are a little restricted at the moment as my kids are 4 and 2! However, I hope I pass onto them my love and respect for the environment. I just remembered that I also joined the school hillwalking club after I went to Ardentinny.

> FQ10.56 What I do in my free time. Firstly it taught me that there were beautiful places in Scotland, I always went abroad on holidays. I still enjoy hiking today.

> MQ10.70 It [Ardentinny] has probably gone a long way to giving me the depth of enjoyment I feel when I manage to get into the outdoors and away from the daily routine.

> MQ10.75 Since Ardentinny, I have always had an interest in the outdoors and hill walking, in particular. Even now I spend as much time as possible outdoors. I am interested in nature generally. Most of that was influenced by what I absorbed at Ardentinny.

> MQ10.96 My interest in nature. I stop and I look more now, and, with work, I do a lot of nature type writing when possible.

> FQ10.111 My love of the outdoors was enhanced and as a very shy child I was encouraged to come out my shell.

Although participants did not refer to whether their changed relationship with the outdoors was related in any way to environmental behaviours associated with sustainability there was a strong theme that Ardentinny had an effect on participants' affective relationship with the outdoor environment.

4.4 Family experiences

In the same way that what might be termed the secondary impacts of participants' experiences could be observed in the way that participants' reported that Ardentinny affected the ways that they approached their job (Section 4.2.2 above) participants also referred to the impact that their experience at Ardentinny had on their family life. The impact ranged from encouraging their children to take the opportunity for experiences similar to Ardentinny when they arose at school, to influencing the choice of family holiday, to impacting upon recreational experiences as a family unit. The aim of educating for leisure therefore seems to be effective beyond its immediate participants as the influences are felt in subsequent family generations.

> MQ10.18 It was my first time away from home and I recall my experiences when encouraging my own daughter on her school excursions.
>
> FQ10.34 I try and encourage my children to take part in any chances they get to get outdoors ... I thoroughly enjoyed it and think they will too.
>
> FQ10.46 Two of my own children have now been to outdoor centres with their school, one has actually been to Ardentinny, I think I would probably have been more apprehensive about them going if I hadn't done something similar myself.
>
> FQ10.58 Since Ardentinny I developed a love of the outdoors and trying sports I might never have considered. This has continued into adult life and the way I now encourage my children to do orienteering, sailing, kayaking and all sports.
>
> FQ10.20 It has made me try to make my kids as active as possible. I take them walking when possible.
>
> FQ10.23 I have returned to Ardentinny with my husband and children, enthusiastically boring them with the details of the great time I had there, wanting them to experience some of its beauty and tranquillity.
>
> FQ10.3 It still influences the types of holidays I want for my own children and also what we do when we are on holiday.
>
> FQ10.66 I enjoy spending time outdoors with my family in the countryside.
>
> FQ10.68 With regards to my children, I want them to experience as much outdoor activities as possible and we plan to take them hillwalking this year for the first time.

In a study on the impact of outdoor recreation on family enrichment Freeman and Zabriskie (2002) reported important relational benefits with regards to strengthening the family unit. Participants in this study did not make any comments as to the effects of their family experiences.

4.5 Confidence

One of the main findings of an evaluation of a large-scale residential outdoor education initiative involving secondary schools in London states that teachers and parents reported increased self-confidence amongst students (Amos & Reiss, 2009). Reports of increased self-confidence as a result of outdoor education programmes are common in research literature (e.g. Dismore & Bailey, 2005; Neill & Richards, 1998; Sibthorp, Paisley, Furman, & Gookin, 2008).

Participants referred to Ardentinny as having increased their social confidence.

> FQ10.104 Ardentinny gave me the opportunity to meet other people. It gave me skills which I have developed since then enabling me to gain excellent communication and people skills. It was the first step in my life to building my confidence.

> MQ10.110 I think it gave me confidence and lots of it, I was able to be more open with people and more forward.

> FQ10.111 My love of the outdoors was enhanced and as a very shy child I was encouraged to come out my shell.

> FQ10.2 Because it was so important for me in helping me to open up as a person I am aware that it could do the same for my own children and that this would be very good for our family life. I think it's all about the countryside giving us space to open up. I haven't really thought about this 'til you asked so I think it is a subconscious influence.

In line with Kennedy's (1992) findings that an expedition experience imbued participants with an eagerness to try new things Ardentinny participants also reported that they felt more confident and willing to take on challenges as a result of their experience.

FQ10.68 It gave me confidence to try new things, this definitely helps when looking for jobs, trying out new hobbies and I now never judge a book by its cover. Before Ardentinny, I didn't speak to some people because of the way they dressed or who they hung about with. Now I take time to find out what someone is like before making a judgement.

FQ11.4 I know that my experiences there helped me form a more mature, 'can-do' sort of attitude.

FQ11.50 I didn't think I was any good at looking after myself before. My family is very protective. I think it made me want to leave home as soon as possible and get out there doing things for myself.

Lastly, one participant gave a slightly different perspective on the theme of confidence. He suggested that Ardentinny provided him with a strategy for coping with times when he is not feeling motivated or confident.

FQ11.81 I am thinking of sending my son on one of the summer camps offered there now as I enjoyed the experience so much. I also purchased a caravan in the nearby area and visit the area nearly every weekend in the summer months to enjoy the area and the good trails which offer excellent family walks. It also helps keep me positive and motivated as when I feel low I go for a long walk to lift my spirits and I feel this all stems from the very positive motivating experience I had there as they were excellent at promoting self-confidence and belief.

5 Continued negative influence

As recounted in Chapter 6, Section 6, Niamh attended Ardentinny on two occasions and unfortunately both occasions were very negative experiences for her. Niamh stated that her memories of Ardentinny still caused her upset when she thought about them almost 30 years later. Niamh considered herself to be quite "an outdoorsy type tomboy" when she was growing up. Her family spent a lot of time camping and hillwalking together and she was also very active in the Guides. She feels that her canoeing experience at Ardentinny vastly diminished her enjoyment of outdoor activities – particularly regarding watersports – to the extent that she would not

classify herself as an outdoors person now. Niamh stated that she does still enjoy forms of recreation in the outdoors, such as walking and skiing, although when learning to ski as an adult she did not want to be taught by an instructor (her husband taught her instead) and feels that this apprehension was related to her interaction with the canoeing instructor at Ardentinny who pushed her beyond the limits she was comfortable with. She stated that she would not want to take part in any sort of organised outdoor activity involving an instructor.

With regards to the interaction with the instructor who embarrassed her in front of her peers and read out the letter her father had written asking that Niamh not be sent to carry out fieldwork on her own, Niamh was uncertain as to the extent of the influence of that experience. She did not want to overplay its significance but felt that a lack of confidence in certain group situations may be partly attributable to that negative social interaction at Ardentinny. When talking about the reasons why she still enjoyed recreation in the outdoors Niamh referred to the beauty of nature and a feeling of physical and mental restoration that resulted from contact with the natural world. Physical exercise, the surge of adrenaline when skiing, and a sense of achievement were also referred to. Niamh made it clear that she was determined to encourage and support her sons' and husband's enjoyment of outdoor activities and felt that she had been successful in not letting her own experience impact upon her family. Where watersports were concerned, however, she admitted a greater degree of anxiety.

Fortunately, Niamh's experiences at Ardentinny had not erased the sense of connection and enjoyment that she gained from being active in the outdoors before Ardentinny. They had, however, significantly affected her confidence regarding watersports or even being in a boat as big as a ferry, her willingness to put herself in the position of a student with an outdoor instructor, and the extent to which she identified herself as 'an outdoors person'.

6 Summary

This chapter is concerned with the second main aim of this present study – investigating whether Ardentinny had any long-term influence on participants' lives and, if so, what those influences are. Ten participants stated that Ardentinny had no influence, 21 stated that Ardentinny had a temporary influence, and 78 stated that Ardentinny continued to have an influence on their lives. The 99 participants in the latter two categories all reported the influence of Ardentinny as positive. One further participant reported that Ardentinny continued to have a negative influence on her life.

A number of reasons were given by participants who stated that Ardentinny had no influence on their lives after the event, ranging from a lack of further opportunities to participate in outdoor activities, to having little memory of the experience, to not having particularly enjoyed the experience. Those participants who stated that Ardentinny had a temporary influence on their lives referred to its impact on their physical activity behaviours, its effect on their self-confidence, and how the experience had broadened their conception of what might be possible for them in life. The passage of time and other competing influences led these participants to consider that Ardentinny's influence was no longer relevant in their lives. Seventy-eight participants, equivalent to over 70% of the questionnaire respondents, felt that their experiences at Ardentinny still had some form of influence on their lives. Participants considered that their experience continued to influence them personally – through a continued enjoyment of a physical activity or through their choice of job. Participants also referred to their experience at Ardentinny indirectly affecting others as well, such as in their approach to their job or in the experiences they created for their families.

From the accounts of the majority of the participants in the present study it is clear that Ardentinny had a strong positive influence on their lives. The experience of the social field at Ardentinny which contrasted with students' everyday home and school life engendered a range of meanings and values associated with the experience (discussed in Chapters 6, 7, and 8). It would appear that these meanings and values,

for the majority of students in this present study, impacted upon their built-up stock of values, dispositions, and unconscious ways of being – their habitus. An example of this is provided by one of the instructors, Barry.

> Barry: For instance Port Glasgow, across the way there, is a very deprived area, and some of the kids who came across came from very deprived backgrounds … it was amazing because we knew that when these particular client groups came, the adults, us, were the enemy. And it took two or three days for us to break down those barriers but we usually did manage to get them onside. You know, just by the way they were treated, because we obviously always treated them with respect, and we were interested in how they felt and what they had to say and stuff and it normally took 2 or 3 days before they could relax and include you [staff] in their particular circle as, you know, as a team, a group.

For many students Ardentinny provided an opportunity such as this, though not always so extreme, to adjust their perception of adults and authority figures. Other participants referred to Ardentinny having "opened my eyes to the outdoors" (MQ1.75) or "It just opened my horizons a wee bit to life other than a housing estate" (MQ7.22). Although opportunities for the change in students' habitus to be expressed in behaviour or life choices was not always immediately available, the latter student referred to a gap of several years before he left home to go to college – something he feels he would not have done had it not been for his experience at Ardentinny – and others implied from their accounts that it was not until after leaving school and becoming more independent that they were able to become involved in an outdoor activity.

The different social field experienced at Ardentinny provided a contrast with students' everyday lives and a different range of appropriate social practices. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) refer to habitus as, "the site of the internalization of reality and the externalization of internality" (p. 205). For the majority of students in this present study the length of stay at Ardentinny, through the internalising of a 'reality' that contrasted with their everyday life, appears to have influenced the internality that they then externalised. This was manifest in a range of different ways

and subject to different time frames. The majority of participants suggested that they are still externalising elements of the reality that they internalised at Ardentinny anywhere between 12 and 35 years ago.

Chapter 10: Summary of findings, implications, and conclusions

1 Summary of findings

1.1 The nature of the Ardentinny experience

I have argued that outdoor education can be considered as a sub-field of the cultural field of education. Ardentinny, a residential outdoor education centre, represents one institution within that sub-field. Students attending Ardentinny entered a social setting that was, in terms of its values, expected behaviours, and implicit conventions, structurally different from students' everyday school and home lives. At Ardentinny the forms of social, cultural, and symbolic capital differed from school and home life. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of cultural field provides a framework for understanding the nature of the environment into which students entered at Ardentinny and, therefore, insight into the nature of their experience. In addition, this framework emphasises the socially constructed nature of an outdoor education experience. Students' experiences at Ardentinny were not a collection of value-neutral, culturally neutral incidents which took place in a context-free environment that is inherently more suited to powerful learning experiences (Brookes, 2002; Wattchow, 2001; Zink & Burrows, 2008). Ardentinny was purposefully constructed, managed, and operated from the earliest design stage to its closure as an outdoor education centre run by the local authority in 1996. Outdoor education practices are strongly imbued with narratives and values that shape the way that experiences are interpreted and understood. This highlights the crucial importance of those who effectively create and manage the sub-field of outdoor education. The social structures that they establish through implicit values and explicit behaviours will fundamentally impact upon the experience of their students.

As I stated in Chapter 4, culture can be destructive, communities can damage their members, and activities can be meaningless. Simply placing students in an outdoor residential environment is not a guarantee of authentic, meaningful learning. The evidence of this present study suggests that Ardentinny provided structured learning experiences in outdoor activities and field work courses underpinned by a carefully

thought out and structured residential experience. One students' comments illustrate the way in which the Principal led by example in demonstrating the principles of compassion and learning on which he wished the centre to operate.

> FQ2.8 [The principal] mixed with the pupils and often spoke to us any time he passed us in the Centre, to check how everything was going. Just looking at him, you knew how much he cared about our time there, he wanted pupils to have a meaningful experience and learn about the countryside and the hills, the loch and all the various wildlife.

Students at Ardentinny experienced a sub-field of education with distinctly different values, expectations, and relations of power in comparison to their normal school and home environment. However, in contradiction to common claims regarding the essential elements of learning experiences in outdoor education literature, references by participants to themes that could be associated with terms such as dissonance, disequilibrium, or anxiety (Nadler, 1993, p. 61; Walsh & Golins, 1976) were rare. Excitement was commonly mentioned with regard to particular activities and to being away from home with friends. In the vast majority of cases, however, the social structures of Ardentinny provided curricular and social experiences that students appear to have been eminently ready and capable of engaging in. These experiences allowed students to express personal and social developmental needs associated with the transition to adulthood (Collinson & Hoffman, 1998). Whilst accepting Dewey's (1938, p. 79) assertion that new experiences present problems or difficulties which in turn stimulate thinking and the exercise of the intelligence to overcome, I would also argue that there is a case for considering that where students desire certain meaningful educational experiences those experiences may importantly be described as creating consonance as well as dissonance. I would suggest that concentrating overly on dissonance and disequilibrium is a rather myopic view of learning experiences and likely to increase rather than reduce the chances of mis-educative experiences arising such as those that one respondent, Niamh, unfortunately, experienced.

267

1.2 Meanings and values associated with the Ardentinny experience

The predominant approach to teaching and learning at Ardentinny appears to have been of modelling (e.g. teachers and instructors sharing meal tables with students, a less formal approach to adult/student relationships) and a combination of didactic and experiential teaching styles. The nature of teaching and learning in the outdoors in a safe manner does not always lend itself to experiential approaches. Allowing students to take a purely experiential approach to solving the problem of how to scale a 20-metre high rock face is likely to be an experience that, to paraphrase Dewey (1938, p. 38), leads to a literal dead place rather than carries students over future metaphorical dead places. Where appropriate, however, students were given the opportunity to engage in learning experiences characterised by freedom and exploration which they greatly appreciated and which aroused their curiosity, strengthened their initiative, and created a level of enthusiasm and awareness of possibilities that led to further experiences (Dewey, 1938, p. 38).

There is a large body of literature in outdoor education which emphasises the importance of 'processing' outdoor experiences (Bacon, 1987; Gass, 1990, 1993; Greenaway, 1993; Priest and Gass, 1997). Luckner and Nadler (1997) refer to processing as the "sorting and ordering of information" (p. xvi) which allows individuals to make sense of their experience and draw learning from it. This sorting and ordering is supposed to be facilitated by an instructor who assists participants in coming to conclusions about and understanding the implications of their experience. Understanding the processes by which human beings learn and create meaning from experience is a complex and ongoing area of inquiry. MacLeod (1996) and Webb (2003) raise important questions about some of the assumptions that have underpinned theories of experiential learning in outdoor education which have emphasised the importance of a formal and discrete period of reflection. Recent empirical research (Beames, 2004a; Rea, 2006) has emphasised the ability of participants to process their own experiences given time and the opportunity for informal dialogue with others.

Formal, structured practices of processing experiences were not part of the programme at Ardentinny and from conversations with Mike (the first depute principal) it was clear that he regarded such an approach with great suspicion. His position was that processing was mostly a disguised form of students being told what they should have learned and that if good teaching and learning was occurring students would be well aware of what they had learned. Instructors were relatively autonomous, however, and one instructor in particular, Sarah, did refer to taking the time to discuss with students what they had done and to creating a safe forum for students to talk about how they felt about each other. It would seem that a range of approaches were taken by Ardentinny staff and any reviewing or processing that did take place was of an informal, discursive nature. Given the claims that participants make about the learning that they derived from their experience at Ardentinny – personal, social, academic, and physical – it would appear that students were capable of understanding the significance of their experience without formal facilitation.

Ardentinny provided a context in which students were able to experience the satisfaction of overcoming challenges, of knowing the satisfaction that can be enjoyed from an event that was not so pleasurable at the time, and of learning new skills. The separation from their everyday life, in combination with the expectations of responsibility, provided students with an opportunity to explore aspects of adulthood and questions of identity. Students valued the experience of communal living which allowed them to get to know their friends at a deeper level and particularly to develop relationships with peers whom they had not previously known. The process of working and living with people who were not previously well known to students was considered an important learning experience which developed confidence and also challenged students' preconceptions of others – lessons which were carried into adult life. The new relationships that students developed with accompanying teachers and the relationships developed with Ardentinny staff are redolent with Wikeley et al.'s (2007) research into out-of-school educational relationships. Students viewed Ardentinny staff, for the most part, as role-models and closer to being peers than school teachers. School teachers accompanying the students began to be perceived differently with students professing to see them as

'more human' and that teachers could even be fun – findings which are congruent with other recent UK research (Amos & Reiss, 2009; Cramp, 2008). The skills and knowledge that students developed through the field work and activity courses were considered to be highly enjoyable. These learning experiences were valued for their challenging, exciting, and experiential nature. The time afforded by a week's concentrated study meant that students were able to reach a level of competence by the end of the week from which they gained a great deal of satisfaction. This often led to a continued interest or recreational pursuit and, in some cases, was influential in career choices.

The meanings and values that participants associate with their Ardentinny experience are framed within the structures of the cultural field that Ardentinny embodied. New learning content – whether outdoor activities or field work – provided students with the opportunity to discover new abilities and skills but it was not just the novelty of the content that was important. The week-long long duration of the courses allowed for the importance of effort in learning to be more clearly visible and authentically rewarded by instructors and peers. The outdoor environment was accorded high symbolic capital as a place where formal learning could happen. This stands in contrast to school where the vast majority of learning takes place indoors. Social capital between students and between students and teachers developed as a result of community living and less formal relations. The expectation that students display high levels of responsibility for themselves and for each other and the more equal relationships between students and adults allowed participants to express the symbolic capital of behaviours associated with adulthood and independence which adolescents highly value (Collinson & Hoffman, 1998).

Rickinson et al. (2004, p. 24) warn against assuming that short outdoor excursions will become significant life experiences. Significant life experiences is an area of research associated with environmental education (Chawla, 1998a, 1998b; Payne, 1999; Tanner, 1980, 1998). This area of research developed from investigating whether or not there were any significant experiences to which people who were committed to environmental education could attribute their interest and activism. The

present study effectively turns that question on its head and considers whether Ardentinny was a significant life experience and if so, what the effects were. Although Ardentinny was only five days in duration it is clear that for the majority of the participants in this study their experience was indeed a significant life experience. The influence of the meanings and values that participants associate with Ardentinny in their subsequent lives is discussed below.

1.3 Life-course influences attributed to the Ardentinny experience

The majority of participants in this study (72%) stated that their experiences at Ardentinny continued to affect their lives. These effects were manifested in a variety of different ways. Many participants referred to Ardentinny as being instrumental in encouraging their interest in recreational activities such as hillwalking or kayaking. Others attributed an enjoyment of gentler recreation in the outdoors and increasing their awareness of the natural world. Ardentinny influenced some participants' choice of job or career whilst others felt that their experience at Ardentinny had given them the desire to integrate outdoor educational experiences into their job. Other participants felt that the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills developed at Ardentinny were useful in the workplace. The influence of Ardentinny was also expressed by participants through the hopes that they had for their own children to have similar opportunities, and also in family recreational practices.

Although an individual's habitus is robust it is particularly vulnerable to change in certain instances, and as Jenkins (2002, p. 76) points out it is inculcated at least as much by experience as by teaching. Ardentinny, although a short period of time in an individual's life, was a concentrated period of recreational, academic, and personal and social learning through direct experience. In this sense, Ardentinny fulfilled the recommendations of Circular 804 (SED, 1971, para. 4) for learning experiences which naturally integrate these aspects of education. The change of field with its new values and structures provided the opportunity for students to develop a feel for a new "game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 61). The new game allowed students to experience a range of different behaviours and social practices, which although of short duration, were intensely and experientially lived through the body, the emotions, and

271

the mind. I acknowledge that the habitus is most strongly influenced by primary cultural socialisation experiences and that adaptations to instinctive values, social expectations, and behaviours are slow to take place and elaborate rather than fundamentally amend primary dispositions (Swartz, 1997, p. 107). I do not claim from the evidence of the present study that Ardentinny fundamentally amended participants' habitus but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Ardentinny, an experience that probably could not be described as primary socialisation but which did come at what is generally recognised as a pivotal stage in a young person's development, did influence the habitus of many of the participants in this study and that their life course was influenced as a result.

Bourdieu suggests that the adaptability of habitus varies according to social class. He proposes, for example, that French working-class habitus is more resistant to secondary socialisation than the middle-class habitus (Swartz, 1997, p. 107). This present study did not allow for investigation of this area. Aside from the difficulty of defining exactly what class is in the modern world it also seemed a highly problematic measure to apply. Bourdieu (1984) uses a combination of occupation, economic capital, cultural capital, and life-style as an assessment of class. Gathering and analysing such data was outwith the remit of this present study. Given the retrospective nature of this study an additional complication would also to have been to decide at what point the social status of the participants in the research be assessed. At the time of Ardentinny? Thirty years after the event? The issue of class or sub-cultures would be a potential area for future research. For example, one interviewed teacher who worked particularly with students with behavioural problems was clear about the benefits that he felt his students gained from Ardentinny. He was also equally clear about the fact that none of them would ever join a school outdoor activity club after returning from Ardentinny no matter how much they had enjoyed or gained from their experience. It was simply not something that was culturally acceptable for them. Thus, as Brookes (2003a, 2003b) argues, situation and context must be taken into account when attempting to understand social practices. Swartz (1997) refers to the "broad parameters and boundaries of what is possible or unlikely for a particular group in a stratified social world" (p.

103). For the students referred to above, joining an outdoor club associated with school was well beyond those boundaries.

The long-term retrospective nature of this present study is unique in the UK. A small number of retrospective studies into the long-term impact of outdoor adventure education experiences exist internationally (Daniel, 2003; Gassner & Russell, 2008; Sibthorp et al., 2008), however, their relevance to the context of outdoor education in UK secondary schools is limited. The findings of this present study show that the majority of participants consider that a one-week residential outdoor education experience continues to have an influence on their life in a variety of different spheres decades later. Stake (2003, p. 147) contends that a researcher should not be conservative in proclaiming new understandings of human behaviour when drawing from a single case with limited generalisability. However, the specificity of this study must also be clearly acknowledged. Ardentinny developed a very stable programme of activity and field work courses which were delivered almost exclusively to secondary school students. The courses focused on one activity or one field work subject only (weather permitting). Multi-activity courses were not part of the programme at Ardentinny. Ardentinny also had a very stable staff. One principal oversaw the operation of the Centre from the latter planning stages in 1972, before Ardentinny opened its doors to students, until the Centre ceased its operation under the auspices of the local authority in 1996. The depute principal's post was only held by two people, the latter of whom had worked previously as an instructor at Ardentinny, and many of the instructors worked at Ardentinny for ten or more years. In addition, the overwhelming majority of pupils attending Ardentinny came from a relatively short geographical distance away. The impact of this, in comparison to outdoor centres which service many of their schools from much further distances, is not known. Finally, the participants in this study are a specific group for two reasons. Firstly, the overwhelming majority of students volunteered to go to Ardentinny – only six research participants stated that the visit to Ardentinny was compulsory. Although the motivations were varied (Appendix G) it was nevertheless their choice. Secondly, although every effort was made to include the widest range of participants in this study as possible, those who responded are a self-selecting group. However,

the range of responses includes negative and ambivalent opinions about Ardentinny which demonstrates that findings are not limited to one section of the population attending Ardentinny.

2 Implications

2.1 Implications for outdoor education practice

Recent years in the UK have seen a growth in interest from government and related agencies regarding outdoor learning and its potential for contributing to the mainstream education system (Department for Education and Skills, 2006; LTS, 2007; Ofsted, 2004). As stated in Chapter 4, the *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* (Department for Education and Skills, 2006, p. 1) states that learning experiences outside the classroom are often deeply meaningful and memorable and that their effects on behaviour, lifestyle, and work continue into adulthood. That assertion is given credence by the findings of this study. A consultation document that preceded publication of the manifesto above states that residential experiences should form part of students' outdoor learning experiences and recommends that every pupil should have access to at least one residential experience (Department for Education and Skills, 2005, pp. 10-11). Residential outdoor education is similarly recommended as one element of a broad programme of outdoor learning in *Taking learning outdoors. Partnerships for excellence* (LTS, 2007).

The findings of the present study suggest that a residential outdoor education experience can indeed be a very significant element of a young person's school career and can have benefits that continue long into adult life. I would also emphasise that the Ardentinny experience was defined by its particular cultural structure. As stated in Chapter 8, a residential experience such as Ardentinny needs to be considered holistically and as a qualitatively different outdoor education experience in comparison to, for example, an outdoor learning experience in a park, in a garden, or on a farm (LTS, 2007, p. 4). The various forms of outdoor learning need to be considered for the specific benefits that each can offer.

The students who attended Ardentinny were primarily from the S3 year group (14-15 years of age). This age was chosen partly because it avoided any timetabling difficulties with examinations and partly because it was considered an important age in a young person's development. From the evidence of the participants in this study it is clear that the Ardentinny experience provided valued opportunities to explore and express aspects of adulthood. Halls (1997) describes how the incidence of secondary school age groups visiting outdoor education centres in Strathclyde diminished during the late-1980s and early-1990s. This is a pattern that is prevalent across the UK. The increasing external management of classroom teachers and curriculum pressures has seen the number of secondary school students attending residential outdoor education programmes significantly fall. Whilst there are undoubtedly benefits to primary school students of a residential experience, the particular value that participants in this study attached to their experience at Ardentinny, with regards to assisting them in their transition to adulthood, suggests that efforts should be made to ensure that more students of secondary school age are given the opportunity of a residential outdoor education experience.

In a similar vein, the increased prevalence of shorter duration or multi-activity outdoor education experiences should also be borne in mind in light of the satisfaction that participants in this study attributed to the gains they made in developing skills in outdoor and field work activities. It is questionable whether the tendency towards short-duration taster sessions and on-site activities such as ropes courses provide the same level of satisfaction or long-term personal development (Rubens, 1997) as a single week-long activity such as participants experienced at Ardentinny. Delivering longer duration courses requires more highly experienced and qualified staff in order to be able to develop students' skills to higher levels and thus requires long-term funding commitments to staff training and continuing professional development. Short-term, seasonal, poorly remunerated contracts are not conducive to developing highly proficient outdoor educators.

2.2 Implications for outdoor education research

Chawla (1998b, p. 385) suggests that retrospective research can be a useful preliminary to longitudinal research as it can highlight areas that a longitudinal study can concentrate on. One of the major difficulties with carrying out this present study was finding participants. Despite having put every effort into various ways of locating people who went to Ardentinny, I cannot say for certain how representative the participants in this study are of the entire population of students (now adults) that attended Ardentinny. Dillman (2009) refers to this issue as non-response errors. A longitudinal study which followed research participants over a number of years would allow for a more representative picture of a whole population.

A second area for further research would be to maintain contact with some of the research participants from this present study. Although one of the themes relating to the continued influence of Ardentinny was physical activity I did not attempt to collect fine data on the frequency or duration of the forms of physical activity referred to. Asking participants to maintain a journal which logs their outdoor recreational habits and which we could discuss or they could send to me would be a useful means of assessing more accurately the influence of outdoor activities on their lives. Cross-referencing against sex and age could also be used to identify demographic trends.

The limited quantity of UK-specific research relating to outdoor education within mainstream education provides almost endless opportunities for research. Each of the limitations of this study noted above in Section 1.3 could be addressed. Outdoor education centres which run multi-activity programmes, which are located at a long distance from the schools they serve, or which deliver programmes to students who have not all volunteered to attend could all be usefully researched. Ideally, long-term or retrospective research in these areas would be carried out as there is little known about the long-term impacts of outdoor education programmes (Burton, 1981; Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 56).

As stated earlier, consideration of the socio-demographic or class-based influences on individuals' experiences at outdoor education centres and the subsequent effect or lack of effect could also be a useful area of investigation. There were a few instances in this research where the influence of an individual's social culture or sub-culture may have been influencing his or her behaviours with regard to the influence that Ardentinny had had on them.

3 Concluding comments

This research study developed from an initial intention to investigate the nature of participants' experiences at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre and whether or not the experience had any effect on participants' later lives. From a starting point of thinking solely about the meanings and values that participants attached to their experience I was encouraged by my supervisors to think more widely about the Ardentinny experience as a whole. In order to do so it was suggested that I consider including other Ardentinny stakeholders in the research. As a result, in addition to the pupil participants, the contributions of Ardentinny management and instructional staff, local authority education officers, head teachers, and school teachers became an integral part of the final research design. From a personal point of view interviewing this wide range of people who hold such a diverse array of skills and depth of experience was an extremely rich and rewarding experience. From a researcher's point of view it is my opinion that the contributions of these additional stakeholders are an invaluable element of this thesis and fully vindicate claims that thick description (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1989, p. 101; Gibbs, 2007) is a powerful tool in facilitating both the researcher's and the readers' understanding of the area of inquiry.

There are many other examples that attest to the learning that I have experienced in carrying out this research study. The practical experience of carrying out such an in-depth research study has led to a much more nuanced understanding of research methods. For example, my original expectation was that face-to-face interviews would undoubtedly be most conducive to encouraging relaxed conversations and generating rich data. In the event, some of the richest and most detailed data was

277

generated through the questionnaire responses, telephone interviews were often very relaxed and amicable experiences, and email conversations proved to be a very appropriate medium for discussing sensitive issues. As a result of learning experiences such as these and others, I feel much better equipped to critique accepted research practices and consider the value of experimenting with different methods in order to find the most suitable approach for any given context.

I have also developed skills and experience in areas that I never imagined would be part of the research process. For example, to attract the interest and, hopefully, the participation of people who went to Ardentinny as pupils I found myself drawn into areas such as website design, advertising, and marketing to name but a few. In addition, I learned about the ebb and flow of a research project - sometimes exciting and inspiring, sometimes monotonous and tedious. My personal reactions towards different aspects of the research have taught me much about myself and my working preferences. In talking about the process of writing Kurt Vonnegut said in a speech at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, October, 1992, "[Writing] is physically unpleasant. Your body doesn't want to sit still that long. Most people don't want to be alone that much." I have strongly empathised with Vonnegut's statement during the period of working on this research study and the countless hours spent indoors, working alone at a computer in pursuit of developing understanding of outdoor education is an incongruity that has been a constant companion. However, the overall experience, although challenging, has certainly been developmental.

The findings of this research inquiry suggest that a residential outdoor experience can be a very powerful learning experience in areas relating to personal achievement, adulthood and independence, relationships with the natural environment, and working and living as a member of a group. Bourdieu's (1977, 1990b) theory of social practice provides a framework for considering participants' expressions of the nature of their experiences at Ardentinny and the impact those experiences did or did not have on their lives in relation to the wider context of everyday social practice. From this perspective, participants' experiences at Ardentinny differed from their previous life experiences in such a way as to allow for the opportunity to develop

278

new understandings of self and the social world. These new understandings were expressed in different ways and, very importantly, at different times over participants' subsequent life course. The majority of the participants in this study (72%) felt that the influence of the learning experience at Ardentinny continued to affect their lives many years later. The effects were considered to be evident in a variety of aspects of life ranging from personal choices regarding physical activity and the use of leisure time, to family choices regarding the use of leisure time, an appreciation of the outdoor environment, self-confidence, and employment choices.

The findings of this research are of educational significance as they relate to the continued provision of outdoor education experiences for many thousands of UK students today. Developing understanding of the nature of outdoor education experiences is vital in order to be able to assess the role and value of these experiences in the education system. This study of participants' experiences at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre contributes to that endeavour.

Appendix A – Newspaper article

Bid to revive exercise in the great outdoors

by Eric Baxter

EFFORTS are being made to encourage more outdoor education for Inverclyde youngsters - and help tackle the area"s poor health record. Youngsters used to go to the Ardentinney Outdoor Education Centre on Loch Long, but that was stopped because of rising costs. Now a researcher hopes to revive interest in outdoor education, and he has the backing of the biggest teachers" union. John Telford, of the University of Edinburgh, said: 'Recent research showed Inverclyde has the second lowest life expectancy in the UK. 'But getting out into Inverclyde"s natural landscape would help overall health and well-being. Increasingly, research is showing that "green" activity is of benefit to mind and body.' Ardentinney was run by Strathclyde Regional Council and then, when it was disbanded, by a group of councils, including Inverclyde.

Mr Telford wants to hear from anyone in Inverclyde who went to Ardentinney between 1973 and 1996, and hopes to use the information to revive interest in the outdoors. He said: 'I"m carrying out research at the University of Edinburgh into people"s experiences at Ardentinney. 'I have worked in outdoor education for approximately 15 years with adults and young people in a variety of different settings and contexts. 'I retain a strong personal and professional interest in the outdoors and am particularly interested in the why, or why not, people develop and maintain a connection with the outdoors.'

EIS Inverclyde secretary Tom Tracey said: 'Outdoor education is vitally important for youngsters. Only five minutes from Inverclyde"s urban areas you can find yourself in the middle of the country. We would certainly support using Ardentinney, but even if that"s not possible, we would still like to see more outdoor education.' Mr Telford added: 'Outdoor education is strongly encouraged in the new curriculum for excellence for all manner of learning objectives. 'This project is a unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of what long-term impact, outdoor education experiences have on lives.' A spokesperson for Inverclyde Council said: 'Outdoor education has a valuable role to play, and our pupils currently participate in organised trips, field studies and outdoor activities. As with all our education services, we are always looking at where we can build on success and are happy to listen to views on service areas.'

Mr Telford"s Ardentinney website is http://web.mac.com/jonnytel/iWeb/Ardentinney%20project/Welcome.html He can be contacted also by email at john.a.telford@education.ed.ac.uk and by phone on 0131 651 6353.

Appendix B – School newsletter advertisement

DID YOU GO TO ARDENTINNY OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE BETWEEN 1973 AND 1996?

COULD YOU SPARE 15 MINUTES TO FILL IN A QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT YOUR TIME THERE?

I'm carrying out a research project into what you remember about your experience at Ardentinny and whether you think it has influenced you in any way in your life.

Loved it? Loathed it? Can't remember a thing about it? It would all be helpful to me. I'm trying to find out whether outdoor education has any long-term impact and, if so, what that is.

Perhaps you didn't go yourself but you know someone who did. Please tell them about this project!

You can find the questionnaire and more information at:
http://web.mac.com/jonnytel/iWeb/Ardentinny%20project/Welcome.html

or by contacting John Telford at:
University of Edinburgh, Moray House School of Education,
St. Leonard's Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ
Tel. 0131 6516353
Mob. 0775 3966157
john.a.telford@education.ed.ac.uk

Any help you are able to give would be very useful and greatly appreciated.

Appendix C – Friends Reunited email

Dear (NAME),

My apologies for contacting you out of the blue in this way. My name is John Telford and I am trying to find people who went to Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre between the years 1973 to 1996 – while it was run by the local education authority. The reason for this is that I am carrying out research into the long-term impact of outdoor education in schools. I am doing the research as a PhD at the University of Edinburgh, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (see www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/about/ for more details). The Greenock Telegraph recently ran an article about the project (9th October 2007).

The research is very important as it will be the first in the UK and among the first internationally to investigate whether outdoor education has any long-term effects on people's lives. It will therefore provide excellent information on the value, or not, of outdoor education in schools. I have a website you might like to have a look at - http://web.mac.com/jonnytel/iWeb/Ardentinny%20project/Welcome.html – which contains a clip from an old promotional video of Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre (perhaps you saw this at your school before going to Ardentinny?), a few photographs of the centre, and a little more detail on what I am doing and why.

If you are able to spare 15 minutes there is also a short questionnaire on the 'How You Can Help' page of the website which asks a few very straightforward questions about what you remember of Ardentinny and whether you think your time there has had any impact on you in any way. Whether your memory of Ardentinny is negative, positive, or non-existent it would all be equally useful to me as I want to find the most accurate picture of what Ardentinny meant to the people who went there. I would be extremely grateful for any time you might be able to give to this. If you would prefer I can send you a paper copy of the questionnaire with a stamped & addressed envelope for returning. My contact details are at the bottom of this email.

If you wish to contact me with any questions or queries I would be more than happy to respond. Equally, if you would like any reassurance about what I'm doing the contact details of two senior members of university staff who are overseeing this work are as follows:

Professor Peter Higgins
0131 6509795
Pete.Higgins@ed.ac.uk

Dr. Pat McLaughlin
Tel. 0131 6516105
Pat.McLaughlin@ed.ac.uk

Thankyou for taking the time to read this email and many thanks in advance for any time you are able to give to the questionnaire.

Yours faithfully,

John

John Telford
Outdoor Education
School of Education
College of Humanities and Social Science,
University of Edinburgh
St. Leonards Land, Holyrood Road
Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ, Scotland

john.a.telford@education.ed.ac.uk
Tel: 0131 651 6353 (direct line)
0775 396 6157 (mob)

Appendix D – Ardentinny participant questionnaire

Ardentinny Experience Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for people who went to Ardentinny between the years 1973-1996 whilst it was run by the Local Education Authority.

Please use as much space to write your answers as you wish. If you are unable to answer a question for any reason, don't worry, just continue to the next question.

Please write your answers in the space provided or place a tick in the appropriate box. If you need more space please for any answers please continue on another sheet of paper.

The information that you give will be treated as absolutely confidential and will not be passed on to any third parties for any reason.

SECTION A – ABOUT YOUR TIME AT ARDENTINNY

1. **How many times did you go to Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre? Please tick the appropriate box.**

Once	Twice than	3 times	4 times	More than 4 times
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. **Please give the full name of the school(s) or organisation(s) you went to Ardentinny with.**

_____

3. **Can you remember when you went to Ardentinny? A rough guess would be helpful but don't worry if you can't remember at all – just continue to the next question.**

YEAR   _____
MONTH   _____

4. **Please tick the appropriate box(es) to show all the reasons why you chose to go to Ardentinny. Tick all the statements that apply.**

I didn't choose, it was compulsory at my school   ☐

I wanted to go because my friends were going   ☐

I wanted to try new activities   ☐

I was interested in the subject we studied there ☐

It was an opportunity I couldn't get anywhere else ☐

I thought being away from home would be fun ☐

I felt pressured to go by my friends ☐

I felt pressured to go by my teacher(s) ☐

I felt pressured to go by my family ☐

Other reasons (please write here)

_____

_____

_____

5. **Which activity or activities did you take part in at Ardentinny? Please tick all that apply.**

Mountaineering ☐   Sailing
☐

Canoeing ☐   History field studies
☐

Orienteering ☐   Biology field studies
☐

Art workshop ☐   Geography field studies
☐

Other (please write here) _____

If you need more space for questions 6 to 10 please continue on another sheet of paper.

6.   **Please write down anything you remember about taking part in this activity/ these activities. This may include what you did, where you did it, how you felt about it, etc.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7.   **Please write down anything you remember about any particular highlights or positive aspects of your stay at Ardentinny. E.g. the people, the place, the subject or activity, etc.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8.   **Please write anything you remember about any particular low points or negative aspects of your stay at Ardentinny. E.g. the people, the place, the subject or activity, etc.**

_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. **Do you think you learned anything while you were at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre?**

YES ☐ (please continue to question 10)

NO ☐ (please jump to question 11)

10. **Please write about what you think you learned while you were at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. **If there is anything else you remember about your time at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre that you haven't had the opportunity to mention already please write it here.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP SO FAR.
PLEASE CONTINUE TO SECTION B.

SECTION B – AFTER ARDENTINNY

This section is about whether you think anything from your time at Ardentinny might have influenced your life afterwards. This might be things such as your work, your interests, how you spend your free time, your attitude towards the outdoor environment, etc.

1. **Place a tick in the box of EITHER Sentence a), OR Sentence b), OR Sentence c), according to which one you agree with the most. Answer any questions that follow the sentence you have chosen. If you need more space please continue on another piece of paper.**

Sentence a)

☐　I don't think anything from Ardentinny influenced me or carried over into my life afterwards.

Please try and explain any thoughts you have on why this is true in the space below. E.g. did Ardentinny have no influence because it wasn't particularly special or memorable, because you didn't learn anything new, because you didn't get a chance to do anything like it again, because you didn't enjoy it? etc.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sentence b)

☐ I think my time at Ardentinny has influenced me in the past but it doesn't any more.

    o   Can you explain in **what part(s)** of your life it influenced you? E.g. your job, what you did in your free time, etc.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

    o   Please try and explain **why** you think it influenced you. E.g. perhaps it changed the way you thought about certain things, it opened up new opportunities, etc.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

o Please try and explain **why** you think it **no longer** influences you. E.g. you're just no longer interested, your circumstances have changed, health has changed, money situation has changed, etc.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Sentence c)

☐   I think my time at Ardentinny still has some influence in my life.

o   Can you explain in what **part(s)** of your life you think it influences you? E.g. your job, what you do in your free time, etc.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

o Please try and explain **why** you think it influences you (e.g. it changed the way you think about things, it opened up new opportunities, etc.)

_____
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. **Is there anything else at all you could tell me about your thoughts on Ardentinny over the years since you were there?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP IN THIS SECTION. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SECTION C.

SECTION C – YOUR LIFE NOW

These questions help me to build a picture of what the people who went to Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre are doing in their lives today.

This information will be treated as absolutely confidential. However, if you are uncomfortable with answering a particular question just leave it blank and continue to the next question.

a. **Please write your full name (first name and surname)**

_____

b. **If you had a different name when you went to Ardentinny please write it here (first name and surname)**

_____

c. **Sex (please tick)**

Male   Female

☐   ☐

d. **Age (please tick)**

21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
☐	☐	☐	☐

e. **Do you have any children who went to Ardentinny?**

NO ☐

YES ☐

f. **Please put a tick in as many of the boxes as apply to your current work situation and write any details in the space provided.**

i) Working full-time. ☐
What is this work?

_____

ii) Working part-time. ☐
What is this work?

_____

iii) Student (full-time). ☐
What are you studying?

_____

iv) Student (part-time). ☐
What are you studying?

_____

v) Retired. ☐
What did you do before retiring?

_____

vi) Seeking work. ☐
Are you seeking anything in particular?

_____

vii) Full-time household duties (parent, carer, etc). ☐
Please describe

_____

viii) Other ☐

Please describe

_____

THANK YOU FOR VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP IN THIS SECTION. PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE FINAL SECTION.

SECTION D

Thank you for the information you have kindly given above. Without your contribution there is no way of knowing what the experience at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre was like from the point of view of the people who went there and what role it played in their school life and their life after school.

I would be very interested in hearing your memories and thoughts about Ardentinny in more detail if at all possible. Might you be willing to do this? We could arrange a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview.

If you think you might be willing to do this please leave your contact details below and I will get in touch with you to see if we can arrange something. If not just leave it blank.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS:

_____

_____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

MOBILE TEL NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Do you know of anybody else who went to Ardentinny (either at the same time or at a different time to yourself) who might be willing for me to get in touch with them? You can leave their contact details below or, if you do not feel this is appropriate, you can pass my details (see foot of page) on to them.

Contact details of your friend(s)/acquaintance(s):

NAME: _____

Address:

_____

_____

Telephone number: _____

Mobile tel number: _____

Email address: _____

NAME: _____

Address:

_____

_____

Telephone number: _____

Mobile tel number: _____

Email address: _____

NAME: _____

Address:

_____

_____

Telephone number: _____

Mobile tel number: _____

Email address: _____

My contact details:

John Telford   Tel: 0131 651 6353
University of Edinburgh
Moray House School of Education   Mob: 0775 396 6157
St. Leonard's Land, Holyrood Road
Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ

Email: john.a.telford@education.ed.ac.uk
Website: http://web.mac.com/jonnytel

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

To return this questionnaire to me please send it to the address above.

Appendix E – Pupil interview schedule

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire and thanks also very much for agreeing to provide additional help in this research.

The purpose of this follow-up interview is to ask a few questions to explore a little more the relevance of the Ardentinny experience to you.

Before we start there are a few things I should make you aware of:

1. If there is anything that you would rather not answer then please feel free to say so.

2. This conversation is confidential.

3. Anonymity will be maintained in the final report – although there may be certain instances where some people might recognise the situation highlighted.

4. You are absolutely at liberty to decide to withdraw parts of what you say or all of what you say at any point. Once the thesis is printed however it won't be possible to retract anything that has been used.

About Ardentinny

Question 1

So you took part in _____ at Ardentinny, can you tell me why you chose that particular activity?

Prompts

Done it before?

Ideas about it being something could continue doing later?

Question 2

You said from your questionnaire that the things you remembered from Ardentinny were….

What is it about these things that make them so memorable?

Question 3

Can you tell me what you remember about the staff?

Prompts   One instructor for the week?

Other staff – instructional and support staff.

Was it important to you whether your instructor was male or female?

What kind of relationship would you say you had with your instructor? (positive/negative/role-model, etc)

Question 4

Can you tell me what you remember about the teachers that accompanied you on the trip?

Question 5

What was the atmosphere at Ardentinny like?

Prompts   Was it like school?

Different to school?

What effect(s) did this have? With peers, staff, etc.

Question 6

Can you remember how much free time you had?

Prompts   What did you do during this time?

Question 7

Can you describe what level of confidence you had in the activity by the end of the week?

Prompts   Do you remember how much responsibility you were given within activities?

Do you remember any time during activities when you weren't directly being supervised?

School questions

Question 8

Can you tell me what you think the school intended the purpose of Ardentinny to be?

Question 9

What was the process of application and selection in pupils going to Ardentinny?

Question 10

Do you remember how much it cost to go to Ardentinny?

Prompts   How much was the cost a factor in going or not going to Ardentinny?

Was it a difficult amount of money to find?

Post Ardentinny & Social context questions

Question 11

Do you remember whether your parents were supportive of you going to Ardentinny?

Prompts   What about your friends?

Teachers at school?

Any other people? Egs, youth group leader, other family members.

Friends?

Question 12

What sort of things did you do in your free time before going to Ardentinny?

Prompts   Did this change afterwards?

Did you feel that going to Ardentinny made it possible to continue with what you had experienced there?

Were there other encouraging factors?

What were the tangible opportunities? Eg. clubs in school, clubs out of school, parents or other relatives taking a lead, etc.

Question 13

Was there anything that Ardentinny inspired your interest in that you would have liked to have participated in after your return home but you were unable to do?

Prompts   Did pursuing your interest seem unachievable?

What were the barriers? Worries about risk? Being outside without adult? Money?

Feeling awkward because no one else interested in same stuff?

Question 14

In response to question about whether time at Ardentinny had any effect on you afterwards you said…. Can you explain that a little bit more?

Question 15

What do you do in your free time now?

Question 16

Is it possible that you didn't continue with outdoor stuff because it wasn't really something that you 'did', it was for other folks? Or maybe you didn't consider yourself an outdoorsy person?

Prompts   Why?

Would you do anything differently? Either during or after?

Question 17

Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you would like to add that would help me to understand the relevance of your experience at Ardentinny to your life.

Prompts   Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix F – Qualitative questionnaire questions

Please write down anything you remember about taking part in this activity/ these activities. This may include what you did, where you did it, how you felt about it, etc.

Please write down anything you remember about any particular highlights or positive aspects of your stay at Ardentinny. E.g. - the people, the place, the subject or activity, etc.

Please write anything you remember about any particular low points or negative aspects of your stay at Ardentinny. E.g. the people, the place, the subject or activity, etc.

Do you think you learned anything while you were at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre? [If response was YES] Please write about what you think you learned while you were at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre.

If there is anything else you remember about your time at Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre that you haven't had the opportunity to mention already please write it here.

I don't think anything from Ardentinny influenced me or carried over into my life afterwards.

Please try and explain any thoughts you have on why this is true in the space below. E.g. did Ardentinny have no influence because it wasn't particularly special or memorable, because you didn't learn anything

new, because you didn't get a chance to do anything like it again, because you didn't enjoy it? etc.

I think my time at Ardentinny has influenced me in the past but it doesn't any more.

Can you explain in **what part(s)** of your life it influenced you? E.g. your job, what you did in your free time, etc.

I think my time at Ardentinny has influenced me in the past but it doesn't any more.

Please try and explain **why** you think it influenced you. E.g. perhaps it changed the way you thought about certain things, it opened up new opportunities, etc.

I think my time at Ardentinny has influenced me in the past but it doesn't any more.

Please try and explain **why** you think it **no longer** influences you. E.g. you're just no longer interested, your circumstances have changed, health has changed, money situation has changed, etc.

I think my time at Ardentinny still has some influence in my life.

Can you explain in **what part(s)** of your life you think it influences you? E.g. your job, what you do in your free time, etc.

I think my time at Ardentinny still has some influence in my life.

Please try and explain **why** you think it influences you (e.g. it changed the way you think about things, it opened up new opportunities, etc.)

Is there anything else at all you could tell me about your thoughts on Ardentinny over the years since you were there?

Appendix G - Questionnaire response statistics

How many times did you go to Ardentinny Outdoor Education Centre?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Once	81.7%	89
Twice	11.9%	13
3 times	1.8%	2
4 times	0.0%	0
More than 4 times	4.6%	5
answered question		109
skipped question		1

Please tick the reasons why you chose to go to Ardentinny. Tick all the statements that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I didn't choose, it was compulsory at my school	5.5%	6
I wanted to go because my friends were going	50.9%	56
I wanted to try new activities	68.2%	75
I was interested in the subject we studied there	20.9%	23
It was an opportunity not available anywhere else	33.6%	37
I thought being away from home would be fun	51.8%	57
I felt pressured to go by my friends	0.9%	1
I felt pressured to go by my teacher(s)	0.0%	0
I felt pressured to go by my family	0.9%	1
Other (please write in space below)	13.6%	15
answered question		110
skipped question		0

Other:
I never got to do any out of school activities
Can't remember
Of those who showed an interest, names were drawn out of a hat
New adventure
Also went as part of school exchange
Only well behaved students got to go, and I was selected from a large number who put there name forward for the trip
A holiday and during term time was the reason
It seemed like it would be fun
Employee staff development, BB trip as officer accompanying boys
The school chose the pupils to go
It was a free holiday, as mum was single parent and I got it free
To have fun. I enjoy all the things they do there.
I was a keen kayaker
Everyone wanted to go, had a good reputation
Can't remember if it was compulsory

Which activity or activities did you take part in at Ardentinny? Tick all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Mountaineering	29.1%	32
Canoeing	34.5%	38
Sailing	13.6%	15
Orienteering	43.6%	48
Geography field studies	19.1%	21
History field studies	1.8%	2
Biology field studies	14.5%	16
Art workshop	3.6%	4
Other (please write in space below)	16.4%	18
answered question		110
skipped question		0

Other:
Canyoning
Gorge walking
Some map work
Camping outdoors
Caving and gorge walking
Gorge Walking and Camping
Gorge Walking
Hiking
X country skiing
Rambling
Fishing
Orchestra weekend!
Gorge Walking, staying over night in an old cabin
A trip out on the old style fishing boat
Hill walking
Ski fitnesss training
Camping overnight
Volleyball summer camp

Which of the following sentences do you agree with the most? Please choose one.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I don't think anything from Ardentinny influenced me or carried over into my life afterwards.	9.2%	10
I think my time at Ardentinny has influenced me in the past but it doesn't any more.	19.3%	21
I think my time at Ardentinny still has some influence in my life.	71.6%	78
answered question		109
skipped question		1

Sex of questionnaire respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	36.8%	39
Female	63.2%	67
answered question		106
skipped question		4

Age of questionnaire respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
21-30	15.1%	16
31-40	25.5%	27
41-50	58.5%	62
51-60	0.9%	1
answered question		106
skipped question		4

Questionnaire respondents by age and sex

	Sex			
Answer Options	Male	Female	Response Percent	Response Count
21-30	4	11	14.3%	15
31-40	9	18	25.7%	27
41-50	25	37	59.0%	62
51-60	0	1	1.0%	1
answered question				105
skipped question				1

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