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**A Phenomenological Study of the
Relationship Between a 10-day Residential
Outdoor Education Experience and
Patterns of Physical Activity in Adult Life**

John Telford

**Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of**

MSc by Research (Education)

University of Edinburgh

2005

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the meanings and values that a group of adults aged between 30 and 31 years attribute to a 10-day residential outdoor education experience that took place 17 years ago. The dissertation specifically investigates whether the participants consider that the experience has had any influence on their current patterns of physical activity.

Research shows that levels of sedentarism and inactivity amongst the population of the United Kingdom are rising. This is causing concern in Government regarding the impact of this lack of physical activity on the health of individuals, the cost to the National Health Service, and the maintaining of a healthy working population. A review of the literature relating to the role of outdoor education as a means of encouraging physical activity reveals a strong historical connection between outdoor education and physical health in the UK. However, the literature is primarily rhetorical and theoretical in nature and illustrates an absence of complementary empirical work.

A phenomenological methodology informed both data collection and analysis. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews. The results demonstrate that the residential outdoor experience was a very positive experience for the interviewees. The experience was most significant in terms of personal and social development. In terms of the impact of the experience on physical activity patterns in adult life the results demonstrate a relationship which is limited but worthy of further investigation.

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Acknowledgements

There are several people I would like to thank for their help in writing this dissertation.

Many thanks to the Howtown participants who agreed to give up their time to be interviewed. Without their willing cooperation this dissertation would never have got off the ground.

Thanks are due to Pete Allison, my supervisor, for his generous support and advice throughout the process of producing this dissertation.

Thankyou to Mat for reading and commenting on various versions and drafts, often at a moment's notice and always with good grace.

Finally, thanks go to Eoin and Dan for helping me with the editing process.

Introduction

Concern is rising in the United Kingdom as it is in many countries across the globe regarding the consequences on public health of low levels of physical activity amongst the general population (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002a). The belief is that increasingly sedentary behaviour patterns in both work and leisure time are storing up serious problems for the future. The problems go far beyond the obvious and immediate impact on the health of individuals. There are also implications in terms of the financial cost of burgeoning demands on the National Health Service [NHS] and on a broader scale still the necessity of ensuring a healthy working population to create the wealth necessary to provide essential services such as the NHS and support a flourishing society (Wanless, 2002; Scottish Executive, 2003b). Lack of physical exercise contributes significantly to being at risk of a range of diseases and health problems such as heart disease and strokes. These risks apply to the population as a whole. Physical inactivity is one of the most widespread determinants of poor health in Scotland where 6 out of 10 men and 7 out of 10 women do not reach the minimum recommended guidelines of physical activity (a minimum of 30 minutes moderate activity on at least 5 days per week). Equally, if not more, concerning is that during childhood when people might expect to be most active (up to 16 years of age) 3 in 10 boys and 4 in 10 girls fail to reach these same minimum recommended levels of activity required for good health (Joint Health Surveys Unit, 2000).

The problem seems to be clear: large, and increasing, numbers of people have levels of physical activity which are low enough to cause serious concern about the increased likelihood of significant health problems in later life. How to address this problem is less clear. Wanless (2004) authored a report commissioned by the Government as part of a review looking at the future of the NHS and health care in the United Kingdom. Preventative measures are the focus of this report and the author notes quite clearly that there is a dearth of information on which to make policy, expenditure and implementation decisions.

The impact of outdoor education has been of interest to Government and the education community since the first structured programmes were developed over fifty years ago. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the possibility of a relationship between school-age experiences of outdoor education and recreational physical activity behaviour patterns in adult life. Specifically, the approach of this dissertation is to research the meanings and value that participants of a 10-day outdoor education programme at a local education authority outdoor centre in the Lake District attribute to that experience 17 years after the event and whether these meanings and values are related in any way to their current patterns of physical exercise and activity in adult life. Any correlation between outdoor education experiences and physical activity in adult life would clearly be of interest when considering how to address the social phenomena of decreasing levels of physical activity and the health and social problems that this entails. Participants in the programme were interviewed regarding their experiences. The interviews were semi-structured in nature and were carried out and analysed within a phenomenological framework.

Outdoor education has a strong history in the United Kingdom (Cook, 1999) and can be conceptualised as consisting of three main areas: environmental education, personal and social development, and outdoor activities (Higgins & Loynes, 1997, p. 6). Outdoor education, therefore, is a broad term which embraces many different types of learning. In the United Kingdom it is experienced within primary and secondary education programmes in a range of contexts such as residential visits, field work, nature studies, environmental studies, and outdoor activities. This dissertation focuses primarily on the latter although as outdoor education tends to be an holistic experience references to other areas associated with outdoor education are unavoidable and it would be unrealistic to try and exclude them. The outdoor activities which most commonly but certainly not exclusively fall under the banner of outdoor education include hillwalking, camping, rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, skiing, mountain biking and orienteering.

This dissertation provides information that will improve understanding of the long-term effects of one aspect (physical activities) of mainstream outdoor education provision in relation to subsequent physical activity. This will, in turn, add to the growing body of knowledge regarding the varied nature of outdoor education experiences and their influence on healthy lifestyles. It will also highlight possible avenues for further research in order to inform policy and practice in the field of outdoor education.

Overview of the dissertation structure

Chapter 1 considers the growing awareness of the global health problem of sedentarism. The historical relationship between outdoor education and physical health is discussed. The role of outdoor education within the statutory education system is then considered before outlining the increasingly explicit emphasis on the relationship between education and public health. Finally, evidence for the role of outdoor education in relation to education and health is considered.

Chapter 2 considers the paradigm within which this dissertation is situated. The methodological framework for the dissertation is discussed along with the methods used to collect and analyse the data. Ethical considerations involved in the process of the research are described as are issues of trustworthiness and generalisability.

Chapter 3 presents and interprets the results of the analysis.

The conclusion draws together the main points of the discussion of results and considers possible areas of further investigation.

Chapter 1 Outdoor education and physical health

1.1 Global health concerns

As outlined in the introduction this study is situated within the broad context of concern regarding a lack of physical activity and the associated health problems which impact both individuals and communities. This is an issue that is of concern not just to Scotland or the United Kingdom but is recognised as a global issue. The WHO (2002) highlights the problem of sedentarism in both developed and developing countries, attributes the deaths of 2 million people every year to physical inactivity and claims that it is amongst the ten most influential factors leading to death and disability. Examples of health complications which are related to physical inactivity range from the physical (such as cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, osteoporosis and obesity) to the mental and emotional (such as depression and anxiety). This is a growing phenomenon that the WHO recognises needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Increasingly the promotion of physical activity is being seen as potentially the most cost-effective and sustainable public health intervention for both mind and body. The World Health Assembly [WHA] (2004) makes note of the fact that the promotion of healthy lifestyles amongst young people should be given high priority and that educational institutions have an important role to play in this task. The drive to improve health is a complex task and will require a multi-faceted strategy. It is clear that the United Kingdom Government is in agreement with WHA that education systems have a major role to play in encouraging increased physical activity. Increasingly Government departments and Government funded bodies are taking on the responsibility for educating people about healthy lifestyles and providing them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to be able to take responsibility for ensuring that they lead healthy lives.

In this chapter I look at the influence of concerns regarding health on the historical development of outdoor education in the United Kingdom. The subsequent two sections build on this historical account. The first considers the role of outdoor

education within the statutory education system in the period following the Second World War. The second details the increasingly explicit emphasis which has been placed on the relationship between statutory education and public health in recent years. The final section of this chapter explores what evidence there is which might support a role for outdoor education within the previously described health agenda.

1.2 Background to the development of outdoor education in the UK

Outdoor education in the United Kingdom has evolved from varied and even disparate roots. Its origins are heterogenous both in terms of aims and philosophies (Nicol, 2002a, p. 30). Cook (1999; 2000; 2001) provides insights into some of the founding influences noting that concern for the health of much of the population was one reason for the development of outdoor education. However, this early 20th century concern over the health of an increasingly urbanised and industrialised population was not entirely altruistic. Whilst no doubt some protagonists of early forms of outdoor education would have been concerned about the smoky, dusty, cramped living and working conditions of the industrial workforce there was also a concern to ensure that young men were fit for military service – both in terms of physical fitness and fitness of character. This marriage of the physical and the moral is a common theme throughout the various influences on the development of outdoor education. Outdoor education was used as a means of combating juvenile delinquency and providing socially acceptable leisure time pursuits (Hahn, 1938; Halls, 1997). The Outward Bound movement first began as a programme to provide seamen with the necessary strength of body and mind to survive being adrift at sea in the event of their ship being lost. The origins of the Boy Scout movement (Baden-Powell, 1908, p. 292), with its strong emphasis on physical activity, are steeped in strong moralising with explicit references to the pernicious effects of unbridled sexual impulses, tobacco and alcohol. Although the historical tapestry of outdoor education in the United Kingdom is rich and varied it is clear that physical health and fitness is one of the dominant threads running through it.

1.3 Outdoor education in the statutory education system

Outdoor education experienced growth of provision in statutory education in the decades following the Second World War peaking during the 1960s to 1980s. Higgins (2002, p. 155) describes the 1960s and 1970s as the “heyday of outdoor educational provision in Scotland”. In England as well this was a period of high levels of outdoor education provision through local education authorities. Although there were high levels of provision Nicol (2002a, pp. 38-39) provides a clear account of the somewhat confused and “tenuous statutory support” for outdoor education during the 1960s. This 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. The aims or purposes of outdoor education and its exact role in a pupil’s education were not clearly documented. Outdoor education was generally seen as being a vehicle for a range of possible learning aims. Referring again to the 1960s and 1970s the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres [AHOEC] (1988, p. 12) notes that “the chief concern was to introduce the skills or knowledge that would eventually lead to participants being self sufficient in leisure activities”. Cheesmond and Yates (1979, p. 5) suggest 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. The relative prominence of each element within the outdoor experience would, of course, vary from centre to centre.

The introduction of the national curriculum in England in 1988 and national curricular guidelines in Scotland in 1993 saw the position of outdoor education become specifically and officially endorsed within both curricular programmes. Mitchell (1992) acknowledges the concern at the time of those with an interest in outdoor education that this specific inclusion would reduce the cross-curricular input of outdoor education. At the same time he welcomes its inclusion within the curricular area of physical education as this would ensure its place within the educational system. Whilst acknowledging the cross-curricular potential of outdoor

education he suggests that being included in the curricular area of physical education was appropriate as he states that, amongst a long list of other reasons, outdoor education involves activities which take place in “healthy” places and encourages lifelong participation. The AHOEC (1988, p. 37) makes a similar brief reference to the potential of outdoor education to make an important contribution to the health of an individual. Unfortunately changes to funding in education during this period severely diminished the capability of local education authorities to provide outdoor education to schoolchildren and Mitchell’s optimism for its role secure within a specified curriculum was not borne out. Today, whilst outdoor education remains a specified element of curriculum documents in England and Scotland, in both cases its position remains tenuous and could be better described as *recommended* rather than core content.

In Scotland physical education falls under the curricular area of *Expressive Arts* (Scottish Office Education Department [SOED], 1993a). This document refers to outdoor education as one example amongst others of a means of providing the opportunity for pupils to work towards learning outcomes of co-operation, sharing, communicating and competing. Within the curricular area of *Personal and Social Development* (SOED, 1993b, p. 24) a statement resembling a footnote suggests that “Outdoor education can provide an invaluable means of delivering all the outcomes of personal and social development. In particular, residential experience, with its different rules and conventions, provides excellent contexts for developing skills.” Notably, outdoor education is not referred to in terms of health or fitness, instead falling firmly under learning outcomes associated with personal and social education.

In England, in addition to a compulsory element of traditional competitive team games schools are required to provide non-competitive activities. Outdoor education is included as one of several such possible areas of activity. Thus, outdoor education is specifically mentioned in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 (ages 7-11, 11-14 and 14-16 respectively) although it is in strong competition for a place within the school timetable against other elements such as swimming and water safety, and athletics (Qualifications & Curriculum Authority [QCA], 1999).

Outdoor education has a strong history in British society and educational institutions. One of its long held virtues has been considered to be its potential to positively benefit a person's physical health and well-being. However, references to the health benefits of outdoor education within educational literature and policy documents are minimal, primarily rhetorical and theoretical, and non-specific in terms of either content or outcomes. In addition, references to health are heavily outweighed by references to personal and social development. Despite the cementing of the position of outdoor education within the statutory educational curricula its role remains somewhat unsupported and unclear. It is possible that the cross-curricular nature of outdoor education (outdoor activities, personal and social development, environmental education) has contributed to a lack of clarity in this regard. It is also possible that a lack of empirical investigation and research into exactly how and where outdoor education can contribute to the education system has culminated in a situation where it is specifically and officially part of mainstream curricula in England and Scotland whilst at the same time receiving tenuous statutory support. In this regard it seems that nothing has changed since the situation of the 1960s described by Nicol (2002a).

1.4 Statutory education as a vehicle for public health

The relationship between education and health is becoming increasingly explicit. In Scotland and England the recognition of the importance of the health of the whole child is well attested to in the literature providing guidelines to education. Key aims for pupils refer to "the capacity to take responsibility for their health and safe living" (Scottish Executive, 2000b, p. 1) and "education is also about helping pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to live confident, healthy, independent lives, as individuals, parents, workers and members of society" (QCA, 1999, p. 4). The expression of such holistic and cross-curricular aims highlights the recognition of the importance currently attributed to providing pupils with the opportunity and encouragement to build the foundations of a healthy lifestyle. However, in practice this recognition is rather meekly backed up by the Government. Schools are expected, as opposed to required, to provide two hours of physical activity per week (QCA, 1999, p. 4). This figure includes both curricular physical

education and extra-curricular activities. Nevertheless, at a policy level at least, the last two or three years have seen an increasingly strong push on the public health agenda in relation to schools. A plethora of reports and consultative documents have been commissioned and published concerning the state of the nation's health and what should be done to address the perceived problems (QCA, n/d; Scottish Executive, 2003a; Scottish Executive, 2003b; Scottish Executive, 2004). These policies consider the role of physical education within the curriculum as a vitally important component in providing young people with the opportunity to develop attitudes, skills and habits which will enable them to make healthy lifestyle choices throughout their lives. The recent report into physical education in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 2) states "a deep belief in the importance of PE in schools as a core activity linked to healthy lifestyles, lifelong learning, improved health, an inclusive society and yes, success in sport at a national level would be very nice!". On the face of it much faith is being placed in the potential of physical education. With what justification?

It would certainly seem logical that physical activity in schools should be an excellent way of introducing young people to a range of activities from which they will hopefully choose to continue one or more into their independent lives beyond school. However, it is very notable and of concern that there is an alarming decline in participation rates even during school years and this is particularly the case amongst girls (Alexander, Currie & Todd, 2003). There would appear to be a need to provide opportunities and activities which attract young people and which continue to hold their enthusiasm both during and beyond school years. The figures are stark; from the age of 4 years old girls are, on average, less active than boys and this difference increases during adolescence. By the age of 16 two thirds of girls and one third of boys do not reach the recommended minimum levels of physical activity and this decline continues into adult life (Scottish Executive, 2004). Carter (2005, p. 7) warns that "The existing substantial investment in school sport risks not being fully realised unless a reduction in the participation drop-off rate post school is secured".

Sport 21 2003-2007: The National Strategy for Sport (sportscotland, 2003) identifies the primary aim for the strategy for sport in Scotland as being increasing participation. Its first target for young people is to encourage a wider range of opportunities to participate in physical activity. This acknowledgment of the need for the provision of a broader range of opportunities for engagement in physical activity is endorsed by HM Inspectorate of Education [HMIE] (1995; 2001) and Scottish Executive (2004). These documents perceive the broadening of provision as an extension beyond what they refer to as “traditional” sports to more contemporary activities such as martial arts and yoga. Outdoor education does not fit neatly into either category and as a result perhaps risks being overlooked. Although in many senses it could certainly be regarded as being traditional it does not fall into the category of traditional *sport*. On the other hand, neither could it be accurately regarded as being a *contemporary* (assuming this means something along the lines of ‘more recently popular’) activity such as yoga. However, if motivation to participate is the criterion for consideration then it is possible that outdoor education may have something to offer.

Cheesmond and Yates (1979, p. 161) in their research report of outdoor education programmes in the Lothian region of Scotland found that outdoor education was extremely popular with students and preferred to other school subjects including physical education. It is perhaps unsurprising that students would state a preference for outdoor education over classroom-based subjects which are taught in more formal settings in a more formal manner. Outdoor education is not examined which might well contribute to it being seen as more fun and less stressful. In addition, outdoor education is often perceived as exciting giving it a certain appeal which is more than likely maintained by its relative novelty value. However, these qualifying statements aside, it would appear that this popularity is well worth considering when making decisions on how best to broaden provision of physical activities in order to encourage wider participation.

Several recent Government or Government agency reports have raised the profile of outdoor education and the role that it can play within mainstream education. The

House of Commons Education and Skills Committee [HCESC] (HCESC, 2005) recently published a report into outdoor learning which recognised that physical education is one of the areas that outdoor education can contribute to. Similarly, the Office for Standards in Education [Ofsted] report into outdoor education (Ofsted, 2004) recommended that outdoor education, amongst other things, makes an important contribution to physical education.

1.5 Research supporting the role of outdoor education in relation to physical health

Despite the interest and support for outdoor education in relation to physical activity there is little research to provide empirical evidence or strong theoretical support for its inclusion in health and education programmes. The impact of outdoor education has been of interest since the first structured programmes were developed over fifty years ago. However, what little evidence there is regarding the efficacy of this form of education often relies upon short-term studies and meta-analyses based on small samples (Barrett & Greenaway, 1995). There is a lack of studies that have specifically investigated the possibility of long-term impacts of outdoor education experiences on physical activity and health. Those which do discuss the relationship (Higgins & Loynes, 1997; Tuxworth, 1996) are limited in their impact due to the above-mentioned lack of supportive empirical evidence. A recent review of outdoor education research (Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 32) states that the “evidence base for cognitive and physical/behavioural benefits is less strong than for cognitive and interpersonal/social outcomes. This seems to reflect the fact that physical outcomes are seldom the primary focus of outdoor adventure programmes and/or their evaluations.” The report goes on to suggest that in examples where there is a focus on such measures improved physical self-image and fitness can be demonstrated. Unfortunately, the report does not cite any examples of such studies leaving the robustness of these claims uncertain. The longitudinal study of Kaplan and Talbot (1983) and the meta-analysis of Hattie, Marsh, Neill and Richards (1997) both investigated the effects of outdoor adventure programmes on personal and social development outcomes such as self-concept, self-esteem and locus of control. Despite the primary focus being on personal and social development both studies

reported a positive relationship between the outdoor programmes and physical activity and fitness. Kaplan and Talbot (1983, p. 180) note that research participants sought to remain physically fit and active and to maintain physical activity which resembled that which they had experienced on their wilderness experience. Hattie et al. (1997, p. 69) found that there were gains in fitness following their meta-analysis of Outward Bound programmes and that there were improvements in “physical ability self-concept”. Unfortunately, presumably as a result of the focus being elsewhere, neither study discusses these results with more than a passing comment and there were no follow-up programmes to ascertain any long-term effects.

In England the government recently commissioned the *Wanless Report* (Wanless, 2002) which provided an assessment of the resources required to provide a high-quality health service. The aim was to identify what measures needed to be put in place in order to provide a health service which would be comparable, if not superior, to other developed countries. Further to this, a subsequent report (Wanless, 2004) was commissioned and published which focuses particularly on measures which might contribute towards proactively improving the nation’s health and thereby reduce the burden on the National Health Service. Wanless (2004, p. 5) notes that there is a dearth of information on which to make policy, expenditure and implementation decisions.

The very poor information base has been a major disappointment as it was when writing the 2002 report. There is a need for significant and continuous improvement if evidence is going to be used to drive decisions.... Although there is often evidence on the scientific justification for action and for some specific interventions, there is generally little evidence about the cost-effectiveness of public health and preventative policies or their practical implementation.

This is not an isolated plea in policy documents (Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 32; Carter, 2005, p. 7) and it is surely only right that if public money is to be spent there should be some evidence base on which to make decisions.

The body of knowledge and evidence regarding outdoor education in general is growing but still remains relatively small compared to other, more established, areas of education and is mostly carried out in countries other than the United Kingdom

(Rickinson et al. 2004, p. 5). This is further evidenced by Hattie et al. (1997, p. 62) who, when carrying out a meta-analysis of Outward Bound programmes, remarked that there were not a sufficient number of evaluations of programmes from the United Kingdom to be included in the research. Although, as I have mentioned above, the research they were carrying out is not directly relevant to this study it is indicative of the need for more evidence to inform decisions regarding practice and policy. The practical as well as political importance of this is made clear by HCESC (2005, pp. 8-9),

Like all educational processes, the benefits of education outside the classroom should be rigorously researched, documented and communicated. Positive and reliable evidence of the benefits of outdoor activities would help schools determine the priority to afford to such work.

The available literature from within and outwith the field of outdoor education regarding outdoor education experiences and their effects on physical activity patterns in later life indicates a belief in a positive relationship which is not evidenced by supporting empirical research. What little empirical research does exist seems to suggest that outdoor education may well have a valuable role to play in the health agenda. However, given such uncertainty it is not surprising that outdoor education is not at the fore of policy decisions regarding health, education and physical activity.

This study aims to contribute to the small but growing body of empirical research regarding outdoor education and physical activity. The following chapter details how the research was carried out.

Chapter 2 Research design and methods

This chapter addresses the three following areas: the methodology used in this dissertation; a description of the methods and process of data collection; and an explanation of the process of data analysis.

2.1 Methodology

All research is generated from and influenced by certain basic assumptions about the world. When searching for understanding the researcher must be aware that assumptions about the nature of reality and the relationship between knower and known are at the heart of the research process. What is the nature of the world? What is it that can possibly be known about this world? What is the most effective means of investigating questions about the world? These questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology are crucial to any form of research. I shall address these questions in the following section.

2.1.1 The importance of assumptions

Assumptions about the world are generally referred to as paradigms. Various different paradigms or world views are acknowledged and contested within the realm of research and science. The nomenclature varies but is commonly explained as a spectrum with a positivist, experimental or normative paradigm at one end and a constructivist, naturalistic or interpretive paradigm at the other (for a fuller description of paradigms see Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Holliday, 2002). As regards the social world the normative paradigm is based on philosophical assumptions that human behaviour can be explained in terms of responses to external or internal stimuli. Therefore, quite logically, human behaviour should be investigated by experimental methods traditionally associated with the natural (as opposed to social) sciences. This form of research aims to discover 'laws' which govern behavioural responses thereby contributing to the formation of an overarching universal theory which will explain human behaviour. The interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, subscribes to philosophical assumptions of a world of

human experience that is inherently meaningful. Human behaviour is considered as being primarily influenced by intentions and meanings rather than stimuli-response reactions. Interpretive research therefore is more inductive in nature whereby theory arises out of the data as opposed to being laid upon it. It is more of an emergent process of discovery and any theory that does arise must make sense to those to whom it refers – those people from whom the data originated. Interpretive research aims to investigate and describe the complexity of human behaviour as opposed to seeking a universal theory.

Creating such categories of understanding about the world is, of course, itself based on certain assumptions about the world; two of which are that the creation of discrete categories is possible and helpful. However, in order to be able to communicate we need to be able to have some common frame of reference, even an imperfect one. Accepting that the illustration of a spectrum of paradigms may not be an absolutely accurate representation of ways of understanding the world but is a useful starting point, a general summary of the two contrasting world views described above is given in Table 1 (adapted from Creswell, 1994, p. 5).

Table 1 Paradigm assumptions

| QUESTION | NORMATIVE/POSITIVIST ASSUMPTION | INTERPRETIVE/CONSTRUCTIVIST ASSUMPTION |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ontology - what is the nature of reality? | Reality is objective and singular. | Reality is subjective and multiple. |
| Epistemology - what is the relationship of the researcher and the researched? | Researcher is independent from that being researched. | Researcher interacts with that being researched. |
| Methodology - what is the process of research? | Deductive process; cause and effect; context free; aims at prediction. | Inductive & emergent process; mutual and simultaneous shaping of factors; context-bound; aims at developing understanding. |

2.1.2 Situating this dissertation

This dissertation investigates the meaning and value that participants of a residential outdoor education programme attribute to that programme in later life. Specific interest is drawn to any relationship between having engaged in physical activities associated with outdoor education (as defined in the introduction) as part of a school educational experience and physical activity behaviour patterns in later life. Outdoor education experiences within mainstream statutory education are typically one-off experiences. The most common programme involves a residential visit to a specialist outdoor education centre lasting between two and five days during either the latter years of primary or early years of secondary education. Is it possible that a handful of days in the context of between 11 and 13 years of schooling could lead to a young person continuing to canoe, rock climb and hillwalk? The dissertation explores the meanings and values that participants attribute to their outdoor education experiences and looks for evidence of those same meanings and values in their adult physical activity patterns whether that translates, for example, to having taken up canoeing at some point post-experience or to other more subtle effects that are less easy to identify at first sight.

In order to gain this understanding of an individual's experience as fully as possible I considered it necessary to strive to see that experience through the eyes of each individual. This approach to the research question embraces the possibility that each person's understanding, meanings and values regarding a same basic experience could vary. It also recognises that the researcher interacts with the researched, and acknowledges that values, far from being something to excise, are at the heart of and vital to the research process. As such, this dissertation is situated within a constructivist paradigm or world view. Admittedly, it would be disingenuous to attempt to suggest that the research question *necessarily* requires a constructivist approach or understanding. It would, of course, be possible to approach the same research question from a normative perspective. The fact that I, as researcher, have formulated the question in a way that I envisage it to be most appropriately situated within a particular paradigm suggests a certain view of the world that I am most comfortable with or sympathetic to. Indeed, my academic experience is primarily

rooted in a literary/Arts background and so it is not surprising that I might be more comfortable with a more interpretive, qualitative approach. As I mentioned above it is crucial for the researcher to be aware of the underpinning assumptions on which any research work is based. It is also important for the researcher to be reflective about the reasons why he/she has come to adopt certain beliefs or assumptions. Whether my making certain choices about research methodology is the sole result of my academic background, an independent intentionality or some combination of the two is not a question to be answered in this dissertation but it is one that is important for me, as researcher, to be regularly reminded of and make explicit within the work in order to increase its trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is a concept that will be addressed in section 2.2.4.

All research, however it is approached and undertaken, is grounded in certain beliefs and assumptions which cannot be empirically tested – they are the philosophical foundation of the work and need to be acknowledged. The research question that I formulated and have described above sits comfortably within a constructivist paradigm. In the following section I will explain the particular methodological approach of phenomenology and why this was the most appropriate methodological framework for this dissertation.

2.1.3 Phenomenology

Bernstein (1979) suggests that during the 1960s radical critiques were made regarding the foundations of social disciplines. These stemmed from a broad picture of social and political unrest within many post-industrial nations at the time. There were growing feelings that claims to objective scientific knowledge were in fact ideology in disguise, an ideology which supported or gave credence to the traditionally dominant philosophical and scientific worldviews. There was an accusation that social sciences were not revealing any previously unknown reality (or realities) and, more to the point, they were incapable of doing so. The charge was that a belief in systematic experimental understanding grounded in a value-free context was both restrictive and blinkered. Phenomenology was one of the ‘new wave’ of approaches to social science which supporters claimed provided clearer and

truer insights than rigid experimental research handed down from the natural sciences. Schutz (1964, p. 8) states that, “The safeguarding of the subjective point of view is the only but sufficient guarantee that the world of social reality will not be replaced by a fictional non-existing world constructed by the scientific observer.” The development of interpretive practices of investigation was seen by Schutz as imperative to counter the harmful inaccuracies of ‘scientific’ representations of the social world. Schutz considered it the researcher’s duty to acknowledge the importance of subjectivity and the process by which individuals make meaning about the world.

A number of authors in the field of outdoor education have stated that there is a need in outdoor education research literature for research that uses a qualitative approach in order to balance an historical positivist bias (Allison and Pomeroy, 2000; Barrett & Greenaway, 1995; Humberstone, 1997). These authors suggest that there is an absence of investigations into the *processes* as experienced by participants as opposed to outcomes as perceived by researchers. Furthermore, they consider positivist approaches in research to be incongruent with the student-centred teaching approach which is generally espoused within the field. The effect of this, they claim, is to ignore and deny the legitimacy of the subjective nature of the learners’ experience. Warren and Loeffler’s (2000) and Humberstone’s (1997) claims that the historic reliance on positivistic frameworks in outdoor education research is problematic and holding back the field echo the social science critiques of the 1960s outlined in the previous paragraph. A number of recent studies have made some progress in addressing the lack of research into participants’ lived experiences (Allison, 2002; Beames, 2004a; Goodyear, 2005).

Patton (2002) suggests that the foundational question of phenomenology is this; what is the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of a particular phenomenon for a particular person or group of people? Van Manen (1990, p. 10) describes it as asking “for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a some-‘thing’ what it is and without which it could not be what it is”. Phenomenology is concerned with the ways in which humans sense and make sense of the ‘life

world'. The life world consists of and is constructed from appearance and experience. Therefore phenomenological research aims to study people's experiences which constitute this life world at face value. This leads to greater understanding of human behaviour which influences and is influenced by phenomena of *experience* as opposed to a world where human behaviour is determined by objective laws of natural science. Behaviour is determined by the phenomena of experience not in the sense of deterministic stimulus-response but in the sense that the meanings and values that individuals uniquely attribute to phenomena contribute to and influence decision making in subsequent experiences.

Phenomenology holds to a belief in the primacy of subjective consciousness and an understanding of consciousness as active, intentional and meaning bestowing. We can gain knowledge of this meaning that consciousness bestows through reflection. People create understanding of the streams of data they receive through the senses by dividing it up into segments or discrete categories – phenomena. This is a process of human consciousness *creation* for the data do not categorise themselves. These 'categories of reality' are often referred to in phenomenology as 'essences'. The investigation of essences – both what they are and how they occur – is at the heart of phenomenology. This dissertation is concerned with investigating the meanings and values that participants attribute to an outdoor education experience and whether the experience influences their physical activity in later life. This could equally be described as asking, "What are the essences of an outdoor education experience and do participants feel that these essences filter through in any way in their later life?" As such, the phenomenological approach is well suited to the research question.

Phenomenology is an approach to interpretive research that gives primacy to the subjectivity of actors in the social world and refutes the opinion that there is an objective world 'out there' which can be apprehended free of any act of perception or interpretation (Holstein & Gubrium, 1998). The researcher attempts to lay aside or 'bracket' his or her assumptions about the world in order to more clearly see how the research participants interpret and create meaning about the world. If human beings create meaning about the world by typifying or categorising it and we also accept

that language is the dominant means of communicating these typifications then this points towards methods for gathering data that focus on language. For this reason I made the decision to collect data using interviews. This is discussed further in section 2.2.2.

The development of interpretive approaches to research in social sciences gathered pace in the 1960s as new insights into the social world were sought and a dissatisfaction with the value-free experimental approach led some to endeavour to protect and legitimise the subjective point of view. From the phenomenological perspective words are seen as that which create and constitute the everyday life world of experience as opposed to referencing an objective 'reality'. The social phenomenology of Schutz (1967; 1970) aims to provide interpretation and explanation of human action and thought (Schutz & Luckmann, 1974, p. 3). It is a philosophical stance which focuses on subjective meanings and interpretations as a means of uncovering how experience is given meaning in everyday life. As such it is an appropriate approach to this dissertation.

2.1.4 Criticisms of a phenomenological approach

One of the foundational principles of phenomenology is that all consciousness is intentional. Intentionality can be described as consciousness being conscious *of* something. This state of consciousness being directed towards something provides the link between subject and object, the mental world and the 'life world'. Physical state, by contrast, has no intentionality – it is not about anything nor directed towards anything. It is in this relationship of dependency between conscious subjects and the focus of their consciousness that phenomenology challenges the Cartesian worldview of the absolute separation of external objects and pure consciousness (Chávez-Arviso, 1997). Phenomenology argues against the possibility and, even were it possible, the usefulness of separating the two. They are inextricably bound. Experience and interpretation are mutually dependent; interpretation is required to understand experience and without experience no interpretation is required. Accordingly, there is no separation between knower and known – there is no objective reality. There is only what people *know* their experience is and means.

Thus meaning making is the essence of human experience and understanding. Phenomenology claims that consciousness is the only phenomenon we can know with any degree of certainty. The world we perceive is the construction of consciousness. The challenge is how to make this world of conscious construction amenable to study and in facilitating this there is a philosophical tension.

From the phenomenological perspective one of the keys to revealing the essential features of an experience is through the adoption of a non-theoretical and unprejudiced standpoint and the creation of a relationship of deep understanding, that is to say a sense of empathy or indwelling with the participants in the enquiry. In this respect phenomenology is part of a broader methodology known as ethnography. In so doing, the researcher is able to gain insights into participants' experiences and the meanings they create. The researcher therefore aims to expose his/her own personal biases and prejudices (in the literal, non-pejorative sense) so that in exposing them it becomes possible to sift them out leaving, as far as possible, the pure essence of the experience of the research participants – the revelation of the life world. However, if phenomenology claims the inherent interrelation between the conscious subject and 'things' or objects of attention in the life world it seems somewhat incongruent to consider it possible to set aside certain 'things' that have been deemed to be problematic leaving the conscious subject free to be intentional towards certain other objects of the life world. There does appear to be a positivistic undertone here that could be argued to undermine its philosophical standpoint. However, it should be recognised that some degree of bracketing of personal opinion and feelings is always carried out by researchers. What the phenomenological approach attempts to do is to make sure that as far as possible the researcher is able to understand and therefore communicate accurately the perspective of the research participants. One of the reasons that I am interested in researching people's experiences of outdoor education is that I had an experience of outdoor education as a secondary school pupil which I believe influenced me. When investigating other people's experiences I feel it is important to allow them to speak freely and honestly about their experience. My instinct is that were I to discuss in detail my personal experience of the effect of outdoor education this would influence the stories of the research participants.

A second point is that one of the basic underpinning philosophical assumptions of phenomenology is that one can only know what one experiences through conscious intentional awareness. This does raise a question of how one first becomes consciously aware. What is the process by which the intentional consciousness of an object is instigated? Husserl (1970) refers to perceptions and meanings that awaken one's conscious awareness. However, this seems to have rather deterministic undertones suggesting that we are to some degree in thrall to our environment whereby it (the object) influences what meanings are made by the conscious subject. However, if the object has no influence on the conscious subject until intentional consciousness is cast upon it then this would seem to suggest a degree of separation between subject and object that phenomenology refutes. One way out of this impasse is that there could be some connection between the subconscious or unconscious mind and objects in the 'life world' when the intentional consciousness is not engaged upon them. The relevance for this dissertation is that I intend to interview people regarding an experience that happened many years ago. Should I assume the possibility that some participants may not ever have reflected on the experience and so I would be the instigator of the reflection? What implications would this have? Or, can one assume that, even if the conscious mind has not regarded the experience intentionally, there is a relationship between the mind and the experience at a less than conscious level? In the event of the interviews it was clear that all participants had reflected on their outdoor education experience and so this did not present an issue but it is something that should be acknowledged.

In this section I have highlighted two potential criticisms of the phenomenological approach. It could be argued that the process of bracketing required of the researcher is reminiscent of value-free positivism and that this undermines the philosophical basis of a phenomenological methodology. I have suggested that any research involves a degree of bracketing on the part of the researcher. There is also a question over what influence the researcher might have if the participants had not previously reflected on the phenomenon under investigation. It seems very unlikely that a person would not reflect in *any* way on a 10-day outdoor education experience whether that might involve going over the events in one's head on the bus journey

home or discussing various aspects of the experience with one's peers over a period of days, weeks, months or years. It was clear once the interviews had begun that all participants had given the experience at least a small degree of reflection.

2.2 Methods

This section first describes who was involved in the research and how they were selected. This is followed by a description of the method and process of the data collection. Consideration is then given to the ethics involved in the research process. The final two sections respectively consider issues of trustworthiness of the research and the generalisability of the findings.

2.2.1 Sample

The obvious and immediate problem of conducting research involving adults who have had outdoor education experiences during their school years is finding potential participants. The solution to this problem was that in 1988, I, along with approximately 30 other students, participated in a 10-day outdoor education programme at our local education authority outdoor education centre in the Lake District. At the time the centre (Howtown) was owned by Durham County Council. The opportunity to take part in the programme was offered annually to all students in the fourth year of secondary school (14-15 years of age). From this potential cohort of approximately 200 pupils approximately 30 (of which I was one) went to the centre. The programme focused primarily on various activities such as canoeing, kayaking, sailing, walking and camping and also on the personal and social benefits associated with residential living and group work. My personal connection to fellow participants provided an excellent opportunity to contact potential subjects for the research project. All of those eventually involved in the research shared the same 10-day experience and so at a fundamental level there is a strong degree of commonality of experience although, of course, to a greater or lesser degree each person will have experienced the 10 days differently. Not all participants would have worked with the same staff from the Howtown Centre nor would they have participated in exactly the same lessons and activities. In addition, other factors such as the composition of the

small groups that the participants worked in would also contribute to the different experience of each participant. Nevertheless, the core of the experience is as homogenous as can reasonably be expected.

The aim was to interview as many of my fellow Howtown participants as possible and to strive for an equal ratio of males and females. The process of sampling employed is described by May (2001, p. 94) as the snowball method. In this case four snowballs were involved. The parents of four Howtown participants were contacted having been identified from the public telephone directory. These four sets of parents were selected on the basis of their continued residence in the local area and my recollection of their child having attended Howtown. The four Howtown participants were subsequently contacted and from these four people the contact details of approximately 15 more were gained. Nine participants of the Howtown experience were finally interviewed from the potential population of approximately 30. This final number of nine interviewees was determined by the practicalities of who was able to be contacted and available to be interviewed within the time frame available. Fortunately, the gender ratio of interviewees was well balanced with five males and four females participating. All interviewees were between 30 and 31 years of age.

2.2.2 Data collection

The decision to use interviews was based on several factors. As stated in section 2.1.3 a phenomenological methodology points most naturally towards methods of data collection which focus on language. This is supported by Blumer (1969) who suggests that interviews are effective in collecting empirical data on how the meanings people develop from interpretations of social situations influence and inform subsequent actions. From a purely practical point of view, knowing that some of the experiences which I would be asking the interviewees to think about occurred 17 years ago I felt that the social element of a face to face interview situation would be most conducive to reviving those memories. For this reason I aimed to avoid having to resort to telephone interviews and fortunately was successful in being able to meet all the interviewees face to face. Despite only three of the nine interviewees

living outside the north-east of England this still involved a significant commitment of time and finance. The eventual time involved in carrying out the interviews was double what I had estimated it would be. Nevertheless, I felt that, for the reasons mentioned above, it was worth the effort. This is supported by Drever (1995, p. 15) who recommends avoiding telephone interviews where possible due to the significant limitations they impose on communication. All non-verbal communication such as posture, gesture and facial expression are missing. Accordingly it is more difficult to work out the mood of the interviewee over the telephone than if meeting face to face. It is also more difficult to interpret and allow natural silences as part of the dialogue without assuming the other person is not engaged.

I chose to use a semi-structured and primarily exploratory interview format (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 65). The interview protocol was based around a set of mainly open-ended questions (see Appendix A) which provided a stimulus for the interviewee to talk about their experiences during the 10-day outdoor education programme and from that explore the meanings and values they place upon the experience. Questions were also directed towards their current patterns of physical activity and whether they perceive any relationship between the two areas. The semi-structured interview approach was chosen to allow for open discussion and spontaneous further investigation of unexpected areas that may arise. Probes and prompts were used to keep the interview moving where necessary and help the interviewee not to feel too awkward if silences developed. Using this approach provided interviewees with suitable support in a one-off situation which had the potential to be uncomfortable or awkward whilst allowing the flow of information to come primarily from the interviewee. I believe that despite having had little or no contact with the majority of the interviewees in over 15 years the face to face semi-structured interviews allowed the fledgling connection that I had with the interviewees to flourish and lead to the establishment of a good working relationship that in turn lead to the collection of rich data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 147).

2.2.3 Ethics

As Kvale (1996, p. 109) states, the interview situation is a moral situation. Both interviewer and interviewee are affected by the interview process. Stake (2000, p. 447) refers to the researcher as entering into individuals' private worlds and as such there is a requirement that the researcher should be respectful and adhere to a strict code of ethics. Kvale (1996) outlines the three guidelines of informed consent, confidentiality and consequences when considering human research. I will explain how I negotiated these three issues during the research.

Informed consent entails the following: participants should be given an overall picture of what the research is about and how it is to be carried out; participation should be voluntary and include the right to withdraw without any negative consequences should they so wish; participants should be made aware of any potential risks or benefits associated with their involvement (Moustakas, 1994). Initially I made contact with potential interviewees by telephone. During this first contact, which involved a good degree of catching up on each other's histories over the last few years, I was able in a very natural way to describe my research project and how I was hoping they might be willing to be involved. During the conversation I made a point of providing several opportunities for the individual to decline being involved and, if they did agree to involvement, I made it clear that they could withdraw at any point for any reason if they wanted to. I also made it clear that anything discussed during the interviews would be anonymous in the dissertation and that, although I could not foresee either particular benefit or negative consequences of being involved in the research, they would be giving permission for their stories to be part of a document that could be read by other people. All those contacted agreed to participate although for personal and logistical reasons several people were eventually unable to be interviewed.

Originally I had planned to send a letter reiterating the details discussed over the telephone to those that agreed to participate. I had felt that a personal contact was important in the first instance as it might strike them as distant or 'cold' that an old friend would get in touch via a formal letter and also that this might then set a rather

strained tone to our relationship. However, during the first telephone conversation I felt uneasy about sending such a letter. In subsequent conversations I had the same feeling and so decided to change the plan. I was satisfied that the telephone conversations were clear and open and so I felt that verbal agreement was sufficient in the first instance. It felt quite formal and businesslike to discuss matters of consent, confidentiality and consequences after having spoken to some of the participants for the first time in a number of years and I felt that the positive and informal nature of our re-emerging relationships might have been undermined by a formal letter. However, on meeting each interviewee, following either a confirmatory second telephone conversation or email correspondence, I began by reminding participants of the issues of consent, confidentiality and consequences and did the same again at the end of each interview. In addition, I followed each interview with a letter of thanks (Appendix B) which reiterated these issues. This was repeated once again when sending back each interviewee's specific descriptive statement (see Appendix C for example) for verification of its accuracy.

During the telephone conversations and the interviews I endeavoured to withhold the specific purpose of my research regarding the long-term effects of outdoor education on physical activity patterns but stated very clearly that I was interested in people's experiences at Howtown. I did this in order that as far as possible I would be eliciting the participants' own views and thoughts. Having in mind the friendship aspect to our relationship I was concerned that they might want to 'help' my research by providing me with the information that they thought I might like to hear. All the participants were quite naturally interested to know what I had been doing since we had last seen each other and so they all knew that I had been working in various jobs related to outdoor education. As such I felt that it was quite possible that they would assume that I was looking for positive reflections regarding the influence of outdoor education on physical activity and so for this reason I did not openly divulge this aspect of the research.

Eisner (1991, p. 215) raises the important point that informed consent implies that the researcher knows beforehand what will happen and what the consequences will

be. In very controlled experimental research this may be a reasonable assumption but with semi-structured interviews the researcher is aware that there may be unanticipated leads which he/she will follow up not knowing where they will lead. Lincoln (1990) suggests that a running dialogue throughout an investigation might suitably replace the concept of informed consent. However, the requirements upon the research participants are high in order to achieve this. I addressed this issue by explaining as fully as I could the situation and emphasising very clearly that participants would be able to view a summary of their interview which they would be free to amend or add to and also that they had the right to withdraw at any time up until the printing of the final document.

As I wished to record the interviews I asked permission from each participant explaining that this was to allow me to transcribe the interview and also to make sure that I did not forget anything. All participants gave their permission willingly. In order to give the participants an alternative I made it clear that if they were uncomfortable with being recorded I was more than happy to take notes instead.

The practice of confidentiality refers to the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that no data which could identify participants are included in the research report. For this dissertation each participant was given a pseudonym, all people referred to in their interviews were also given a pseudonym, the name of the school was not given, nor the name of the town where the school was located.

As stated in the opening paragraph of this section it is inevitable that the social interaction of an interview will affect both interviewer and interviewee. The consequences for each may be positive, negative or a combination of both. The researcher has a particular responsibility to make participants aware of any potential positive or negative aspects which may be associated with their participation in the research. This is not necessarily a straightforward process as it is not possible to foresee every eventuality. However, all effort should be made to explain the consequences that might be reasonably expected as a result of involvement in the research. With regards to this dissertation I foresaw no obvious likelihood of

negative consequences. Interviewees were all satisfied with the arrangements for consent and confidentiality. On reflection after the event it seemed that the most obvious consequence for interviewees was a feeling of satisfaction at being given the opportunity to discuss what had been a positive experience at Howtown.

Consideration of the ethics involved when researching people's lives is crucial to ensuring that the experience is as safe and non-exploitative as possible. Exactly what this means and how it is negotiated will depend on the specific nature of the research in question. This section has addressed how the issues of consent, confidentiality and consequences were approached for this dissertation.

2.2.4 Trustworthiness

Rigour is vital to the research process in order that the interpretation of the data and any conclusions drawn from those interpretations can be considered trustworthy. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) refer to concepts of trustworthiness, credibility or dependability when working in the qualitative sphere of research rather than the terms validity and reliability which have developed out of a positivist research philosophy. In this section I explain the measures that I took to ensure that the claims I make are trustworthy.

Lincoln and Guba (1988, p. 296) state that increasing the credibility of qualitative research involves two components. The first is to ensure that the research is carried out in such a way that the findings are credible. This was addressed by using a suitable methodology and appropriate data collection procedures. The second is to be able to show the credibility of the findings by allowing the research participants (in this case the interviewees) to give their approval. This was addressed by employing member checks whereby interviewees were sent a copy of the analysis of their interview (Appendix C) to verify the accuracy of my interpretation. Participants were encouraged to make amendments or additions as they saw fit and were provided with a stamped addressed envelope to return their comments (Appendix D). Investigator triangulation was also employed. This involved a colleague experienced in research reading the meaning units (described more fully in section 2.3) elicited from the fully

transcribed interviews and then comparing notes to ensure that I was not investing the process of analysis with too high a degree of personal bias.

2.2.5 Generalisability

Stake (1995, pp. 7-9, 20) discusses the issue of generalisation. He makes the distinction between *petite* and *grande* generalisations. *Petite* generalisations occur and build on each other throughout the course of a research study 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. In this section I shall outline why this dissertation will look to make *petite* generalisations which would add to the current body of knowledge in the field of outdoor education and point towards areas for further research.

The opportunity to participate in the Howtown outdoor education programme was offered each year to a cohort of approximately 200 students. Those who were interested were required to put their name forward for consideration. The final selection was then made by teaching staff. Details of the exact process of how this selection was made were not communicated to students although students were told that only those whom staff considered trustworthy in terms of their behaviour would be given the opportunity to participate in the programme. I was not able to contact those who were members of staff at the time to obtain any further details on this selection process. Students were also required to pay a relatively small fee of £32 each. Again, I was not able to obtain information as to whether financial assistance was available for those unable to pay this fee. The self-selecting nature of the potential sample group introduces an element of bias into the sample group as it would not be unreasonable to assume that those who volunteered to go to Howtown would be more disposed to outdoor education and its possible influence in later life than those who had no desire to participate. The element of selection by teaching staff and the cost factor are difficult to attribute particular bias to; would those less

well behaved at school or those unable to pay the fee be more or less likely to have been influenced by the experience? This is impossible to judge.

Another potential element of bias is the snowball sampling method. There is the possibility that this method of identifying potential participants does not lead to the identification of a sample group that is representative of the potential sample population. However, as stated in section 2.2.1 all nine participants did not originate from the same root. Five interviewees resulted from one initial contact, two from another and one each from the final two contacts.

As mentioned in section 2.2.3, due to my relationship with the interviewees having an element of friendship, I was aware that this might introduce an element of bias into the research. The relationship between interviewer and interviewee will always affect the process to some degree, however slight. My concern regarding my relationship with the interviewees was whether, given their awareness of my professional background, they would feel able to be absolutely honest about their outdoor education experience at Howtown. I addressed this issue before each interview started by stating that the research was exploratory in nature, that there were no right or wrong answers and that the interviewee was absolutely free to express their honest thoughts and opinions.

For the reasons mentioned above and the small number of research participants I will not seek to make *grande* generalisations from the findings of this dissertation. The dissertation will, however, provide insights into the residential outdoor education experience and its influence on physical activity patterns in later life which will raise issues for further research.

2.3 Data analysis

Essential to understanding the philosophical basis of phenomenology is the search to identify elements of an experience that are common to participants in that experience. Whilst each person has a unique set of experiences which are taken at

face value phenomenological research is not primarily aiming at describing what is unique to each individual but rather assumes from the start a commonality in human experiences and aims to search for those commonalities. The process of analysis of the interview data focused on what the common values and meanings of the experience at Howtown Outdoor Education Centre were for the participants and whether they considered any of those values and meanings had any influence in their adult lives in relation to physical activity.

Silverman (2000, p. 123) describes one possible approach to interview data as considering the data as “accessing various stories or narratives through which people describe their world.” Instead of attempting to access a ‘true’ picture of the ‘reality’ of the world or experience of the participants – which is based on a contestable assumption that they themselves can access this ‘true’ picture, if it exists – interviewee and interviewer create together a plausible account of the world. From this emerges a narrated reality. Stake (1995, p. 72) states quite clearly that analysis does not begin during the days marked ‘analysis’ on the research schedule, “analysis should not be seen as separate from everlasting efforts to make sense of things.” Arguably, the process of analysis begins before the interviewees are even met as the researcher considers what participants might say. For myself, from the very conception of the research idea well before the interviews began one of my main concerns was whether anyone would remember anything at all and, if they did, how pertinent it would be to my specific research interest. Tesch (1990, p. 92) however, refers more specifically to phenomenological research when stating that data analysis begins at the point that the first data are collected. The first task of the phenomenological researcher is to ‘bracket’ her/his own preconceptions about the phenomenon under study. The researcher must attempt as far as possible to put aside their own meanings and interpretations and enter wholly into the world of the individual being interviewed (Hycner, 1985, p. 281). Although my recollections of the experience were very limited I did have an overall impression of the experience and generally speaking it was very positive. In addition, as each interview progressed my impression of the experience became much richer and fuller. As the interviews progressed it became increasingly important that I ‘bracket’ not only my own

original meanings and interpretations but also those meanings and interpretations of previous interviewees from the interviewees still to come.

Phenomenology is fundamentally about attempting to discover the essence of an experience. The challenge involved for this dissertation was how to go about discovering the essence of an experience that took place 17 years ago from nine interviews that lasted an average of 40 minutes. And how exactly would one recognise an 'essence'? Although not providing exact answers to these questions Wolcott (1990, p. 35) provides some useful advice in suggesting that the critical task is to thin out most of the data gained by a process of constant winnowing, "The trick is to discover essences and then to reveal those essences with sufficient context, yet not become mired trying to include everything that might possibly be described." There is a critical tension here between not getting bogged down and buried under the mass of data collected by employing a process described above as winnowing and not disregarding data which may at first, second or even third sight have been categorised as irrelevant. Stake (1995) recommends spending the best analytic time on the best data. Undoubtedly this is good advice but it again raises the issue of what are the best data and how to recognise them. The following paragraph describes how I went about this winnowing process of selecting what I considered to be the best data. Diagram 1, which follows this section, provides an illustration of the data analysis process.

During the process of transcription (which I carried out myself) I came to know each of the interview sessions very well. Transcribing from the same small dictaphone recorder used for the interviews involved many plays and rewinds of short phrases and sentences and then playback of longer passages in order to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Once all the interviews were fully transcribed I took each interview in turn and read it carefully, trying to immerse myself in it and gain not just an understanding of the content but an overall feel for the whole. Sometimes, if unsure of exact nuances of meaning I went back to the interview on tape and read and listened at the same time. Once I felt that I had a good grasp of the text I moved on to looking for parts of the interview that related specifically to the Howtown

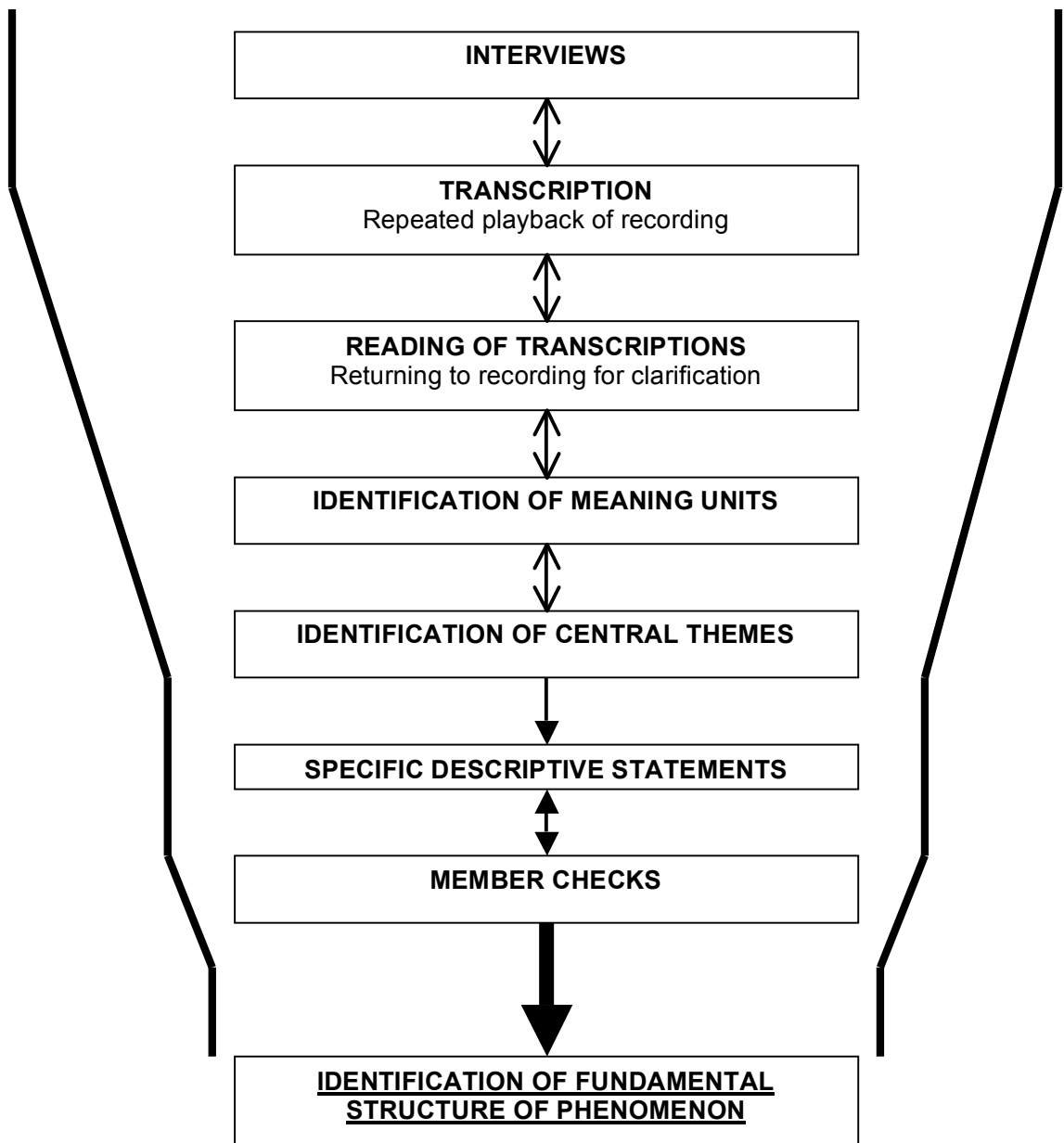
experience and marked out sections that I considered to be meaning units (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59). Wertz (1985, p. 165) defines a meaning unit as “a part of the description whose phrases require each other to stand as a distinguishable moment.” Identifying related groups of phrases which are remarkable in this way is not a straightforward task. The interviews were semi-structured in format using open-ended questions as a springboard for the interviewees to recount their impressions and experiences. One advantage of this approach was that it allowed the interviewees a good deal of freedom to range in and out of various areas and topics of discussion as thoughts came to mind thus providing the opportunity for them to freely arrive at areas which they considered of value. However, when transcribed verbatim, these streams of consciousness did not always lend themselves easily to the process of identifying phrases constituting distinguishable moments. As people naturally tend to do in conversations and thoughts, the interviewees would sometimes jump from one topic to another, start on one train of thought and then immediately abandon it for another only to return at some point to the original train or slight variation of it. This does not detract in any way from the value of the data nor create insurmountable difficulties when analysing them but is simply a recognition of some of the practical realities of using a phenomenological approach.

Once I had identified an individual meaning unit I then summarised its content . This summary was called a central theme (Appendix E). Any meaning units with strong similarities were grouped together under the same central theme. Through a process of refinement involving going back and forth between central themes, meaning units, complete transcripts and recordings of the interviews I eventually arrived at the stage where I was satisfied that there was congruence between the four representations of the interview. I then drew together the central themes of each individual interview to create a single descriptive statement (Giorgi, 1975, p. 88) which I felt represented the essential elements, the essence, of that interviewee’s experience. This description of each interview was specific to that interview and therefore to one person’s experience. Each description was then sent back to the interviewee from whom it had originated in order to ensure that it was indeed a faithful representation of that person’s experience. The interviewees were asked to read over the descriptive

statement distilled from their interview and comment on its accuracy and were also asked if they wished at this stage to add or retract anything. Seven of the nine interviewees replied to this request. Minor adjustments were made to two of the descriptive statements as a result of this process. As a result of only minor adjustments to two of the descriptive statements I made the decision to include the data from the two interviewees who had not replied.

The specific descriptive statements were then all compared against each other and by focusing on the transsituational elements (Giorgi, 1975, p. 88) the “identification of the fundamental structure” of the phenomenon was created (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61). This fundamental structure provides a description of the essence of the Howtown experience. Central themes that formed part of descriptive statements but that were not transsituational are also included in the discussion of results in order to acknowledge the unique themes and illustrate the range of meanings of the phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

Diagram 1 The data analysis process



Chapter 3 Presentation and discussion of results

The first section of this chapter presents the results of the data analysis in the form of the fundamental structure or ‘essence’ (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61) of the 10-day residential outdoor education programme at Howtown as experienced by the interviewees. The fundamental structure comprises four main elements: the overall significance of the experience; physical activity; novelty and unfamiliarity; and personal and social development.

In the second section of the chapter the fundamental structure is discussed and interpreted. To some degree separating the different elements that I have described above in order to be able to discuss each one individually provides a false representation of the experience and does not accurately represent its holistic nature. However, some categorisation is necessary in order to be able to make interpretation and discussion of the experience possible. I have attempted to reconcile this tension by addressing the overall significance of the experience and the physical activity separately whilst the discussion of novelty and unfamiliarity, and personal and social development forms a single section as I considered the links between these two elements too strong to convincingly represent them separately.

Discussion of non-transsituational central themes follows in section three.

3.1 The fundamental structure of the Howtown experience

The Howtown experience was one of the most significant experiences during school years. It stands out as very memorable during a school career of between 11 and 13 years. More than a decade and a half later the events at Howtown still contribute to the friendships of some of those who participated.

The activities were an important part of the experience because they were either completely new or were being carried out in more testing conditions or situations. In addition to this strong novelty value they were also considered to be the sort of activity that was not accessible under most other circumstances. The experience at Howtown was considered a contributory factor for those who continued to participate in outdoor activities.

Being placed in an unfamiliar environment and working in groups which transcended the usual peer or academic groupings at school were factors which contributed to the impact of the experience. These factors were seen as resulting in learning about self and others which did not happen in other educational contexts.

The time spent with peers during activities facilitated the development of new and deeper friendships, many of which continue to this day. The residential aspect of the experience was considered as an experience of increased independence. Being away from home and family was seen as a step outside the comfort and familiarity of the family structure into a more adult world where a greater degree of maturity and responsibility was required. This experience elicited positive responses. The notion of independence and stepping into a more adult world was also evident in the participants' experiences of the physical activities.

3.2.1 Overall significance of the Howtown experience

Although the interviewees struggled at times to articulate specific thoughts about the Howtown experience one thing that they were all able to express was the very positive overall impression that they still hold for the time they spent at the Centre. Some individuals were able to recall with remarkable clarity specific details regarding the 10 days spent in the Lake District 17 years ago. The interviewees recalled their stay at Howtown as one of the most positive experiences of their school years and comments such as those below were often expressed towards the beginning of the interviews as the participants began to reflect on the experience.

[It was]...probably one of the best things we did at school. I mean we went on like German exchanges and other trips and that do you know what I mean? But that's the one really that sticks in your mind because I think if you get young people like that away together and you're doing things together, that's where you sort of, that's where you make mates isn't it? You remember things and like, ye knaa, best time innit? Even now, as an adult, you know what I mean? Like I would love it if someone said, "Right, we're gannin on a week's long adventure"... "holiday", even if we were only going to Howtown for four days, I'd be like, "Get in there!" do you know what I mean? What could be better than that? Cos it literally, it isn't is it?
(Matthew)

Well, it's just one of these holidays that's really memorable. I've been on so many holidays in me life but I mean it is really memorable for all the reasons we talked about, like a combination of all of those things and you know it's definitely up there with...*good holidays* you know I can't think of anything I didn't like about it and I know you've probably got rose-tinted glasses when you come back but I can't remember anyone complaining or moaning or anything bad about it at all, so naw, I think everyone should do it! Yeah!
(Verity)

...it must have been really special, cos we do like remember so much about it and I know from like talking to people just over the years about things that you remember, and it normally is like me falling in the sheep bog or something like that.
(Lucy)

These sentiments give expression to the strength of meaning and value that the interviewees' attribute to the experience. The following sections refer to more specific aspects of the experience and provide a more detailed exposition of what made Howtown "what it is and without which it could not be what it is" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10).

3.2.2 Physical activity

From the phenomenological perspective behaviour is influenced by the phenomena of experience (Cohen & Manion, 2003). Meanings and values are attached to experiences which contribute to the decision making process in subsequent experiences. One of the main reasons participants were attracted to and subsequently enjoyed the outdoor education experience at Howtown was the excitement of new and different activities.

Em, I really, I mean it's quite general, but I really enjoyed it and that was probably one of my first experiences of outdoor activities as such. I'd been walking with my parents and stuff but to actually do canoeing and stuff was my first, that would be my first time, and I loved all of it apart from the caving, yeah.
(Peter)

Activities that were available at Howtown were on the whole perceived by the interviewees to be unavailable in any other context and this was a very strong motivation for wanting to be able to go to Howtown. There were exceptions to this generalisation. One interviewee, Marvin, was very involved in the Scouts and was very competent at most of the activities. For him it was simply an opportunity to spend more time doing what he already loved. Four other participants had done a small amount of walking with parents beforehand but none of the other activities. For the most part the activities taken part in at Howtown were considered not to be available or accessible in the day to day context of life. As Matthew expresses,

Just great isn't it to be outdoors, to do all those different activities that you cannot do, like, but if you based yourself on a lake you cannot go wrong can you? Because if you wanna go for someone to show you how to sail a boat or like paddle a canoe or jump in the water, wey, you cannot do that round here really. Although you've got watersports centres on your doorstep and we're only 15 mile 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?
(Matthew)

Howtown is situated on a lake and so was ideally suited to providing a range of watersports such as sailing, windsurfing, canoeing and kayaking. Despite a river running through the interviewee's home town and being situated, as he states, a relatively short distance from the coast, the water activities at Howtown seemed

inaccessible to him in any other context. Other activities were referred to in a similar vein.

I definitely enjoyed em, the abseiling and rock climbing that was something you couldn't have done at all on your own.
(Sara)

However, despite attaching positive significance to these activities participants did not, for the most part, continue to engage in them subsequent to their time at Howtown. There are two important exceptions to this overall picture which I shall now discuss.

Although the experience at Howtown did not have a strong influence on subsequent physical activity patterns in terms of regular participation it did have a notable influence on attitudes towards being and exercising in the countryside. This was almost entirely expressed in terms of hillwalking or walking in the countryside. Jerry describes how the experience at Howtown “reignited” his love for the Lake District after having visited the area on several occasions with his family as a younger child.

...it reignited em like me love for the Lakes [Lake District] and that area, I mean it's so funny every single time I go back over to the Lakes with Katy or me Mam and Dad or whoever, I'm al..., I always look on the map for Howtown,
(Jerry)

One of the significant aspects of the experience at Howtown for Jerry in terms of physical activity in later life makes links with discussion later in this chapter regarding adulthood and independence. Although he had been to the Lake District with his family the Howtown experience was significant because he felt that this was *his* experience and this led him to consider that it was something that he was able to continue to do himself and wanted to continue to do for himself. Jerry considers his experiences with his parents were contributory but one gets the impression that they might have just stayed as childhood memories if not for the opportunity to experience it more independently. Later in the interview he describes having returned to the Lake District independently and his motivation for doing so.

Interviewer: So when you go back now what do you go back to do? When you were saying you go back with Katy...?

Mainly walking, mainly walk yeah, em, maybe we'll get to multi-activities, you know doing the activities but I suppose, I suppose it's different when you do it with er, if you go back with your wife and that. I remember I went back with Joe [school friend] for a, we went for like a long weekend and we camped in Glen Ridding just at the base of Hellvellyn.

Interviewer: And what made you go back and do that?

Just cos you had the bug, it's a beautiful place you know...I kind of defy anyone to experience a big sunny walk up Hellvellyn and not be moved by it to a certain extent, certainly when they get to a certain age. You know...it doesn't matter what their background is, you know their social...upbringing and that, everyone, anyone that climbs to the top of something like that feels a sense of achievement.... I find it very, very interesting how, em, I just feel a longing to go back, cos it, it's a kind of magical place without being a bit too soppy about it.

(Jerry)

Jerry believes that an experience such as Howtown contributes towards engendering a desire for being in beautiful environments such as the Lake District and that this desire remains with participants into adult life. Appendix F shows that hillwalking/walking in the countryside is the most popular form of activity in terms of the total number of interviewees participating in different forms of physical activity. Although it is not the most frequently engaged in, when interviewees have the time available (time constraints and travelling distance were regularly cited as barriers) it is the activity they are most inclined to choose to do. Jerry's impression is that this desire to take part in physical exercise in what he considers to be beautiful environments is a common phenomenon amongst people of his age. He sees this as being a result of opportunities that are not so common for young people nowadays.

It brings out those things in you, and now people of a certain age group, have, you know the lads that work with me or whatever, em, all of them do that kind of thing...all of them do at least one or two weekends a year, going over to Wales, or the Lakes, and just getting out. People our age who still go out and do all the boozing and rock and rolling and this, that and the other, you know and some proper tearaways and that but everyone, everyone of our kind of age group...because they've done it once or twice because that was still a viable thing to do, when we were kids, your parents took you away or whatever. Em, most people who've done it once get the bug, you know, and that's what it is...and it's come from a variety of sources, you know from my dad, the Howtown thing particularly cemented it because it was the first time I did it alone, you know?

(Jerry)

Verity and Lucy's comments below tally with Jerry's regarding one of the main motivations for going out walking; primarily this is expressed in phrases such as a desire to "get out" or to "enjoy the fresh air".

...me and Mark go walking, we'd go to the Lakes for the day and go for a walk, so I suppose in that sense – yeah. We'd do that, em, but not in terms of the canoeing or the rock climbing or anything like that, em...I would say, you know, weather permitting we would go, we'd head off like once a month, you know just go away, just for the day normally, just head across [to the Lakes], probably moreso in the summer, like we're not going away in the summer so we'd just take odd days and go across to the Lakes and walk and you know, just to, well just cos it's enjoyable to get out really...
(Lucy)

...we often go, I mean it's just walking outside I mean it's no big deal but it's quite hilly and it's nice in the countryside for Glasgow, Motherwell, Lanarkshire area. And there's a couple of other places here that I just like to be outside and enjoy the fresh air.
(Verity)

The need to be in a non-urban environment is essential to the definition of walking implicit in the interviews. Landscapes as exemplified by the Lake District are a significant element of the activity; it is environment specific. The perception of beauty, wildness and space are vital to the feelings of satisfaction and achievement that result from the activity of hillwalking or walking in the countryside.

I like the...getting back to nature in a sense. I've always got this feeling that where we came from is probably a better place to be and that being out there without walls and ceilings and that sort of thing is closer to that, I feel comfortable with that. I love the views...I think aesthetically it's very nice. More and more now as I get older I like that nature side...
(Marvin)

...we've done, er the New Forest a couple of times you know, anywhere to get out and have a bloody walk, to be honest, just to get out and have a walk and feel a bit of nature and you know, all of that routine.
(Jerry)

...the hillwalking is more, although there is an element of personal challenge, it's more for the scenery, I just love the views. I guess that's probably the high in that.
(Peter)

I think that in terms of outdoors, not just the sports, but actually just being outdoors in the middle of nowhere there's a tremendous beauty in that and I think that always can be enjoyed.

(Sara)

It is not an activity in which participation is motivated by a desire to keep fit.

Although interviewees were aware that some degree of fitness was probably a by-product and so this provided some secondary motivation they were also aware that the frequency with which they were able to go hillwalking was not alone sufficient to make significant changes to their overall levels of fitness.

Two interviewees attributed participation in a different activity to the experience at Howtown. Charles and Peter are both regular kayakers. They estimate that they go kayaking two days a month and three days a month respectively during the winter months. The frequency of their kayak outings reduces during the summer months as river water levels are not always suitable. Neither person had been kayaking before their experience at Howtown.

...from that very first experience I went back and did an, em, like the next step which was a week's kayaking, which is like my hobby now, so, yeah yeah it certainly has influenced us [me] but I can't pinpoint specifics.

(Peter)

Although Howtown enthused Peter to continue kayaking it was the involvement in a youth club near his home following the Howtown experience which provided regular opportunities to go kayaking, canoeing and hillwalking. This may explain the final few words of the quotation above which he uses in such a way as to suggest that Howtown was not the only influence on what led to his continued interest in kayaking. Charles attended the same club as Peter subsequent to his experience at Howtown. The motivation for both interviewees with regard to kayaking involved a combination of being active outside, personal challenge and socialising with friends.

Kayaking...it's the buzz and the excitement I get out of it and personal challenge to overcome something, is quite demanding, and where a lot of people do look at a freezing cold river it's like well actually getting out there, getting the water splashed in your face, coming home with a big red face, but also a smile on your face. Em, and er, also to be with friends as well which is probably the most important reason why I do it all, just to be out and have a bit chat with friends.

(Peter)

I think nowadays, it's, it's a bit more, I think I appreciate the nature more, like I can't go paddling now without seeing the beauty around you and that, you know? Like the trees in the autumn and all the rest of it. You know you get away with your mates and you come back refreshed, feeling refreshed afterwards. I like to think of myself as fit and healthy like, so a lot of what I do is motivated by that but that's not what kayaking's about though. It's more like, you know, every time you go out it's different even if it's paddling same river. It's got to be outside like, you know outside is like free and that, you know, it was created freely like so you should be able to enjoy it freely. The rock and the water have always been there you know? They're like there to explore and that and you like find something different every time. It's kinda like there's a...you know like a kinda, sort of joy and sadness in the outdoors. You know you don't find that indoors, it's a false environment, it's safer so there's less, less achievement and buzz. I hate doing stuff indoors, like why would you go indoors when you can do stuff outside?
(Charles)

With the exception of Marvin, Peter and Charles were the only two interviewees who discussed attending any organised club which provided them with further opportunities subsequent to the Howtown experience. Marvin was unique amongst the interviewees in that he had a good deal of experience in several different outdoor activities prior to attending Howtown. This experience was due to regular involvement with a local Cub Scout troop. He continued several of these activities into adulthood, eventually training and qualifying as a mountain guide.

Understandably, participants found it difficult to specify exactly how and to what degree Howtown was influential on their current physical activity. The interviewees did not wish to make claims about the impact of Howtown that they could not substantiate and hesitated in attributing specific importance to single events in childhood or adolescence. Verity discusses this point,

I think every experience you have when you're growing up has some kind of influence, I mean, it's difficult to say if that's [Howtown] the determinant factor but it must have factored in somewhere along the line. For example, although as a child I would go horse riding and into the mountains to go camping with me mam and dad, we never went orienteering and as a family we didn't go windsurfin', well me brother did actually, em so it was just different experience, so I'm not sure if that was like I say the determinant factor or not but that walking experience definitely changed my opinion if you like of walking, cos I went like *rambling* with me mam and dad after that a few times (laughs), I suppose it did, yeah, to a certain extent, the rambling! (Verity)

Although the following quotation refers to what led Marvin to his choice of career as opposed to the influence of the Howtown experience on physical activity in adult life, it supports Verity's statement.

I would say probably in the sense that all of those experiences culminated in me going into a job in the mountains really, er, I don't know whether I could say that any single experience at Howtown or any of the other things I did...I don't think I could really because at that time of my life I was always outdoors...so I think it would be difficult to say that yeah it was Howtown that did *x, y, z* but em, I'm sure it must have had a definite positive influence cos I ended up doing what I did [mountain guide].
(Marvin)

Verity clearly had numerous opportunities during childhood to participate in various different activities. Understandably, she considers that all of these experiences will have influenced and shaped the person she is now. However, there is one particular, unexpected influence that she does attribute to Howtown. At an earlier stage of the interview she recounts how she was not expecting to enjoy the hillwalking and camping activity but in the event it turned out to be the thing she enjoyed the most. The word "rambling" in the quotation above was emphasised by Verity in such a way as to express how unlikely it would be that a teenager would actively desire to participate in such an activity with her parents. The experience at Howtown must have had a strong effect to result in such an outcome. Verity estimated that she now goes walking in the hills or countryside close to her home approximately once a month. As she states, there is no way of knowing whether Howtown was the determinant factor in the development of this pattern of activity but she does consider the experience as a contributory factor.

The Howtown experience was a unique experience for most of the interviewees in terms of physical activities. Interviewees typically considered it as a contributory factor in a desire to exercise outdoors. This is seen most clearly in attitudes towards hillwalking. The relationship between Howtown and physical activity in later life is most strongly seen in contributing towards an appreciation of or a desire to exercise in a non-urban environment as opposed to participating in an activity which might contribute towards levels of fitness. When discussing fitness interviewees referred to activities which are convenient and short in duration such as going to the gym and

going for a run. Outdoor activities were considered as requiring a lot of time. It also seems significant that Peter, Charles and Marvin, who continued regular outdoor activities subsequent to the Howtown experience, were all involved in organised clubs of some description which provided them with the opportunity to continue to participate in their favoured activities.

3.2.3 Unfamiliarity and personal and social development

As well as the novelty and unfamiliarity with regards to the activities engaged in interviewees also made reference to the unfamiliar environment – both geographical and social. Interviewees considered that this led to reflection and learning about self and others that was unique to the Howtown context.

...you were put in an alien situation a lot of the time, and I think I was quite lucky in the fact that I was already particularly fit through all the training I did anyway, but I know you were put in...well it was cold and it was wet and you know, if you were Christine, Lardy's eaten all your packed lunch! (laughs) On day one of the three day camping trip! You, you know you were put in situations where you had to adapt and learn to work together and, it couldn't just be any other holiday cos any other holiday wouldn't be as good cos you would be bored and you wouldn't have enough to do.
(Lucy)

...what kind of got you was that it was sort of new, these were new things, that you'd never done before, that you'd kind of seen other people doing, and so you know, am I equipped to do that? You know, I mean, I'd never camped out before other than in the back garden, you know, when we were kids and then this that and the other and em, you know, never actually gone away and camped and that in itself, it, it was challenging, you know, it kind of made you think, oh God, are we, are we up to this?
(Jerry)

Situations arose as a result of the activities that were significant aside and apart from the actual physical activity itself. Lucy refers to a variety of situations which were "alien" to her. Indirectly she suggests that the physical challenge was of a greater degree than most participants would have been used to. Uncommon demands were put on physical fitness, ability to withstand being cold and wet and dealing with domestic and social matters such as one's tent partner eating significantly more than their share of the communal food. These novel and testing situations requiring participants to develop new skills and abilities, both personal and interpersonal, were seen as positive experiences.

The Scottish national guidelines document for the curricular area of personal and social development describes personal and social development as being fundamental to a child's education (SOED, 1993b). This curricular area looks at working towards pupils having an appropriately positive regard for self and others; developing skills which will allow them to participate appropriately in society; being able to consider and evaluate values they and others hold and recognise the impact that these have on everyday life; and being able to take increasing responsibility for themselves. It is clear that the interviewees encountered opportunities at Howtown for significant learning in all of the above-stated areas of personal and social development.

there was also an element of, I mean it's funny it never actually comes to you until you start thinking about it. This has only just come to me now...it's only when you think about it that there is an element of camaraderie developed there. Especially when you did things like the hiking over... You know, the, the walking over or when you did the abseiling and some people were shitting themselves to do it...and you'd coax them over you know and they'd do it and you would kind of help each other out... there was no element of...skiing is like ultra competitive, you know? And you're all in your groups and you're all trying to show off, all trying to spray each other when you stop and invariably you end up sliding through a pile of people, but this there was a little bit more togetherness, you know, you all went out hiking together and you're all knackered, you know, and then you'd all like pitch the tent and while it was fun, more than anything it was a learning experience, you learned things about yourself.

(Jerry)

It is not clear from this extract whether Jerry feels that the cooperative aspect of his time at Howtown translated into changed behaviour subsequently but it is perhaps important to note that he now sees this as standing in marked contrast to other, comparable experiences whilst at school. The testing situations, from his perspective, brought people together and engendered situations of learning about oneself whereas, by inference, comparable situations led more to competitive individuality. Marvin speaks of a similar sentiment,

It was a really sort of profoundly relaxing experience, I think for everybody, and people who wouldn't ordinarily have got on with each other at school or mixed with each other just came together.

Interviewer: Why do you think that was?

Em, I think possibly, I don't know, everybody was dripping wet, everybody was wearing horrible waterproofs, most of us probably stunk a bit, and er, I

think it probably strips back a lot of the pretensions that people hide under when they're at school or in their environment. I dunno if that's why, never really thought of it I suppose... maybe the independence cos you are out there, you put your own tent up, you're cooking for yourself, it's a bit more grown up and maybe people just respond to that, I don't know.
(Marvin)

Marvin expresses quite clearly the way in which the activities and conditions created a situation which contributed towards more open social interaction. What he perceived as being the masks and barriers that people live behind, and perhaps feel unable to remove, in their everyday lives were removed. This idea of being tested bringing out elements of team work and social cohesion is reiterated by Peter,

Definitely, definitely, em just, from what I've experienced it's good to be part of a team and doing the activities you've got to work together as a team otherwise it just wouldn't work, you'd have people falling and struggling all over. Em and just the friends you make, em, it's just an excellent way of getting to know people, talk to people and share... I mean you're both in, you're all in settings that nobody's used to so you're all equals, there's no, "Oh I'm a good footballer" or whatever, you're just all equals, you get on and do it really.
(Peter)

Peter's comment refers particularly to the theme of novelty and unfamiliarity discussed earlier. The new environment was seen as a positive factor in creating a situation where all students were able to contribute with less of the burden of preconceived notions that he implies tend to dominate the home or school environment. Schools are institutions which carry with them their own social codes and expectations. The relevance of the 'good footballer' reference perhaps concerns the status given to certain students within the school according to particular 'performance indicators'. Football was the main team (for boys) run by Peter's school and so those who were on it perhaps achieved a certain recognition which then influenced their social standing within school life. The opportunity to break down some of these 'social classes' and socialise outside the normal or established peer groups in an unusual context was a levelling factor in Peter's mind. Jane makes a comment along similar lines that refers specifically to interaction between males and females,

I think you get to see a different side of your friends as well cos you spend so much time, you, you know well normally it's just nine 'til four wasn't it? And I

think you really bonded with certain people, I certainly did with em, Barry what's-his-name (laughs), Barry Jones, albeit through sheer terror, em, no I just, you know, cos it was all that teambuilding and it was, it was certainly a lot more interaction with boys and girls cos you were usually put half boy, half girl, much more than what you ever did at school, certainly got to know a lot of the lads better, em, than what I did on a one-to-one at school,
(Jane)

Jane's reference to bonding with Barry relates to a group activity involving a walk in the dark. She had been slipping and sliding and he had been able to help her along. Students were divided into groups of approximately 8-10 with a roughly even split of males and females in each group. Although the school was a co-educational comprehensive Jane's comment implies that the opportunities to get to know members of the opposite sex as friends in a more meaningful way was facilitated at Howtown. This is similar to the way in which Peter's comments refer to relationships with members of the same sex but within different peer or social groups.

As well as the interaction with people from different peer or social groups and members of the opposite sex Jane's comment above also refers to seeing different sides of the friends you already have. Matthew refers to his consideration of the residential element of the experience being a major contribution in this.

I would say its even character building to sleep in a dormitory with your friends and em, you knaa, just to spend that quality time that, you know, when you're at school you know your mates and that and kick around with a certain amount of people but even then your time's limited and you're doing, to be honest, the things which come easy to you, kicking round the streets, kicking a football down the park or whatever whereas when you go there it's like opening Pandora's Box,
(Matthew)

The wonderfully metaphoric reference to opening Pandora's box gives an insight into just how different this experience felt for Matthew compared to the comfortable familiarity of social relations in the home or everyday environment. The experience of sleeping together in the same dormitory is considered to be a learning experience. The hours outside of those normally spent with friends, the "nine 'til four" that Jane refers to or the "kicking round the streets" that Matthew refers to are a challenge just as the activities are a challenge. "Quality time" seems to mean the hours between

coming home from socialising with friends and seeing them again the next morning. These hours, most of which presumably would be spent sleeping, nevertheless somehow seem to represent an opportunity to get to know other people in a deeper way. Exactly what it is about this period of the day that makes it special is unclear. It may be something related to the way people behave when they are tired. Or, perhaps it is the simplicity of sharing the banal rituals of everyday life such as washing and sleeping that render the pretensions and facades that Marvin refers to earlier more transparent. Whatever it is, the time together is seen as vital to the process of developing deeper relationships.

In a quotation above Marvin makes reference to the camping activity seeming a more grown-up situation and people responding to that with more mature behaviour. References to adulthood and independence came through strongly with regard to many situations at Howtown during the interviews. Howtown is situated in the Lake District approximately 100 miles away from the town where the school which the participants attended is located. Although this is not a great distance and would only take in the region of two hours travelling time the element of separation from home was seen as significant. When discussing what he felt made the Howtown experience unique Matthew stated that it was partly related to being allowed to leave home.

I think the whole responsibility of being allowed to go away from home, by your parents...like living, like potentially away from home with a group of people that you didn't know, just, I dunno, just like pushing yourself on, to be slightly independent from your parents and home, like stepping towards like, I divvenaa, the adult world if you like.
(Matthew)

The significance of the separation is that it is perceived by participants, as illustrated by Matthew's comment above, as being associated with responsibility. The participants seem to pick up on an implicit message that parents have sanctioned the trip because they consider their child mature enough to be able to cope. This is considered an important moment. Matthew very accurately and succinctly describes an essence of the experience that came through in all the interviewees' reflections on the experience; that in some way Howtown represented a step towards adulthood. Interest in this transition from childhood to adulthood, often referred to as a rite of

passage is an area of interest within the field of outdoor education (Beames, 2004b; Bell, 2003).

In addition to the separation enforced by the residential nature of the experience the activities themselves also figured strongly in the interviewees' reflections on their sense of new responsibility and independence at Howtown. The meanings and values that they attributed prior to participation in the activities mainly consisted of the excitement of the opportunity to participate in something new or inaccessible as mentioned previously. Reflections upon the meanings attributed subsequent to participation in certain activities revealed some interesting insights. In the excerpt below Jerry reflects on his experience of sailing in the small two-person dinghies.

we did...em...Topper sailing, which I remember thinking, that looks impossible and it looks boring, but if I'm honest I probably enjoyed that more than any of the activities there, much to my surprise, you know, it was brilliant, you really, you really learned what to do and it was a real...er...

Interviewer: What was it about that that you particularly enjoyed?

The fact that it was probably the one thing...it was a technique thing, it wasn't just, it wasn't just em, you know anyone can hike up a mountain, anyone can walk for hours and hours, you know canoeing isn't difficult to do, em...orienteeing is (laughs) especially when you've got Joe reading the map, em, and it, it, cos that was like, that was like the newest thing, you know even though you were nervous about stuff like climbing you knew you could do it, cos you climb trees and you climb this, that and the other, but Topper sailing seemed like this technical thing, it seemed like a more adult activity, to be honest, if you, that's the expression I'm looking for. It was a more grown up thing to do because you had to appreciate things like wind and tacking into the wind and this, that out of the wind and all the rest of it. And do things like rolling the boat and standing up on it and pulling it back up. That was a real, that was a real accomplishment to be honest,
(Jerry)

The features that made activities enjoyable were not just characterised by physical challenge or how exciting they looked at first sight. Often the activities that interviewees had expected to enjoy because they thought they would be exciting such as rock climbing or abseiling did not live up to expectation and in this situation an activity that looked "boring" (a teenager's most damning verdict on anything?) turned out to be one of the highlights of the week. Jerry's impression was that

“anyone” can cope with the physical nature of walking up a hill or paddling a canoe but the satisfaction of sailing was related to the strong cognitive element. Perhaps for a physically able young man this set a greater challenge than encountered in other activities and therefore led to a more meaningful and memorable achievement.

Other descriptions of the sensation of living and working in an adult world were common. Sara evokes below the mixed feelings of concern and satisfaction at working within a more independent framework.

...the sort of responsibility of having to...I remember when we did go camping we had to sort of find our own way back! And I just sort of remember thinking, “There’s no adults here with us I wonder if they know where we are!” And the fact that we had to meet at this point and there was, I dunno, four or five of us or something? Maybe there was more I can’t remember, but I know there was no adults there with us at one point, thinking isn’t this really good, and your sense of achievement of that at the end.
(Sara)

In this situation students were tasked with finding their own way back to the outdoor centre without direct supervision. Other comments referred to simple things such as putting up your own tent, cooking your own camp food and looking after your own walking boots to make sure they were clean and dry for the next day. All of these factors in different ways built up a scenario within which students felt more responsible, more independent and more adult. Perhaps one of the reasons for the impact of situations which led to feelings of independence and adulthood was the reality of direct and immediate consequences. If the tent was forgotten there was no sheltered place to sleep, without a well erected tent there was no chance of staying dry through the night if it rained. Food had to be cooked to avoid going hungry, wet boots were still wet the next day if they weren’t placed in the drying room. Small as they may seem simple demands such as these left marked impressions on the participants. Other consequences associated with the activities themselves were also recounted.

I mean you were supervised but you did it yourself, I mean I remember, going back to achievements...Hellvellyn, we did Hellvellyn, that was an achievement, that felt like you’d climbed up a bloody mountain, you know you, you did, you felt like you’d climbed a mountain. You know it’s only like 800 feet or somethin’ isn’t it? 800 metres or 800 feet? 800 metres is it? Yeah. It was only 800 metres and you know that in itself is just like, it was the greatest

feeling in the world standing on the cairn at the top and that and coming up Striding Edge or Swirrel Edge or whatever and looking down at the tarn, Red Tarn or whatever, em, you know, you know you felt, you felt it was like scary. You know you were like, bloody hell anyone could like quite considerably fall off here and that's what it was, you weren't quite as mollycoddled, you know you had to kind of do it yourself, it was a little bit more regimented and em, you sort of had to, had to perform. To be honest there would have been, would have been no shame in some people turning round and saying, "I'm not doing this." You know cos some of that, going up there on an edge like that is a bloody scary thing to do...you know?
(Jerry)

The feeling of independence within a supervised atmosphere created the opportunity whereby participants felt a strong sense of achievement on many occasions; these successes were 'theirs'. Some of the achievements such as that described above were felt to be of a scale never experienced before and required a certain type of focus to achieve. The vital importance of ownership of the achievement is explained by Matthew,

...being allowed to have a certain amount of responsibility for yourself in activities which are probably like quite dangerous, I mean, do you know what I mean, aye you've still got people looking after you and that but there's still an onus on yourself to be like sensible.
(Matthew)

Participants were aware that, despite the presence of "people looking after you", Howtown was an environment that was, or appeared to be, less controlled than they were used to in everyday life. The consequences of not being sensible and responsible for oneself felt very real and potentially serious. The implication of Matthew's statement above, and similar statements, was that the consequences of not being sensible and responsible in the home environment did not have, or were not perceived to have, the same impact. Howtown provided an opportunity for participants to experience and understand for themselves the necessity of responsible behaviour. This is not to suggest that situations in the home environment did not, or were not perceived by certain other people, to necessitate responsible behaviour. The important point is that Howtown facilitated the experience of a different world which the participants *themselves* felt required different behaviour.

The experiences of the interviewees at Howtown would seem to support the claim made in the Scottish 5-14 curricular guidelines that “Outdoor education can provide an invaluable means of delivering all the outcomes of personal and social development. In particular, residential experience, with its different rules and conventions, provides excellent contexts for developing skills.” (SOED, 1993b, p. 24).

3.3 Non-transsituational central themes

Discussion of these elements of the experience is important in order to acknowledge and illustrate the range of values and meanings that participants attribute to the Howtown experience (Stake, 1995).

3.3.1 Low cost

The 10-day programme at Howtown came at a cost to participants of £32. This was mentioned as important in that it allowed students to participate who would not normally have been able to afford extended school trips and excursions.

...actually I never actually went on any school trips at all, I didn't go on the German exchange or skiing or anything with school... I just never asked me mam and dad to go but this was obviously so cheap and just so you know I didn't feel I couldn't ask to go on this... I remember mine and Joannes' mam saying, “God you can't feed them at home for 32 quid for 10 days! (laughs) We'll just keep them there!”

(Lucy)

I remember we got this [Howtown] on a shoestring. It was like something like 40 quid or something daft like that, not even that, it was like a token amount of money to go...I dunno it might have been subsidised, I've nee idea.

(Jerry)

...there was the Howtown group and then there was the skiers wasn't there? Can you remember that? Some of them used to go to both. But usually you went skiing or you went on the cheaper school holiday, the cheaper school holiday was Howtown.

(Verity)

3.3.2 Enjoyable hardship

Some aspects of the experience that interviewees referred to as positive result from certain types of hardship. Although this aspect of the experience is covered to some

degree in section 3.2.3 regarding novelty and personal and social development there is also an element of it that is worthy of mention in its own right but that was not fundamental to the structure of the experience.

I remember camping overnight near a river and us having the shittest food ever to prepare, like beans and dried up Smash and like all of this stuff but thoroughly enjoying the experience I mean it was...I remember being hungry cos I'm quite a hungry kind of person. Just much hilarity over the evening cos you know just camping out in the middle of nowhere, midges everywhere, pouring with rain, you know if you're an adult nowadays you'd probably be like, "Nn, I'm going home" well Fred [partner] would be like that anyway I'm sure but at the time it was brilliant.
(Verity)

...it was everything from rinse your own wetsuit out, stick it through the mangle, you know everything from go and clean your own boots make sure they're all scrubbed off and that before, on the night, clack all the mud off and scratch them off before you're allowed to go in. I do, it wasn't boot camp you know, but there was an element of er, it was slightly regimented, but that was good but there was you know a discipline to it...I don't remember there being any boozein and you know kids always find a way, to, to do that, em, I don't remember there being any of that and I do remember it being a little bit, little bit stricter but...I wasn't sorry for that...you know? I wasn't sorry for that, I, I enjoyed that, so that was it that was a kind of high in itself, you know?
(Jerry)

Enjoyment of the experience was related to the novelty of different situations and the opportunities for new learning and understanding that they provided but in addition to that a degree of hardship was significant for some of the interviewees. There seems to be a particular pleasure in being tested by situations requiring both physical and mental stamina. These situations seem to occur mostly during activities such as hiking and camping which are of longer duration than most others and also as a result of the personal responsibilities integral to the residential experience itself.

3.3.3 Negative image

Verity (section 3.2.1) and Jerry both made references to the unfashionable image of hillwalking or "rambling" and of the people who take part in this activity. For Verity a positive experience completely changed her original perception which is quite possibly a barrier to participation for many young people. In the passage below Jerry reflects on the image he considers to be associated with hillwalking.

I do know some people who just couldn't give two hoots about it, because it's not a cool thing to do. People are so obsessed with image and this, that and the other that going hiking you know, let's face it there is a piss-take culture that surrounds it, you know the whole rambling like bit, you know the whole like lunatics with maps and all that routine.... You know everyone's guilty of it at some time but...it's just not sexy, I dunno, people have maybe, you don't wear sexy clothes to do it...and people just associate it with wet, drizzle and hostile northerners and people with one eye and em all the rest of it, but you know, people do have misguided associations of what it's about.
(Jerry)

Hillwalking and walking in the countryside in their adult life is a favoured recreational pastime for the participants in this research. Documents referred to in chapter 2 (HMIE, 1995; HMIE, 2001; Scottish Executive, 2004) suggest that broadening the range of opportunities to participate in physical activity is vital to encouraging and increasing participation in physical activity. Although some of the participants in this study perceive hillwalking as unfashionable and having a negative image among young people they expressed in their interviews how much they enjoyed it as an activity at Howtown and how much they still enjoy it now. It seems that providing opportunities for young people to change their perceptions about this activity could be one way of encouraging a means of physical activity that the vast majority of the population is physically capable of.

Van Manen (1990, p. 10) describes phenomenology as asking "for the very nature of a phenomenon, for that which makes a some-'thing' what it is and without which it could not be what it is". In this chapter I have discussed the fundamental structure of the Howtown experience from the viewpoint of the interviewees. For the participants in this research the essence of Howtown is based on four main elements: an overarching significance in the context of their years in primary and secondary education; outdoor activity; novelty and unfamiliarity; and personal and social development.

Concluding comments

This dissertation investigates the meanings and values that a group of adults aged between 30 and 31 years attribute to a residential outdoor education experience that took place 17 years ago. More specifically, its aim is to investigate the possibility of a relationship between school-age experiences of outdoor education and recreational physical activity behaviour patterns in adult life.

Physical inactivity is of growing concern throughout the developed and developing worlds (WHO, 2002a). It is one of the most widespread determinants of poor health in Scotland. Concern relates to men, women and children (Joint Health Surveys Unit, 2000). Educational institutions and systems are considered as having an important role to play in promoting healthy lifestyles (WHA, 2004). In the United Kingdom this approach is evidenced by numerous Government reports, studies and documents (QCA, n/d; Scottish Executive, 2003a; Scottish Executive, 2003b) which explore and discuss how to address the issue.

Outdoor education has a strong history within the United Kingdom education system, particularly so since the Second World War (Higgins, 2002; Nicol, 2002a). Physical health and fitness are ever-present elements within the various traditions of outdoor education that have developed in the United Kingdom. However, there is little evidence to provide understanding of exactly what long-term effects, if any, outdoor education experiences and programmes have on participants in terms of physical activity and health (Rickinson et al., 2004, p. 32). This dissertation has taken one step towards addressing this lack of research.

The results of this dissertation demonstrate that, overall, the residential outdoor experience at Howtown was a very positive experience for the interviewees. It stands out as one of, if not the, most significant and memorable experience of their school years. Interviewees were initially attracted to Howtown by the opportunity to take part in new and exciting activities that they considered were not accessible in any

other context. The opportunity to go away with friends was also an important part of wanting to be involved. From the results of this dissertation it seems that the personal and social elements of the experience were the most significant. This would support the claims that residential outdoor education experiences provide particularly rich experiences for learning about self and others (SOED, 1993b). Howtown was also seen as an important moment in taking a step towards adulthood.

This dissertation aimed specifically to investigate any relationship between the Howtown experience and physical activity patterns in adult life. The results demonstrate a relationship which is limited but worthy of further investigation. The comment of the AHOEC (1988, p. 12) that, “the chief concern [of outdoor education] was to introduce the skills or knowledge that would eventually lead to participants being self sufficient in leisure activities”, holds some weight in the light of the results of this study. All of the participants were confident about walking out in the countryside or, for some, tackling more challenging walks in the Lake District and Scotland. Approximately half of the participants had prior experience of hillwalking; mostly with parents. From the limited number of participants in this dissertation there would appear to be a relationship between influences such as these and the regularity that participants go walking in their adult lives (and how much they would like to do more if they had the time). Two of the participants continue to take part in kayaking on a regular and relatively frequent basis. Notably, they both had access to a club which provided them with the opportunity to continue this activity that they had discovered at Howtown.

Interviewees did consider Howtown as a contributory factor in the physical activity that they choose to participate in in adult life. Understandably, they referred to it as one factor amongst many which has influenced their activity patterns. Interestingly, only one participant continues to participate in an activity (football) that might be considered as typical of physical education lessons in schools (see Appendix F). This tallies with research which demonstrates a sharp decline in participation rates in physical activity beyond statutory education (Alexander, Currie & Todd, 2003). It also highlights the need for further research to investigate the relationship between

provision of opportunities for physical activity in mainstream education and patterns of physical activity in later life. Interviewees took part in the activities to which they attributed some relationship to Howtown primarily for enjoyment. The desire to be outside in what they considered to be a beautiful and restorative environment, with friends or partners was the main motivation. For some an element of physical challenge was important too. Benefits to physical fitness were of definite secondary importance. Outdoor activities were not seen as a means of maintaining fitness. For this, participants recognised that regular exercise of shorter duration was important. Outdoor activities were considered as too time consuming to play a prominent role in fitness but they were considered as contributory.

As Cheesmond and Yates found (1979, p. 161) the outdoor activities at Howtown were very popular amongst participants. It is difficult to generalise this finding to a wider population as Howtown participants were all volunteers. However, they were volunteering, for the most part, for activities which they had no experience of. It would seem reasonable to suggest from the findings of this research that outdoor activities might be one way of attempting to broaden participation in physical activity. Further research is necessary in order to be able to make generalisations about the influence of outdoor education to a wider population. In addition, as outdoor education experiences in schools tend to be one-off experiences there is the possibility that the novelty associated with them leads to a 'rose-tinted' view that might not be the case were it a regular part of the school curriculum. Research into the experiences of students who do participate in regular outdoor activities as part of the school curriculum would be very valuable. This would also provide the opportunity to investigate the effects of regular participation in outdoor activities in one's local environment on physical activity patterns in later life. It is possible that the unique nature of an experience such as Howtown, whilst providing opportunities that students consider as inaccessible in their everyday life, in fact reinforces the perception that outdoor activities are inaccessible in day to day life.

Other areas for further research that might be considered include the relationship between age and attitudes to outdoor activities. One interviewee in particular

discussed how he no longer played sports such as rugby due to the fact that he found that as he got older he picked up injuries more easily and took longer to recover from them. He now tends to participate in less high impact physical activity of which hillwalking is one example. Several interviewees made reference to the importance of being 'in the open air' or 'in nature'. Research into what exactly this means could be useful in providing information and access to spaces that fulfil these requirements that do not necessitate long journeys to reach them. Finally, further research into the influence of gender on experiences of and attitudes towards outdoor education experiences would be useful.

The concluding comments above provide insights into the meanings and values that participants of a residential outdoor education experience at Howtown Outdoor Education Centre attribute to that experience with particular reference to the influence of that experience on physical activity in later life. These insights provide a useful illumination into the experience of one group of people which also raises possibilities for further research in this area.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview protocol

Can you start by describing in as much detail as you can what you can remember about your time at Howtown?

Prompts might include suggesting thinking about:
place – sights, sounds, smells
people - friends, other pupils, staff
activities

Howtown was something you had to volunteer for. Can you remember why you wanted to go to Howtown?

What things, if any, stand out in particular about the experience?

Prompts:

Any particular moments or experiences? Highs or lows?

If you were 14 again and you had the chance would you go again? Why?

If you had a 14 year old child would you encourage them to go? Why?

If you had the chance to go again now, would you? Why/why not?

Would you say the experience has influenced you in any way? If so, in what way or ways?

Is there anything that you did at Howtown that you continue to do now?

Is there anything that we haven't discussed about your time at Howtown and your thoughts and feelings about it that you would like to add?

Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix B

Example of letter of thanks

Address

Date

Hi NAME,

This letter is just to follow up on yesterday's interview and confirm in writing a few things that I mentioned then.

First of all thanks very much for your time. Without the help of all those who have agreed to be interviewed there would be no study. I hope it wasn't too arduous an experience dredging up those memories of freezing lakes. I've certainly enjoyed hearing about people's experiences and the excuse it's given me to catch up with folk I haven't seen or spoken to for a long time.

So, as I said yesterday, you can of course decide to withdraw your contribution at any time up to the printing of the final document if you wish. Everything you mentioned during the interview is confidential and all efforts will be made to keep your contribution anonymous in the final report. I know that makes it all sound a bit cloak and dagger but it's just standard practice whatever the subject matter is.

If you are still ok with it I will send a summary of the interview to you to read over and tell me if you agree it is an accurate record of what was said.

Thanks again for your help,

All the best,

Appendix C

Example of specific descriptive statement - Jerry

The trip to Howtown was not a formal educational experience. It involved low financial cost. The residence was reminiscent of school though this did not detract from the excitement and anticipation of having a good time there. Unfamiliar physical challenges made for a potentially daunting experience – both physically and emotionally. There was a special satisfaction at accomplishing sailing which had a strong technical element in addition to the physical element. This gave the perception of sailing being a more adult activity. Surprise at enjoying something that initially looked boring. There was a perception of some activities (eg. canoeing down rapids) as being challenging on quite a grand scale. This provided a particular feeling of being ‘alive’.

Quite simply the experience was very enjoyable. It was a fun time with friends which stands out as probably the most significant trip or holiday undertaken with school. The variety of the activities and intensity of the learning experience marks it out as special. The variety and intensity of the experience contributed to some sort of learning about self. Some of the activities in particular lent themselves to a development of group feeling and camaraderie which stands in contrast to other school experiences such as skiing trips. The low point of the experience (windsurfing) is possibly related to lower personal proficiency in that activity and/or a less well managed activity session.

Simple activities such as camping and cooking own food felt very adventurous. The elements of responsibility and self-reliance that were part of many activities were very positive aspects which provided a particular sense of achievement and satisfaction. There was independence but within a supervised context. In some situations the consequences of an accident seemed very real and potentially serious adding to the sense of achievement on completing the activity. The experience affirmed the various benefits of outdoor activities as perceived by the participant. Eg. cool, healthy, fun, providing memories to cherish.

There is something special about walking to the top of a mountain that is different to things like messing about doing things like riding your bike at home. It is something that can touch everyone no matter their background. Having been to Howtown creates a longing to go back. A magical place. It gives you a ‘bug’ for the outdoors although this bug can come from variety of sources – getting out with dad as a kid. Howtown was particularly influential because it was first time did it without dad – step of independence that felt important. After that had confidence to return independently with friends.

Important to get ‘out’ and ‘feel that your out in a bit of nature’. Small areas of 10 or 15 sq. miles can provide enough – see lots of different birds and animals, have a bit of a feeling of being ‘lost’ – provides an antidote to a week of work. Even though hiking has an uncool image, once have bug can’t deny its effect. The physical

exercise element of walking/hiking is important along with other things like experiencing the beauty of nature, an element of exploration and adventure. It gives a good feeling of physical satisfaction at the end of the day.

There is a spirit of adventure associated with outdoor activities that is attractive. It is a draw to participation even though what one does is at a much lower technical level than famous figures that one admires. Spirit of adventure is still there. Outdoor activities have a element of adventure that is an inherent need in humans. Certain geographic features are important to make an outdoor experience feel authentic. Important to have mountainous country that gives a feeling of wildness. This is what makes the experience inspiring or magical.

Going to the gym is about relief of stress, getting exercise after day sat around or cooped up at work. Also about maintaining fitness for when do get chance to get into outdoors. A substitute that allows you to dream about 'being out there'.

Time is a barrier to continuing participation in outdoor activities. Where you live also dictates to some degree what you can and can't do - eg. sailing but time is the biggest barrier. Getting into outdoors requires lot of travelling time – to get into inspiring landscape as opposed to just flat, open country. Living in London is barrier to getting out and doing outdoor stuff – inspiring countryside so far away. Image associated with outdoor activities is a barrier to some. Outdoor activities aren't 'sexy', don't sound very glamorous.

Appendix D

Example of member check letter

Address

Date

Hi NAME,

How are things? I hope all is well with you.

So, it's been a little while since I came down to chat to you about Howtown but as I warned you I'm sending you what I think is a summary of the essential details of what you were saying. If you think any of it is inaccurate would you mind marking it and changing it? Similarly if there's anything you now really want to add or retract that would be really useful too. You can send this back in the envelope I've enclosed or email or text any comments if that's easier.

Just to remind you again that you can of course decide to withdraw your contribution at any time up to the printing of the final document if you wish. Everything you mentioned during the interview is confidential and all efforts will be made to keep your contribution anonymous in the final report.

So, thanks a million once again for your help and give me a shout if you ever make it up to Edinburgh.

All the best,

John

Appendix E

Example of natural meaning units and central themes

| <u>Interviewee</u> | <u>Natural Meaning Unit</u> | <u>Central Theme</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| JERRY | I can remember imagining that it was gonna be, it was the first kind of holiday that we'd ever been on like that. Cos we'd done stuff like, you know I think we'd been skiing by that point, I can't remember, I dunno, and this kind of original impression was kind of, can it be as much fun as the skiing, I'll always remember thinking that, cos skiing was a real treat | The trip to Howtown was not a formal educational experience. |
| | ...skiing [school trip] was a real treat. You know it cost your parents an arm and a leg and I remember we got this [residential outdoor education experience] on a shoestring. It was like something like 40 quid or something daft like that, not even that, it was like a token amount of money to go...I dunno it might have been subsidised, I've nee idea. | Low financial cost |
| | [It was] Exciting, like once we were pulled up the drive, apart from the general excitement you have from going away with your mates, em, I remember when we pulled up, em, I wonder if I kind of, I think it did almost remind me of school camp...it was almost a little bit run down. You know what I mean, I don't know what I was expecting...I wasn't expecting a hotel or anything like that, but it was quite em, just rudimentary, just quite basic in the way it was laid out. We just had these little chalet blocks, you know just like old pebble-dashed chalet blocks and that and I remember we went up and there was this old like, er, reception room come disco spot or whatever, you know...which it just, it just reminded me of the school and then, er, then we went in and everyone like bags [reserves] their bunks [beds] and sort of had a mosey around. It was just, it was just exciting, cos you just | Residence was reminiscent of school though this did not detract from the excitement and anticipation of having a good time. |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | thought we're gonna have some fun here and that – you know? | |
| | <p>I remember thinking...kinda looking around and thinking...em...some people aren't gonna enjoy a lot of this holiday. You know like I remember thinking already, you know, there was a few competitive people there, you know like myself included, who just kind of throw themselves into stuff and I remember looking around and seeing the likes of, I don't know if like Jack and people like that went, but, but, people of that ilk – can I mention names or not? (Laughs)</p> <p>Aye, you'll change him [give him a pseudonym].</p> <p>I remember thinking, some of this could be quite daunting. I think, I recall we had some kind of briefing on the first night, where they roughly laid out, they obviously had to rotate the activities, and I remember they sort of roughly laid out, you know talking about rock climbing and abseiling and things like that, and you know that might kind of put the willies up some people and that. And I remember thinking, oh this is gonna be a bit of a personal challenge for me, you know, as well. You kind of think if you've done skiing and you do a lot of sport you'll be fine but what kind of got you was that it was sort of new, these were new things, that you'd never done before, that you'd kind of seen other people doing, and so you know, am I equipped to do that? You know, I mean, I'd never camped out before other than in the back garden, you know, when we were kids and then this that and the other and em, you know, never actually gone away and camped and that in itself, it, it was challenging, you know, it kind of made you think, oh God, are we, are we up to this?</p> | Unfamiliar physical challenges made for a potentially daunting experience – both physically and emotionally. |
| | the first thing was, almost there was excitement but there was a little sense of nervousness, you know, as well. Cos some things we'd never done...windsurfing... | Unfamiliar physical challenges such as windsurfing made for a potentially daunting experience – both physically and emotionally. |
| | What, oh right, em, I remember, I think the activities were split up, we | Special satisfaction at |

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| | <p>did...em... Topper sailing, which I remember thinking, that looks impossible and it looks boring, but if I'm honest I probably enjoyed that more than any of the activities there, much to my surprise, you know, it was brilliant, you really, you really learned what to do and it was a real... er...</p> <p>What was it about that that you particularly enjoyed?</p> <p>The fact that it was probably the one thing...cos I tried windsurfing and I was crap at that and, and this was like a, it was a technique thing, it wasn't just, it wasn't just em, you know anyone can hike up a mountain, anyone can walk for hours and hours, you know canoeing isn't difficult to do, em...orienteering is (laughs) especially when you've got Geoff reading the map, em, and it, it, cos that was like, that was like the newest thing, you know even though you were nervous about stuff like climbing you knew you could do it, cos you climb trees and you climb this, that and the other, but Topper sailing seemed like this technical thing, it seemed like a more adult activity, to be honest, if you, that's the expression I'm looking for. It was a more grown up thing to do because you had to appreciate things like wind and tacking into the wind and this, that out out of the wind and all the rest of it. And do things like rolling the boat and standing up on it and pulling it back up. That was a real, that was a real accomplishment to be honest, I was absolutely thrilled doing that</p> | <p>accomplishing activity which had a strong technical element in addition to the physical element (sailing). This gave the activity the perception of being more adult. Surprise at enjoying something that initially looked boring.</p> |
| | <p>we did the open canoeing, Canadian canoe...the two-man thing, I remember going down the rapids with Richie for that and we came out and that was like really hairy and scary at one point but it was such a blast, you know? You never felt so alive doing that, cos it was proper, it wasn't the Grand Canyon but you know it felt like it was when you were doing that.</p> | <p>Perception of activities as challenging on quite a grand scale (Canadian canoeing down rapids) which provides a particular feeling of being 'alive'.</p> |
| | <p>but to be honest it was just, it was just exciting, it was another holiday with your mates, you know, but...more than anything and not to conclude too early I remember coming back and still maintaining it was probably the best holiday we did</p> | <p>Fun time with friends which stands out as probably the most significant trip or holiday undertaken with</p> |

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| | with the school, you know, it was on a par with any of the ski trips... | school. |
| | Whereas doing this, em, it was like a whirlwind, you know of different activities and that's what the, that's what the hook was, ah yeah I think that's what it was, it was like Jesus you know we've never like sat in a boat before and by the end of sort of an 8 hour day in that like Topper sailing, you've picked it up and you knew what to do, you know like the thing where you roll it, pick it up and start it again and that was, that was exciting, whereas, to compare it with skiing trips, once you can ski, you can ski and then it's just degrees of, of improvement | Variety of the activities and intensity of the learning experience marks it out as special. |
| | you're all knackered, you know, and then you'd all like pitch the tent and while it was fun, more than anything it was a learning experience, you learned things about yourself, em, because of the variety of challenges that you had you know during the week and they were so intense and so compacted into, "today we do this tomorrow we do that", your head never stops spinning and you'd have big massive long sleeps on the night, you know and you'd wake up and, and er, and it was something completely different to do that day. | Variety and intensity of the experience contributed to some sort of learning about self. |
| | there was also an element of, I mean it's funny it never actually comes to you until you start thinking about it. This has only just come to me now, if I'm honest I haven't thought about this much in the last couple of weeks, I've just been spinning with work and last weekend and what's coming up tomorrow and that but it's only when you think about it that there is an element of camaraderie developed there. Especially when you did things like the hiking over... Aye... You know, the, the walking over or when you did the abseiling and some people were shitting themselves to do it... Yeah... | Some of the activities in particular lent themselves to a development of group feeling and camaraderie which stands in contrast to other school experiences such as skiing trips. |

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| | <p>And you'd coax them over you know and they'd do it and you would kind of help each other out... there was no element of... skiing is like ultra competitive, you know?</p> <p>Mm, yeah.</p> <p>And you're all in your groups and you're all trying to show off, all trying to spray each other when you stop and invariably you end up sliding through a pile of people, but this there was a little bit more togetherness, you know, you all went out hiking together</p> | |
| | <p>the whole thing was generally characterised by a lot of fun, you know, a lot of laughs</p> | <p>Quite simply the experience was very enjoyable.</p> |
| | <p>If I'm honest about one of the lows, em, and again I'd never really remembered this until you prompted me now, em, was the, the windsurfing day, where, where that was the one thing where I didn't feel we had...and maybe it was because I wasn't very good at it and so I'm being biased, but that was the one day that seemed less well managed and less well controlled.</p> | <p>Low point possibly related to poor personal proficiency or less well managed activity session (windsurfing).</p> |
| | <p>And also being out on camping which was just kind of high adventure, you know just sharing a tent and just doing simple things like cooking a tin of, of like boiled potatoes and tomato sauce and chucking some mince meat into it, you know</p> <p>Yeah,</p> <p>And just doing that, sort of semi-unsupervised, getting your pots and pans, learning how to...we had those, those paraffin stoves didn't we, you had to fill them up with a bit of paraffin and make sure there was no residue and that because it would go, you know it would all go, "woomph" and go up, and you know but little, little achievements like that, stuff that you never thought you'd do, stuff that you'd</p> | <p>Simple activities such as camping and cooking own food felt very adventurous. The elements of responsibility and self-reliance were very positive aspects which provided a particular sense of achievement and satisfaction.</p> |

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| | <p>always had laid on for you, suddenly, suddenly you had to get your finger out and do it yourself. And again I can't help drawing, drawing parallels with the ski trip whereby to a greater or lesser degree the ski trip was very laid on whereas this one it was everything from rinse your own wetsuit out, stick it through the mangle, you know everything from go and clean your own boots make sure they're all scrubbed off and that before, on the night, clack all the mud off and scratch them off before you're allowed to go in. I do, it wasn't boot camp you know, but there was an element of er, it was slightly regimented, but that was good but there was you know a discipline to it whereby when you're on the ski trip everyone's just on the piss and the bus comes and picks you up and the bus comes and takes you away and then you all go out and get drunk and you do the same again the next day, where this there was less, I don't remember there being any boozein and you know kids always find a way, to, to do that, em, I don't remember there being any of that and I do remember it being a little bit, little bit stricter but...I wasn't sorry for that...you know? I wasn't sorry for that, I, I enjoyed that, so that was it that was a kind of high in itself, you know?...</p> | |
| | <p>this was the time where, em, where we did it ourselves,</p> <p>Mmhmm.</p> <p>I mean you were supervised but you did it yourself, I mean I remember, going back to achievements...Hellvellyn, we did Hellvellyn, that was an achievement, that felt like you'd climbed up a bloody mountain, you know you, you did, you felt like you'd climbed a mountain. You know it's only like 800 feet or somethin' isn't it? 800 metres or 800 feet? 800 metres is it? Yeah. It was only 800 metres and you know that in itself is just like, it was the greatest feeling in the world standing on the cairn at the top and that and coming up Striding Edge or Swirrel Edge or whatever and looking down at the tarn, Red Tarn or whatever, em, you know, you know you</p> | <p>There was independence but within a supervised context. The consequences of an accident such as when out walking on Hellvellyn seemed very real and potentially serious adding to the sense of achievement on completing the activity.</p> |

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| | <p>felt, you felt it was like scary. You know you were like, bloody hell anyone could like quite considerably fall off here and that's what it was, you weren't quite as mollycoddled, you know you had to kind of do it yourself, it was a little bit more regimented and em, you sort of had to, had to perform. To be honest there would have been, would have been no shame in some people turning round and saying, "I'm not doing this". You know cos some of that, going up there on an edge like that is a bloody scary thing to do...you know?</p> | |
| | <p>Howtown just like, affirmed that doing that [outdoor activities] is cool, it's good for you and it's fun and it gives you like memories and photographs that you treasure and stuff.</p> | <p>Experience affirmed the various benefits of outdoor activities as perceived by the participant. Eg. cool, healthy, fun, memories to cherish.</p> |
| | <p>Just cos you had the bug, it's a beautiful place you know. I think it gets to a point, as a kid, like, you know we all grow up doing things we all love to do, you know mucking around on bikes and this that and the other but I kind of defy anyone to experience a big sunny walk up Hellvellyn and not be moved by it to a certain extent, certainly when they get to a certain age. You know, not to stand on the top, it doesn't matter what their background is, you know their social...upbringing and that, everyone, anyone that climbs to the top of something like that feels a sense of achievement. You know, you do, and it's, it's very, I think it's a shame that a lot of people don't have the opportunity to do it. You know a lot of people are just tied up and certainly kids, listen to me, "kids these days!", you know but the Playstation generation and all that crap, they don't get the chance to do it but I find it very, very interesting how, em, I just feel a longing to go back, cos it, it's a kind of magical place without being a bit too soppy about it. It brings out those things in you, and now people of a certain age group, have, you know the lads that work with me or whatever, em, all of them do that kind of thing...</p> <p>Yeah?</p> | <p>There is something special about walking to the top of a mountain that is different to things like messing about doing things like riding your bike at home. It is something that can touch everyone no matter their background. Having been to Howtown creates a longing to go back. A magical place. It gives you a 'bug' for the outdoors although this bug can come from variety of sources – getting out with Dad as a kid. Howtown was particularly influential because it was first time did it without dad – step of independence that felt important. After that had</p> |

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| | <p>All of them do at least one or two weekends a year, going over to Wales, or the Lakes, and just getting out. People our age who still go out and do all the boozing and rock and rolling and this, that and the other, you know and some proper tearaways and that but everyone, everyone of our kind of age group, because they've done it once or twice because that was still a viable thing to do, when we were kids, your parents took you away or whatever. Em, most people who've done it once get the bug, you know, and that's what it is. I've got the bug and I'm pleased Jen's got it and it's come from a variety of sources, you know from my dad, the Howtown thing particularly cemented it because it was the first time I did it alone, you know? And then going back and doing it with Cooper and then going back and doing it...I think I went away once with university and had a weekend over there [Lake District] and since then, I went up there with Mary [previous girlfriend] I think and now, now I'm going away with Jen [wife].</p> | <p>confidence to return independently with friends.</p> |
| | <p>Well, I mean it's not for the want of trying but (discussion with Joanne over how many times have been to Lake District) probably get away once a year or twice tops and we've done the west coast of Scotland and the Western Isles and things like that, you know all things of that nature, and em, while it's not the same we've done, we've done er the New Forest a couple of times you know anywhere to get out and have a bloody walk, to be honest, just to get out and have a walk and feel a bit of nature and you know, all of that routine.</p> <p>And do you feel that you have to, you say "get out and have a walk" so is that implying that you have to get out of London or...?</p> <p>Yeah,</p> <p>Is there nothing nearby that would...?</p> | <p>Important thing is to get 'out' and 'feel a bit of nature'. Small areas of 10 or 15 sq. miles can provide enough – see lots of different birds and animals, certain feeling of being 'lost' – provides an antidote to a week of work. Even though uncool, once have bug can't deny its effect.</p> |

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| | <p>No I mean the last place we lived [Croydon] there was some woods, em, I mean there's some woods round here and you can to a certain extent just go out and do this little walk and feel you're kind of lost. You know, and it'll only be like, 10 square miles, 15 square miles, mebbe's just in little pockets of Surrey but you don't hear the traffic, you see hundreds of squirrels, you see twenty different types of birds and that you know, that is something that is very important to do, the kind of thing that really sorts you out after a week, to go and do that on a Sunday morning or Saturday morning and that. You know it's something that does give you that bug and like I say once anyone has got that thing, I do, I do know some people who just couldn't give two hoots about it, because it's not a cool thing to do. People are so obsessed with image and this, that and the other that going hiking you know, let's face it there is a piss-take culture that surrounds it, you know the whole rambling like bit, you know the whole like lunatics with maps and they all (strange noise) and all that routine that there is a gentle mickey-take of em, of people who do it. But em, there's an awful lot of people who do do it who are dead proud of it.</p> | |
| | <p>Er, but it is thing when you do the whole walking thing that you take a pride in it because it's an exercise thing as well. There is that element attached to it. You know, it's not just about seeing a beautiful place and exploring and there's always the little bit risk of getting lost, it's a bit exciting and a bit daft. It's also bloody good exercise. You feel like, you know, you've earned your reward at the end of the day and stuff.</p> | <p>The physical exercise element of walking/hiking is important along with other things like experiencing beauty of nature, an element of exploration and adventure. Feeling of physical satisfaction at end of day.</p> |
| | <p>I would like to get into climbing, I would like to do that, cos you know it would suit me. I'm kind of terrified of heights but you know, em, but I always have a massive interest in the history of climbing, the history of alpinism, I've read like loads of books on that. I find that absolutely fascinating, and all the Himalayan stuff, and you know the European thing, I find it so, em, you know it's just a really moving thing. The kind of thing that grabs you, these kind of proper adventurers, you know</p> | <p>Spirit of adventure associated with outdoor activities is attractive. It is a draw to participation even though what one does is at a much lower technical level than famous figures that one admires. Spirit of</p> |

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| | <p>I've read tons about you know Scott and Amundsen, and Hillary, and Shackleton...an amazing hero of mine, I've got like legions of stuff about him and that. It's that kind of spirit of adventure and in your own little way you feel like you're setting out to do it. You like the kind of approach of packing your like Mars bars and pickled eggs and all that kinda bit and going out and doing it. You know cos it's just removed from the comfy, the comfy world that we're, that we have. You know it's a little bit of getting back to what you're about and that.</p> | <p>adventure is still there. Outdoor activities have a element of adventure that is an inherent need in humans.</p> |
| | <p>If I worked in like Manchester and believe you me I've tried, I've looked around the south-east and there's nowt [outdoor spaces like the Lakes]...it's a pretty country but it's not remotely inspiring, it's not remotely, you know, magical. You know you've got little country lanes in Kent but it's boring. The New Forest is ok but it's still three hours hike [drive] down there and it's very flat...</p> <p>So what makes a place magical or inspiring for you?</p> <p>Like really sharp relief, you know mountains, waterfalls, tarns, lakes, rivers, you know that's what it is. Slightly wild you know a bit of wildness, there's nothing wild down here, apart from Brixton...you know there's nothing wild, there's no real get out and get away from it. You know there's nothing, I don't know what the nearest place is you know people say like Devon and Cornwall, North Wales is supposed to be good but drive to north Wales you might as well drive to the Lakes give or take another hour or so. But it's just time. Time is the single thing that you can't create.</p> | <p>Certain geographic features are important to make an outdoor experience feel authentic. Important to have mountainous country that gives a feeling of wildness. This is what makes the experience inspiring or magical.</p> |
| | <p>So when you go to the gym what's that about? Is that about a reward at the end of the day or is it exercise or what?</p> <p>Well, a combination of both. Part of it's an outlet of stress, principally that's what a</p> | <p>Going to the gym is about relief of stress, getting exercise after day sat around or cooped up at work. Also about maintaining fitness for when</p> |

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| | <p>lot of it is. Part of it's you spend a lot of your day sedentary, well actually not a lot of it, work can be physically, you know, kind of almost running around but there's still too much time spent sitting on your backside, em, so it's a combination of those things but also it's with a view, you know if I'm honest, it's with a view of having, keeping yourself in some kind of nick so that you can do things like that, so when you go away hiking you do your 12 hours and at the end you feel fine. You've got maybe a couple of blisters and that and maybe a tight hamstring but you feel good and that whereas if you go away not having been doing any exercise at all you do half of Cat Bells or something and you're absolutely knackered. You know you are physically wrecked and you can't enjoy it. There's no point in doing it if you can't enjoy it. So it's a combination of those things but that is in the back of your mind, you want to keep able to do those things. The gym is just a kind of false environment that enables you to kind of dream of the good things when you're going to be out there.</p> | <p>do get chance to get into outdoors. A substitute that allows you to dream about 'being out there'.</p> |
| | <p>So you've talked about the walking and the hiking, is there anything else that you did at Howtown that you continue to do since being there or...?</p> <p>Em, probably not to be honest because most of them have involved either a bigger commitment for which I don't have the time or you know, just the, having a boat, you know I live in London which is landlocked. You know if, for example, I lived on the coast I would probably, I would wager that I'd probably have a little like Topper, you know and I probably would get into something like that and I think it's something that I probably will pursue later on and that, you know? But if I'm honest the only thing that I've kept up with any regularity has just been walking. I mean just walking and climbing, like scrambling you know? Not roped climbing, but em, again you know I would do most of these things given a little bit more time.</p> | <p>Time is a barrier to continuing participation in outdoor activities.</p> <p>Where you live also dictates to some degree what you can and can't do - eg. sailing.</p> |
| | <p>So what is it that stops you doing those kind of things?</p> | <p>Time biggest barrier. Getting into</p> |

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| | <p>Time. Time, time, time, time. Nothing else. I get 20 days holiday a year. Once you take out two weddings that leaves you with 2 weeks holiday a year. You know you take out two weddings, a couple of weekends home, a funeral and a long weekend, you know a stag weekend that leaves you with the grand total of 10 days which is 2 weeks and it's not a great deal of time. It's the only thing, I would go there every week if I could. I would go every weekend to the Lakes. If I worked in like Manchester and believe you me I've tried, I've looked around the south-east and there's nowt [outdoor spaces like the Lakes]...it's a pretty country but it's not remotely inspiring, it's not remotely, you know, magical. You know you've got little country lanes in Kent but it's boring. The New Forest is ok but it's still three hours hike [drive] down there and it's very flat...</p> | <p>outdoors requires lot of travelling time – to get into inspiring landscape as opposed to just flat, open country.</p> |
| | <p>...there's nothing wild down here, apart from Brixton...you know there's nothing wild, there's no real get out and get away from it. You know there's nothing, I don't know what the nearest place is you know people say like Devon and Cornwall, North Wales is supposed to be good but drive to north Wales you might as well drive to the Lakes give or take another hour or so. But it's just time. Time is the single thing that you can't create.</p> | <p>Living in London is barrier to getting out and doing outdoor stuff – inspiring countryside so far away.</p> |
| | <p>I do know some people who just couldn't give two hoots about it, because it's not a cool thing to do. People are so obsessed with image and this, that and the other that going hiking you know, let's face it there is a piss-take culture that surrounds it, you know the whole rambling like bit, you know the whole like lunatics with maps and they all (strange noise) and all that routine that there is a gentle mickey-take of em, of people who do it. But em, there's an awful lot of people who do do it who are dead proud of it.</p> <p>What is it in that perception of people that do it that makes people want to take the</p> | <p>Image associated with outdoor activities is a barrier to some. Outdoor activities aren't 'sexy', don't sound very glamorous.</p> |

mickey out of them?

The reason people take the mickey out of anything, it's ignorance isn't it? You know everyone's guilty of it at some time but...it's just not sexy, I dunno, people have maybe, you don't wear sexy clothes to do it. It's not the same as being on the beach in a bikini and that, though I don't do that very often either [laughs]. Scratch that bit, aye. But it's em...

Note to self, Jerry doesn't wear bikinis!

Not in front of other men anyway! Em, so it's just not that and people just associate it with wet, drizzle and hostile northerners and people with one eye and em all the rest of it, but you know, people do have misguided associations of what it's about. You know you wake up in a tent, you're wet through, you've got to tramp here and that, no running water if I want to have a wash and if I need the loo you know I've got to go behind a bush and this that and the other and you know it's not everyone's cup of tea but again people are quite ignorant that you can just go away and stay in a lovely guest house for 30 quid a night and you get everything, you know you get a good breakfast, you get knowledgeable people who work there in the guest house or people who stay there on the caravan site or camp site you know and you know you can go away and have a very pleasant weekend without any hardship and see a lot of good things but people take the piss because they've never done it and it's easier to apply some kind of train spotting mentality to it. You know if you talk about hiking, if you say to someone I'm going windsurfing or I'm going, you know, em rock climbing it sounds a little bit more glamorous. But then equally if you said I'm going fishing for a week in the Lakes people would think you're ? again, because fishing has even bigger [negative] connotations .

APPENDIX F

Table of interviewees' current physical activity patterns detailing frequency of and motivation for participation

| Activity | Interviewee | Frequency | Motivation |
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| Cycling | Matthew | 2 or 3 times a week | To be outdoors, to get the 'high' that comes from exercising, sense of achievement. |
| Football | Matthew | Once a week | For exercise and social |
| Gym | Matthew | No regular pattern, perhaps 2 or 3 times a month | For social |
| | Marvin | Twice a week.. | Keeping fit without the risk of injury associated with sports like rugby that used to participate in. Injuries more common and last longer as getting older and so wants to stay fit but not get injured. |
| | Lucy | Once or twice a week. | For fitness and/or relaxation with friends in pool and jacuzzi. |
| | Verity | Twice a week, three times if possible. | For fitness, to maintain healthy weight, helps 'cope with life'. |
| | Jerry | In fits and starts – two or three times a week for a couple of months and then not at all for a few months. | To maintain some degree of fitness so that when get the chance to get away into outdoors you are fit enough to enjoy it. |
| Hillwalking/ walking in the countryside | Matthew | Once every 2 or 3 months | Just to be outdoors and doing something active with other people. |

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| | Peter | Once a week. | For the scenery and the views. |
| | Marvin | Once a month. | Enjoy being out in the mountains and the natural environment, feel comfortable and relaxed there. To be in the mountains, outside in all the elements whatever the weather, getting 'back to nature', the views, the freedom. Appreciation of nature is increasingly something that is important and part of the experience. When younger was more interested in a faster more action packed outdoor experience, that is less important now. Enjoy using mountaineering skills. |
| | Lucy | Once a month | Enjoyable just to get out into the countryside, get some exercise and fresh air, an escape from work and responsibilities of home life, nice environment. Not about a challenge. |
| | Verity | Sporadically, maybe once a month. | To be outside in the countryside, in the fresh air |
| | Sara | Very occasionally, maybe once or twice a year. | For enjoyment of being outdoors and in the countryside. |
| | Jerry | | The beauty of the environment, the sense of achievement at the end of the day or when standing on top of a mountain. Good exercise. To get out into the countryside and feel that you're out in nature – see animals and birds. It is an antidote to the working week. Having the sense of adventure of being out in a wild landscape, the possibility of getting lost gives an element of excitement and fun. Getting away from 'comfy life' and back to 'what you're about'. Inspiring countryside. |
| Kayaking | Charles | Winter – 2 days a month. Summer – 1 day every other month. | Feel refreshed afterwards. River environment is different every time go out so don't get bored. Important to be outdoors. Sense of achievement, 'buzz', beauty of nature. |
| | Peter | 2 or three days a month. | The excitement, the 'buzz', facing a challenge, being out with friends. |
| Mountain biking | Charles | Once a week | Need to get regular exercise – feel refreshed afterwards, break from everyday life, gives more energy for other things. Like to stay fit and healthy. Prefer to do things outdoors than indoors. No organisation required and not dependent |

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| | | | on others to be able to do it. |
| | Marvin | Every now and then. | Just to be doing something active. |
| Rock climbing | Sara | Used to go about once a fortnight but recently doesn't go any more. | Something to do with friends – for the social side of things. |
| Running | Peter | In fits and starts – every few days for a period of a few weeks and then not for a long time. | To lose weight, to get fit for hillwalking. |
| | Lucy | Once or twice a week, occasionally more. | Being out in the fresh air, having time to think, always try to run in away from houses in more countryside areas. Also for the challenge of setting times to beat and working towards running half marathons. Fitness is also a motivating factor but less so than the above. |
| | Sara | Once or twice a week. | Time to oneself, being outside, keeping fit. |
| Scuba diving | Charles | Summer – once every three weeks. | For fun. Something active to do together with wife. |
| Ski | Jane | Twice a year for 1 week | Fun and active. |
| | Marvin | Twice a year for 1 week. | To be in the mountains, outside in all the elements whatever the weather, getting 'back to nature', the views, the freedom. Appreciation of nature is increasingly something that is important and part of the experience. When younger was more interested in a faster more action packed outdoor experience, that is less important now. |
| | Lucy | Once a year for 1 week. | |
| Snowboard | Charles | Once a year for 1 week. | Exciting, enjoy being outdoors |
| | Verity | Twice a year for 1 week. | Being active and out in the fresh air, in the elements. |
| Swim | Jane | Very occasionally | To stay cool when working in Middle East |

For the purposes of this study 'gym' is used as encompassing activities which might range from exercise classes to the use of cardiovascular apparatus. This collective definition has been used as this is the sense in which the interviewees used the word. 'Going to the gym' was used in the sense of a verb comparable to 'going running' or 'going hiking'.

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