THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Feeling nature: naturism, camping, environment and the body in Britain, 1920-1960

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by

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Abstract

This thesis considers the interaction of human beings with the natural environment. In particular, it addresses the ways that naturists and light-weight campers encountered, understood and reflected upon the spaces, places and environments around them in the period between 1920 and the late 1950s. In considering 'outdoor cultures' and drawing upon humanistic geography and recent literature concerning issues of embodiment, sensuality, and body culture, my research raises a number of important questions. These include the importance of citizenship and the ethos of outdoor recreation in the inter-war and immediate post-war period, debates about the embodied experience of naturists and campers and, in turn, the ways in which Nature was represented within their reflexive accounts. In working through issues of sensuality, self, body culture and morality, the thesis contributes to ongoing geographical debates concerning the body and embodiment; sensing the environment and outdoor cultures; and experiences of space and place and the mutual constitution of nature and society in inter-war European cultures. Drawing upon empirical analysis of archival and historical texts, and upon oral histories, photographs, art and poetry I consider embodied experience as a 'situated' practice in relation to the moral geographies of citizenship and idealism evident in the inter-war and immediate post war periods. The thesis demonstrates that human experience is mediated, directed, and evaluated by a wealth of social, cultural and historical parameters and that naturists' and campers' experience shaped and was shaped by wider discourses of morality, health and self.

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Abbreviations

CCBN	Central Council of British Naturism
CCPR	Central Council of Physical Recreation
CCRPT	Central Council of Recreative Physical Training
CCY	Camping Club Youth
CTC	Cyclist's Touring Club
DA	District Association
EGS	English Gymnosophy Society
GWR	Great Western Railways
HCCSSC	Hull Community Council Social Survey Committee
IFCC	International Federation of Camping Clubs
LMR	London Midland Railways
LNER	London and North Eastern Railways
NGS	New Gymnosophy Society
SBS	Sun Bathing Society
SBR	Sun Bathing Review
SR	Southern Railways
TB	Tuberculosis
WLHB	Women's League of Health and Beauty
WTA	Workers Travel Association
YCA	Youth Camping Association of Great Britain and Ireland

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Chapter One

Introduction

Whilst writing this introduction an article appeared in *The Guardian* newspaper extolling the virtues of exercising in 'the great outdoors'.[1] The article outlined recent scientific research into 'biophilia' or 'the affinity we humans have with the natural world' and gave details of the work of so-called 'original *al fresco* fitness guru' Tina Vindum, ex-world champion mountain biker and founder of Outdoor Action Fitness (founded 1995) and the 'Green Gym' conservation projects conceived by Dr William Bird. Though touted as an innovative, new 'lifestyle choice' these open-air fitness regimes (consciously or not) draw heavily on the philosophies developed decades (and occasionally centuries) earlier.

This thesis considers the interaction of human beings with the natural environment. In particular, it addresses the ways that naturists and light-weight campers encountered, understood and reflected upon the spaces, places and environments around them in the period between 1920 and the late 1950s. This was a period in which such groups proposed direct connections between exposure to fresh air and sunlight and the formation of fit healthy bodies through open-air recreational pursuits. At the same time, the expansion of leisure and recreation in the natural environment was welcomed by many in Britain as an opportunity to improve citizenship and a chance to educate the national community about the benefits of nature. Such concerns drew upon the social, cultural and political anxieties and dislocation consequent upon the First World War,

[1] Murphy, S. (22/09/01) 'Back to nature', *The Guardian (Weekend)* p. 69. See Tina Vindum's website www.outdoorfitness.com and the Green Gym website www.greengym.org.uk. I return to this, and similar, articles in subsequent discussions, although it is important to note that although based in a historical context, my research has

the instabilities and economic depression of the inter-war years, and the Second World War and its aftermath. For some open-air enthusiasts, the perceived ugliness and anonymity of modern urban and industrial society was emblematic of the resulting physical, mental and moral deterioration of the population. It was amidst this context that naturists and light-weight campers promoted their lifestyles as partial solutions to these problems.

In considering 'outdoor cultures' and drawing upon humanistic geography and recent literature concerning issues of embodiment, sensuality, and body culture, my research raises a number of important questions.[2] These include the importance of citizenship and the ethos of outdoor recreation in the inter-war and immediate post-war period, debates about the embodied experience of the participants and, in turn, the ways in which Nature was represented within their reflexive accounts.[3] The thesis combines extensive empirical analysis of archival and historical texts with considerations of oral histories, professional and amateur photography, art and poetry. These sources illuminate the descriptions and experience of naturists and light-weight campers, and the reasons they give for spending time in the natural environment. Although part of a much wider culture of open-air recreation in this period, campers and naturists argued that their activities exposed individuals to Nature and the open-air life in ways that no other leisure activities could. For example, naturists saw nakedness as a way of re-

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ongoing relevance in the contemporary world.

[2] See Tuan, Y. -F. (1976) 'Humanistic geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 pp. 266 – 276; Crouch, D. (2001) 'Spatialities and the feeling of doing', *Social and Cultural Geography* 2 (1) pp. 61 – 75; Butler, R. and Parr, H. (1999) (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability*. London: Routledge; Teather, E. K. (1999) *Embodied Geographies*. London: Routledge; Nash, C. (1998) 'Mapping emotion', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1) pp. 1 – 10; Nast, H. and Pile, S. (eds) (1998) *Place Through the Body*. London: Routledge; Callard, F. J. (1998) 'The body in theory', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 pp. 387 – 400; Davis, K, (1997) *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: Sage; Longhurst, R. (1997) '(Dis)embodied geographies', *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (4) pp. 486 – 501; Rodaway, P. (1994) *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge; Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism in Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity; Corbin, A. (1986) *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odour and the Social Imagination*. London: Papermac.

[3] The camping and naturist literature commonly used the word 'Nature' with a capital 'N'.

opening the connection, flow and an intimacy between the human body and the natural environment. Similarly, camping literatures sustained a broad belief that although there was an intuitive affinity with nature deep inside all humans, only the light-weight or 'true' camper might experience the most meaningful and rewarding relationship with Nature.

Camping and ... 'naturism'?

The fact that my research interests lie primarily in the areas of social, cultural and historical geography with a particular focus on the interaction of human beings with the natural environment is due in large part to my academic background. My studies began with a geography degree in the Department of Geography at the University of Wales, Lampeter.[4] This unique institution fostered my initial interest in contemporary human geography, and especially upon cultural, historical and social geography, and issues surrounding humanistic geography and 'situated knowledges'. From Lampeter I moved to the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway where I undertook an MA in Cultural Geography. This course covered a range of current philosophy and theory in cultural geographical research and enhanced my understanding of key debates in contemporary social, cultural and historical geography, especially the issues surrounding embodiment and sensuality which are now two of the main foci of my Ph.D. Yet the innovative geographies I encountered as a student had not reached every branch of the academy.

As the above title suggests, during the last four years my research, particularly into

naturism, has been met with a certain degree of surprise by some geographers. This is usually rapidly followed by an element of disbelief. To this day, members of my department unfamiliar with my work (despite numerous internal seminars and external conference papers) regularly introduce me to other postgraduates, new staff and visitors as 'This is Nina, she studies naked people', or on more 'social' occasions 'This is Nina, she looks at rude magazines'. In this section my aim is to situate my perspective as a cultural-historical geographer considering the 'exotic' realm of naturism and the more familiar, mundane world of camping. I begin with camping.

My main reason for choosing camping as one of my two case studies is highly personal.[5] Camping was a significant feature of my life throughout childhood and continues, though to a lesser degree, as part of my life today. My parents began tent camping with Lancashire and Cheshire District Association (hereafter 'Lancs and Chesh' or 'DA') in the early seventies and my mother camped until seven months pregnant. My first experience of camping was at five days old when my parents resumed camping with the DA.[6] This set the precedent for the next seventeen years; every Friday evening between March and November my parents would pack up the caravan, my tent and Landrover and join the other members of Lancs and Chesh at their weekend meet.

Alongside my peers I became a member of the Camping Club Youth (CCY) and worked my way through the Junior and Senior Youth Tests learning amongst other

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[4] Sadly the department closed in 2001.

[5] In my initial proposal I planned to concentrate on three out-door pursuits - camping, naturism and rambling. However, on subsequent visits to the Ramblers' Association archive I realised that not only was I trying to cover an inordinate amount of material but also that the archive material available to me focused mainly on issues of rights of way, access, routes taken by various people and equipment. This stood in stark contrast to the camping and naturist literature I encountered which included a great deal more material illuminating descriptive experience.

[6] Although initially wary, both sets of grandparents began camping in caravans with Roach Valley District Association and Lancs and Chesh some years later.

things, how to map read and use a compass, how to behave whilst in the countryside, how to pitch and erect a tent in various weather and lighting conditions, how to use a paraffin stove and basic first aid. Once I had become the proud holder of the required Youth Certificate, aged fourteen and with the same friends I began to attend National and International Youth meets travelling to Poland, Portugal and Scotland and through countries such as Spain, Belgium and Germany. I also appeared in the pages of *Camping and Caravanning* when I was awarded the North West Region 'Ray Hughes Trophy for Endeavour' for my involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. I stopped camping as regularly at the age of seventeen when the local riding stables and the prospect of staying 'home alone' proved to be a more attractive option to a teenager eager for independence. My parents (and until recent illness, my grandparents) still camp regularly and have both been awarded the title 'super-campers' in recent years (a small trophy presented within the DA to the camper(s) recording the most 'camps' throughout the year) and are active members of the Lancs and Chesh committee.[7] I stopped camping completely whilst at university and nowadays, camping is an occasional pleasure which at present I am able to indulge all too infrequently.

My years of camping left me in an unusual position. On one hand, being away virtually every weekend meant I had close contact with other camping families (some of whom resided in the same local area), but few social connections and a limited awareness of the village where I grew up. On the other hand, whilst trying to recollect the numerous places I camped with my parents, I still find it difficult to picture anything but a few distinguishing or unusual features of all the places I have visited.

[7] My mum and dad held the positions of Assistant Site Secretary and Site Secretary respectively until October 2001 when my dad was elected Chairman. My mum continues to play an active committee role and my granddad is President (and ex-Chairman). My grandma, until recent illness used to help with organising the raffles and the food for buffets. As for the 'supercamper' award, my parents find this slightly embarrassing whilst at eighty-one my grandma and granddad prefer to view it as a hard won achievement.

Occasionally I will drive through a village or a stretch of countryside that seems vaguely familiar with a strange sense of *deja vu* only to realise that I've camped there several times in the past. For me these experiences are usually limited to Lancashire, Cheshire and parts of Yorkshire but have happened in places as far afield as Cornwall, Devon, Anglesey and the Lake District where we used to spend various holidays.

What I do recall, though, are the times spent shivering in my sleeping bag, clutching a hot water bottle whilst simultaneously wearing pyjamas, leggings, two jumpers, a hat, gloves and two pairs of socks; the joy of being allowed to roam a field for a whole weekend, collecting conkers, swimming in rivers, crashing through Delamere Forest collecting dead wood for the annual bonfire, making tree swings, dams and dens from bracken and then travelling home on Sunday evenings tired, rosy cheeked and filthy; making desperate attempts as a small child to fall asleep, fingers in my ears, on parental assurance that earwigs really do crawl in there if you don't go to sleep quickly enough; the sound of music and people laughing as they drank home-made 'punch' and dressed up for fancy dress parades; the evening socials and walks across soggy peat moors and through crunchy frost coated forests during the winter; the sound of wind and rain beating against the thin canvas of my tent; the smell of waterproofed canvas, barbecued chicken cooked over apple tree twigs, black peas on bonfire night and the squish of wellingtons on wet grass. All of these are my memories, sensual, embodied memories of camping, and my thesis therefore investigates the everyday and embodied geographies of camping and discusses the ways in which campers' experience of the natural environment is at once highly sensual whilst at the same time mediated by social and cultural norms.

My first encounter with the subject of naturism came much later when I was

studying for my Masters degree at Royal Holloway. During a discussion regarding the relationships between the body and the environment, my course director recalled an 'illicit' publication from his adolescence which included photographs of people (mainly women - hence the furtive schoolboy interest) exercising nude and living 'in nature'. The magazine was *Health and Efficiency*, and a subsequent visit to the British Library fuelled my interest further. Though the magazine did not focus solely on naturism, issues regarding the body such as physique, tanning, skin care, nudity within the natural environment and contemporary morality were widely represented. I return to these issues within my thesis alongside an evaluation of the perceived relationships between the human body and the environment within wider naturist literature.

It is important to make one further point regarding the widespread scepticism towards naturism and the sense that I had to justify myself and my research. On requesting the various back issues of *Health and Efficiency* at the British Library I was intrigued to be instructed - without explanation - to move my study materials to a pre-assigned table away from other library users. At this early stage of my research I was unaware that such responses would be symptomatic not only of the position of naturism within wider popular culture but also the perception of naturism as a subject 'unworthy' of serious academic research. As noted above, my determination to research the activities of naturists has been further cemented in the face of taunts and (friendly) ridicule at the 'dubious' nature of my subject matter from friends and other postgraduates and staff in my department. In the early days I often felt that I was only popular in the department when news circulated that the latest quarterly edition of *British Naturism* had landed on my desk - those who rifled through my shelves in my absence know who they are.

Structure of the thesis

My aim in this introductory chapter has been to outline the key themes involved in the thesis and to acknowledge my own positionality in relation to the two case studies. Broadly, the thesis develops an account of the embodied geographies of campers and naturists by working through issues of sensuality, self, body culture and morality. In doing this, my work contributes to ongoing geographical debates concerning the body and embodiment; sensing the environment and outdoor cultures; and experiences of space and place and the mutual constitution of nature and society in inter-war European cultures. Chapter Two seeks to contextualise the central debates of the thesis within the broader socio-historical contexts of inter-war and immediate post-war in Britain. In particular, the chapter focuses on debates of the time regarding the physical deterioration of the population and subsequent attempts to restore 'health' on an individual and national scale. Leading on from this I document the growth of open-air movements, the expansion of recreational pursuits in the natural environment and ideas regarding citizenship and anti-citizenship which began to proliferate at this time.

Chapter Three moves through three sets of literatures and debates central to my consideration of the interaction between human bodies and environments. I evaluate the discussions of humanistic geography from the 1970s and its aftermath, the more recent debates surrounding the body, embodiment and the sporadic but continuing geographic engagements with sensuality. Each of these literatures advances different strands of my argument. A review of the humanistic geography literature and the work of theorists such as Tuan, Entrikin, Seamon and Buttimer emphasises the ways in which geographers began to recognise the diverse nature of the human condition and the

varieties of environmental experience.[8] Discussions of the body and embodiment, with particular reference to phenomenology and feminist theory, provide a basis for discussions of the connections between the human body and the natural environment.[9] Focusing on sensuality extends the discussion to encompass the multi-dimensionality of space, emotional geographies and the potential to provide fresh insights into human-environment relations.

Chapters Four to Nine are divided into two parts each concerning themes specific to naturism or camping. These chapters explore issues of the self, the body and embodied practices, and human engagement with natural environments within the sub-cultures of naturism and camping in Britain between the late 1920s and late 1950s. The case studies were selected because they allow discussion of the ways that specific groups conceptualised, valued and attached meaning to the body and environments surrounding them. Throughout Parts One and Two I draw primarily on empirical analysis of archival and historical texts, and upon oral histories, photographs, art and poetry. Chapter Four focuses on the development of 'organised naturism' in Germany and Britain and highlights the differences and similarities between the fledgling movements. I look specifically at the influence that physical culture, the interwar drive towards open-air recreation and the practice of heliotherapy had on early British naturism. The final part of the chapter considers the impact of contemporary morality on the naturist movement

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[8] Tuan, *op. cit.*; Entrikin, J. N. (1976) 'Contemporary humanism in geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (4) pp. 615 – 632; Seamon, D. (1978) 'Goethe's approach to the natural world: implications for environmental theory and education', in Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (eds) *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. London: Croom Helm; Buttimer, A. (1990) 'Geography, humanism, and global concern', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1) pp. 1 – 33. See also Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (1978) 'Introduction: contexts of modern humanism in geography', in Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (eds) *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. London: Croom Helm pp. 1 – 17.

[9] See. Kearney, R. (1998) 'The phenomenological imagination (Husserl)', *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-Modern*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press pp. 13 - 45. Macann, C. (1993) *Four Phenomenological Philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty*. London: Routledge. On feminist theory see Blunt, A. and Wills, J. (2000) 'Embodying geography: feminist geographies of gender', *Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practice*. London: Prentice Hall pp. 90 – 127; Butler and Parr, *op. cit.*; Callard, *op. cit.*; Rose, *op. cit.*

and the extent to which naturists had to negotiate contemporary attitudes towards the body and display. These case studies facilitate a consideration of the body and its roles and place within naturist discourse.

In Chapter Five, I argue that naturist discourse destabilises the traditional dualisms of traditional Enlightenment thought, preferring instead a more 'recursively constituted' conceptualisation of mind and body relations. In addition, the chapter emphasises the embodied and highly sensuous geographies evident in reflexive accounts of naturist practice. I use key examples from the naturist literature and the work of German physical exercise enthusiast Hans Surén in order to work through debates regarding the body, embodiment and sensuality. I outline the context within which Surén wrote, his approach to the relationship between humans and environment and the ways he felt the environment impacted upon the body, both mentally and physically. I examine the sensuousness of Surén's description and consider the embodied nature of his out-door experience using a recursive conception of the body-environment relationship.[10] Drawing on debates regarding gender and nature, I also argue that Surén's work contains a dual conception of both intimacy with, and / or mastery over, the natural environment.[11] In the final part of the chapter I deal more specifically with the body examining Surén's theories concerning health and nudity. Chapter Six extends this debate by examining the representation of the naked body within naturist culture. Whilst naturist practice itself actively challenges central constructions of the body in Western society and its attendant dualisms of public / private, culture / nature, and subjectivity / objectivity many naturist images act to reinforce traditional gender binaries and celebrate specific bodily ideals. However, these dualisms become problematic when one considers representations of the male nude and the attempts of Surén and

fellow naturists to assimilate a revised masculinity with the natural environment.

Chapters Seven to Nine examine the members and activities of the *Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland* drawing on themes raised in Chapter Three and the discussions of naturism in Chapters Four to Six. In Chapter Seven I place camping within a wider historical context charting the movements' progress from a small-scale club to multi-national organisation. I consider the reasons why people were driven to camp, in particular, the desire to escape from the towns and the wish to return to a more 'natural' state in harmony with nature. Chapter Eight examines the embodied geographies of camping and, in particular, the contribution of the different senses to people's knowledges of different environments and the ways in which the senses help to form distinctive 'emotional spaces' within these practices. The chapter emphasises that embodiment is produced discursively and that the body cannot be understood outside its relations with place, and social and cultural contexts. In the final part of the chapter I examine the intimacy and reflexivity of the relationship between body and environment. I consider the distinction made between campers and non-campers regarding their ability to live in tune with natural rhythms and highlight the particular qualities of the 'moss-back' or seasoned camper.

Chapter Nine considers embodied experience as a 'situated' practice in relation to the moral geographies of citizenship and idealism evident in the inter-war and immediate post war periods. I focus on the qualities of the camper, and the ways in which membership of the Club came to be regarded as a hallmark of good conduct. I look at the moral geographies of the campsite in relation to debates regarding appropriate behaviour in the natural environment and attempt to show how the camping

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[10] Butler and Parr, *op. cit.*

ethos fits in with the wider concerns prevalent at this time. In so doing, illustrate the complex and plural ways campers interacted with the ideas and experiences of nature, and to draw out the embodied practices and sensualities that realised these ideas about bodies and nature. The concluding chapter reflects upon both the political and theoretical implications of the development of geographies of embodiment, and indicates directions for future research. As a whole the thesis contributes to wider debates and scholarship addressing the re-thinking of embodied experiences through consideration of bodily engagements with 'nature' and environments – for these are, I think, neglected aspects of our understandings of the human geographies of the last century.

[11] See Rose, *op. cit.*

Chapter Two

The state of the nation: health, fitness and outdoor recreation

Introduction

This chapter considers the cultures, debates, beliefs and assumptions concerning the relationships and engagements between the environment and the body in the first half of the twentieth century. A central element of early to mid twentieth century outdoor culture was a reaction against the perceived ugliness, anonymity and artificial nature of modern urban industrial society and the imagined physical, mental and moral deterioration of the population that resulted. Such concerns drew upon social, cultural and political anxieties and dislocation consequent upon the First World War, and the instabilities and economic depression of the inter-war years. For example, Springhall notes that the hopes and fears of an apprehensive middle class struggling to consolidate its position against what were perceived as threats, both at home and from abroad, were a characteristic element of this period.[1] Such threats included industrial competition from America and Germany, the expansion of German naval power, the expanding influence of Socialism, poverty and urban destitution.[2] However, Boscagli states that fears of national and racial degeneration which fed such 'anti-decadent rhetorics' and looked to Nature as an agent of renovation were also fuelled by Nietzschean and

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[1] Springhall, J. (1977) *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883 - 1940.* London: Croom Helm. Walvin, J. (1987) 'Symbols of moral superiority: slavery, sport and the changing world order, 1800 – 1950', in Mangan, J. and Walvin, J. (eds) *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800 – 1940.* Manchester: Manchester University Press pp. 242 – 260; Budd, M. A. (1997) *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire.* London: Macmillan. See also Searle, G. R. (1979) 'Eugenics and politics in Britain in the 1930s', *Annals of Science* 36 pp. 159 - 169.

eugenicist discourses both prominent in the pre-war years.[3] The pursuit of healthy open-air recreation, and campaigns to improve access to open spaces progressed hand in hand with the related goals of ameliorating urban conditions and removing social constraints.[4]

The popular adoption of healthy open-air recreation first emerged in the wake of radical social and cultural changes following World War One.[5] Although people did partake in out-door activities before 1914, there was a significant expansion in outdoor recreational pursuits in Britain in the inter-war period.[6] Lowe states that the early twentieth century 'high priests' of the open-air life such as Robert Baden-Powell and his American counterpart E. T. Seton (founder of the Woodcraft Folk) appear, in retrospect as the inheritors of a well-established tradition rather than prophets.[7] Walking in communion with nature had been inspirational for English Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Hazlitt in the early nineteenth century.[8] C. E. M. Joad noted that from the 1870s onwards 'a trickle of townsmen began to resort to the country for air, exercise, relaxation and spiritual refreshment'.[9] Philosopher and social commentator Joad was one of the most prolific at recording the effects of the later mass

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[2] On the contribution of tuberculosis to these fears see Campbell, M. (1999) 'From cure chair to *Chaise Longue*: medical treatment and the form of the modern recliner', *Journal of Design History* 12 (4) pp. 327 - 343 (p. 329). Tytell also notes that, 'the post-war era was a time of extraordinary insecurity, of profound powerlessness as far as individual effort was concerned, when personal responsibility was being abdicated in favour of corporate largeness'. Tytell, J. (1976) *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation*. London: McGraw-Hill (p. 5).

[3] Boscagli, M. (1996) *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Westview Press.

[4] Taylor, H. (1997) *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement*. Edinburgh: Keele University Press.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Lowe, R. (1983) 'The early twentieth century open-air movement: origins and implications', in Parry, N. and McNair, D. (eds) *The Fitness of the Nation: Physical and Health Education in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the History of Education Society of Great Britain. Leicester.

[8] Prynn, D. (1976) 'The Clarion Club, rambling and the holiday associations in Britain since the 1890s', in *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 pp. 65 – 77.

[9] Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*. With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber p. 15. Prior to this 'walking' as a means of locomotion was commonly associated with the poor, roving itinerants and the working-class, had not been considered a suitable pursuit for the upper-classes. However, in the late-eighteenth century, with the development of the British road system (and later steamboats and rail travel) travelling became faster and more reliable. With a choice of several modes of transport walking was 're-defined' as 'a sensual way of moving through the landscape, a way of uniting body and mind, of getting closer to both nature and to rural culture, a way of finding yourself'. Löfgren, O. (2001) *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing*. London: University of California Press (p. 49). Löfgren also highlights the distinction made between

movement in the inter-war period as well as its undoubted political implications. Most of his convictions were based on witnessing the large-scale escape at weekends by young people from Manchester into the Peak District.[10] Thus, 'the practical and tangible beginnings of the outdoor movement were informed by a critique of those crude and often superficial values that had gained purchase in the ethos of a consolidated industrial capitalist system'.[11]

In the late nineteenth century, however, it was only the more affluent who were able to enjoy such recreational opportunities, with rambling and climbing becoming popular forms of relaxation for the professional and intellectual classes.[12] It was this strata of society from which most of the open-air literature and published accounts of outdoor activities emanated.[13] This extended to literature published in the twentieth century — as Taylor notes:

> the expansive contemporary literature of open-air recreation does give something of the flavour of the inter-war need to escape to the countryside, although in its fairly dominant emphasis on the romantic, the aesthetic and the spiritual, it reflects only the response of a minority, rather than that of the larger, popular outdoor movement.[14]

Much twentieth century writing was redolent of the nineteenth century intellectual esoteric ideas relating to the attractions of an unspoilt natural environment. As demonstrated in this thesis, the influence of this literature extended not only to the

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the 'true' traveller as an individual who obtained an enriched sense of experience from the journey as opposed to the tourist who was simply a 'package' that allowed itself to be transported between 'sights' (p. 50).

[10] Taylor, *op. cit.*; Joad, *op. cit.*

[11] Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[12] *Ibid.*; Prynn, *op. cit.*

[13] Taylor, *op. cit.*

idealisation of certain environments and bodies but also to concerns regarding types of behaviour and appropriate ways of experiencing the environment. Using poetry, interview material, magazines and amateur photography, however, I argue that these ideas also were both internalised by and conflicted with the values of naturists and campers between the 1920s and late 1950s.

This chapter contextualises the thesis by situating the two case study groups, campers and naturists, within the wider contemporary social, economic and cultural milieu of the early twentieth century. In addition, each section will provide a brief introduction to key themes which filter through the thesis; health, morality, citizenship, human-environment relationships. In the first main section I outline the contemporary concerns regarding the state of the nation and highlight the condition(ing) of the body as central to these debates. The medical examinations during the Boer War, and later the First World War, revealed the nation's health to be in a perilous state and from this period on doctors began to stress the importance of fresh air, exercise and sunlight.[15] Following Horn, these debates appear to draw upon late nineteenth century theories of the body; at the same time that certain bodies (in this case the diseased, impaired, weak bodies of conscripts and working-class mothers) were made 'social bodies', society was reimagined as a body to be defended against itself 'an organism whose component parts posed predictable risks to the survival of the whole'.[16] As an extension of this discussion I also examine the practice of eugenics within Britain and the extent to which it may have influenced policy and practice.

In the second section of the chapter, I examine British attempts to restore national

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 239.
[15] *Ibid.*

health through the reformation of the individual body. Although the disappointing health register of World War One did not create the impetus for state surveillance and discipline of the body it did intensify it. In the inter-war period numerous independent organisations and state departments began to focus their attention on the physical health, stature and well-being of the British population with particular emphasis placed on the benefits of exercise, fresh air, welfare reform and the dangers of 'misguided recreation' amongst the masses. In focusing on the culture of the body as well as the mind, contemporary social commentators believed that it was not only possible to restore national health but also to create effective citizens.[17] However, this goal was problematised by worries that by pushing too hard their efforts may result in 'a passive acquiescence' which was the 'antithesis of active citizenship'.[18] Via comparisons with contemporary schemes in Europe and the Soviet Union I demonstrate the peculiarly 'voluntary' nature of the British physical fitness and open-air movements.

In the third section of the chapter, I briefly describe the growing popularity of 'heliotherapy' in twentieth century Britain and the extent to which the 'sun' as a health cure and symbol of life or regeneration filtered through contemporary society. I consider the rise of the open-air movement and the factors that influenced and enabled a significant proportion of the population to take part in outdoor pursuits from the late 1920s onwards. I demonstrate that enthusiasm for the outdoors was part of a wider movement for physical culture which affected most of Europe during the first half of the twentieth century and was reflected in Britain by the physical training and keep-fit craze,

[16] Horn, D. G. (1994) *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity*. Chichester: Princeton University Press (p. 18).
[17] Joad, C. E. M. (1937) 'The people's claim', in Ellis, C. W. (ed) *Britain and the Beast*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd pp. 64 – 85.
[18] Anon (09/01/1937) 'Fitness for Life', *The Times* p. 13.

cycling, camping, hiking and rambling, and naturism.[19] In an attempt to counteract the supposed degenerative effects of urbanisation, young people were encouraged to get out into the countryside, commune with nature, exercise and fill their lungs with fresh air. However, whilst modern society generated the desire for healthy and meaningful uses of leisure time, these efforts were inhibited by exclusionary action by landowners and legislation which prevented people from accessing rural areas. Finally, I outline the calls of preservationists and other social commentators for the 'education' of the masses in the 'arts of right living'.[20]

'The Survival of the Unfittest'[21]

The 'humiliating debacle' of the Boer War (1899 - 1902) heralded a major social crisis which highlighted the fragility of the British Empire and threatened to destroy any illusions of imperial greatness.[22] Providing an insight into the extent of social deprivation, particularly the poor health of many volunteers, the war reinforced nineteenth century concerns about the consequences of urban life upon the condition of the British race and foretold dire repercussions for both nation and empire.[23] When soldiers were measured according to standardised recruitment ideals, problems ranged from recruits being 'too small' through to possessing weak lungs, bad hearts, rheumatic

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[19] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[20] Matless, D. (1998) *Landscape and Englishness*. London: Reaktion.
[21] Extract from Bullen, G. (02/06/1931) 'The survival of the fittest', *The Times* p. 10.
[22] Rutherford, J. (1997) 'Under an English heaven': Rupert Brooke and the search for an English Arcady', *Forever England: Reflections on Race, Masculinity and Empire*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. 39 - 69; Searle, G. R. (1976) *Eugenics and Politics in Britain, 1900 - 1914*. Leyden: Noordhoff International Publishing; Springhall, J. (1977) *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883 - 1940*. London: Croom Helm; Budd, *op. cit.*
[23] Rutherford, *op. cit.*; Searle, *Eugenics and Politics, op. cit.*; Pope, R. (1991) *War and Society in Britain, 1899 - 1948*. London: Longman.

complaints, flat feet, and bad teeth.[24] The condition of the nation became a pressing issue in this period as statistical analyses and more impressionistic studies began to produce a disturbing picture.[25] For example, prior to 1919 a long series of social surveys had been undertaken modelled on and inspired by the pioneers of such work: Booth's survey of living standards in London (1889) and Rowntree's *Poverty*, a survey of living standards in York in 1899.[26] Further surveys were undertaken in the inter-war years in York, London, Merseyside, Southampton, Bristol, and the 'five towns' (Reading, Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Bolton). In addition, national surveys of food consumption and total expenditure were carried out by the Rowett Institute and the Ministry of Labour respectively, in 1935 and 1938.[27] These surveys usually focused their attention on the 'working class' under the assumption that 'the working class' were an easily identifiable group within society, though Glynn and Oxborrow note that little space was devoted to the problem of precise definition.[28]

Another common feature of such surveys was the overriding concern with 'physical needs' which, it was again assumed, could be objectively calculated. The problems of trying to quantify or measure human needs and feelings will be discussed in Chapter Three. My particular concern here is the way in which bodily health and well being was thought to be impacted upon by the surrounding environmental conditions. High infant mortality coupled with a rapidly decreasing birth rate further led to the belief that the increasing urbanisation of the population was contributing to its physical and moral

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[24] Rutherford, *op. cit.*; Budd, *op. cit.* In 1900 of 20,292 voluntery recruits only 14,068 were considered fit to join. Walvin, *op. cit.*

[25] Pope, *op. cit.*; Glynn, S. and Oxborrow , J. (1976) *Interwar Britain: A Social and Economic History*. London: Allen and Unwin.

[26] Glynn and Oxborrow, *op. cit.*

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.* Walvin, *op. cit.*, states that in the 1860s the urban poor shared a racially determined category remarkably like colonial blacks: lazy, stupid, ignorant and unwilling to work unless compelled.

decay.[29] Though modern urban life was considered necessary to contemporary civilisation, towns were also associated with disease, artificiality, over-stimulation and a separation from nature. Ugly and ill-placed buildings were thought to have a damaging effect on the beauty of English minds;

> even the sturdiest of natures suffers loss in surroundings which express nothing but meanness and vulgarity [...] instinct warns against ugliness [and] other kinds of corruption [...] Health of body and health of mind, nutrition, physical fitness, the happiness of children depend, in the last issue, upon thinking and feeling and therefore upon the influences and suggestions by which men and women are surrounded.[30]

For example, for the architect Le Corbusier early twentieth century urbanism was analogous to the negativisms of twisted deformities, broken body parts, even visual impairment.[31] As will be demonstrated in Chapters Four to Nine, similar debates and anxieties were reproduced repeatedly in naturist and camping literatures.

Alongside the many independent surveys, England's 'physical deterioration' was also made the subject of Government inquiry.[32] In 1904 whilst 'denying any evidence of actual decline in the physical condition of the population' an Inter-Departmental Physical Deterioration Committee Report emphasised that 'there was much that could

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[29] Though the decline was probably due in part to increasing use of birth control methods. Hoggett, F. E. (1974) *A Dictionary of British History. 1815 – 1973.* Oxford: Blackwell.
[30] Anon (19/06/1937) 'Health and environment', *The Times* p. 15.
[31] Imrie, R. (1999) 'The body, disability and Le Corbusier's conception of the radiant environment', in Butler, R. and Parr, H. (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability.* London: Routledge pp. 25 – 45.
[32] Fletcher, S. (1984) *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880 - 1980.* London: The Athlone Press.

and should be done to improve that condition'.[33] The Committee's reform recommendations covered the extension of local authority town planning powers to combat overcrowding, action to reduce smoke pollution, the distribution and handling of food and milk, working conditions, instruction of the poor in domestic science and child rearing, adult drinking and juvenile smoking, and state supported physical training.[34] Rutherford notes that by the end of the nineteenth century theories of degeneracy had blended sin and crime into a medical discourse which proposed that the root of all social problems was a hereditary, personal pathology.[35] Likewise, the Report located the problem of physical deterioration in childbearing, the upbringing of children and the supposed ignorance of working-class mothers in matters of healthcare and moral instruction. By focusing attention on the physical condition of the nation's children, the Report also was directly responsible for the launch of the School Medical Service in 1907 and the provision of meals for pupils.[36] Glynn and Oxborrow state that it seems likely that malnutrition amongst growing children was fairly widespread in the inter-war period though school meals and milk are thought to have been a crucial factor in improving the general health of children.[37] Springhall comments that many social imperialists took up the idea of deterioration which was made fashionable by the report

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[33] Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 59. Those who reported or portrayed social danger in 'sensationalist' terms were often marginalised as 'scare-mongers'. In comparison, more 'sober' social commentators (despite qualifying the alarmist picture) tended to depict a slower, mediated process of decline in which a 'relative deterioration in the body of the city population in turn undermined the "imperial race" with ensuing disintegrative effects upon the nation and Empire'. Pick, D. (1989) *Faces of degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848 - c.1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (p. 184).

[34] Pope, *op. cit.*; Searle, *Eugenics and Politics*, *op. cit.*; Fletcher, *op. cit.*

[35] Rutherford, *op. cit.* For further discussion on theories of degeneration see Pick, *op. cit.* Horn, *op. cit.*, states that, '[t]he construction of the social as a domain of scientific knowledge and technical intervention marked a revolution in the history of bodies in the West. The spaces of the social came, over time, to be [associated] with the dangerous, injured, needy, diseased, and infertile bodies of women and men - bodies at times identified as "at risk", and at others as "posing risks" to a more encompassing collectivity' (p. 18).

[36] Bryder, L. (1992) 'Wonderlands of Buttercup, Clover and Daises': Tuberculosis and the Open-Air School Movement in Britain, 1907 - 1939', in Cooter, R. (ed) *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare, 1880 - 1940*. London: Routledge pp. 72 - 95; Turner, D. A. (1972) 'The Open-Air School Movement in Sheffield', *History of Education* 1 (1) pp. 58 – 80; Fletcher, *op. cit.* In 1907 all Local Authorities were compelled by law to have the children in their schools medically examined three times a year. In 1906, Local Authorities were also allowed to provide school meals, and although only about half of them were doing so by 1939, this figure increased greatly during World War Two. From 1906 Local Authorities were also allowed to provide a third of a pint of milk for children for 1½d a day, or free if the parents could not afford to pay in 1934. It was not until 1946 that free milk was provided for all children.

[37] Glynn and Oxborrow, *op. cit.*

and this idea soon became 'interchangeable' with degeneracy or decadence adding 'an implication of moral decline to the fear of physical worsening', a fact which the report was intended to refute.[38] Issues surrounding 'morality' and the physical conditioning of the body will be discussed later in this chapter.

At the close of World War One attention was once again called to the poor standard of physique exhibited by a large proportion of Armed Service recruits. In the classification of new recruits the shape of the body was crucial and photographs such as those in Figure 2.1 were used to categorise physique and determine the physical differences between the 'fit' and 'unfit'.[39] In this illustration the men are labelled from I to IV with Grade I denoting the healthy, well-developed body; these classifications later became alphabetical from A to D. The cursory five-minute medical inspections, conducted under the auspices of the Local Government Board between 1917 - 1918 placed forty-one per cent of those inspected in Categories C and D and considered ten per cent unfit for any form of military service.[40] In *The Times* A. L. Sachs wrote of the poor physiques of the recruits he had to inspect, particularly in terms of bad dental care.[41] National pride was, of course, at the centre of these debates, however, it is important to acknowledge that the British were not alone in their fears. Since their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, French social commentators had been drawing unflattering contrasts between the spectacle of modern manhood and that of its ancient

[38] Springhall, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
[39] Bourke, J. (1996) 'Inspecting', *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*. London: Reaktion pp. 171 – 209.
[40] Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 4; Bourke, *op. cit.* See also Glynn and Oxborrow, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[41] Sachs, A. L. (13/10/1936) 'Physical Fitness: Active Participation in Sport', *The Times* p. 12.

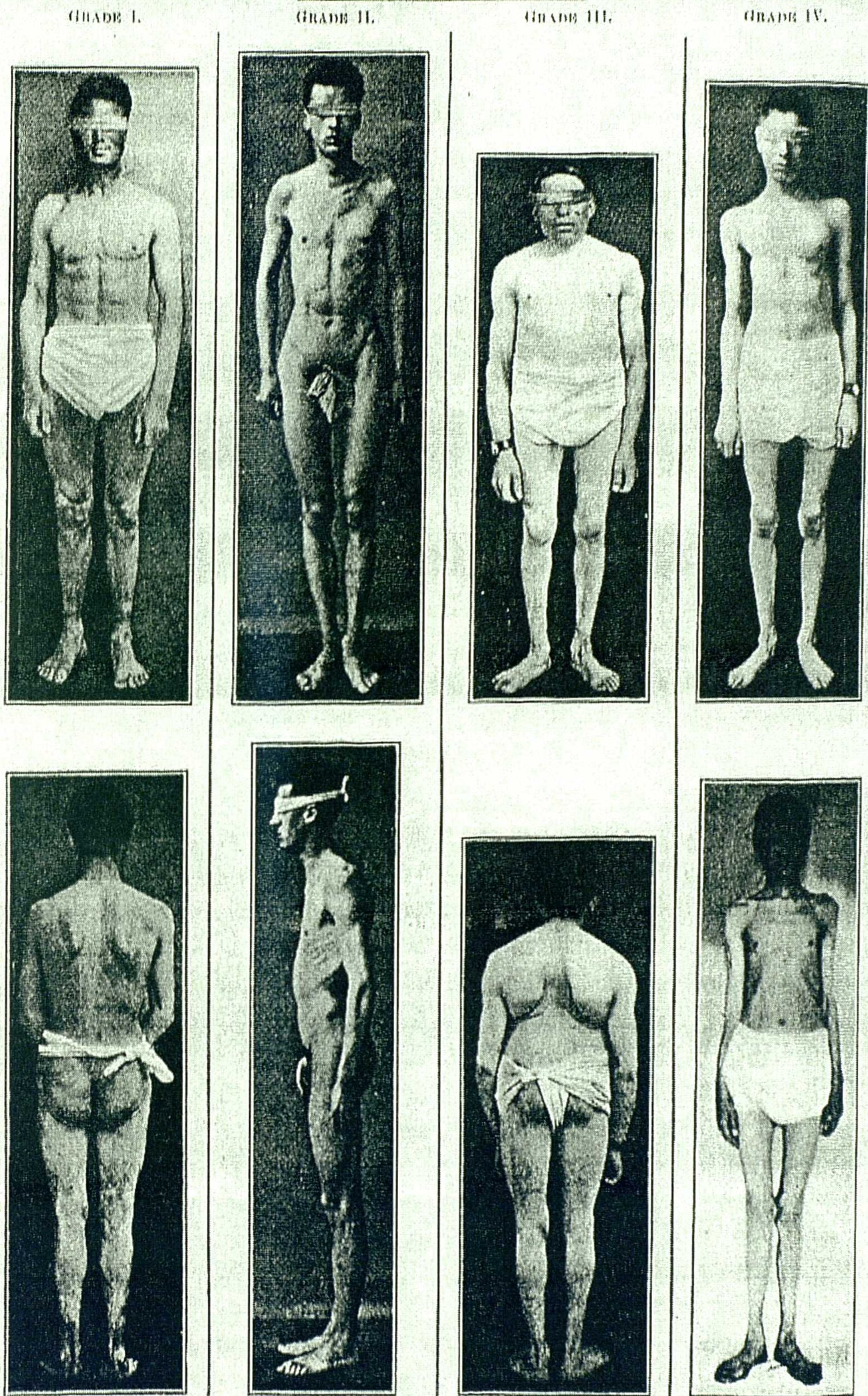

Figure 2.1 'Specimens of men in each of the four grades'. From Bourke (1996) p. 173.

forebears.[42] Contemporary bodies with all their 'deformations' - round backs, sloping shoulders, narrow chests, bulging stomachs, weak arms, knock knees - provided a striking contrast to ancient athletes and 'flesh could not stand up to comparison with stone'.[43] Such 'classical essentialist' depictions of bodies highlighted 'geometric proportion and symmetry', or a body 'seemingly able-bodied, taut, upright, male, an image projected as self-evidently invariable, normal, vigorous and healthy'.[44] Garb remarks that the modern French man (and presumably the British male) was thus,

> a weak replica of his ancient forebears, to whom alcoholism, syphilis and hereditary diseases were allegedly unknown. Moreover, while the ancients had neither to contend with the overworking of the intellect, the over-population of big cities, the withering effects of industrial labour, or the anaemia of bureaucratic duties, modern man (sic) was gradually being destroyed by the effects of modernisation.[45]

It was claimed that the sorry state of the modern body threatened to produce damaged offspring whose progressive degeneracy spelled nothing less than the end of France. In Britain it was widely agreed that the physical training given to service men was effacious in moulding the male body, making them more robust, taller and heavier and it was proposed that military drill should be applied to the civilian population.[46] Not only did these (specifically male) bodies have to be capable of military prowess it was also crucial that those who survived were 'fit' to work for the nation. Yet, as Bourke remarks, 'the proposal that military service improved the shape of men's bodies obscured an important issue: the war improved only those bodies that were not

[42] Garb, T. (1998) *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*. London: Thames and Hudson.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[44] Imrie, *op. cit.*
[45] Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

completely or partially decimated'.[47] The idealisation of particular bodies and the gendered and ablist assumptions which saturate these discourses will be considered in more depth in Chapter Six which examines the representation of naturist bodies and photography.

At this point it is enough to note that these health debates operated at two scales, the collective and the individual: the strength of the nation depended on the healing, cleansing and training of the individual.[48] The early twentieth century was a period in which a variety of groups expressed concern at the supposed degenerative tendencies of the national stock. The root of this degeneration was located in modern urban life and, in particular, amongst the working class. Degeneration quickly became synonymous with moral decline. The next section briefly examines the rising popularity of eugenics as a way of counteracting the problems of degeneracy and decline in twentieth century Britain.

Eugenics

The influence of eugenics was widespread in the early decades of the twentieth century.[49] Though the Eugenics Society recorded a drop in membership figures in the years immediately following World War One, by the late 1920s membership figures had begun to recover and continued to rise until 1933 when they reached an all-time peak of

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[46] Bourke, *op. cit.*
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[48] Boscagli, *op. cit.*
[49] Farrall, L. A. (1979) 'The history of eugenics: a bibliographical review', *Annals of Science* 36 pp. 111 - 123; Searle, *Eugenics and Politics*, *op. cit.*

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768.[50] Fletcher states that 'public receptiveness to such ideas was ensured in Edwardian Britain by the humiliations of the Boer War and by the growing awareness of German rivalry in both economic and military terms'.[51] For example, Boscagli notes the way in which popular movements such as the Boy Scouts mixed the patriotic concerns of the eugenics movement with Nietzschean ideals of individualism, will and physical power.[52] Searle links the rapid rise in support for eugenics in the early 1930s with the worsening economic situation and political turmoil in Britain:

> as unemployment mounted and all the major parties demonstrated their helplessness in the face of social and economic problems that they could neither understand nor control, fringe organisations proliferated and new movements succeeded in recruiting the frustrated and the alienated in their thousands.[53]

A common reaction was to greet the 1920s economic collapse as a striking vindication of the eugenical creed. In the depression, 'retribution had at last been visited upon a community which had for so long obstinately flouted the laws of biology'.[54]

Eugenics offered a utopian vision of a future in which contemporary problems such as alcoholism, criminality, disease and poverty would cease to exist.[55] The theory behind eugenics was simple: if domestic violence, pauperism, alcoholism and criminality in working-class life could be attributed to heredity, it was possible, by

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[50] Searle, 'Eugenics', *op. cit.*, p. 160.
[51] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[52] Boscagli, *op. cit.* The movement aimed to produce a new type of young man, whose health and physical prowess could counteract the implicitly degenerative tendencies of modern England (p. 85).
[53] Searle, 'Eugenics', *op. cit.*, p. 159.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 161.
[55] Farrall, *op. cit.*

controlling working class sexual reproduction, to breed these ills out of existence.[56] For example, in 1909, William Ralph Inge, later to be Dean of St Paul's and the eulogiser of Rupert Brooke, had called for 'any legislation' which would 'reduce the poor's desire to breed'.[57] Almost three decades later, G. Bullen reassessed Inge's philosophy in *The Times*,

> [f]ew will question the attractiveness of Dr Inge's vision of England a thousand years hence, peopled with a happy, healthy race and without wars, disease, national debt, poverty, taxes, crime, unemployment or any of the other ills with which we are at present afflicted. But how are we going to attain it? [...] As Mr Wicksteed Armstrong has shown in 'The Survival of the Unfittest' all our so-called humanitarian legislation, with its free hospitals, asylums, charities, pensions, health insurance, and doles is leading us rapidly to racial degeneration. We are subsidising the unfit at the expense of the fit [...] we are breeding a nation of C3 parasites.[58]

The Eugenics Society was a very prestigious organisation and from its inauguration had been consistently successful in recruiting members from the ranks of highly esteemed academics and scientists.[59] Many distinguished intellectuals were also prepared to work under the auspices of the Society, not because they agreed with all its policies or even

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[56] Rutherford, *op. cit.*, p. 55. A term coined by Francis Galton - Charles Darwin's cousin - in 1883 'eugenics' took Social Darwinism to its 'logical conclusion'. Farrall, 'Eugenics', *op. cit.*

[57] Rutherford, *op. cit.* The Very Rev. Inge K.C.V.O., D.D. (1860 – 1954) was an Anglican Clergyman and Dean of St Paul's 1911 – 1934. Educated at Cambridge he was also a prolific lecturer and essayist on current affairs and popular religion. A friend of Bernard Shaw, Inge's *Times* obituary described him as a man who had 'no use for socialism' and whom 'distrusted the masses'. He was also staunchly opposed to industrialism which he considered a 'cancerous growth on British society' and he eagerly looked forward to the eventual dismantling of the manufacturing cities so that their sites could be reclaimed for the plough'. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 - 117; Roberts, F. C. (ed) (1979) *Obituaries From The Times 1951 - 1960.* Reading: Newspaper Archive Developments Ltd. For more information on Rupert Brooke see Rutherford, *op. cit.*

[58] Bullen, *op. cit.*, p. 10. In 1936 Lord Dawson of Penn proposed a solution in which the fittest were promoted above the 'weaklings' that once would have been killed by disease. Though unfit youth should be given elemental training, no attempt should be made to raise them above their 'biological level'. Dawson of Penn (04/11/1936) 'The national physique: leaders of youth', *The Times* p. 15.

[59] Searle, 'Eugenics', *op. cit.*

shared the dominant political outlook, but because they were professionally attracted by the constructive work it was doing in a number of fields.[60] Though eugenics did not constitute a coherent doctrine, cognate research fields included demographics, genetic counselling, family allowances, the search for safer and more effective contraceptives, artificial insemination and sterilisation. Searle notes that the Society never aimed to make mass converts but rather hoped to influence legislative processes by permeating the media, academic institutions and the medical profession.[61]

Towards the end of the 1930s, however, a marked shift of opinion away from the practice of eugenics took place, particularly within the biological profession.[62] No singular reason can be said to be responsible for this, although two factors can be noted. Firstly, eugenics benefited from the reassurance which it provided to many middle class people that unemployment, like other social problems, was the result of inexorable scientific laws, not of defective social or economic arrangements.[63] The mass unemployment of the inter-war years, however, served to demonstrate the absurdity of the eugenic hypothesis that social dependence and destitution were the result of genetic defect.[64] Secondly, the connection between athleticism, virility and national renewal had become particularly influential in fascist Germany.[65] However, the draconian scheme of compulsory sterilisation published by the German government in July 1933 led to a risk of guilt by association for advocates of the Society's own sterilisation campaign, and to the shocked realisation of the evil purposes to which eugenics could

[60] *Ibid.*; Fletcher, *op. cit.*
[61] Searle, *op. cit.* This appears to have extended to geography, see Cornish, V. (1924) 'The geographical aspect of eugenics', *The Eugenics Review* 16 (4) pp. 267 – 9. In this short article, Cornish stated that the method of the geographer was to study all mankind in relation to the regions of the world, in particular, those nations which were the most 'useful' part of human community - more specifically, those from Europe, Occidental peoples, or 'the White Race'. Indeed, the increase or maintenance of the 'White Race' would be a eugenic movement tending to the well-being of the world.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] Boscagli, *op. cit.*

be put.[66]

Although the eugenics movement and its concerns regarding future generations undoubtedly informed governmental policy and practice in the inter-war period, from the early 1930s attention was focused on the training and 'moulding' of the current population. It is in light of these efforts, and the widespread adoption of out-door recreational pursuits, that I discuss the activities of naturists and campers. A number of examples indicate the extent to which the state and other (voluntary) organisations became directly involved in attempts to restore national health and subsequently improve morality. The following section traces the development of physical exercise amongst the general population from the mid-1930s onwards, looking, in particular, at state directed initiatives and the ideas behind 'voluntary citizenship'.

'Keep fit, take exercise, keep fit and you'll be wise'[67]

In this section I chart some of the key debates surrounding the physical fitness of the British population focusing on the policy and practice implemented first by independent organisations and, then on a national scale, by state-run institutions. In October 1934 *Times* correspondent F. J. Willis remarked that he was in no doubt that

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[66] *Ibid.* Whilst the German government wanted a compulsory scheme which was very loosely drafted and increased the risk of sterilisation being used to punish political opponents, the Society wanted a voluntary one with elaborate safeguards to protect the citizen against possible victimisation or exploitation. This is a theme I return to in Chapter Four when I discuss the links between National Socialism and naturism. It is important to note that ideas of 'evolutionary fitness' and 'racial degeneration' were widely endorsed throughout Europe and America in this period. The United States had sterilisation laws before Germany and continued to conduct thousands of sterilisations per year until the 1940s. Pick, *op. cit.* To broaden this idea, Burt comments that it is also problematic to assume that 'nationalism' in this period necessarily implies 'right-wing politics; [we] should also be open to the fact that individuals may have thought in national terms because the notion of internationalism was, at the time, largely underdeveloped'. Burt, R. (1998) *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, 'Race' and Nation in Early Modern Dance.* London: Routledge. Searle notes, that the Eugenics Society as a whole never identified itself with right-wing extremism as exemplified in Britain by Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (founded 1932). Searle, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

much had been done since 'the Great War' in the development of public health services and the improvement of food, milk, water supplies and housing conditions to raise standards of health.[68] He believed that these advances had undoubtedly been reflected in the better physique and fitness of the new generation. However he wished to draw attention to 'other factors inherent in modern conditions of living' which also had an important bearing on health and fitness, and in particular, to the use of leisure. Willis noted that such spheres had been under close and intensive scrutiny in other countries and Britain could not, more than any other, afford to lag behind.[69] A year later, an unqualified article in *The Times* stated that the immediate effects of malnutrition and bad housing conditions were certainly being swept away. Though the ills arising from sedentary occupation, from living in towns short of fresh air and sunlight, lack of exercise due to the speed of modern life and the convenience of modern transport could not be prevented, Britain had a 'magnificent physical stock' and by stimulating the national consciousness it would be possible to undo the evil effects of urbanisation.[70]

In the early 1930s demographic statistics showed that ninety per cent of the national population left school (the main provider of physical education at this time) at fourteen and that nearly three million people were subject to long periods of 'enforced leisure' due to unemployment.[71] Spurred on by fears of physical degeneration and moral decline many local authorities began to take an increased interest in leisure time. In 1933 the use (and perceived abuse) of leisure time amongst the local population became a particular concern to Hull Community Council. In this year the Hull Community Council Social Survey Committee (HCCSSC) published the report of a survey which

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[67] GFS (2001), 'Keep Fit', George Formby Society. http://www.geogreformby.co.uk.lyrics/
[68] Willis, F. J. (12/10/1934) 'Physique of the Nation', *The Times* p. 10.
[69] Willis, *op. cit.*
[70] Anon (12/10/1935) 'Physical Training in Schools: The King's Message to Conference', *The Times* p. 17.

had studied the various ways in which 'people of all classes' in Hull used their leisure time.[72] The report concluded that for the majority of the contemporary generation 'leisure' meant 'freedom from employment'. In line with the rest of the nation, people in Hull were demanding longer weekends, shorter business hours and were spending an increased percentage of the household budget on 'leisure time activities'.

On one hand, the report spoke favourably of the fifty per cent of homes who owned wireless licences. This cheap form of entertainment had proven to be a novelty amongst the general population, however, more importantly, the talks, plays and news reports had the potential to be 'powerful influences for moulding social thought'.[73] On the other hand, the report also commented unfavourably that Hull boasted 298 public houses for a population of 313,366 in 1931.[74] Greyhound racing, another popular pastime, was also amongst pursuits considered 'deferential to the best interests of the community as the main attraction was betting on the results'.[75] Chapters Four to Nine consider the issue of 'appropriate' uses of leisure in greater depth and with specific reference to naturist and camping groups. At this point, however, I wish to emphasise the main conclusion of the Committee's report which was that, 'on the whole, [there was] a considerable amount of chance and aimlessness in the use made of leisure time'.[76] The next section looks at the 1930s nation-wide drive towards more 'meaningful' recreation and a higher standard of physical fitness amongst the general population.

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[71] Evans, R. and Boyd, A (1933) *The Use of Leisure in Hull*. Hull: Hull Community Council Social Survey Committee (p. 23).

[72] *Ibid.* The report provides a comprehensive survey of the recreational facilities available to the public in Hull. The overall emphasis of the report appears to be that contemporary facilities for sport, recreation and physical fitness were not adequate for the 27,339 males and, more so, the 28,979 females aged between fifteen and twenty-four whom were resident within the city.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 11

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 9

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 10

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 24

Female physical training has had a long tradition in Britain, but in the early 1930s the nation's womanhood was swept off its feet by 'Keep Fit'.[77] The term 'Keep Fit' was first used c. 1929 by the National Council of Girls Clubs in their campaign to cater (on a large scale) for the physical exercise needs of working girls and women affected by unemployment in Lancashire.[78] Although at first only promoted on a local level the campaign was later taken up and publicised by the Women's League of Health and Beauty (WLHB) as demonstrated by Figure 2.2, and eventually, 'Keep Fit' became a central part of what amounted to a national crusade to promote physical recreation for everybody.[79]

The WLHB signalled a new and broader outlook developing among women and girls.[80] By 1937 the campaign had encouraged 3,288 women aged between 18 and 55 to

[77] On the female tradition see Fletcher *op. cit.*

[78] The scheme was sponsored by the National Council of Social Service. On Keep Fit see Matthews, J. (1990) 'They had such a lot of fun: the Woman's League of Health and Beauty between the wars', in *History Workshop Journal: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 30 pp. 22 - 54; Keane, E. L. (09/07/1937) 'Physical training for girls', *The Times* p. 12. On the drive towards athleticism and 'manliness' prior to 1900 see Walvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 255 – 257.

[79] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 90. Matthews, *op. cit.* notes that other movements around this time included The Everywoman's League of Health (founded by Sali Lobel), the Legion of Health and Happiness (founded by Moira Cronin-Bond - hit song in 1933 with 'Bend Down Sister if You Want to Stay Thin'), the Institute of Beautycraft (founded by Jessie Harvey-Smith) and the League of Health and Grace (founded by Jessie Greenwood).

[80] The WLHB (formerly Build the Body Beautiful League - founded 1930) was a self-supporting enterprise (dubbed the Sixpenny Health Movement) founded by Mary Bagot Stack, which by 1939 had 170,000 members in Britain, Australia, Canada and Hong Kong. Forced to support her family in 1926 Stack set up a teacher training school, the 'Bagot Stack Health School', where the students undertook orthodox courses in dance, callisthenics and remedial exercise. Herself an ex-pupil of Mrs Josef Conn's Institute of Physical Training she eventually developed her own exercise system incorporating exercises for graceful walking and figure training. Working with the motto 'Movement is Life' popularised by Isadora Duncan (whom I discuss later), Stack proved herself to be an efficient publicist and became well known as a conservative reformer and philanthropist. By the late 1930s Stack's daughter Prunella was widely known as Britain's 'perfect girl'. Stack's missionary zeal was informed by her firm belief that pride of body was an essential foundation on which to build life and character. The WLHB was most famous for its large, public, mass demonstrations and spectacles often staged by up to 2000 - 5000 members. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 23; Matthews, *op. cit.* On the so-called 'obvious' association between the WLHB's uniform, mass spectacles and 'racial health' rhetoric with fascism see Matless, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

Figure 2.2 The Woman's League of Health and Beauty demonstrate the 'Flat back and slim waist exercise' in Hyde Park (May 1935). From the Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

become weekly members in 121 classes in 51 towns across Britain.[81] Eileen Fowler eventually set up the 'Keep Fit Association' in 1956. In her *Guardian* obituary Fowler (1907 - 2000) was recently heralded as the popular face of 'keep fit'.[82] Between 1934 and 1945 Ms. Fowler set up classes using exercises with 'comforting' names such as 'stretchaway', 'skipalong' and 'swingtime' encouraging everyone to exercise. She later took part in rallies and eventually branched out into radio and television. As Britain's so-called 'keep fit guru' she became famous for the catchphrase 'Down with a bounce; with a bounce, come up' and broadcast every morning at 6.45 on the BBC's first keep fit programme.[83] One of the interesting features of her work are the gendered assumptions prevalent in her teachings. Fowler believed, for example, that women could begin to

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[81] Keane, *op. cit.* In the early twenties advertisements were more likely to be aimed at those who wanted to gain weight rather than those who wished to lose it. 'Slimming' the precursor to 'keep fit' first became popular around 1927 and all kinds of tablets and potions were sold as weight reducers, however, this fashion faded around 1932 when physical fitness became predominant. Graves, R. and Hodge, A. (1950) *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain 1918 - 1939.* London: Faber and Faber.

[82] Kingdon, E. (11/03/00) 'Obituary: Eileen Fowler', *The Guardian* p. 24.

[83] *Ibid.* For a discussion on the BBC, 'images' of national identity and citizenship during the Second World War see Nicholas, S. (1998) 'From John Bull to John Citizen: images of national identity and citizenship on the wartime BBC', in Weight, R. and Beach, A. (ed) *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930 - 1960.* London: I. B. Tauris.

assume correct posture by standing properly at the sink and men by getting up from armchairs without using the arms. I discuss attitudes towards male and female physique and differences in training at greater length in Chapters Five and Six.

Recreative physical training for both males and females expanded at such a rate that by 1935 a national co-ordinating body was formed under the initiative of the National Association of Organisers of Physical Education and the Ling Association.[84] The Central Council of Recreative Physical Training (hereafter CCRPT) was responsible for the stimulation and co-ordination of what was rapidly becoming a national campaign for increased and improved physical recreation.[85] The CCRPT was the brainchild of Phyllis Colson (1904 - 1973) who like the Hull Community Council Social Survey Committee (HCCSSC) was also struck by the recreational needs of young people once they reached school leaving age.[86] Whereas the HCCSSC had merely surveyed 'need', Colson realised the idea of creating a nation-wide body to co-ordinate the efforts of the many sports groups, educational authorities, industrial firms and individuals willing and able to provide facilities. The main aim of this coalition would be to improve the physical and mental health of the community through physical recreation amongst the post-school population.[87] As Chairman of the CCRPT, the Earl of Athlone stated that, in their view, the time was 'ripe' for Government's adoption of far-sighted measures to co-ordinate the work of State Departments with Local Authorities and voluntary

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[84] McIntosh, P. C. (1952) *Physical Education in England Since 1800*. London: G. Bell and Sons; Cooke, D. (ed) (1946) *Youth Organisations of Great Britain* (Second Edition). London: Jordan and Sons. The Ling Association was a professional body formed in 1899 by female ex-students of the Bedford School of Physical Training the doctrine of which followed principles of the Swedish system of exercise developed in 1813 by Per Henrik Ling (1776 – 1839). Ling believed that organised physical training should be an integral part of general education, medical remedial treatment, and national defence. The Ling system involved free-standing movements and words of command designed to develop all parts of the body harmoniously on a physiological basis. 'Swedish drill' was remarkably different to the pre-World War One German drill which favoured Indian clubs, dumbells, horizontal / parallel bars, rings and the vaulting horse. Newman, G. (1939) *The Building of a Nation's Health*. London: MacMillan and Co.; Bourke, *op. cit.* For more information on Ling see Anon (03/05/1939) 'Father of Swedish Drill', *The Times* p. 15.

[85] The CCRPT was renamed the Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) in 1944.

organisations to the common end that Britain should become an A1 nation.[88] The Council's first task was to undertake a comprehensive national survey (similar to the HCCSSC study) of existing facilities and organisations for adolescents, men and women, so that future development proposals could be presented to the trustees of various charitable funds.[89]

A state directed campaign to encompass those above school age was initiated in February 1937 when a White Paper on Physical Training and Recreation was issued accompanied by the inauguration of the National Advisory Council for Physical Training and Recreation.[90] The Bill contained a number of Clauses pertaining to the organisation of physical training and recreation at both a national and local level.[91] Clause One provided for the continuance of two National Advisory Councils and two Grants Committees covering England and Wales, and Scotland which would consist of around thirty individuals, 'such persons as the Prime Minister may from time to time appoint'. Clause Two recommended the establishment of local committees and sub-committees consisting of the representatives of local education authorities, voluntary organisations, and other persons who had special knowledge and experience in order to review existing facilities, direct public interest towards the value of recreation and to promote local schemes. The Bill was criticised because it did not include a nutrition policy, however, this view was countered by the argument that, although a large proportion of the nation had a far from an ideal diet, there were 'multitudes fully

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[86] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 177. Colson remained General Secretary of the CCRPT until 1963. Circa 1930 the Physical Education Committee estimated that 91 per cent of boys between fourteen and eighteen never engaged in any form of physical activity (though I assume this did not include manual work). Bourke, *op. cit.*

[87] Cooke, *op. cit.*; Fletcher, *op. cit.*

[88] Athlone (08/10/1936) 'Physical Fitness', *The Times* p. 15. Athlone was also Chairman of the National Playing Fields Association and the Joint Advisory Committee of the CCRPT. On the assistance granted through the CCRPT see Cooke, *op. cit.*

[89] McIntosh, *op. cit*; Anon (18/06/1935) 'The Training of Youth: Physical Health', *The Times* p. 13.

[90] McIntosh, *op. cit.*, p. 229. Lord Aberdare was appointed chairman. Anon (09/02/1937b) 'The Advisory Council: Lord Aberdare as Chairman', *The Times* p. 7. For a list of council members see Anon (13/02/1937) 'National fitness: members of the Physical Training Council', *The Times* p. 12.

capable of taking advantage of better facilities for physical training'.[92] After the Bill's second reading a *Times* columnist remarked that there was 'general and hearty' public support for the effort to improve the physical condition of the nation.[93]

The Physical Training and Recreation Act followed in July 1937.[94] This Act can be seen as the most direct piece of 'interventionist legislation' in the recreational field.[95] The main aim was to achieve a better standard of physical development in adults by offering increased opportunity for recreation and improved sports facilities.[96] The Act extended the powers of local authorities enabling them to acquire and manage land, and the government also approved large sums of money for both capital and current expenditure on playing fields swimming baths, bathing places, hostels, gyms, camp sites and other buildings and premises.[97] The Campaign was thought to be so comprehensive that information of an advisory nature was sent (in many cases on request) to Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burma, Canada, Ceylon, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Lithuania, New Zealand, Rumania, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.[98]

The campaign continued to gather momentum until the outbreak of war, with an increase in facilities, provision of support for the coaching of games and sports, training

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[91] Anon (20/03/1937) 'Raising national physique: text of Government Bill', *The Times* p. 10.
[92] On nutrition see Denman, R. D. (14/10/1936) 'Physical fitness', *The Times* p. 15; Ebor, W. (10/11/1936) 'The national physique: nutrition and exercise', *The Times* p. 12; Huxley, J. [Julian] (11/11/1936) 'The national physique: regional experience in nutrition', *The Times* p. 12; On the counter argument see Anon (08/04/1937) 'The cult of fitness', *The Times* p. 17.
[93] Anon, 'Cult of fitness', *op. cit.*
[94] McIntosh, *op. cit.*
[95] Jones, S. G. (1987) 'State intervention in sport and leisure between the wars', *Journal of Contemporary History* XXII pp. 163 - 82. See Section Three for a discussion on voluntary citizenship.
[96] *Ibid.*

schemes for teachers and leaders, contributions to voluntary organisations such as the Boy Scouts, YMCA and YWCA, research and the dissemination of new ideas.[99] By November 1937 the National Register of Leaders had around 3,000 names and people often had to be turned away from CCRPT training courses due to lack of available space.[100] The number of training courses rose from just 10 in 1936 to more than 125 by 1939.[101] Lectures and demonstrations were also popular and in 1938 *The Times* reported 'large and enthusiastic' attendances at classes.[102] One series of lectures arranged by the CCRPT displayed physical training of foreign origin. Each demonstration lasted twenty minutes and covered Britnor recreational gymnastics, a Norwegian system utilising medicine balls, the Mensendieck system of functional exercise from America, the culture of movement from Germany, dance gymnastics from America, modern dance adapted for English groups and the Medau system of rhythmic gymnastics from Germany. With such an increased demand for recreational facilities, by June 1938, the total gross expenditure during the National Fitness Campaign had reached £2,800,000.[103]

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[97] *Ibid.*; Newman, *op. cit.*; Anon, 'Raising', *op. cit.*; Matless, *op. cit.* Local Authorities were entitled to make compulsory land purchases (excluding that of the Parish Council). In addition, any new property was required to have a secure tenure for a minimum of twenty years and no assistance was given to schemes conducted for financial profit. The grants usually varied between twenty-five and seventy-five per cent and were graduated according to existing local resources, although some schemes could potentially attract 100 per cent grants. Anon, 'Raising', *op. cit.*; Anon (10/08/1937) 'Physical Fitness Campaign: Power of Local Authorities', *The Times* p. 7; Anon (05/11/1937) 'Grants for National Fitness', *The Times* p. 15.

[98] Anon (08/11/1937)' Response to Fitness Campaign: Advice Sought by Other Countries', *The Times* p. 9.

[99] Jones, *op. cit.* An article in *The Times* documented that, by October 1937, grants had been made to the Boy Scouts Association, the National Association of Boys Clubs, the National Federation of Women's Institutes, the YMCA and YWCA, and the National Council of Girls Clubs. Other groups were under consideration, however, a condition of the grant stated that groups must employ a trainer who complied with CCRPT guidelines. Anon (22/10/1937) 'National Physical Training: Grants to Voluntary Organisations', *The Times* p. 16.

[100] Anon, 'Response', *op. cit.*; Anon (06/12/1937) 'Physical Fitness: Half Day Training Courses', *The Times* p. 9.

[101] Anon (11/10/1938) 'Facilities for Fitness: Combating Apathy' *The Times* p. 16; Anon (24/11/1939) 'Training Fitness Leaders: 10,000 People Attend Courses', *The Times* p. 5.

[102] Anon (30/01/1939) 'New Systems of Exercise: Ideas from Abroad', *The Times* p. 9; Anon (20/05/1938a) 'Progress of Fitness Campaign', *The Times* p. 13.

Despite its apparent success the Campaign was subject to criticism often articulated in the letters column of *The Times*. One of the first schemes attacked was the continued absence of the proposed National College of Physical Training. Plans had been made for a College designed specifically to train new ranks of teachers and leaders.[104] By May 1938 a 220 acre (including fifty acres for future expansion) site in Mersthan, Surrey had been selected.[105] However, this venture was soon to attract criticism as the land remained empty following its acquisition.[106] Local Authority initiatives were also censured. For example, in London some boroughs were said to be under facilitated, the distribution of recreational facilities was often uneven, and women's teams were said to be less adequately provided for than men's.[107] Debate circulated as to whether this was actually the fault of individual local authorities failing to take the initiative, a problem of the system in general, or continued apathy on the part of the general public. In March 1938 a Mr Strauss wrote that although newly trained leaders were available there were still not enough training centres for them to work effectively. He asked,

> can the movement be carried on in odds and ends of buildings, dilapidated mission halls, disused warehouses and so on [...] halls must be cheerfully lighted, properly heated, provided with shower baths, canteens and other amenities.[108]

In reply, a Mr Pelham urged him to be patient stating that the Physical Training and

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[103]This covered £1,000,000 for swimming baths, £1,250,000 for community centres and clubs, £500,000 for playing fields, and £50,000 for the development of camping facilities and Youth Hostels. Though the Committee reported receiving over 100 applications a month, to date 250 applications had been dealt with some of which, on various grounds, had been considered 'ineligible' for aid. By the end of 1938 1,176 schemes with a capital cost of £6,609,514 had been submitted, of these 450 were proposed by local authorities and 726 by voluntary organisations. Anon (29/06/1938) 'Grants by National Fitness Council', *The Times* p. 9; Anon (12/06/1939) 'Fitness of the Nation: What Remains to be Done', *The Times* p. 8.

[104] Anon, 'Raising', *op. cit.*

[105] See Anon (19/03/1937) 'Site for National Training College: Proposals to Council', *The Times* p. 8; Anon (20/05/1938a) 'National College of Physical Training: 220 Acre Site in Surrey', *The Times* p. 13.

[106] See Anon (06/08/1938) 'Physical Fitness', *The Times* p. 11; Anon, 'Facilities', *op. cit.*

[107] Anon, 'Fitness of the Nation', *op. cit.*

Recreation Act *had* recognised the need for additional premises and had empowered the Board of Education to make grants in aid of the capital cost of such premises.[109] However, whilst a number of grants had been provisionally approved, the acquisition of sites, preparation of plans, and arrangements for securing ownership and management took time. Mr Pelham added, 'a wide door has been opened. It remains for local enterprise to make use of it'.[110]

Indeed, on the local scale rates of progress varied enormously. The main problem appeared to be the need to strike a balance between the generation of enthusiasm and the rate at which Local Authorities could provide facilities to satisfy the enthusiasm when it was generated.[111] A correspondent in *The Times* in August 1938 stated that in some cases the National Fitness Campaign had 'ceased to be a novelty', 'Physical Training is now almost in the position of medicine, having a strong profession behind it, anxious to see correct principles in practice and those methods which would imperil the larger object for the sake of wider appeal'.[112] The article pointed out that in the first instance, people gravitated towards the sport they were good at or familiar with and people often became self-conscious and suspicious when asked to change. It showed a lack of insight to imagine that the working class, particularly men and youths, would pay for something which illness or the vagaries of industry may debar them from attending regularly. In addition to this it was also necessary to realise the strength of the entertainment industry with which the Fitness Campaign was competing. The flashing lights and attendants of the cinemas extended an 'obvious' and 'flattering welcome' to the passer-by.[113]

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[108] Strauss, E. (10/03/1938) 'Physical Training Centres', *The Times* p. 10.
[109] Pelham, E. H. (15/03/1938) 'Physical Training Centres', *The Times* p. 15.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[111] Anon, 'Physical Fitness', *op. cit.*
[112] Anon (01/08/1938) 'Fitness and its Handicaps: The "Consumer" Interest', *The Times* p. 11.

A correspondent in *The Times* believed that apathy on the part of the general public was a problem, however, this was often the result of a lack of knowledge of existing opportunities rather than a lack of keenness.[114] It was counter-productive to have poster advertisements which said 'Keep Fit' but had no lists of facilities. Similarly, to make the campaign part of education risked repelling those who had had enough during their school days.[115] For example, documenting various experiments in Wimbledon C. W. De Roemer stated that most non-intellectual adolescents, or those averse to the school atmosphere were unlikely to look at notice of physical training when they were situated amongst lists of educational subjects.

The main charge was that both central and local authorities were waiting to be stimulated by the public rather than seeking to stimulate the public themselves. Writing in *The Times* C. W. De Roemer stated that there was too much waiting to see what other people would do, without giving 'any lead whatever'.[116] De Roemer remarked that in countries such as Germany, each town was equipped with a civilian physical fitness and games instructor who instructed people of all ages. He felt that in handing out 'a few shillings towards a pair of sculls for a rowing club or a pair of shorts for a hiker', the British Government, and by association Local Authorities, appeared to be sitting back in the hope that people would do something about it.[117] L. F. Ellis replied swiftly stating that Major de Roemer did not help the situation by allowing his disappointment in his own borough council to lead him to write such inaccurate statements.[118] Firstly, the Council had no power to provide facilities themselves, and secondly, no generalisations

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[113] *Ibid.*
[114] Anon, 'Facilities', *op. cit.*
[115] Anon, 'Physical Fitness', *op. cit.*
[116] De Roemer, C. W. (02/09/1938) 'Physical Fitness: Lessons Learned on the Continent', *The Times* p. 8
[117] De Roemer, C. W. (04/08/1938) 'Physical Fitness: Some Experiments at Wimbledon', *The Times* p. 11. De Roemer stated that he had just been 'honoured' by membership of an area committee.
[118] Ellis, L. F. (06/08/1938) 'Physical Fitness: What the Council has Achieved, a Reply to Criticism', *The Times* p. 11.

about attitudes to education or other authorities could be safely made. For example, during the last session for which figures were available around 20,500 men and boys and 17,750 women and girls had enrolled voluntarily in physical training classes provided by London County Council.

Voluntary Citizenship

Matless notes that there were many parallels in inter-war English iconography of leisure in landscape with that of the Third Reich, including ideals of comradeship and physical fitness, the revival and purification of the nation, and the image of 'man' as an invigorated, healthy and fit citizen in painting, photography and film.[119] Under the German Reich physical training had evolved not only into a system but into a vast national practice.[120] Healthy exercise was believed to revitalise bodies exhausted and misused within scientifically rationalised methods of industrial production.[121] Open-air sport formed part of the daily curriculum and physical training was compulsory in all schools, in each of the sixteen universities, in the German National Physical Training League, the *Hitler-Jugend* (Hitler Youth Movement), the Labour Service and in the *Kraft Durch Freude* ('Strength Through Joy' movement).[122] The 'Strength Through Joy' movement was organised in 1934 to encourage certain leisure time occupations such as sport, camping, physical exercise, games and folk-dancing. As a contemporary observer Newman remarked that,

[119] Matless, D. (1990a) 'The English outlook: A mapping of leisure, 1918 – 1939', in Alfrey, N. and Daniels, S. (eds) *Mapping the Landscape: Essays on Art and Cartography.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham, University Art Gallery and Castle Museum pp. 28 – 32.
[120] Newman, *op. cit.*
[121] Burt, *op. cit.*

> for [teachers], as for their pupils, one of the first aims of life is the culture of strong, healthy and hardened bodies, patient of toil and resistant to fatigue, inured to stress and strain - such a culture stands now in Germany even higher than academic proficiency.[123]

The German physique was being transformed and the German youth between fifteen and twenty years were considered to be the living witnesses to the care afforded to their bodies by the State.[124]

A number of British observers travelled to Germany to observe the 'Strength Through Joy' movement, including Prunella Stack of the Women's League of Health and Beauty. However, 'systematic approaches to physical training and education did not catch on as quickly in Britain as in Germany'.[125] Whilst the influence of the wider contemporary milieu cannot be ignored, as with the eugenics movement discussed in first part of this chapter, this needs to be kept in perspective.[126] Taylor has two criticisms of popular interpretations of this period.[127] The first is that the collective effect of the generally superficial narratives of inter-war open-air recreation has been to gloss over the full social and political importance of the boom, and to ignore much of its distinctively British cultural significance. In addition, he believes that interpretations of the popularity of outdoor pursuits in Britain between the wars too readily identify the movement with prevailing motives in continental Europe, and particularly with the

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[122] Newman, *op. cit.*; Anon (20/08/1931) 'Wander Youths: Organised Hiking in Germany', *The Times* p. 15.
[123] Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 362.
[124] Anon, 'Wander', *op. cit.*
[125] Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[126] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[127] *Ibid.*

German *Wandervögel* and 'Strength Through Joy' movements.[128] 'Hiking' and 'rambling' became mass activities during the 1930s, but often with few of the overtones of the pre-war model of the German *Wandervögel* movement.[129]

One correspondent contemplating the German Youth Movement wrote '[it] seems unfortunate that the movement towards a healthier physique and moral existence should have been planned on lines that may so obviously subserve nationalist militarist designs'.[130] There was constant concern in Britain regarding both the 'militarisation' and potentially 'forced' nature of physical training.[131] Although Struckmeyer proposed a national, compulsory training scheme for boys lasting around eighteen months he was anxious this should not be a form of camouflaged military service.[132] Rather, it would channel the 'primitive' urges of youths and solve the problem of unemployment. From its inception the National Fitness Campaign attracted suspicion regarding 'the bogey of militarism'.[133] These claims were summarily dismissed as 'unworthy' and 'sinister' by advocates of the Campaign, although Jones cautions that any moves towards improving the national physique (individual and collective) in this period must be seen against the background of rearmament and the fear of war.[134] Although, there were no institutions in Britain akin to the Nazi 'Strength Through Joy' movement, the Italian Dopolavoro, the Soviet Union All-Union Physical Culture Council, or the French spare-time

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[128] *Ibid.*; Graves and Hodge, *op. cit.*, state that although the term 'hiking' came into popular use from the United States around 1927 the fashion was actually German. In Germany the *wandervögel* with his (sic) rucksack, Tyrolese costume, concertina (or 'beribboned mandoline') and singing girl-chum was the most popular figure in Republican Germany (p. 274).

[129] Lowerson, J. (1980) 'Battles for the countryside', in Gloversmith, F. (ed) *Class, Culture and Social Change: A New View of the 1930s*. Sussex: The Harvester Press pp. 258 – 280.

[130] Anon (17/09/1932) 'Regimenting Young Germany', *The Times* p. 11.

[131] See Struckmeyer, K. (30/11/1934) 'Physical Culture: Compulsory Training', *The Times* p. 12. Much of this criticism was aimed at 'drill', however, not everyone agreed that such regimented exercise was truly detrimental to the human spirit. For example, E. L. Henslow believed that drill was the 'kindergarten of all organisation', it taught the young lad (sic) to play his part in the team, to 'keep his place in the field' and was in no way soul destroying. Henslow, E. L. (13/10/1931) 'Physical education: the army system', *The Times* p. 18.

[132] *Ibid.*

[133] Anon, 'Cult of fitness', *op. cit.*, p. 17; Anon (09/02/1937a) 'Physical Training' Mr Stanley on the New Scheme', *The Times* p. 7.

[134] Anon, 'Cult of fitness, *op. cit.*; Anon, 'Physical training' Mr Stanley', *op. cit.*; Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

committees, sport and leisure were still an 'important part of political culture, particularly on the right and left of the political spectrum'.[135] As outlined above, the most obvious form of control was legislative and there were numerous Bills in the United Kingdom relating to leisure, many of which were enacted. For example, the Statute Book witnessed Acts which aimed to control the cinema, drinking, gambling, holidays, camping, rambling and physical training, and so on. The effects this legislation had on camping will be discussed in Chapter Nine.

The open-air boom in Britain was never entirely state directed. Rather, it tended towards a more voluntarist approach.[136] In January 1937 an article in *The Times* titled 'Fitness for Life' stated that voluntary organisations were concerned with the Government's forthcoming campaign on two points. The first that the campaign should be operated on a voluntary basis, and second, that the campaign should aim to produce general fitness in both body and mind which was 'essential to effective citizenship'.[137] The article stated that,

> [i]n both cases [the voluntary organisations] have been pushing at an open door. It has been recognised by all who have studied the question that we do not want in this country the kind of robot which might well be produced by institutions exclusively in the hands of the Government, and, though the practice of extolling physical fitness in authoritarian states has commanded admiration, the methods of producing [it] have not.[138]

Commenting upon an encounter with Mussolini, founder of the Boy Scouts Baden-

[135] Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 165. For more information on Rumania see Patmore, D. (1939) 'The youth movement of Rumania', *Geographical Magazine* IX (2) pp. 73 – 84.
[136] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[137] Anon, *op. cit.*, 'Fitness for Life'.

Powell was similarly forthright.[139] When asked if he could criticise the notion of a united nation and a singular Italian ideal he stated: 'I would prefer a nation where they were not forced to be in an association, but where [boys] came forward with a voluntary idea of citizenship for their country'.[140] Schemes should to be completely voluntary in character producing health in body, mind and spirit and recognise that fitness could only be achieved by self-effort, 'compulsion might well produce only "a passive acquiescence" which is the antithesis of active citizenship'.[141]

The British government wanted to avoid the paternalism associated with the 'Strength Through Joy' movement which was considered too disciplined and not sufficiently individualistic.[142] At the opening of the Health, Sport and Leisure Exhibition Gloag stated that,

> [g]ood citizenship does not depend, and in this country of ours has never depended upon compulsory discipline of a military or even of a semi-military kind. The object of any campaign for fitness is surely the living of a full and healthy life.[143]

Rather than militarising sport and fitness like Russia, Italy and Germany, and the use of extravagant adverts and alarming statistics, the general consensus was that in Britain, steady persistence would lead the general public to realise that they owed it to themselves and their families to improve their shape, increase their vigour and move

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[138] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[139] Anon (04/06/1937) 'Gymnastic Training for Youths: Lord Baden Powell's Criticism', *The Times* p. 18.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[141] Anon, 'Fitness for Life', *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[142] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[143] Gloag, J. (1938) 'The object of the Exhibition', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* XLV pp. 494 - 5 (p. 494).

with grace and freedom.[144] Emphasis was placed very much on the individual and their role or duty in the collective reform of the nation. Individuals were presented and measured against ideals to which they were encouraged to endeavour. As we shall see in later chapters, these ideals included not only body shape, but also, stamina, character and morality.

At the same time people were also being encouraged to remove themselves from the confines of the urban environment, to breathe fresh air and let the sun heal their bodies in order to regain a lost intimacy with their body's natural rhythms and instinctive selves. The philosophies of naturism and camping were informed by these ideas regarding health, physical fitness and the benefits of open-air recreation and a strong emphasis was placed on the presence (or absence) on an instinctual selfhood which once re-discovered, would lead the individual to physical, moral and spiritual wholeness.

The growth in healthy open air recreation; the countryside as a contested space and 'education' for the masses

The inter-war period in Britain saw a remarkable growth in open-air recreation.[145] Changes in leisure patterns, particularly in the 1930s, affected both the scale and character of this movement that moved from being a preserve of the wealthy to a mass movement. Alongside widespread physical fitness schemes, Britain witnessed the widespread adoption of country walking, cycling, mountaineering, and other related activities such as hop picking and camping, by a substantial section of the young urban

[144] Anon (06/02/1937) 'Training for Fitness: A Voluntary Duty', *The Times* p. 9.
[145] Matless, *op. cit.*; Anon (May 1931a) 'The Home Office Supports Camping', *Camping* XXVIII (5) p. 77.

working and lower middle classes.[146] Such pursuits not only provided affordable forms of recreation and holidays for millions of poor city dwellers who desperately wanted to get away for a break other than the occasional away-day to the coast, but for some also promised rewards such as improved physique, health and spiritual wholeness.[147] Although not a wholly characteristic social phenomena, the huge popularity of open-air pursuits, substantial expansion of outdoor associations, and the consequent growth and consolidation of an outdoor recreational and countryside lobby in Britain, was a distinctive element of the inter-war period.[148]

As Matless has noted, this expansion of recreation in the natural environment was welcomed by many in Britain as an opportunity to culture citizenship and to educate the national community about the perceived benefits of nature and improve the population through outdoor pursuits.[149] Although sometimes naïve and romanticised, the association between the restorative powers of Nature and the development of the spiritually, morally and physically whole person contributed significantly to the cults of camping and rambling in the 1920s and 1930s.[150] In this section, the progression from sea bathing as an invigorating health cure in the eighteenth century to sunbathing in the twentieth century will be established, highlighting themes which will be discussed at greater length in Chapters Four and Five. I then discuss the factors which enabled masses of urban dwellers to leave their home towns to embark on pursuits previously reserved for the elite. Finally, I outline some of the moral geographies which arose from

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146 Taylor, *op. cit.*; Akhtar, M. and Humphries, S. (2000) *Some Liked it Hot: The British on Holiday at Home and Abroad.* London: Virgin; Cherry, G. E. (1993) 'Changing social attitudes towards leisure and the countryside in Britain, 1890 – 1990', in Glyptis, S. (ed) *Leisure and the Environment: Essays in Honour of Professor J. A. Patmore.* London: Belhaven pp. 67 – 86.

147 Akhtar and Humpries, *op. cit.*

148 Taylor, *op. cit.*

149 Matless, *op. cit.*

150 Warren, A. (1987) 'Popular manliness: Baden Powell, scouting and the development of manly character', in Mangan, J. and Walvin, J. (eds) *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800 – 1940.* Manchester: Manchester University Press pp. 199 – 219.

such mass movement and highlight some of the debates regarding countryside leisure and the behaviour of outdoor enthusiast circulating in the inter-war and immediate post-war period.

Health and well-being: from sea bathing to sun bathing as a universal cure-all

Bathing in water and the practice of 'hydrotherapy' has had many meanings throughout history: a social practice, a ritual of purification and separation, an element of competitive gentility and class conflict, a medical treatment, a source of sensual pleasure, a means of unity with nature.[151] In the classical period, bathing was a public activity in which bodily health and sensual pleasure combined into an experience considered both a necessity and a luxury.[152] As public spaces, baths endorsed a certain amount of equality and although men and women would usually bathe apart, bathing was often used to promote the concept of a united and classless society.[153] In the medieval period washing and bathing was again a pleasurable and convivial affair.[154] Twigg states that for wealthy patrons baths,

> were one of a number of sensual pleasures associated with feasting, luxury and making love. For ordinary people, there were public bath and wash houses which were associated with gambling, drinking and a certain amount of impropriety. Men and women bathed naked together.[155]

[151] Twigg, J. (2000) *Bathing: The Body and Community Care*. London: Routledge (p. 18).
[152] *Ibid.*
[153] Once naked the bather would participate in exercise ranging from physical such as sports or ball games to mental such as discussion or reading.

[154] *Ibid.*

By the end of the medieval period, however, new standards of decency led to increased disapproval of mixed bathing.

In the early modern period there was a major shift in opinion regarding the value of water. Water, in particular hot water, became widely regarded as a danger to the 'porous' body with the potential to 'weaken its vital fluids' and sap its strength.[156] Bathing thus became a perilous affair and washing, a highly circumscribed activity with recommendation that only the hands and face should come into direct contact with water. By the eighteenth century, however, the practice of water bathing began to regain its popularity amongst the upper classes, although, this time the emphasis was on cold water: 'Bath houses and cold water plunges [were] common features in eighteenth century landscapes [...] Spas and watering places became increasingly popular and plunge baths were among the facilities they offered'.[157] It was in this era that seaside resorts such as Scarborough soared in popularity as people flocked to experience the health-giving properties of sea water and fresh sea air. As Akhtar and Humpries state, '[w]hen the English aristocracy began to visit the seaside they came in winter, believing that submersion in the ice-cold waves, followed by a glass of cold seawater mixed with milk or honey, would cure everything from indigestion to nymphomania'.[158] Cold water was associated with classical virtue and with the ability to harden and strengthen the body, promoting 'moral' as well as 'physical' vigour. Towards the nineteenth century this moral purity was increasingly equated with physical purity and a new standard of cleanliness emerged. Twigg states that from this point cleanliness slowly became 'a mark of social and spiritual superiority, and an emblem in the war between the

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[155] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[157] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[158] Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Wheat, S. (19/08/00) 'Costume drama', *The Guardian (Travel)* p. 8. See also Lancaster, O. (May 1937) 'Royalty at the seaside', *Geographical Magazine* V (1) pp. 17 – 34.

classes'.[159] In the early nineteenth century cleanliness was still primarily concerned with 'gentility' and not hygiene. It was not until the years between 1890 and 1930 and the popularisation of germ theory and its translation into everyday domestic practice, that a new importance was assigned to cleanliness in the war against germs, the most notorious being the tubercule bacilli which is examined in Chapter Four.[160]

In the early decades of the twentieth century sun and air bathing became increasingly popular in the struggle for health. In 1932 David Adams stated; '[to]-day ... we are returning to that most ancient of faiths, the worship of the sun, in the ceremonial interblending of his (sic) vital rays with our own repetitive bodily framework'.[161] Fussell remarks that the early twentieth century experienced what John Weightman called the 'Solar Revolution', characterised by one of the most startling reversals in modern intellectual and emotional history.[162] Until the nineteenth century the heavenly body of poetry was always the moon as demonstrated by the work of Tennyson and Poe.[163] However, in the twentieth century the sun replaced the moon and was transformed into *the* celestial body sending forth mystical emanations. By the 1930s the sun obsession was visible everywhere, Art Deco would be impoverished without the sun motif and there were a 'plethora' of 'sun titles' during this period, such as Alain Gerbault's *In Quest of the Sun* and *The Gospel of the Sun* and Alfred Noyes's *The Sun Cure*.[164] Between the turn of the century and the 1920s 'sporty' bronzed skin came to be favoured over the more 'distinguished' paleness which chatacerised the elite

[159] Twigg, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
[160] *Ibid.*
[161] Bourke, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
[162] Fussell, P. (1980) 'The new heliophilly' and 'The places of D. H. Lawrence', *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 137 – 140 and 141 - 163.
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] *Ibid.*

classes of previous periods.[165] Prior to World War One dark skin was associated with peasantry and working outdoors and the sun was viewed as a menace to white skins. Women and girls of the upper classes protected their skin with parasols, wide-brimmed hats and gloves; 'heliophobia' was an indispensable accessory of the class system.[166] It was only in the 1920s when people such as Coco Chanel made the wearing of skimpier, sporty clothes and a 'suntan' fashionable, a status symbol of the rich.[167] In offices and factories across the country 'bronzed faces, reddened chests and mahogany coloured hands' hinted at travels to the tropics and the tan, 'which artifice stimulates for some even in the winter months [became] an end in itself rather than the outward sign of the health to be expected from judicious doses of sunshine.'[168] The sunbathing craze was also immortalised in popular culture by songs such as George Formby's 'Sunbathing in the Park' (Appendix 4) and Gracie Field's 'What can you give a nudist for his birthday?'.[169] In August 1932 *The Times* reported that resorts such as Southend and Morecambe had begun to attract thousands of sunbathers and, in Colwyn Bay, organised physical exercise on the beach had proved so popular that additional classes had to be arranged.[170]

Yet, some social commentators were unconvinced as to the value of sun and air. Evelyn Waugh wrote a sceptical article for the *Daily Mail* titled 'This Sun-bathing Business' in which he declared; '[n]owadays people will believe anything they are told

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[165] Eichberg, H. (1990) 'Race-track and Labyrinth: the space of physical culture in Berlin', *Journal of Sport History* 17 (2) pp. 245 - 260; Fussell, *op. cit.*; Bourke, *op. cit.*
[166] Fussell, *op. cit.*; Wheat, *op. cit.*
[167] Wise, S. (26/09/99) 'Carry on camping', *The Observer Magazine* pp. 22 - 23; Wheat, *op. cit.*; Bourke, *op. cit.*
[168] Anon (08/06/39) 'Sunburn', *The Times* p. 17.
[169] Fryer, P. (1963) 'No nudes is good news', *Mrs Grundy: Studies in English Prudery*. London: Dennis Dobson pp. 193 – 208.
[170] Anon (17/08/1932) 'Crowded holiday resorts', *The Times* p. 7. Though for the more affluent, the French Riviera soon became the place to see and be seen. The warm, 'lemon-scented' climate of the Riviera had previously been a stop off point on the Grand Tour and, in turn, a winter holiday destination. It was later immortalised in the cult film *And God Created Woman* (1956) which starred the voluptuous, bronzed Brigitte Bardot and popularised sun worship and nude bathing. Akhtar and Humphries, op. cit., pp. 82 – 83.

by "scientists", just as they used to believe everything they were told by clergymen'.[171] Similarly, a correspondent to *The Times* wished that the enthusiasm for sunbathing could be replicated in other spheres of life;

> [a] week or two of sunshine is enough to work a transformation in the ordinary phlegmatic English of either sex. He and she take off all the clothes they decently can, or, even more, go hatless, or at least carry any headgear which convention insists on their displaying, eat sandwiches and fruit unashamedly in public and strew the grass of parks with corpse-like forms [...] sunbathing becomes a laborious cult, commanding a perseverance and an attention to detail which applied to the bread-and-butter of business life would scale towering heights of success.[172]

Despite such scepticism sunbathing and the cultivation of a deep tan became a popular craze in the inter-war period, a fashion which, to a certain extent and despite 'scientific' warnings, still exists today. In the above statements, however, certain 'moral geographies' abound concerning not only appropriate behaviour but also the spaces and environments within which these practices took place. Such debates are highly relevant to my discussion of both naturism and camping in the inter-war and immediate post-war period due to the highly contested nature of the spaces in which outdoor leisure took place.

The inter-war passion for the supposed health giving properties of 'light' and fresh air filtered into all aspects of modern life. For example, the 'sun cure' was used alongside pit-head baths in trials to boost the health and fitness of miners and their

[171] Cited in Fussell, *op. cit.*, p. 141. W. H. Auden shared Waugh's sentiments.
[172] Anon, 'Sunburn', *op. cit.*, p. 17.

families.[173] The potential of sunlight also stimulated seemingly endless opportunities for innovation and companies competed to bring the gift of health to the discerning consumer. Figure 2.3 shows just one page of advertisements featured in the special 'Sunlight and Health Number' published by *The Times* in May 1928. The use of 'artificial' sunlight and the treatment of tuberculosis will be explored later in the thesis. The invention of Mr F. E. Lamplough, 'Vita Glass' was widely recognised as the first glass of its type.[174] This ultra-violet (UV) ray transmitting glass was thought to be a discovery of great importance and was the outcome of many scientific tests primarily on plants and animals which proved that ordinary window glass filtered out UV rays.[175] Vita Glass was successfully utilised at Kew and it was thought that by utilising Vita-glass, British market gardeners could bring forward their produce and be more competitive on the international market.[176] Vita Glass was installed in poultry farms and even in the monkey house at London Zoo with favourable results (though further tests showed that not all animals benefited from increased exposure to UV rays).[177] In a study of the modernist Penguin Pool and Gorilla House built in London Zoo a few years

[173] Linehan, D. (2000) 'BodyWash: the rise and fall of Pit Head Baths, and other washing machines, in twentieth century Britain', paper presented in the 'Historical Geographies of Twentieth Century Britain' session, at the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) Annual Conference; Hutchinson, G. S. (16/12/1927) 'Sunlight treatment for miners', *The Times* p. 10. Hutchinson outlined work undertaken at the Sherwood Colliery, Mansfield, where an experiment was conducted on three hundred people to examine the influence of exposure to ultra violet light. The test population consisted of youths 'of a similar type', volunteer adult miners especially those suffering from rheumatism, arthritis, lumbago or wounds, and children of miners suffering from rickets, teething troubles, and skin diseases who had been recommended by their doctors. Each individual was medically examined and records were taken regarding their medical history, family history, general health (including the condition of their teeth, tonsils, glands, lungs, appetite and blood count) and body measurements (height, weight, chest, thighs and arms, etc.). Half of these individuals were exposed to UV light and the other half acted as a control population in order to provide comparative data, however, Hutchinson does not provide the results of the experiment in this article.

[174] See advertisements in *The New Statesman* (23/04/1927) and *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* (22/05/1928).

[175] Scientific Correspondents (22/05/1928) 'Vita Glass": value to plant and animal life', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xvii; Campell, *op. cit.*, Note 60.

[176] *Ibid.*

[177] *Ibid.*

xxxviii. THE TIMES, TUESDAY, MAY 22, 1928.

"VITA" GLASS

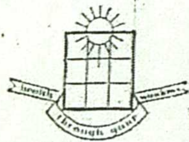
Now the most inexpensive means of obtaining daily health from sunlight

Thinking men and women the world over are now considering health in terms of sunshine.

They realise that "Vita" Glass provides the means of bringing indoors the natural health-giving rays of ultra-violet light that ordinary window glass shuts out entirely, but they have a vague idea that the cost is prohibitive for people of moderate means.

This idea is entirely erroneous. In actual fact "Vita" Glass has been considerably reduced in price and is now the cheapest method of obtaining daily health from sunlight. More than that, its first cost is the whole cost. The installation of "Vita" Glass obviates the necessity for long and expensive courses of special Vitamin D foods. Exposure to the Health Ray actually manufactures Vitamin D in the skin by chemical action, of which it gives visible proof by imparting to the skin the rich tan of health. The cost of "Vita" Glass for a good averaged-sized window of, say, 18 panes, each a foot square, would be 36/- plus the ordinary cost of glazing—is this too much to pay for health?

Write now for "Healthy Windows," a descriptive booklet which includes full particulars of prices and types of "Vita" Glass, to the "VITA" GLASS MARKETING BOARD, 33 ALDWYCH HOUSE, LONDON, W.C.2



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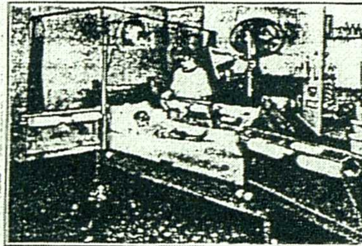

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100% HEALTH can be enjoyed only if the Sun's Ultra-Violet Rays (the life-giving health-rays) are enjoyed to the fullest possible extent. This can be achieved by fitting HOLVIGLASS, the new and improved U-V-R window-glass, which, according to independent evidence, gives the highest U-V-R transmission of any glass of this type. Holviglass is the strongest and most durable U-V-R glass, the most resistant to film, and the most resistant to temperature changes. Ideally suited for nurseries, living-rooms, schools, hospitals, factories, live-stock, horticulture, etc. Write to-day for descriptive brochure, containing report of scientific test by the University of Sheffield, and full details, to address below.

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SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1.

Figure 2.3 'Vita Glass' and sun lamp advertisements. From *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* (May 1928) p. xxxviii.

later in the 1930s, Gruffudd remarks that such buildings 'emerged from a new theorisation of the natural world and the efficient nurture of life'.[178] In the 1930s there was a clear relationship between modernist architecture and concern for the environment and health;

> [it] was expressed in concern for the patterns of ill-health, and specific diseases like TB, generated by dark, insanitary and cramped areas of the Victorian industrial city, and in the concurrent belief in the health-giving benefits of the new architecture – natural light, fresh air and sanitary design.[179]

Developments regarding popular hygiene therefore laid the foundation for twentieth century modernism; '[t]heorists of the Modern Movement in architecture repeatedly used the word 'clean' in their writings; and TB sanatoria, with their bare white walls, sun-filled, open air balconies, became one of the emblematic building types of modern architecture'.[180]

The cult of heliotherapy and the quest for the healthy body was an important design consideration for modernist house types, whether luxury or low cost, leading them to be designed with flat roofs, balconies and terraces, these features provided the necessary

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[178] Gruffudd, P. (2000) 'Biological cultivation: Lubetkin's modernism at London Zoo in the 1930s', in Philo, C. and Wilbert, C. (eds) *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*. London: Routledge pp. 222 – 242. Gruffudd points out the irony that '[while] human society, with the benefits of social progress, had failed to provide its working classes with decent, healthful homes, "mere" animals were being advanced and nurtured by enlightened applications of science' (p. 236).
[179] *Ibid.* For more information on this relationship see Gruffudd, P. (1995) 'A crusade against consumption': environment, health and social reform in Wales 1900 – 1939', *Journal of Historical Geography* 21 pp. 39 – 54.
[180] Twigg, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

facilities for sunbathing and open-air living.[181] However, at the same time that attention was focused on transforming the urban environment, people were also being encouraged to escape from this environment.

Escaping the Towns

From the 1870s onwards, greater levels of affluence, increased leisure time, advances in transport and, by the end of the 1930s, an increase in 'holidays with pay' enabled young people to leave the towns and opened up the countryside as a source of fresh air, exercise, recreation and spiritual refreshment.[182] However, McIntosh notes that increased time away from the workplace in the 1920s and 1930s cannot always be equated with longer holidays or a shorter working week.[183] Though an increase in spare time and gradual reduction of the working week meant that, for many, more time and energy was available for fitness training and countryside recreation, there were also unprecedented levels of unemployment in this period, much of it long term. Therefore much outdoor recreation and physical education between the wars must be considered against a background of enforced idleness for a large percentage of the population; of the mental and physical deterioration that went with it; and of poverty and

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[181] Campbell, *op. cit.* Architectural Correspondent (22/05/1928) 'Traps for sunbeams: light problems in architecture', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xvi. Although in practice, comparatively little was attempted in bringing the medium into everyday social life. Though shrewdly marketed as 'Health through your windows' the disappointing sales of 'Vita Glass' can probably be attributed to expense and the fact that, even before installation, the cost was four times higher than ordinary glass. Saise, Dr. W. (25/05/1928) 'Vita-Glass', *The Times* p. 10.

[182] McRae, A. (1997) *British Railway Camping Coach Holidays: The 1930s and British Railways (London Midland Region), Scenes From the Past: 30 (Part One)*. Stockport: Foxline; Joad, *Untutored Townsmans'*, *op. cit.* See also Macnaghten, P. and Urry, J. (1998) *Contested Natures*. London: Sage. As a result of the Holidays with Pay Act 1938. By 1952, two-thirds of manual workers received a fortnight's paid holiday a year. Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*, p. 18. In 1925 there were still only 1.5 million workers entitled to a paid annual holiday but this figure rose to 11 million by 1939. In this year, about 15 million people had a weeks holiday or more away from home. It is interesting to note that the 'Health, Sport and Fitness' exhibition of 1938 featured a section titled 'Escape From the Town' alongside sections such as 'Healthy Childhood', 'Everyday Health' and 'Open Spaces'. Summerson, J. (1938) 'The Health, Sport and Fitness Exhibition', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* XLV pp. 492 - 493.

malnutrition.[184]

In Scotland, Taylor notes that the pull of the hills and the open spaces for young men with time on their hands and with no affinity with urban street life was described enthusiastically by the Glaswegian 'Mountain Men'.[185] Lorimer states that the anticipation offered by adventurous trips to the Highlands lay in direct contrast to the 'penurious living conditions' which a great many people were forced to endure in Scotland:

> [t]wo centuries of industrialisation and urbanisation had bequeathed to the country an awful and potentially intractable legacy. Large numbers of the populace lived out impoverished lives in the polluted and unsanitary conditions which had become common to all industrial settlements.[186]

For various cultural commentators, the modern urban realm was an 'anathema' to the Scottish race,

> [i]t appeared to stunt the overall development of the population and most alarmingly, robbed from youth the very vivacity and energy upon which it once thrived. The urban experience, like a cancer afflicting the nation's nervous system, left Scotland stricken requiring radical ameliorative treatment.[187]

A reaction to the Great War also gave some impetus to the outdoor movement in Britain

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[183] McIntosh, *op. cit.*
[184] *Ibid.*
[185] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[186] Lorimer, H. (1997) 'Happy hostelling in the Highlands': nationhood, citizenship and the inter-war youth movement', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 113 (1) pp. 42 – 50 (p. 42).

as a whole. This entailed a widespread rejection of the old order and particularly of the regressive eagerness of the establishment to return to the supposed normality of the pre-war world, coupled to a substantial desire to move forward into a better world for the majority.[188] Motivation ranged from a simple desire to escape the cities and enjoy social fellowship, to high-minded ideals and a reforming political *raison d' être*.[189]

Inexpensive transport was the main facilitator for escaping the atrophying effect of urban unemployment. For those who could afford it, railway travel was increasingly a means of getting out into the countryside. Walking in the countryside became easier in the 1920s with cheap rail and bus fares and a small rise in real wages, at least among skilled and white-collar workers.[190] By the mid-1930s rambling and walking had captured the imagination of a significant proportion of the British public. The Ramblers' Association, formed in 1935, brought together 1,200 ramblers in a national organisation, though there were other clubs that remained outside the umbrella of the national body.[191] Media interest in this outdoor phenomenon both reflected and helped to generate the boom, with regular features on hiking, rambling and cycling appearing in newspapers such as the *Manchester Guardian*, and constant references to the availability of cheap transport.[192] As predicted by the Hull Community Council Social Survey Committee (HCCSSC), the wireless – the new medium of communication – also expressed regular interest in, and thereby helped to impel popular trends in open-air recreation.[193] Backed by a widespread popular adoption of the bicycle as a means of

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[187] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[188] Taylor, *op. cit.* David Mellor (in Arts Council of Great Britain, 1980) cites E. J. Hobsbawm's remarks on the political aspect of this movement in 1969; '[a]fter 1919 Britain appeared to recover - and a heroic attempt was made by her governments to recreate the conditions of 1913 and thus to restore that lost paradise ... the slump of 1929 destroyed the illusion of a return to the *belle époque* before 1913' (p. 24).
[189] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[190] Lowerson, *op. cit.*
[191] Taylor, *op. cit.*; Lowerson, *op. cit.*
[192] Taylor, *op. cit.*; Graves and Hodge, *op. cit.*. Graves and Hodge note that provincial newspapers often sponsored hikers leagues which had a large membership figures in the industrial Midlands and North.
[193] Taylor, *op. cit.*

transport and casual leisure, cycle sales far surpassed any previous peak, including that of the first craze in the 1890s.[194] Camping and, to some extent, naturism can be seen against this background. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, camping took off as an affordable family holiday during the inter-war years, the advantages being that once one had paid for one's equipment and provisions, a camping holiday cost next to nothing and could be organised independently. Camping therefore also managed to retain its popularity in the austere years following World War Two. Akhtar and Humphries describe the thousands of young men and women who packed their tents and bedding onto the back of their bikes and rode off to the countryside or the coast on summer weekends; 'they would often set off on Friday evenings or at the crack of dawn on Saturday morning, returning home for Sunday tea. Round trips of eighty to a hundred miles or more were very common'.[195]

The growing numbers of publications produced by the outdoor associations also indicate not only the scale of the popular fashion of the day, but also the collaboration in common interest of the ever-increasing outdoor fellowship.[196] The popularity of rambling and camping was indicated by substantial evidence of an expanding lobby in favour of improving public access to open countryside, and growing support for a corpus of ideas pertaining to the planning of wilder areas for recreational amenities.[197] Urban industrialism created the demand for healthy and active uses of leisure time, which in turn was frustrated increasingly by the policy of exclusion that was a

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[194] The introduction of the modern safety bicycle in the early 1890s allowed the urbanite regular access to the countryside for excursions. Annual sales rose from 385,000 in 1920 to a peak of 1,610,000 in 1935 compared with a figure of 2 million driving licences in 1925. In addition 1938 membership of cycling clubs (including those affiliated to the racing-orientated National Cyclists' Union) stood at over 60,000. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 232; Cherry, *op. cit.*

[195] Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

[196] Taylor, *op. cit.*

[197] *Ibid.*, p. 229 – 230. On attempts to widen access and democratise the countryside see Short, J. R. (1991) 'Town birds of the English Countryside', *Imagined Country: Environment, Culture and Society*. London: Routledge pp. 57 – 79 (p. 77); see also Macnaghten, and Urry, *op. cit.* On the Access to Mountains Bill see Prynn, *op. cit.*, pp. 65 - 77.

consequence of the growing capitalisation of the agrarian sector, including the commercial exploitation of 'wilderness' areas for shooting.[198] Contemporary commentator Joad remarked that the fact that;

> the desire of "sportsmen" to insert pieces of metal from a distance into the bodies of grouse and pheasants should be permitted to prevent citizens as a whole from walking on the moors and in woods seem[ed] to [him] offensive to morals and repugnant to common sense.[199]

Contestation over rural space resulted in a series of open clashes between the defenders of 'traditional' rights of property on the one hand, and the assertive proponents of a different tradition on the other.[200] Disputes over land use also are reflected in both the naturist and camping literatures. In Chapter Four I examine the early conflicts between the naturist groups and non-naturists and the establishment regarding areas deemed 'appropriate' for nude sunbathing. In Chapter Nine I discuss so-called 'anti-camping legislation' and attempts by the Camping Club to lobby the government to change policy.

Matless notes that although mass trespass and other such 'political walking' troubled preservationists and 'respectable' rambling leaders,

> [i]t is important to [...] stress that preservationists and political ramblers offered parallel arguments for walking: a physical and spiritual escape form the city, a morally beneficial leisure activity taking the working class out of

[198] Taylor, *op. cit.*; Lowerson, *op. cit.*
[199] Joad, 'People's claim', *op. cit.*, pp. 69 – 70.
[200] Lowerson, *op. cit.*

the pub and cinema.[201]

1930s preservationism was not so much a critique of modernisation in the face of tradition and more a 'modernist' concern to regulate boundaries.[202] A common feature of preservationist discourse is its emphasis on clarity and cleanliness of form. Preservationists placed great stress on the zoning of land uses. Although not anti-urban, they proposed a clear delineation between town and country.[203] In its will to order and progress the preservationist movement had parallels with modernist visions of landscape being promoted abroad, for example, in Nazi Germany.[204] An enthusiastic adoption of a philosophy of national planning was devised as the most constructive way to counteract both the continuing problems of environmental blight and the growing demands of country leisure.[205] Due to a perceived lack of planning and developmental controls and, following nineteenth century prescriptions outlined in the introduction to this chapter, nature was constructed as an unspoilt 'other', vulnerable, threatened.[206] The urban-rural contrast re-emerged to be a major influence on the unprecedented growth of open-air pursuits. Often debate not only circulated around the spaces of open-air recreation but also focused on the bodies of the recreationalists themselves.

The Arts of Right Living

The expansion of leisure in the country was given a general welcome by

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201 Matless, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
202 Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*
203 Matless, D. (1990b) 'Definitions of England, 1928 – 39: preservation, modernism and the nature of the nation', *Built Environment* 16 (3) pp. 180 - 191; Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.* On urban sprawl see Joad, *Untutored Townsmans*, *op. cit.*
204 Matless, 'English outlook', *op. cit.*
205 Taylor, *op. cit.* The inter-war period witnessed a marked increase in house-building and development. Cherry, *op. cit.* On urban sprawl see Joad, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 – 38.

preservationists as an occasion for a culture of citizenship.[207] However there was great concern regarding those who did not take the preservationists' English outlook, those whose pursuits were out of place in the country and indeed out of place in England as a whole.[208] For preservationists 'walking, cycling, camping and map-reading made up an "art of right living" whereby individual and nation might give form to itself environmentally, generating intellectual, moral, physical and spiritual health'.[209] Similarly, as we shall see in Chapters Four to Nine, naturists and campers stressed the benefits of the open-air life at the same time as directing the behaviour of members towards appropriate behaviour stressing knowledge and experience as crucial to a 'true appreciation' of the countryside.

In 1931, Vaughan Cornish stipulated that nature was vital because of its provision of a universal and pure spiritual resource: it held the potential for common ground and harmony, free from the discords of culture and tradition.[210] It was, 'an original source of inspiration accessible to all peoples, nations and languages, a pure fountain undisturbed by discordant tradition, unclouded by intellectual error'.[211] In expressing his belief that the general public should be 'taught better', Cornish highlighted the attention given by the preservationists to regulation and education. First, regarding leisure in the countryside, but also to the establishment of rules of conduct and pleasure, and to the cultivation of a particular ethos of open-air leisure.[212] Lowerson notes that *The Times* and other journals commonly stalked two contrasting spectres, the first of which was a 'mob of young men and women - hatless, raucous, yellow-jerseyed, slung with

[206] Cherry, *op. cit.*
[207] Matless, ''English outlook', *op. cit.*
[208] *Ibid.*
[209] Matless, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
[210] Matless (1991)
[211] *Ibid.*, p. 274.
[212] Matless, 'English outlook', *op. cit.*; Matless, *op. cit.*

concertinas'.[213] The second was the 'genuine' rambler, cast in the mould of the solitary late Victorian artisan naturalist, studious, interested in birds and flowers, deferent and, most importantly, sticking to well-marked footpaths rather than wandering into the mist of a *battue*'.[214] Joad described;

> the hordes of hikers cackling insanely in the woods, or singing raucous songs as they walk arm in arm at midnight down the quiet village street. There are people on the river banks, lying in every attitude of undressed and inelegant squalor, grilling themselves, for all the world as if they were steaks, in the sun. There are tents in meadows and girls in pyjamas dancing beside them to the strains of the gramophone, while stinking disorderly dumps of tins, bags, and cartons bear witness to the tide of invasion for weeks after it has ebbed; there are fat girls in shorts, youths in gaudy ties and plus-fours.[215]

In his later book *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country* Joad articulated these sentiments through the evocative illustrations of Thomas Derrick three of which are featured in Figure 2.4.[216] These illustrations depict the mythical 'Satyr', 'Poseidon' and 'Pan' besieged by mass tourism and hordes of marauding hikers.[217] Geoffrey M. Boumphrey described this as the 'blighting touch of the townsman upon the country'.[218] Other frowned upon acts included dropping litter, picking wild flowers, the destruction of wildlife, loud noises, motorcycles and music.[219]

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[213] Lowerson, *op. cit.*, p. 274.
[214] *Ibid.*, p. 274.
[215] Joad, 'The people's claim', *op. cit.*, pp. 72 – 73.
[216] Joad, *Untutored Townsmans*, *op. cit.*
[217] *Ibid.*
[218] Boumphrey, G. M. (1937) 'Shall the towns kill or save the country?', in Williams-Ellis, C. (ed) *Britain and the Beast*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. pp. 101 – 112 (p. 101).

Figure 2.4 'Satyr', Poseidon' and 'Pan'. From Joad (1946).

Yet Joad also challenged anyone who had witnessed the invasion of the country by young people just before the Second World War - the youth hostellers, the ramblers, the cyclists, the Scouts, the Guides and campers - to deny that 'what they achieved in escaping from the oppression of the towns was a good thing, good no less for their souls than for their bodies'.[220] He believed that it was inevitable that urban dwellers would go to the country and nothing could prevent them.[221] However, this was not a reason for 'closing the doors, putting up fences and denying access'; most urban dwellers were merely hapless victims of the degenerative environment that surrounded them on a day to day basis. In 1937 an unsigned article in *The Times* stated that;

> Even the sturdiest of natures suffers loss in surroundings which express nothing but meanness and vulgarity [...] instinct warns against ugliness [and] other kinds of corruption [...] Health of body and health of mind, nutrition, physical fitness, the happiness of children depend, in the last

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[219] Matless, 'English outlook', *op. cit.* On litter see Joad, *Untutored Townsmans*, *op. cit.*
[220] Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
[221] *Ibid.*

> issues, upon thinking and feeling and therefore upon the influences and suggestions by which men and women are surrounded.[222]

Gloag expressed similar sentiments in 1938, arguing that practical encouragement should be given to every movement that took people into the countryside for recreation.[223] In so doing it would give unrestricted meaning, to the claim that England was a nation of open air lovers: 'it will implant a love for Nature and a respect for the beauties of the countryside, and will give to new generations of town dwellers what they lack conspicuously at the moment - good manners in the countryside'.[224]

In *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country,* Joad stressed that the 'right' attitude to and use of the country did not come by chance or nature it could only be made better by training, teaching and the effect of the environment on the human constitution; 'only by intercourse with the beautiful thing [would] a man come to realise that it [was] beautiful, to love it and treat it as he ought to do'.[225] He believed that the attitude of the urban dweller was somehow inevitable;

> is it any wonder that those brought up amid such surroundings should reflect in their tastes and pursuits the environment which has stamped their souls, that they should like trivial books, empty plays and vulgar films, and that they should be so little able to come to terms with nature that their natural reaction to natural beauty, when they do come into contact with it, should be to fence and enclose it, to deluge it with litter, to uproot its flowers and carve its trees, spoiling and ravaging it, until they have effectively destroyed

222 Anon, 'Health', *op. cit.*, p. 15.
223 Gloag, *op. cit.*
224 *Ibid.*, p. 495.
225 *Ibid.*, p. 23. See also Boumphrey, *op. cit.*

the beauty they could not understand?.[226]

In an earlier text he expanded upon this;

> [l]et a boy grow to manhood among beautiful sights, harmonious sounds, and just institutions, and his soul will give forth beauty, harmony, and justice. Let him grow up in the midst of brutality and violence, among squalid sights and ugly sounds, and he will be unjust and violent in his dealings, his soul will give forth ugliness, and he will not know how to come to terms with gentleness and beauty. Brutality and violence are not as a general rule the normal environment of the average English boy; not, at any rate, as yet. But touching ugly sights and sounds, I would ask the reader to go and look at Rotherham or Manchester or Newcastle or Hull or Leytonstone or Camberwell or Reading, to look and to listen, and when he has had his fill of the dirt and the stench and the foul air and the over-crowding and the hideous buildings and shattering racket of these places, I shall be unable to deny myself the pleasure of again putting to him the question: "What do you expect?[227]

Of the many clubs and associations founded in this period the one the preservationists most closely associated with and shared the aims and methods of was the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) founded in 1930. The YHA provided inexpensive accommodation at suitable places to encourage young people to spend walking holidays in the countryside.[228] Walkers or cyclists could stay in cheap, simple accommodation for the

226 *Ibid.*, p. 43. See also Joad, 'The people's claim', *op. cit.*
227 Joad, 'The people's claim', *op. cit.*, p. 71.
228 Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*

night and cook their own meals if desired or have one provided at a reasonable cost.[229] The development of a network of accommodation for those inclined towards simple and economical forms of open-air recreation was rooted in the same non-conformist ethos that helped to shape the nature of the large outdoor movement.[230] Indeed, the YHA promoted a particular ethos of leisure of a pioneering spirit, and of simplicity and morality in the design and use of hostels. Leisure was conducted in an atmosphere of order, of pleasure in control, from which comfort might detract. This was not regarded as a moral clamp-down, rather as devices to foster a new morality, simple and pure.[231]

Conclusion

The inter-war years were a period which witnessed the massive expansion of physical culture as a direct response to concerns regarding national and racial degeneration. Particular concern was placed on the physical body of the individual and the haphazard use of leisure time by urban dwellers. Direct connections were made between the physical, moral and spiritual health of the body and the environments which it occupied. For example, the so-called 'un-natural', crowded, suffocating conditions endured by the modern population in towns and cities were thought to induce specific physical and mental characteristics. This suggests a recursive human-environment relationship whereby exposure to nature could lead to harmony in mind and body, return to more 'natural' bodily rhythms and a more explicit appreciation of the natural environment. The physical culture movement in Britain was paralleled and to some extent influenced by alternative movements in Europe, however, in Britain the

[229] Joad, *Untutored Townsmans*, *op. cit.*; Taylor, *op. cit.*; Lowerson, *op. cit.*
[230] Taylor, *op. cit.*

movement was characterised by its unique 'voluntary' ethos. As a result, this period also saw the wide-scale adoption of open-air recreation by significant numbers of the population and outdoor pursuits such as camping and naturism proliferated. This movement was widely encouraged by preservationists and other open-air movements as an opportunity to culture citizenship and to educate the population about the benefits of exposure to the natural environment. Yet, ideas concerning citizenship and anti-citizenship began to define appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and attitudes towards the natural environment and various open-air enthusiasts called for the 'education' of the masses in correct codes of behaviour.

[231] Matless, 'English outlook', *op. cit.*

Chapter Three

Uncovering human experience: geographical humanism, the body, embodiment, sensuality and 'engaged' research

Introduction

In the previous chapter I situated my thesis within the social, cultural and historical contexts of the inter-war and immediate post-war period. My intention in this chapter is to position my research in relation to broader theoretical debates within contemporary geography. Generally the thesis seeks to examine human-environment relationships, with particular reference to the everyday, embodied experience of people interacting with the natural world. I am particularly concerned with the ways in which human-environment relationships have been conceptualised within humanism and humanistic geographical traditions and how such traditions might help us conceptualise human-environment and outdoor cultures today. I argue that much of human experience is often lost, ignored or devalued within traditional practices of knowledge production within geography. In recuperating and reassessing humanistic debates and aligning them with more recent discussions of embodiment, sensuality and body culture, I aim to develop a more 'engaged' and 'embodied' approach. Such an approach facilitates fresh insights into human experience and the social, cultural and economic parameters which mediate this experience.

Humanistic geography first emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a response to concerns within human geography that much of the quantitative theoretical work was

often lacking in 'people', and operated without a *human face*, a *human scale*. Although the term 'humanistic geography' can be used to characterise a diverse range of philosophies, methods and substantive studies, a common principle amongst all practitioners was the objective of 'bringing human beings in all of their complexity to the centre stage of human geography - in opposition to "peopleless" geographies [of spatial science]'.[1] Humanistic geographers have spanned diverse and occasionally quite incompatible intellectual positions and perspectives.[2] One common methodological factor, however, is the association with 'qualitative' methods of enquiry designed to gain access to more complex interpretations of feelings and actions than the 'quantitative' studies characteristic of spatial science. The data 'are usually linguistic rather than statistical, contextual rather than cut out from everyday life, [and] the researcher is engaged with the informants rather than separated from them'.[3]

It is possible to identify three distinct developmental phases. Initially, humanistic approaches provided a critique of spatial science. Humanists wanted to create a more 'self-conscious, philosophically sound, and active understanding of the richness of a human existence beyond the self-limiting strictures of analytical methods and positivistic science'.[4] Secondly, humanist philosophy began to criticise positivist assumptions and claims to objectivity, and encouraged debate on the 'philosophies of

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[1] Cloke, P., Philo, C. and Sadler, D. (1991) 'Peopling' human geography and the development of humanistic approaches' *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates*. London: Paul Chapman (p. 58); Gregory, D. (1994a) 'Humanistic Geography', in Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D. M. (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Third Edition). Oxford: Blackwell pp. 263 - 266; Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (1978) 'Introduction: contexts of modern humanism in geography', in Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (eds) *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. London: Croom Helm pp. 1 - 17. See also Smith, D. M. (1997) *Human Geography: A Welfare Approach*. London: Edward Arnold.

[2] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.* They range, for example, across foundational philosophies (phenomenology, existentialism), methodologically inclined philosophies (pragmatism), philosophies of meaning (hermeneutics), theological arguments (as in the Christian Bible), psychological and psychoanalytical materials (environmental psychology), and principles of substantive inquiry (historical idealism or interpretative sociology). For a discussion on pragmatism see Smith, S. (1984) 'Practising humanistic geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74 (3) pp. 353 - 374. See also Unwin, T. (1992) 'Geography and historical-hermeneutic science: the quest for understanding', *The Place of Geography*. Harlow: Longman pp. 136 – 157.

meaning' (i.e. phenomenology, existentialism). The positivist world was an ordered, universe of laws, with no room for intangible, fleeting, messy human things. By 'peopling' human geography, humanists recognised both the humanity of the geographer *and* the people the geographer studied - the crucial role played by the human beings 'out there' in the 'real world' as people perceiving, interpreting and shaping the human geography of their surroundings. For theorists such as Lowenthal the individual became a 'new *terra incognita* in need of exploration'.[5] Finally, humanistic geography illuminated a 'sense of place' or the unique meanings, values and feelings that people attach to particular places where they live, work, play and visit. The assumption was that these meanings, values and feelings were just as real as a place with objective reality. Tuan believed that the humanist could show how a place was a shared feeling and a concept as much as a location and a physical environment.[6]

The first section of the chapter provides a brief overview of the development and some of the main principles of humanistic geography. First, I indicate how humanistic geography can be linked back to early humanism and its relationship to scientific theory. I also look at the spatial science of the 1950s and early 1960s, detailing the beginnings of a humanist critique and the turn towards philosophies such as phenomenology and existentialism. I then use phenomenology as an example of this humanist philosophy. Second, I look at contemporary humanistic geography and the ways in which moves are being made towards a 'geographical humanism'.

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[3] Burgess, J. (1992) 'The art of interviewing', in Rogers, A., Viles, H. and Goudie, A. (eds) *The Students Companion to Geography.* Oxford: Blackwell (p. 207); Smith, S. (1994) 'Qualitative methods', in Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D. (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Third Edition). Oxford: Blackwell pp. 491 – 493.
[4] Ley and Samuels, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[5] Teather, E. K. (1999) *Embodied Geographies.* London: Routledge.

In the second section of the chapter, I look at the place of the body in geographical theory and the ways in which visual observation has formed the foundations of epistemology and scientific method in the West. First, I outline the separation of mind and body in Western Enlightenment thought and the associated corporeal repercussions, such as, the gendering of nature and the construction of the body as 'Other'. Second, I examine feminist calls for more 'engaged', 'situated' and embodied research and consider the impacts of emotion on research and practice. Third, I briefly outline the role of vision in the 'disembodying of people's relationships with nature' and examine other ways of sensing the environment using particular reference to the sense of smell.[7]

In the final section of the chapter, I outline some of the methodological concerns of my thesis, in particular, the use of interviews as a research technique and the study of 'sensitive' issues. I conclude by providing a brief outline of some of the issues highlighted in my literature review which are particularly relevant to my study.

'Peopling' human geography: the critique of spatial science and the move towards 'geographical humanism'

Humanistic geography is rooted in humanism, an intellectual tradition dating back to the Renaissance.[8] This tradition reasserted the position of human beings in the world stressing their ability to know the workings of the world and to change the world.

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[6] Tuan, Y-F. (1976) 'Humanistic Geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (4) pp. 266 - 276; Teather, *op. cit.* See also Eyles, J. (1985) *Sense of Place*. Warrington: Silverbrook Press; Butz, D. and Eyles, J. (1997) 'Reconceptualising sense of place: social relations, ideology and ecology', *Geografiska Annaler* 79B (1) pp. 1 – 25.

[7] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*

[8] For a discussion on geography and humanism see Buttimer, A. (1990) 'Geography, humanism, and global concern', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1) pp. 1 – 33.

Humanism also emphasised the study of meanings, values, goals and purposes and was a reaction against objective, narrow, mechanistic and deterministic views of 'man'.[9] Tuan stated that 'humanism' had different meanings but each sought to enlarge the conception of the human individual.[10] He noted how historical usage allowed one to define humanism as an expansive view of what the human was and could do, however he also acknowledged that a restrictive view still existed: since the Enlightenment dogmatic science had taken the place of religion in universities. However, the humanist did not disregard scientific perspectives on human activity, instead they built upon them.[11]

Yet it is important to recognise that humanism and science effectively developed together and not in opposition - it is vital to remember that one of the many faces of this humanism was '*scientific* humanism'.[12] Tuan believed that humanistic geography's contribution to science lay in disclosing material of which the scientist, confined within his own conceptual frame, may not be aware.[13] This material included

> the nature and the range of human experience and thought, the quality and intensity of an emotion, the ambivalence and ambiguity of values and attitudes, the nature and power of the symbol, and the character of human events, intentions and aspirations.[14]

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[9] Entrikin, J. N. (1976) 'Contemporary Humanism in Geography', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (4) pp. 615 - 632. In the work of Merleau-Ponty and the majority of other texts male experience is recognised as the norm by the use of 'man' in the text. See also Teather, *op. cit.*
[10] Tuan, *op. cit.*
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 266 – 7.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.* Tuan used scientific models as his point of departure. Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*, state that 'much of the philosophical material is drawn upon by humanistic geographers is itself touched by a desire to parallel science, to refound science or to emulate science's transcendence of everyday human realities' (p. 58). See also Ley and Samuels, *op. cit.*, pp. 4 - 7.
[14] Tuan, *op. cit.*, p 274.

A social scientist could therefore benefit from reading biographies, histories, poems, and novels, however Tuan recognised that these texts were often too dense-textured and specific to suggest possible lines of research. He declared that one of the humanist geographers' roles must therefore be that of

> an intellectual middleman, he [sic] takes these nuggets of experience as captured in art and decomposes them into simpler themes that can be systematically ordered. Once experience is simplified and given an explicit structure, its components may yield to scientific explanation.[15]

Whilst humanist geography may not have offered a feasible alternative, nor a presupposition-less basis for scientific geography (as is claimed by some of its proponents), as a critique, the humanist approach helped to counter the overly objective and abstractive tendencies of some scientific geographers.[16] In the next section I discuss spatial science and the way in which humanists tried to move away from abstraction towards more experiential philosophies.

Spatial Science

From the mid-1960s geography was primarily a science of spatial patterns and rational human-environment relationships.[17] However, gradually some spatial scientists became concerned with the inability of 'laws' and 'models' to adequately account for observed patterns of location and movement within society.[18] This unease stemmed

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 274. See also Livingstone, D. N. and Withers, C. W. J. (eds) (1999) *Geography and Enlightenment.* London: University of Chicago Press; Livingstone, *op. cit.*
[16] Entrikin, *op. cit.*
[17] This work drew on the models of Christaller, Von Thünen, Weber. See Gregory, D. (1994b) *Geographical Imaginations*. Oxford: Blackwell pp. 52 – 68; Livingstone, *op. cit.*
[18] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*; Livingstone, *op. cit.*

from a general dissatisfaction with the 'dehumanising' aspect of spatial science in which people became statistics, dots, flows, and co-ordinates. Davis remarks that human beings were portrayed as 'disembodied actors' rather than 'living, breathing, flesh-and-blood organisms'.[19] The critique of spatial science was multifarious, however the main argument was that 'classification, systematisation and theory-formulation' were inappropriate to the rich, ambiguous and diverse nature of the human condition.[20] Entrikin remarked that the

> belief among social scientists that spaces not conforming to physical space are distortions or metaphors of this space, rather than the actual space of experience [is a] concrete [example] of the scientist's tendency to place *a priori* assumptions at the basis of much of their work, and neglect the data of experience.[21]

Ley stated that spatial analysis was so abstracted that it lost sight of its subject, it was a 'geography without man' that was at once intellectually deficient and morally blind.[22] Ley and Samuels defined this as a 'reawakened awareness of humanist principles', whereas Gregory termed it a 'resurgence of humanism' because many critiques stated their allegiance to the tradition inaugurated by Paul Vidal de la Blache.[23] However, whereas Gregory believed the absence of 'Marxian Humanism' was a 'deficiency', Ley

[19] Davis, K. (ed) (1997) *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: Sage (p. 3). An example would be to imagine people as billiard balls dashing around. In a positivist ontology the world (universe) is basically made up of many 'atomistic', readily identifiable *real objects* (these are tangible, countable, measurable): these objects are *ordered*; they are bound together in *regular relations* through time and across space (object B always follows object A in time; object B always coexists with object A in space): these relations are the *laws* of how the world 'works'.
[20] Simmons, I. G. (1993) 'The Lifeworld', *Interpreting Nature: Cultural Constructions of the Environment*. New York: Routledge pp. 76 - 116; Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, *op. cit.*, p. 76. See also Livingstone, *op. cit.*
[21] Entrikin, *op. cit.*, pp. 623 - 624. Tuan, *op. cit.*, believed that scientific approaches tend to minimise the role of human awareness and knowledge. On academic irrelevance see Ley and Samuels, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[22] Cited in Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
[23] Ley and Samuels, *op. cit.*, p. 1; Gregory, D. (1981) 'Human agency and human geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 6 (1) pp. 1 - 18. On the problems of this commitment see Ley and Samuels, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 - 13.

was astonished at Gregory's failure to examine the treatment of human agency by Marxist geographers.[24] Whilst indeed a reaction against spatial analysis through the '1970s, the humanistic tradition reacted also against an unsympathetic and unsuitable Marxism which similarly reduced human agency to passive status before the seemingly irrevocable logic of economic structures'.[25]

Whilst some geographers moved towards a more 'positivist' approach, others preferred a more 'cognitive-behavioural' one. The cognitive-behavioural approach, designed to examine the thoughts and actions of human beings who failed to act 'rationally' and to take seriously the more 'human attributes' of human decision making, gained much prominence in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[26] This can best be viewed as a 'shift from humans acting in the world to humans simply reacting to it'.[27] The research emerged from three empirical directions: (i) locational analysis (the mental maps people have of the spaces and places around them), (ii) the geography of natural hazards (the perceptions people hold of natural hazards and environments), and (iii) environmental perception (the everyday spatial preferences people display in occupying or utilising certain spaces and places rather than others).[28] Behavioural geography is now seen as providing a link between the 'peopleless' landscapes of spatial science and the 'peopled' landscapes of humanistic geography.

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[24] Gregory, 'Human agency', *op. cit.*; Ley, D. (1982a) 'Rediscovering man's place', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 7 (2) pp. 248 – 253.
[25] Ley, 'Rediscovering', *op. cit.*, p. 248. In reply see Gregory, D. (1982) 'A realist construction of the social', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 7 (2) pp. 254 – 256.
[26] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*; Ley, D. (1994) 'Behavioural Geography', in Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D. M. (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Third Edition). Oxford: Blackwell pp. 30 – 33; Rodaway, P. (1994) *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge. Rodaway reminds us that this was not the first occurrence of perception studies in geography, and that Vaughan Cornish undertook pioneering work in (1935) *Scenery and the Sense of Sight*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[27] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*

Yet the development of a more self-conscious human geography towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s saw the increasing rejection of behavioural geography. Cloke *et al* state that, 'the initial stirrings of humanistic geography as critique were prompted as much by the partial treatment of people in behavioural geography as by their complete neglect in spatial science'.[29] A fundamental criticism was the inability of spatial analysis and subsequent philosophies to talk about 'real world' concerns. Humanistic geographers attacked the 'pallid' outlook on human beings and the 'reductionist' tendency to 'objectify', 'reify' or, 'thingify' the people under study.[30]

Consequently, in the emerging humanistic geography a number of geographers started a new chapter of thought in which the positivist character of spatial science was identified and explicitly criticised using an alternative package of humanist philosophies such as phenomenology and existentialism. Philosophies such as phenomenology provided a critique of positivism by attempting to infuse feelings and reality back into studies which, by their abstractive and generalising nature had 'lost touch with what life is really like'.[31] It was suggested that humans no longer felt respect and concern for the natural world because they had become alienated from the rhythms of nature and could re-establish their ties with nature only through some directed, self-conscious effort.[32] There is a clear resonance here with the 'National Fitness' and open-air movement discussed in Chapter Two, to which I return in more depth in Chapters Four to Nine

[28] *Ibid.*; see also Peet, R. (1998) *Modern Geographical Thought.* Oxford: Blackwell; Unwin, *op. cit.* For a discussion of behavioural and cognitive psychological models of perception see Rodaway (1994) pp. 16 - 19. For an example of this work in practice see Golledge, R. G. (1991) 'Tactual strip maps as navigational aids', *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness* 85 pp. 296 - 301.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 67; Rodaway, *op. cit.*, pp. 13 - 14. Tuan coined the term 'humanistic geography' in 1976. See Tuan, *op. cit.*
[30] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 69. See also Unwin, *op. cit.*; Winchester, H. P. M. (1996) 'Ethical issues in interviewing as a research method in Human Geography', *Australian Geographer* 2 (1) pp. 117 – 131.
[31] Simmons, *op. cit.*
[32] Seamon, D. (1978) 'Goethe's approach to the natural world: implications for environmental theory and education', in Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (eds) *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems.* London: Croom Helm.

when discussing the conscious effort made by naturists and campers to rediscover their 'natural rhythms' and to 'reconnect' with nature.

One goal of humanistic geography then was to reveal patterns and varieties of environmental experience and learning that if once lost and now obscure, might be newly invigorated and re-channelled to awaken a spirit of co-operation with, and involvement in, nature. Likewise, Macnaghten and Urry consider the processes by which we come to know what any nature is like.[33] For example, they consider how nature becomes embodied and embedded in daily life, the contributions made by different senses to peoples' knowledges of different environments and how odours, sights, sounds and flavours are discursively organised. Later chapters of the thesis examine the embodied experience of naturists and campers, focusing on the multi-sensual nature of their encounters with the natural environment and the ways in which this both shaped, and was shaped by, ideas of morality, health and self. In order to reach these knowledges, humanistic philosophies specified an anti-positivist vision of 'appropriate questions' to ask about human beings and of 'appropriate research procedures' to employ in the process.[34] I return to the question of methodology in subsequent sections considering not only the alternative approaches suggested by humanistic geographers, but also reflecting upon more recent work in feminist theory and ideas surrounding more 'engaged' research practices and issues of embodiment. In the next section, I take phenomenology as an example looking in more detail at how humanist geographers began to critique spatial science and their attempts to develop an alternative philosophy.

[33] Macnaghten, P. and Urry, J. (1998) *Contested Natures*. London: Sage.
[34] *Ibid.*

Phenomenology and existentialism

Humanistic geographers such as Tuan, Buttimer, Relph and Seamon all turned to phenomenology in a move designed to critique scientific-positivistic spatial science.[35] Phenomenology, was a 'descriptive philosophy of experience', a radical reflection upon the way in which we *experience* the world.[36] The main focus of Husserl's phenomenology was how humans *experience* the *objects* of the world, at a deep psychological level.[37] This emphasis on 'objects' is crucial as Husserl was interested in developing a philosophical method which would enable the philosopher to get 'back to the things themselves' to uncover and isolate the true essences of objects.[38] This search for essences would be facilitated by reflection upon the 'data of consciousness'.[39] These ideas need to be understood carefully: one should recognise that the emphasis is not so much upon the objects themselves as upon the 'experiencing' of objects.

Conventional science (with its positivist assumptions) has an abstract notion of objects as 'real', material and readily knowable.[40] The cornerstone of empirical, scientific research is that data is 'observable' and conclusions are 'testable through observation of relevant data', and hence great importance is attributed to the visual and

[35] See Unwin, *op. cit.* This move took various forms. Some humanistic geographers combined their phenomenology, with varying degrees of commitment, to the related continental philosophy of *existentialism* which I discuss later.
[36] Farber, M. (1960) 'Phenomenology', in Urmson, J. O. (ed) *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*. London: Hutchinson pp. 292 - 295. German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938) is credited as the founder of the movement, however, the term was first used within geography by Relph and Tuan in articles for *The Canadian Geographer* in 1970 and 1971 respectively. Entrikin, *op. cit.* For an in-depth discussion of Hussel's work see Macann, C. (1993) 'Edmund Husserl', *Four Phenomenological Philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau*-Ponty. London: Routledge pp. 1 - 55. See also my discussion on feminist critiques of humanist geography.
[37] True phenomenology is first hand - my experience of myself - all other definitions are second-hand. For a discussion on the 'phenomenological imagination' see Kearney, R. (1998) 'The phenomenological imagination (Husserl)', *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-Modern*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press pp. 13 - 45.
[38] Entrikin, *op. cit.* Essence is the defining properties of thing or a process, and subsequently, the meaning to the individual. Chris Philo has used the 'malteser metaphor', the chocolate representing the surface characteristics of an object with the honeycomb as the inner 'essence'.
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] *Ibid.*

observation by the eye as the primary sense.[41] The impact and historic power that such research has exerted on our understanding and sense of nature is significant.[42] In contrast, phenomenology insisted on discussing objects only in the context of their complex relationship with human subjects who experienced them. The ways in which human communities think, feel, discuss and value sensory experiences will shape their socio-spatial recognition of the senses on an everyday basis, with important consequences for the extent to which the different sensory perceptions are either included in or excluded from human discourse.[43] In my research I use textual material such as magazines, letters and poetry created by and circulated amongst naturists and campers to examine the ways in which they discussed and evaluated their experiences of both the natural environment and the places they inhabited.

Phenomenologists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908 - 1961) wished to look beyond, but not subsume, the individual. They took as their starting point the naiveté of mind which precedes 'knowledge', the kind of experiential knowing which must precede informed scientific observation and its subsequent analysis.[44] They claimed that all human 'states of mind' must be understood in terms of their 'intentionality' or 'directedness to objects', that is, the *essences* of objects reside in the relationship whereby subjects experience the objects that they 'use' (that they have 'intentions' about). By inserting the human subject centrally into the philosophy the integral subject-object relationship was problematised and made the pivot of philosophical investigation. It is this manoeuvre that aligns phenomenology with the *humanist*

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[41] *Ibid.*; Smith, S. J. (2000) 'Performing the (sound)world', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18 pp. 615 – 637.

[42] Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*; Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.*

[43] For example, Rodaway, *op. cit.*, states that the 'geography of the nose' is particularly underdeveloped due to the denigration of the sense of smell within western culture. See also Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.* I return to discuss sensual geographies later in this chapter.

tradition and which attracted humanistic geographers through the promise of a philosophy that rooted itself in the subject-object relationship, rather than a philosophy (positivism) that rooted itself solely in the objects. For Husserl, the objects 'for' subjects could be *real* things (e.g. chocolate) or *ideal* things (e.g. mathematics); reality was incidental, what mattered were the 'things as they appear[ed] in consciousness'.[45] In principle, each one of us is potentially a phenomenologist, each one of us can reflect upon the objects appearing in our consciousness - can reflect upon our 'deep' experience of objects - and thereby encounter the 'true' *essences* of these objects.[46]

Phenomenological reflection requires us to suspend all our 'preconceptions' about objects, both those that are 'common sense' and those that we are conditioned to know through 'natural scientific attitude'.[47] By stripping away these preconceptions, one effectively peels away the 'surface' of the object to get to its 'essence'. Simmons, states that 'two people may detect different meanings of the same essence and their sense-data are held to be the significant facts, not the object or process itself nor the descriptions and categorisations of it that follow the rules of natural science'.[48] Husserl supposed that individuals who pursued the phenomenological method 'correctly' would arrive at the *same* ('transcendental') understanding of the *essences* of objects. On the basis of

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[44] Simmons, *op. cit.*; Entrikin, *op. cit.* For an in-depth discussion on Merleau-Ponty's work see Macann (1993) 'Merleau-Ponty', *Four Phenomenological Philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau*-Ponty. London: Routledge pp. 159 - 201.

[45] Findlay, J. N. (1960) 'Husserl', in Urmson, J. O. (ed) *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*. London: Hutchinson pp. 188 - 190. Findlay states that a 'wholly imaginary instance may therefore be as decisive in a phenomenological investigation as one that is actual' (p. 189).

[46] Unwin, *op. cit.*, notes that while such a transcendental exercise might have been rewarding in terms of individual understanding, its reflective rather than productive character made it unattractive to academics whose career paths were in part determined by the publications they produced - there are few actual examples of phenomenological research based upon Husserl's ideas (p. 147).

[47] A set of 'unquestioned presuppositions about our everyday lives which help to define our expectations regarding a particular event or situation, and which provide a context for determining the significance of that event or situation'. Weiss, G. (1999) *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality*. London: Routledge p. 48. For a critique see Young, I. M. (1990) *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

[48] Simmons, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

this shared and 'true' understanding science could be rebuilt: a science alert to the 'true' essences of objects as these reside in the subject's experience of them.

While phenomenology was concerned with the *a priori* foundations of knowledge, existentialists concentrated on the nature of 'being' and understanding human experience. Though closely related to — and indeed, partially derived from — phenomenology, existentialism was an ethical philosophy which emphasised individuality and freedom of choice; a reaction against idealist and positivist philosophies which abstract 'thought from action', 'knowledge from emotion', and 'man from his existential situation'.[49] Existentialists rejected philosophies which ignore basic facts of human existence or involvement, and the myriad ways in which humans know the world, for example, through their physical presence, feelings or emotions.[50] The two main criticisms it makes of science are (i) that the scientist's search for causal explanation and laws of human behaviour is unsympathetic to freedom of choice, and (ii) that the reduction of human beings to the status of objects ignores subjectivity, their most distinctive feature.[51] Existentialism was a return to the concrete world of being as the source of consciousness and, in rejecting idealism, its basic concern lay with the realities of the human condition.[52] In the following sections I begin to evaluate the extent to which I can apply the principles of humanism, phenomenology, existentialism and the later 'humanistic geography' to my own work and discuss the methodological and ethical concerns which arise when undertaking such a project.

[49] Entrikin, *op. cit.*
[50] *Ibid.* See also Unwin, *op. cit.*
[51] *Ibid.*

Humanistic geography

Rather than developing a detailed critique of the ways in which spatial science dealt with the people it studied, early humanist texts tended to reflect upon the drawbacks in the knowledges derived from spatial science.[53] However, though these texts show little practical application, one could argue that humanistic geography made its most significant contribution to human geography in sensitising researchers to the everyday and yet often quite intimate attachments to the places that encircle them.[54] It is these concerns that I wish to develop with respect to my own work. It is vital to acknowledge the humanistic geographers' attention to *place*, to the various ways in which human beings 'relate' to the places around them and the extent to which senses of place have infused and energised contemporary human-geographical enquiry more generally.[55] Cloke *et al* believe we should,

> ascribe considerable importance to this heightened awareness of the intimate emotional, practical, political and other attachments people usually possess with the places containing them [this is then, an] emergent and innovative *geographical humanism* geographers can proudly introduce to the wider audience of philosophy, social science and the humanities.[56]

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[52] Unwin, *op. cit.*

[53] Because so much time was spent on the philosophy, humanistic geographers in the early to mid 1970s were often accused of being nothing but 'navel gazers' by spatial scientists. In the *Transactions* debate between Ley and Gregory (c. 1982) discussed above, Ley wanted to highlight the cost of the domination of theory, not in terms of a plea for naive empiricism, rather to suggest the 'naive theoreticism' which he believed had circulated since the mid 1970s. Ley, *op. cit.*

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 58 – 59.

However, Cloke *et al* also remark that this geographical humanism is not particularly 'comfortable with much of the prior humanist thought that supposedly inspired it'.[57] For example, few contemporary geographers have any interest in 'uncovering the true essence of objects' in the deep psychological realm of experience or in re-building science, many preferring to focus on the 'everyday', lived experience and embodied senses of place.

Although there is much that is attractive in the underlying principles of humanism and the subsequent texts of humanistic geography, I would like to problematise the essentialising nature of phenomenology. For instance, phenomenology was designed as an attempt to provide an alternative to the abstraction and generalisation of spatial science, but by striving to essentialise experience, it simply replicates this. Essentialisation is a way of making things familiar, valuing commonness over specificity and difference. I do not support the notion that things can or should be reduced to 'true essences' nor Tuan's belief that feelings should be reduced to 'simpler' themes that can be 'ordered'.[58] As I argue throughout the thesis, whilst groups of people may share common bonds and feelings in relation to place, individual experience is rich, diverse, complex and embodied whilst at the same time also being fleeting and subject to internal and external mediation.

Some humanistic geographers have moved towards highly personal and subjective geographies using intensive research methods in an endeavour to get as close as possible to the place experiences of individuals as *individuals*.[59] This geographical humanism

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 59. For a more in-depth discussion of geographical humanism see pp. 80 – 83.
[58] Tuan, *op. cit.* For a discussion regarding the re-evaluation of humanistic approaches, in particular phenomenology, see Rodaway, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 - 9.
[59] *Ibid.* Intensive methods of research include encounter groups, in-depth and repeated interviews, joint writing of personal biographies, etc.

takes seriously the irreducibly *inter-personal* and *inter-subjective* geographies of human groupings whose shared 'world-views' - common values, meanings or ideologies - are intimately bound up with the material places of which they are 'a part'.[60] In studies of inner-city urban America David Ley sought to move away from strict foundational philosophies such as phenomenology and existentialism towards 'humanistically-oriented work'.[61] The latter 'concerned not with transcendental essences nor with other forms of scholarly abstraction, but with the everyday and usually "taken-for-granted" meanings of social actions available to social groups in specific social contexts'.[62] Ley tried to ground his theory in the *constitutive phenomenology* of Alfred Schutz in a conscious attempt to retain the spirit of Husserl's philosophy whilst abandoning his obsession with hidden essences. Phenomenology was recast here as the study of everyday and 'taken-for-granted' lifeworlds *per se* rather than a search for deeper essences. From this theoretical standpoint, place, group and life world are seen as three closely linked entities. However, Walker and Greenberg caution against a humanistic geography that concentrates primarily on the thoughts and actions of 'ordinary folk' ignoring the very real material constraints (particularly economic and political ones) that limit human activity.[63] In relation to my research this means not only situating the two case studies within their historical, social, cultural and economic contexts, but also considering appropriate methods of research. I discuss my research methodology in more depth at the end of this chapter.

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[60] *Ibid.*
[61] Cited in Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
[62] *Ibid.*

The body in geographical research

In Part One I outlined the marked shift in human geographical thought since the mid-1970s from the abstract, 'disembodied' theory of spatial science to the more embodied theory and practice of 'geographical humanism'. In this section I consider the 'peopling' of geographical research and subsequent issues surrounding 'the body' in more depth. In particular, I consider the contribution of feminist theory to debates about the absence / presence of the body within social science research. For example, Weiss states that Husserl's own lifelong project was similar to that of many contemporary feminists, namely 'to render that which has remained indeterminate (or even invisible) determinate as a phenomenon in its own right'.[64] However, whilst phenomenology offers potential for feminism in its fascination for the mundane (everyday attitudes, objects, beliefs), it also harbours dangers. Particular understandings of the body which have been critiqued include the 'invisible' ways in which the masculine body provided the norm for Merleau-Ponty's accounts of embodiment and Husserl's 'naive' belief in the neutrality of investigation.[65] In the first part of this section then, I focus on the gendered dichotomy of mind / body, the subsequent assimilation of nature and femininity and the ways in which research practice can affect the construction of geographical knowledges.

[63] Cited in *ibid.*, p. 88; Walker, R. and Greenberg, D. A. (1982a) 'Post-industrialism and political reform in the city: a critique', *Antipode* 14 (1) pp. 17 - 32. For a flavour of the heated debate that followed this paper see Ley, D. (1982b) 'Of tribes and idols: a reply to Greenberg and Walker', *Antipode* 14 (1) pp. 33 - 37 *and* Walker, R. and Greenberg, D. (1982b) 'A guide for the Ley reader of Marxist Criticism', *Antipode* 14 (1) pp. 38 - 43.
[64] Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

In the last decade, the body has become a major theoretical preoccupation in the social sciences.[66] Following on from humanistic philosophy, feminist critiques and more recent work on the geographies of disability, Hall notes a 'significant shift in social scientific attention away from the body of a person as a biological entity, that was either unimportant because of its "naturalness" and fixity, or important in determining a person's social behaviour'.[67] Alluding to Sennett's belief that Western civilisation has had persistent trouble in honouring the dignity of the body and diversity of human bodies, Hall recognises a fundamental problem with 'the body' in Western society.[68] He points out that, although the body is central to many contemporary debates, from 'genetic screening to body building', from 'sexual display to plastic surgery', in general, we remain 'out of touch' with, or dehumanised to, our bodies. In the second part of this section I move on to discuss the validity of emotion and sensuality in geographical research and how this has impacted upon my own work. For example, Irigaray believes that the dominance of the look over smell, taste, touch and hearing has 'impoverished' bodily relations and caused the body to lose its materiality.[69] The two case studies demonstrate the value of embracing the ambiguity of human beings as flesh and blood, as living, breathing organisms open to the spaces and places which encircle them. In the concluding section of this chapter then, I discuss the concept of a more 'embodied' approach sensitive to the vagaries and variety of human experience and the ways in which this could lead to an increased understanding of human-environment relationships.

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[66] McDowell, L. (1999) 'In and out of place: bodies and embodiments', *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Cambridge: Polity; Hall, E. (2000) 'Blood, brain and bones": taking the body seriously in the geography of health and impairment', *Area* 32 (1) pp. 21 – 29.

[67] Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[68] Sennett, R. (1996) 'Nakedness: The citizen's Body in Perikles' Athens', *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilisation*. London: Faber and Faber pp. 31 - 67; Hall, *op. cit.*; Christopherson, S. (1989) 'On being outside "the project"', *Antipode* 21 (2) pp. 83 – 89.

[69] Cited in Urry, J. (1999) 'Sensing leisure spaces', in Crouch, D. (ed) *Leisure / Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*. London: Routledge pp. 34 - 45; Rodaway, *op. cit.* For a discussion on the denial and disavowal of experience in modern culture see Robbins, K. (1996) 'The touch of the unknown', *Into the Image: Culture and Politics in the Field of Vision*. London: Routledge pp. 11 – 34.

The separation of mind and body within Western society

Traditionally, social science has been reluctant to deal with the 'material' body, displaying what Scott and Morgan refer to as an 'anti-body bias'.[70] Indeed, until the advent of humanistic thought in the 1960s, geography was dominated by the idea that the mind and body were separate entities.[71] Bodies were thought of in the abstract and as ideal, not as fleshly and flawed with feelings, emotions and intimate attachments.[72] Following Shilling, Hall describes this as the 'paradox of the body', in which 'the body [was] considered as a passive container which act[ed] as a shell to the active mind'.[73] From the mid-1980s onwards, feminist scholars such as Bordo, Fox Keller and Gatens began to analyse the scientific neglect of the body and the centrality of rationality in modernist science as direct products of the dualisms of Cartesian thought.[74] These dualisms, for example, mind / body, culture / nature, reason / passion, permeate western thought, with the former being valued above the latter which is generally categorised as an inferior 'Other'.[75] For example, in Western Enlightenment thought the body emerged as the 'other', the weak and dominated partner of the mind.[76]

With the development of 'mechanistic world theories' in the seventeenth century women were considered to be the repositories of natural laws, the female body, like

[70] Cited in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 3. See also Hall, *op. cit.*; Urry, *op. cit.*
[71] Teather, *op. cit.* Teather traces this back to the mind / body dualism established by French philosopher Descartes (1596 - 1650).
[72] Hall, *op. cit.*
[73] Shilling cited in Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 22. See Shilling, C. (1993) *The Body and Social Theory*. London: Sage.
[74] Cited in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Bordo, S. (1987) *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture*. Albany: SUNY Press; Fox Keller, E. (1985) *Reflections on Gender and Science*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Gatens, M. (1996) *Imaginary Bodies: Essays on Corporeality, Power and Ethics*. London: Routledge. See also Wearing, B. (1998) *Leisure and Feminist Theory*. London: Sage; Grosz, E. (1994) *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Sydney: Allen and Uniwn; Bordo, S. (1993) *Unbearable Weight. Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Hall, *op. cit.*, states that the history of medicine is a useful way of understanding the dominance of biological notions of the male and female body - on the Cartesian dualism (p. 23).
[75] Longhurst, R. (1997) '(Dis)embodied geographies', *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (4) pp. 486 - 501; Davis, *op. cit.*; Wearing, *op. cit.*; McDowell, *op. cit.*; Teather, *op. cit.*; Hall, *op. cit.* See also Longhurst, R. (1995) ' The body and geography', *Gender, Place and Culture* 2 (1) pp. 97 – 105; Williams, S. J. and Bendelow, G. A. (1996) 'The "emotional" body', *Body and Society* 2 (3) pp. 125 - 139.

nature, represented all that needed to be tamed and controlled by the '(dis)embodied, objective, male scientist'.[77] As Longhurst summarises,

> in "reality" both men and women "have bodies" but the difference lies in that men [we]re thought to be able to pursue and speak universal knowledge, unencumbered by the limitations of a body placed in a particular time and place whereas women [we]re thought to be bound closely to the particular instincts, rhythms and desires of their fleshly, located bodies.[78]

The female thus became a metaphor for the corporeal side of the mind / body dualism, representing the 'natural', 'emotionality', 'irrationality' and 'sensuality'.[79] Nochlin believes that many of these assumptions about women presented themselves (and, it could be argued still are presented) as a complex of common sense views about the world, as self-evident, and were therefore relatively invisible to most of the contemporary population. For example, the success of a discourse in confirming an ideological position rests not on its reliance upon evidence but rather in the way it exercises successful control through the 'obviousness' of its assumptions.[80] In this case, the assumptions include those about women's weakness and passivity; her sexual

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[76] Hall, *op. cit.*; Longhurst, '(Dis)embodied', *op. cit.*

[77] Fox Keller cited in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Rose *et al* remark that use of the term 'natural' often implies something separate from human with its own distinct processes from those of society, economy, polity and culture, and thus open to be acted upon by human agency. Rose, G. (1996a) 'Geography as a science of observation: the landscape, the gaze and masculinity', in Agnew, J., Livingstone, D. N. and Rogers, A. (eds) *Geography: An Essential Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell pp. 341 – 350; Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity; Rose, G., Kinnard, V., Morris, M. and Nash, C. (1997) 'Feminist geographies of environment, nature and landscape', Women and Geography Study Group *Feminist Geographies: Explorations in Diversity and Difference*. Harlow: Longman; Martin, E. (1998) 'Fluid bodies, managed nature', in Braun, B. and Castree, N. (eds) *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium*. London: Routledge.

[78] Longhurst, '(Dis)embodied', *op. cit.*, p. 491.

[79] Davis, *op. cit.*; Teather, *op. cit.*; Williams and Bendelow, *op. cit.*

availability for men; her defining domestic and nurturing function; her identity with the realm of nature; her existence as object rather than creator of art; and the futility of her attempts to insert herself actively in the realm of history by means of work or engagement in political struggle.[81]

The association of naturalness with 'woman' is so 'pervasive' that historically nature (in reference to the physical world) has been symbolically represented as female and separate from masculinised understandings of culture.[82] Contemporary western views of nature are fraught with the dichotomy or duality between man and woman, and person and nature and, in turn, the culture / nature dichotomy both parallels and reinforces the dichotomies of man / woman, mind / body.[83] The gendering of nature in the west follows a long historical tradition. The ideological separation of culture from nature was evident in the classical period, however as mentioned above, its gendering was elaborated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when biological 'discoveries' in medical science were closely linked to the social and political developments which placed women in subordinate positions. Within preservationist literature the 'feminine' was often used as an allegory for vulnerable, endangered nature. This is spectacularly evident in Thomas Derrick's illustrations for C. E. M. Joad's *The*

[80] Nochlin, L. (1989) 'Women, art and power' and 'Eroticism and female imagery in nineteenth century art', *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*. London: Thames and Hudson pp. 1 – 36 and 136 – 144 (p. 8); McDowell, L. (1992) 'Multiple voices: speaking from inside and outside the project', *Antipode* 24 (1) pp. 56 – 72 (especially p. 60). For example, Richardson states that Nazi ideology was not 'natural' but 'frequently relied on the assertion that it did no more than develop people's innate, biologically and racially determined capacities'. While Nazi propaganda in the Third Reich relied heavily on images and texts which constructed women as the 'life source of the people', such a construction would have seemed positive, natural and shared to the committed Nazi woman. Richardson, A. (1990) 'The nazification of women in art', in Taylor, B. and van der Will, W. (eds) *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*. Winchester: The Winchester Press pp. 53 - 79 (p. 55).
[81] Nochlin, *op. cit.*
[82] McDowell, 'In and out', *op. cit.*, p. 45; Rose *et al*, *op. cit.*
[83] Shiva, V. (1997) 'Women in nature', in McDowell, L. and Sharp, J. P. (eds) *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*. London: Arnold pp. 174 – 177; McDowell, L. and Sharp, J. P. (1997) 'Section Three. The nature of gender: editor's introduction', in McDowell, L. and Sharp, J. P. (eds) *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*. London: Arnold pp. 165 – 170; Blunt, A. and Wills, J. (2000) 'Embodying geography: feminist geographies of gender', *Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practice*. London: Prentice Hall pp. 90 - 127.

Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country as seen in Figure 3.1.[84] In these two illustrations the naked, vulnerable 'natural' bodies of the 'dryad' (nymph of the tree) and 'oread' (nymph of the mountain) are threatened by the noise and destructive speed of urban life and the pollution of heavy industrialisation.[85] However, the association between women and nature is complex. In landscape paintings, femininity is discursively represented as both maternal and seductive.

Feminised nature, 'can be seen as nurturing and plentiful, bounteously reproducing the fruits of the earth; or she can be seen as a mysterious and uncontrollable force, threatening the achievements of culture and civilisation'.[86] Davis states that,

> [i]mages of the dangerous, appetitive female body, ruled precariously by her emotions, stand in contrast to the masterful, masculine will, the locus of social power, rationality and self-control. The female body is always the 'other': mysterious, unruly, threatening to erupt and challenge the patriarchal order through distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death [...] In short, the female body represented all that needed to be tamed and controlled by the (dis)embodied, objective male scientist.[87]

[84] Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*. With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber.

[85] Rose, *Feminism, op. cit.*; Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 23. For a discussion on the conceptualisation of the earth as a 'mother' and the uncritical use of gender stereotyping of nature as female see Seager, J. (1997) 'The earth is not your mother', in McDowell, L. and Sharp, J. P. (eds) *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*. London: Arnold pp. 171 – 173.

[86] Rose *et al*, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Rose, G. (1992) ' Feminist voices and geographical knowledge', *Antipode* 24 pp. 230 – 233.

[87] Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Rose, *Feminism, op. cit.*; Teather, *op. cit.* I discuss emotion in the next section.

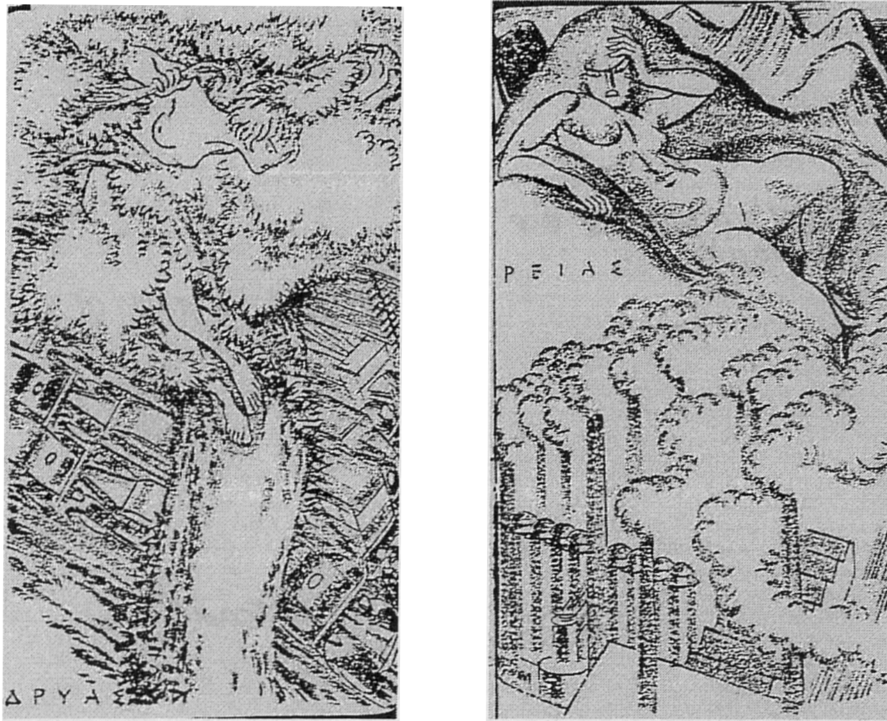

Figure 3.1 'Dryad' (nymph of the tree) and 'Oread' (nymph of the mountain). From Joad (1946).

Rose has applied this to the politics of knowledge within academia and to the discipline of geography with particular reference to the conception of femininity with the geographical landscape tradition.[88] Describing geography as a 'phallocentric' discipline she states that the kinds of knowledge the discipline offers are masculine, abstract, distanced, cold, a very particular kind of rationality; whatever geographers are uncertain of, whatever seems to them to be 'elusive', is characterised as feminine; if knowledge is masculine, then the 'unknowable' is represented as feminine.[89] To ignore the body in geographical research then, is to comply with masculine strategy which denies the specificity and situatedness of male experience.[90]

[88] Rose, 'Geography', *op. cit.*; Bonner, F., Goodman, L., Janes, L. and King, C. (eds) (1995) *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity. On the reification of the Western cultural opposition between culture and nature see Wearing, *op. cit.*, p. 104. On gender and geographical knowledge with particular reference to the Royal Geographical Society see Blunt and Wills, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 – 120.
[89] Rose 'Geography', *op. cit.*
[90] *Ibid.*; Rose, 'Geography', *op. cit.*

Longhurst states that the 'masculinist separation of mind from body and the privileging of mind over body, remains a dominant conception in western culture'.[91] Young's work on 'cultural imperialism', emphasised that bodily distinctions are crucial to the production of inferiority as dominated groups are defined as nothing but their bodies, as 'imprisoned in an undesirable body' in contrast to dominant groups who occupy an 'unmarked', 'neutral', 'universal' and 'disembodied' position which is white and masculine by default.[92] Feminist philosophers such as Gatens and Grosz have recently tried to deconstruct the hierarchical mind / body dichotomy in an attempt to develop the idea of the body as a means of resistance to control with possibilities for revisioning the female body beyond its inferiorisation to a male equivalent.[93] Such 'post-structuralist' research also has 'attempted to deconstruct the mind / body hierarchical dichotomy to revalue the part that the body plays in everyday life and experience'.[94] Yet, contemporary women are still defined as 'Other', a confinement which is exacerbated through the construction of an idealised female body which most fail to measure up to. In response, Parr and Butler have sought to destabilise the limiting mind / body dualism whilst also highlighting the general reluctance to fully critique the myth of the 'perfect' body / mind.[95] Instead, they place an emphasis on contextualisation, situatedness of understanding different minds and bodies in different places through multiple encounters.

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[91] Longhurst, '(Dis)embodied', *op. cit.*, p. 491. See also Williams and Bendelow, *op. cit.*

[92] Young, *op. cit.*; Rose, 'Geography', *op. cit.*

[93] Wearing, *op. cit.*, p. 105; Gatens, *op. cit.*; Grosz, *op. cit.* Masculinist literature has also applied poststructuralist ideas to the male body in contemporary society pointing to a sense of powerlessness that many men feel when compared to the masculine ideal. However, female writers point out that it is this myth which allocates men power and constructs women's bodies as different and inferior. See Turner, B. (1996) *The Body and Society* (Second Edition). London: Sage; Connell, R. W. (1995) *Masculinities*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press; Middleton, P. (1992) *The Inward Gaze: Masculinity and Subjectivity in Modern Culture*. London: Routledge.

[94] Wearing, *op. cit.*, p. 105; Blunt and Wills, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 – 116.

[95] Butler, R. and Parr, H. (1999) (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability*. London: Routledge.

As demonstrated in the previous section, the cultural politics of 'the gaze' has attracted unprecedented attention among social scientists of late. However whilst this provides a helpful critique of our common sense ways of seeing, at the same time it also reinforces the dominance of sight, deflecting attention away from the role of the other senses.[96] Feminist theorists have argued that the concentration upon the visual has over-emphasised appearance, image and surface.[97] However, building upon this, Hall believes that recent research on the body in geography in which the body is studied as a site of inscription, identity and consumption, has continued the 'denial' of the materiality of the body.[98] Following Parr's suggestion that a focus on the representation of the body often neglects 'the physical presence of the body', Hall argues not only for the inclusion of the body in geographical research but also an acknowledgement of the 'materiality' of the body through 'embodied' theory.[99] Following Parr, Hall and Christopherson in the next section I aim to go some way towards acknowledgeing the materiality of the body within my research through a consideration of the place of emotion in research and the construction of situated knowledges.

[96] Smith, S. (1997) 'Beyond geography's visible worlds: a cultural politics of music', *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (4) pp. 502 - 529; Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.* Smith critiques Denis Cosgrove's 'privileging' of vision in his studies of Renaissance Italy and landscape ideology. Whilst concentrating on the emergence of a new social order based on visual representation, Cosgrove pays little attention to sound and the fact that late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Venice was a centre for musical innovation. See also Robbins, *op. cit.*

[97] Urry, *op. cit.*; Rodaway, *op. cit.*

[98] Hall, *op. cit.* See Bell, D. and Valentine. G. (eds) (1995) *Mapping Desire*. London: Routledge; Pile, S. (1996) *The Body and the City*. London: Routledge.

[99] Parr cited in Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 22. It is important here to heed Davis' warning that much new theory is in danger of being just as masculinist and disembodied as it ever was. For example, 'postmodernism, with its critical demolition of dichotomies like mind / body, nature / culture and emotionality / rationality has certainly helped to make the body a popular topic, however, post-modern theorising about the body has all too often been a cerebral, esoteric and, ultimately disembodied activity'. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 14. On the way in which post-modern research reflects structures of oppression and domination see McDowell, 'Multiple voices', *op. cit.*, p. 65. On further dangers of the popularity of the 'body' see Callard, F. J. (1998) 'The body in theory', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 pp. 387 - 400. Christopherson also asserts that many of these debates are not just about theory but a political struggle over whose theories will have validity and significance in geography. Christopherson, *op. cit.*, p. 84. In response see Chouinard, V. and Grant, A. (1997) 'On not being anywhere near the "project": revolutionary ways of putting ourselves in the picture', in McDowell, L. and Sharp, J. P. (eds) *Space, Gender and Knowledge: Feminist Readings*. London: Arnold pp. 147 – 163; McDowell, 'Multiple voices', *op. cit.* For a discussion on the long-term outcomes of our research practice see Bailey, *op. cit.* Some authors have considered co-authorship, however, this would have been impractical due to the number of people I interviewed and also because this thesis is being assessed for a Ph.D. I attempted to deal with this by offering the participants some of my analyses late in the research. Only two participants expressed an interest. I had final power of interpretation.

Anderson and Smith cite the gendered basis of knowledge production as a key reason why factors such as emotion and sensuality have, to a large extent, been marginalised in social science research.[100] Traditional gender politics within research have valued and implicitly masculinised detachment, objectivity and rationality, whereas feminine characteristics such as emotion have been thought to 'cloud vision' and 'impair judgement'.[101] In the past, good scholarship meant keeping one's (and others') emotions under control. Emotion was viewed as somehow outside the field of social science analysis, it was personal and 'not to be shared'.[102] Smith remarks that the relevance of emotions is generally underplayed in social science being 'regarded as irrational and subjective. Emotional behaviour is unpredictable; it denotes a loss of self-control; it lacks objectivity; it is indulgent, perhaps dangerous'.[103] Hall believes that geographers often avoid and therefore deny the materiality of the body 'the organs, the hormones and bodily fluids, the bones, the blood and brain of the body', the 'messy bits', not wanting to get their hands dirty.[104] Anderson and Smith believe that such a silencing of emotion not only produces an incomplete understanding of the world but also neglects and excludes a key set of relations through which lives are lived and

[100] Anderson, K. and Smith, S. J. (2001) 'Editorial: Emotional Geographies', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 pp. 7 – 10.
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] Nast, H. and Pile, S. (eds) (1998) *Place Through the Body*. London: Routledge. On the 'ethereal' existence of the emotions within sociology see Williams and Bendelow, *op. cit.*
[103] Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.*, p. 630. On geographical fieldwork and scientific objectivity see Rose, 'Geography', *op. cit.*; Rose, ' Feminist voices', *op. cit.*
[104] Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 27. See also Anderson and Smith, *op. cit.* and Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.* One enduring problem is how to 'grasp the emotional' and what do we do with it when we have it. See Anderson and Smith on 'non-constructionist' approaches.

societies made.[105] For example, Smith highlights how the power of music hinges on its emotive qualities and musical performance might be conceptualised as 'a set of social relations whose practices create and shape distinctive *emotional spaces*'.[106]

Caution is, however, advisable. Academic writing often deals in extremes, a focus on 'emotionally heightened' spaces can be illustrative but it can also be complicit with the tendency to segregate emotions outside of mainstream research and policy.[107] I believe that emotion and everyday attachments and fears are key features in the way in which humans encounter, understand and value their experiences of space and place, and cannot be ignored. Similarly, Anderson and Smith believe we should recognise emotions as ways of knowing, being and doing to take geographical knowledges beyond visual, textual and linguistic domains.[108] Some researchers are beginning to work with these ideas in practice, although this work still tends to be located in the cultural (often feminist) corners of the discipline.[109] My research will supplement and expand upon this growing body of work by grounding ideas about 'geographical humanism', the body, embodiment, and sensuality outlined in this chapter within the debates of campers and naturists. I return to discuss the experiences of campers and naturists in Chapters

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105 Anderson and Smith, *op. cit.* They note that this is particularly relevant for policy-relevant work, for example, the emotional impacts and / or costs of a project don't usually feature in decision making. For recent debate on policy see Peck, J. (1999) 'Editorial: grey geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 (2) pp. 131 - 6; Pollard, J., Henry, N., Bryson, J. and Daniels, P. (2000) 'Shades of grey? Geographers and policy', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25 (2) pp. 243 - 8; Banks, M. and MacKian, S. (2000) 'Jump in". The water's warm: a comment on Peck's 'grey geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25 (2) pp. 249 - 254; Peck, J. (2000) 'Jumping in, joining up and getting on', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25 (2) pp. 255 - 258. See also Massey, D. (2000) 'Editorial: Practising political relevance', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25 (2) pp. 131 - 3. Massey writes that recent arguments over BSE, GM foods, etc. 'have exposed that fact that scientists themselves do not agree, that they and their research may be influenced in a whole variety of ways by the contexts [...] in which they take place, and that certain questions - about elements of risk, about comparative evaluations - may simply not be answerable in a 'scientific' sense at all' (p. 131).

106 Smith 'Performing', *op. cit.*, p. 630.

107 *Ibid.*; Anderson and Smith, *op. cit.*; Nast and Pile, *op. cit.*

108 Anderson and Smith, *op. cit.*

109 *Ibid.* See Koskela, H. (2000) 'The gaze without eyes": video-surveillance and the changing nature of urban space', *Progress in Human Geography* 24 pp. 243 - 65; Nash, C, (1998) 'Mapping emotion', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1) pp. 1 - 10; Widdowfield, R. (2000) 'The place of emotions in academic research', *Area* 32 pp. 199 – 208.

Four to Nine. I now move on to discuss the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Humanistic geography highlighted a need to go beyond the 'conventional "scientific" notion of researcher as a simple toiler after objective truth, and a desire to recognise all of the complex *a priori* assumptions, values, hopes and fears researchers themselves cannot avoid stirring into the study of human situations'.[110] In this sense humanist geographers made a claim for research from 'somewhere', rather than research from 'nowhere' or a 'God's eye' perspective.[111] A key point made by humanistic geographers was that all manner of human *values* are always bound up in the efforts of the researcher to know about their objects of research and it is therefore important to acknowledge the ways in which those values permeate the geographical research process.[112] Cole Harris stated that the,

> scholar is not an empty vessel that soaks up information, digests it, and regurgitates an interpretative synthesis. He or she is a human being with individual predilections, foibles and inconsistencies: a member of a society and a product of an age. The scholar brings a particular vantage point to the study of the past that willy nilly, affects the judgement of it.[113]

Feminist theorists have also problematised the construction of theory, particularly in relation to power and what Haraway labels 'unlocatable, and so irresponsible,

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[110] Unwin, *op. cit.*, p. 58; Butz and Eyles, *op. cit.*
[111] See Gregory, *Geographical, op. cit. (*especially pp. 65 – 66); Haraway, D. (1992) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Routledge.
[112] On the 'masculinisation' of fieldwork, for example, see Sparke, M. (1996) 'Displacing the field in fieldwork: masculinity, metaphor and space', in Duncan, N. (ed) *Body Space: Destabilising Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge.
[113] Harris, C. (1978) 'The historical mind and the practice of geography' in Ley and Samuels (eds) *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. London: Croom Helm pp. 123 - 137 (p. 129).

knowledge claims'.[114] They have critiqued the idea that 'objectivity' and the ability to elicit knowledge free of prejudice or bias is possible or even desirable.[115] Gilbert writes that,

> [i]nstead of attempting to be a neutral, distant researcher feminists focused on the mutuality of the research process; inter-subjectivity not objectivity and dialogues in place of monologues became the goals - the relationship between the researcher and researched was thereby made visible and open to debate.[116]

I hope I have gone some way towards situating my own personal and theoretical perspective in this chapter and the 'introductory' Chapter One. I discuss the specific research practices I employed whilst undertaking my research, in particular, whilst interviewing research participants at the end of this chapter.

The sensuous nature of human experience

Phenomenological theory is a highly 'people orientated' form of knowledge and the meanings that individuals and groups attached to their environments were of major importance to phenomenological geographers. Indeed, theorists such as Buttimer and Seamon recognise that places acquired meaning for people through their activities and

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[114] Haraway, D. (1996) 'Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', in Agnew, J., Livingstone, D. N. and Rogers, A. (eds) *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 108 - 128 (p. 117); Rose, *Feminism, op. cit.*, p. 49; Christopherson, *op. cit.*; Bonner *et al, op. cit.* For a discussion on power, the female body and subversion see Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 - 14.
[115] May, T. (1993) 'Interviewing: methods and process', in *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*. Buckingham: Open University Press
[116] Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

personal experiences.[117] Yet, within this chapter I argue that despite providing a valuable insight into the ways in which humans experience the world, these phenomenological theorists failed to situate their arguments within empirical research. My work explicitly grounds aspects of humanistic and phenomenological theory within an empirical study of naturism and camping. Following on from my discussion of 'emotional geographies' and the situating of knowledges within research, I argue that ways in which people experience the environment other than the visual are important too. Whilst in the West we are very comfortable with using the visual as a route to knowledge and as a medium for experiencing the world, sight is not independent of other senses and not necessarily the most important in all situations.[118]

Visualism — or the tendency to reduce all sensuous experience to visual terms — is evident both in geography and contemporary culture.[119] Through the last few centuries there has been a 'fascination with the eye as an apparent mirror of nature' and a general 'hegemony of vision has characterised Western social thought'.[120] In eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain (later in Western Europe and North America), this shift was manifest in the development now recognised as a discourse of the 'visual consumption of nature'.[121] The hegemony of vision and the development of visual discourse

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[117] Teather, *op. cit.*

[118] Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.*; Rodaway, *op. cit.* Irigaray believes that in Western cultures the dominance of the look over smell, taste, touch and hearing has 'impoverished' bodily relations and caused the body to lose its materiality. Cited in Urry, *op. cit.* In everyday language and metaphor, for example, touch is the sense most closely related to emotion and feeling - to 'be touched' or 'moved'. Stewart, S. (1999) 'Prologue: from the museum of touch', in Kwint, M., Breward, E. and Aynsley, J. (eds) *Material Memories*. London: Berg pp. 17 - 36.

[119] Rodaway, *op. cit.*; Robbins, *op. cit.* See Sutton, L. (Winter 1999) 'A different way of seeing the countryside', *The Rambler* pp. 16 – 17.

[120] Rorty, R. (1980) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Oxford: Blackwell. On the development of the dominance in Europe see Urry, *op. cit.*, p. 36; on geographical representation and maps as the deployment of the visual sense as a means of control and surveillance see Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*; on ancient Greece and the roots of modern words which reveal the 'pervasive ocularcentrism of Western thought' see O'Tuathail, G. (1996) *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*. London: Routledge.

[121] Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.* For example, with the increase in travel (first within Britain and then abroad on the 'package tour') 'natures were deemed sufficiently entertaining for the informed amused eye'; that is, the new aesthetic of swiftly passing countryside from rail carriages; the popularity of promenading and the visual appreciation of the sea; the increase in 'leisurely walking' and pursuits such as climbing; and the popularity of garden design and visual consumption of the landscape (p. 113). See also Urry, *op. cit.*

contributed to the transformation of nature into spectacle. Throughout the early eighteenth century much of nature was viewed as inhospitable (a wilderness). Corbin remarks that among the 'best proofs that one had entered a sublime landscape was the *emotion it evoked* [for] the early romantic writers and artists who first began to celebrate it, the sublime was far from being a pleasurable experience'.[122] However by the late eighteenth century, the 'sublime', the awe-inspiring and terrifying had been reinterpreted as a meaningful aesthetic experience and by the late nineteenth century had given way to an increasingly comfortable, almost sentimental demeanour and more tourists sought out the wilderness as a spectacle to be observed and enjoyed for its wondrous beauty.[123]

Ocular perception has not always been the primary focus of official and scholarly literature. From the mid-eighteenth century, a new aesthetic movement made olfaction 'the sense that generated great movements of the soul';

> [o]dour [...] gives us the most intimate sensations, a more immediate pleasure, more independent of the mind, than the sense of sight; we get profound enjoyment from an agreeable odour at the first moment of its impression; the pleasure of sight belongs more to reflections, to the desires aroused by the objects perceived, to the hopes they give birth to.[124]

[122] Corbin, A. (1986) *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odour and the Social Imagination.* London: Papermac p. 73 (my emphasis). Areas such as the Lake District were equated with impenetrable forest, wild animals, unscaleable mountains, cavernous ravines, demons, unhealthy peasants, odours. In *The Prelude* (1799) Wordsworth's experience was close to terror. See Wordsworth, W. (1915) *The Prelude: An Autobiographical Poem by William Wordsworth 1799 – 1805.* Hammersmith: Doves Press. On 'wilderness' see also Cronon, W. (1996) 'The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature', in Cronon, W. (1996) 'The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature', in Cronon, W. (ed) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature.* London: Norton pp. 69 – 90.

[123] *Ibid.*

[124] Saint-Lambert cited in Corbin, *op. cit.*, pp. 82 - 83. In gardens the sense of smell was invested with powerful effects. Corbin notes that although a garden was primarily, a picture based on 'the mechanism of sight', '[p]erfume could help to perfect a strategy of emotional satisfaction. [...] according to Hirschfeld, [...] if gardens were to be places that sated the senses, '[a] grove embellished by fresh foliage and smelling prospects is even more delightful when at the same time we hear the song of the nightingale, the murmur of a waterfall, and when we breathe the sweet odour of violets' (pp. 79 - 80).

Corbin was inspired to write about the perception of odours by reading the memoirs of Jean Noël Hallé, a member of the Societé Royale de Médecine (1794) and his accounts of exploring the odours on the riverbanks in Paris in 1790. Hallé's meticulous documentation provides an accurate account of a variety of odours, but makes no reference to anything visual or aural. Paris was indeed a rich olfactory environment as documented in Patrick Süskind's novel *Perfume* (1989), and three decades later in an 1827 official report which documented that 'the sense of smell gives notice that [one is] approaching the first city in the world, before [one's] eyes [can] see the tips of its monuments'.[125] Corbin remarks that Hallé's reports were not unusual:

> [a] careful reading of contemporary texts reveals a collective hypersensitivity to odours of all sorts [pleasure] at the sight of the landscape of an English garden or the blueprint of an ideal city is paralleled by horror of the city air, which is infested by miasmas.[126]

In the late eighteenth century, sensualist philosophy had almost official status. The sense of smell was viewed as capable of shaking a person's inner life more profoundly than were the senses of hearing or of sight. Smells and, to a certain extent, sounds were, however, subject to subtle taste distinctions.

With a developing alertness to the sensory environment, the senses soon became the analytical tools and measures of the pleasantness / unpleasantness of the physical

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[125] Gandy, M. (1999) 'The Paris sewers and the rationalisation of urban space', in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 pp. 23 - 44 (p. 26).

[126] *Ibid.*, p. 4. Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*, also note the importance of smell in the construction of the Nineteenth century western city.

environment.[127] A survey of Parisian smells published in 1881, recorded that cesspits, refuse and sewers were considered by inhabitants to be the three most unpleasant odours.[128] Odour often became the focus of debate regarding the presence of livestock within urban areas.[129] In addition to the chaos which the animals were thought to bring to the city, people in the vicinity of cattle markets often complained of 'odours, flies and other unseemly sights'. Keen to cleanse the 'filthy' urban environment, mid-nineteenth century health reformers were 'especially enthusiastic for the exclusion of cattle slaughtering, milk production and other so-called "noxious trades" which created both dirt and smell as a by-product of their operation'.[130] The concern for human health centred mainly on the smells and waste from slaughterhouses - thought to be a likely source of harmful miasmas - and much attention was paid to describing the leakage of organic waste and nasty smells of this 'noxious business'.[131]

Unfortunately, the sense of smell declined in importance since the dawn of the modern period and with the atrophy of olfaction, smell now occupies a fairly paradoxical position at the bottom of the contemporary hierarchy of senses (along with the sense of touch).[132] There are many reasons for this, however the two most relevant to my thesis are the problem of language and the transient nature of smells, touch, tastes

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[127] Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.* Cf. the Nazi practice of labelling Jews as 'stinking' see Classen, C., Howes, D. and Synnott, A. (1994) *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell.* London: Routledge. See also Corbin, *op. cit.*; Urry, *op. cit.*; Stallybrass, P. and White, A. (1986) *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression.* London: Methuen; Cresswell, T. (1994) 'Putting women in their place: carnival at Greenham Common', in *Antipode* 26 (1) pp. 35 - 58. Cresswell discusses the ways in which smell was used in the media as a signifier of disorder and displacement amongst the Greenham women (pp. 43 - 47).

[128] Gandy, *op. cit.* Gandy also discusses the temporal changes that took place in smell perception.

[129] Philo, C. (1995) 'Animals, geography and the city: notes on inclusions and exclusions', in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13 (6), pp. 655 - 681. On the evaluation of rural and urban smells see Porteous, J. D. (1985) 'Smellscape', in *Progress in Human Geography* 9, pp. 365 - 387.

[130] Atkins in *ibid.*, p. 666. Philo locates this within contemporary discourse stating that two intertwining processes were also at work at this time. The first was the process by which different types of phenomena were categorised and allotted to certain 'spatiotemporal containers' raising questions about 'matter out of place'. The second was the long-term bifurcation of the urban and the rural as 'distinctive entities conceptually associated with particular human activities and attributes' (p. 666); See also Corbin, *op. cit.*

[131] *Ibid.*

and sounds. In the eighteenth century, creating a language capable of translating the perceptions of smell involved attempting to separate the sense of smell from the animal origins to which it seemed inextricably linked. It quickly became apparent that olfactory sensations could not be contained within the meshes of scientific language and contemporary attempts to define and classify odours remain subjective due to the problems involved in the communication of 'first hand' phenomenological experience and because of the ambiguity and imprecision of language.[133] Several recent studies have shown that the 'language of social science' (which frames studies in terms of *certainty*) still cannot cope with the more ambiguous 'language of human action'.[134]

Though my research provides a historical perspective told through people's bodily experience, for example, how they moved, saw, heard, smelled, I do not aim to provide a historical catalogue of physical sensations in the outdoors in the same way as Jean Noël Hallé in Paris.[135] Nor do I aim to create a whole new vocabulary, develop an advanced way of documenting and writing about sensual experience or simply reverse the polarity between vision and other sensory experience.[136] Rather I demonstrate how poetry, stories, oral history, letters and magazines can be a rich source of experiential data by allowing people the opportunity to express for themselves the ways in which they experience the environment. Although there are problems and a degree of (scientific) stigma associated with using such material as data, I argue that sensual

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[132] Lucien Febvre cited in Corbin, *op. cit.*; Porteous, *op. cit.*; Rodaway, *op. cit.* For example, Corbin and Porteous note that whilst '[o]lfaction as the sense of lust, desire and impulsiveness is associated with animal behaviour', it is also a sense of self-preservation and emotional memory. For a discussion on sensual hierarchy see Rodaway, *op. cit.*; Vinge cited in Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[133] Corbin, *op. cit.*; Porteous, *op. cit.* This is further amplified by the fact that English is a highly 'visual' language.

[134] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*, cite Olsson, G. (1980) *Birds in Egg: Eggs in Bird.* London: Pion and Philo, C. (1984) 'Reflections on Gunnar Olsson's contribution to the discourse on contemporary human geography', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 2 pp. 217 - 240. See also Stewart, *op. cit.* On the limitations of language and the need to find alternative ways of interpreting and thinking about sensual experience see Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.*

[135] Sennet, *op. cit.*

experience directly affects people's perceptions of the natural environment whilst camping and partaking in naturist activities and, as a record of this phenomena, the above sources hold valuable information.[137]

I have noted above that the cornerstone of empirical scientific research is that data is 'observable', external to and therefore detached from the body. First, although olfaction is said to provide a more direct and less premeditated encounter than vision, smells are uniquely 'ephemeral'.[138] As Corbin notes, 'olfactory sensations can never provide a persistent stimulus of thought' and therefore they do not lend themselves readily to measurement, quantification or comparative study.[139] Second, the senses also pose a 'philosophical problem appearing on a boundary between, what we term, internal and external phenomena'.[140] Stewart notes that even in Merleau-Ponty's classic study *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), the body is necessarily articulated as separate from the world, 'the human senses in their refinement and specialisation serve as sentinels against the excesses the external world presents to interiority'.[141] Yet, to touch and be touched, smell and be smelled, to hear and be heard are 'quite different ways of being in the world', in opposition to the traditional philosophical models of vision; 'we are immersed in the surrounding world [...] there is not the possibility to be alone or to be above it [we] are involved and implicated in the reciprocity of contact'.[142] The

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136 For example, Robbins, *op. cit.*, states that the 'fundamental problem lies with the division and separation of sensory experience in modern culture – this is what makes such polarisation possible. To work against this, it is necessary to think in terms of the relation – the association, the affinity, the complimentarity – between [the] senses' (p. 29).

137 Smith, 'Beyond geography's', *op. cit.*, p. 504; Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.* Smith recognises that 'playing, singing, or sounding the world into existence is [often] still the stuff of novels and fairy tales, rather that the content of scholarly journals' (p. 617).

138 For example, Tuan argued that 'directedness and immediacy of smell provide a sharp contrast with the abstractive and compositional characteristics of sight'. Cited in Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

139 Corbin, *op. cit.*; Porteous, *op. cit.*

140 Stewart, *op. cit.* Stewart states that visual and auditory senses depend upon relations to external objects and their properties; sounds and smell are public and external; tastes are private, yet external to the skin and membranes in that they require stimulation; feelings of heat or cold or warmth are partly internal and partly dependant on contact with external forms (p. 18).

141 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

142 Robbins, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

'shady', fleeting nature of the senses causes instability in the concept of the 'whole body', particularly as senses cluster at the openings of the body and draw attention to parts of the body which can be penetrated and are open to the world.

Despite various critiques of ocularcentrism the senses are often assumed to be an 'intrinsic property of the body', a 'natural and unmediated aspect of human *being*'.[143] However, perception is not unmediated, and one is unlikely to encounter an environmental object that has not already been culturally inscribed.[144] Law points out that the senses are far from innocent, they are part of situated practice which can shed light on the way bodies experience different spaces of culture.[145] Lefebvre argues that the production of space is crucially bound up with smell stating, 'where an intimacy occurs between "subject" and "object", it must surely be the world of smell and the places where they reside'.[146]

Macnaghten and Urry claim that much writing about the environment has not addressed the 'complex, diverse, overlapping and contradictory ways in which people sense the world around them and come to judgements of feeling, emotion and beauty about what is appropriately "natural" and "unnatural" about their environment(s)'.[147] They examine the diverse ways in which human beings sense the environment, believing that it is not a case of individual psychology but rather, of certain socially patterned 'ways of sensing'.[148] Macnaghten and Urry argue that 'different ways of

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[143] Law, L. (2001) 'Home cooking: filipino women and geographies of the senses in Hong Kong', in *Ecumene* 8 (3) pp. 264 – 283.
[144] Butz and Eyles, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 –11.
[145] Law, *op. cit.*
[146] Lefebvre, o*p. cit.*
[147] Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[148] In using this wordage I believe the authors both acknowledge and reject the traditional primacy of vision as displayed in Berger, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin.

sensing are organised around the modalities of space and time, which form, mediate and refract the senses in their relationships with 'nature'.[149] Urry states that the,

> emphasis upon the visual reduces the body to surface and marginalises the sensuality of the body. In relationship to nature it impoverishes the relationship of the body to its physical environment and over-emphasises masculinist efforts to exert mastery, whether over the female body or over nature. By contrast it is claimed that a feminist consciousness less emphasises the dominant visual sense and seeks to integrate all of the senses in a more rounded consciousness not seeking to exert mastery over the "other".[150]

Macnaghten and Urry believe that we must investigate the diverse 'smellscapes' which organise and mobilise our feelings about particular places, in particular, those which are important in evoking memories of very specific places.[151] In *Matter and Memory* (1908) Henri Bergson states that 'there is no perception which is not full of memories [w]ith the immediate and present data of our senses, we mingle a thousand details of our past experience'.[152] Senses also play a vital role in mediating spaces of multicultural cities.[153] For example, dynamic interaction of food, photos, letters and other artefacts enabled the production of an 'alternative sensorium' called Little Manila amongst the Filipino community in Hong Kong. Sensory landscapes are constituted by emotion and historical layerings. Geographies of the senses tell us something different about outdoor culture and diasporic experience providing fresh insights into corporeal relations.[154]

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[149] Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
[150] Urry, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
[151] *Ibid.*
[152] Cited in Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[153] Law, *op. cit.*

'Engaged' methodolgies

As noted above, humanistic geographies are often characterised by their use of highly qualitative research in an attempt to yield rich sources of information on people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, and feelings and to gain an insight into how they account for their own experiences.[155] My research has employed an intensive approach in an attempt to create a methodology which would allow people to speak for themselves.[156] I undertook a series of 'in-depth', semi-structured, open-ended interviews with naturists and campers that lasted between two and four hours.[157] A total of 32 individual/group interviews were conducted involving 70 participants.[158] The pre-planned standard interview can pose substantial limitations on research and the flow of the interview - as the researcher is unable to follow up interesting ideas and the complexity and everyday detail of peoples lives is filtered out and people's voices can often be re-presented in unintended ways.[159] Semi-structured interviews allow people to answer more on their 'own terms' or within their 'frames of reference' but still provide a greater structure for comparability than the un-focused interview.[160] I endeavoured to conduct interviews as 'conversations' starting with a general set of questions and then pursuing interesting themes and asking participants to clarify and elaborate on their responses.[161] This was an attempt to capture the salient experiences and secure vivid,

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[154] *Ibid.*

[155] May, *op. cit.*; Gregory, D. (1994c) 'Extensive research' and 'Intensive research', in Johnston, R. J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D. M. (eds) *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (Third Edition). Oxford: Blackwell, p. 184 and pp. 293 - 295; Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis.* London: Sage; Burgess, *op. cit.*

[156] Interview techniques vary though they can commonly be imagined as a continuum with structured or 'focused' interviews at one pole and unstructured interviews at the other. Burgess, *op. cit.*

[157] Taylor, S. J. and Bogdan, R. (1984) 'In-depth interviewing', *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings.* Chichester: John Wiley and Sons pp. 76 - 105.

[158] See Appendix 1 for details regarding the number and type of interviewees, and the date and location of each interview.

[159] Burgess, *op. cit.*

[160] May, *op. cit.* See May for further discussion on focused interviews. See also Burgess, *op. cit.*; Taylor and Bogdan, *op. cit.*

[161] May, *op. cit.*; Burgess, R. G. (1982) 'The unstructured interview as a conversation', in Burgess, R. G. (ed) *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual.* London: Allen and Unwin pp. 107 – 110.

inclusive accounts from informants based on personal experience.[162] The interviews were conducted between July 2000 and April 2001. The majority of the interviews were taped and transcribed in full although when participants were not comfortable with being recorded, I resorted to note-taking. All of the camping interviews were conducted in the participants' homes whilst the naturist interviews were conducted in people's homes or caravans (at their club), in cafes or in communal club areas.

My interviews were conducted with both individuals and groups (ranging from two to ten participants). In interviews with individuals the participants were generally very at ease, relaxed and un-guarded. In their homes people were able to speak their mind and felt free to express their own (sometimes controversial) views. Although occasionally a distraction, partners also present around the house often contributed to the conversation, jogged memories and encouraged spontaneous further discussion. I did interview some couples together. The question of whether couples should be interviewed together or apart is widely debated.[163] For example, Valentine notes that one partner will often talk more than the other as households often have 'an informal "spokesperson": the member of the household who represents it to the outside world'.[164] In most cases I had no choice, although it is important to be aware of the practical problems, ethical issues and power dynamics when interviewing couples and groups. Whilst the group interviews allowed the participants time to reminisce, bounce issues around, jog each other's memories and corroborate stories in the production of a single collaborative account, there is also a danger that some participants may have been

[162] Burgess, *op. cit.*; Taylor and Bogdan, *op. cit.*.
[163] Valentine, G. (1999a) 'What it means to be a man: the body, masculinities, disability', in Butler, R. and Parr, H. (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability*. London: Routledge.
[164] *Ibid.* p. 68.

inhibited by more vocal members of the group.[165] In our everyday lives our actions and opinions are modified according to the social situation in which we find ourselves.[166] Admittedly, in comparison, as a form of conversation even individual interviews are subject to the same 'fabrications, deceptions, exaggerations and distortions that characterise talk between any persons'.[167] They give us insight but there can also be great discrepancy between what people say and what they actually do.

Making initial contact with target groups was not straightforward and my strategies varied.[168] I concentrated on two organisations: the 'Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland' and the 'Central Council of British Naturism'.[169] Focusing on the North West, Yorkshire and Midlands regions, letters were dispatched on University of Hull headed notepaper (see Appendix 2) to key representatives within each organisation and to various sub-groups (see Appendix 3 for a complete list). Contact details were obtained through club magazines and advertisements in the classified sections, fixture lists and by word of mouth or 'snowballing'. With the naturist groups, in particular, phone numbers (and sometimes addresses) were only obtained through personal introduction or recommendation by key members from other groups which advertised their activities more openly. I also placed advertisements in both *Camping and Caravanning* and *British Naturism*.

[165] Valentine, *op. cit.* These discussions were difficult to manage and tape as everybody tried to talk simultaneously. For a discussion on the relative merits of focus groups research or 'group interviews' see Holbrook, B. and Jackson, P. (1996) 'Shopping around: focus group research in North London', *Area* 28 (2) pp. 136 – 142.
[166] May, *op. cit.*
[167] Taylor and Bogdan, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
[168] On the practical and ethical problems of gaining access to a target population see Winchester, *op. cit*, p. 122.
[169] I chose the former due to its long-standing association with camping in Britain and also because I already possessed links with active members at all levels of the organisation through familial association as outlined in Chapter One. I chose the latter organisation primarily because of its focus purely on naturist activities and secondly because it is the largest representative organisation of naturists in Britain.

Recruiting respondents from both organisations proved difficult and I make no claims for the representative range of the participants. At a simplistic level it would be easy to assume a complete lack of interest or apathy amongst the members of these organisations in my research which may have seemed 'irrelevant' to their everyday lives and interests. However, I believe there were other factors at work. For instance, the people I did manage to speak to often said that they didn't believe what they had to say was 'important' or, in other words, 'worthy of research'.[170] In other cases my letter had been 'passed around' as nobody knew who was responsible for dealing with this type of request, this was then amplified by the fact that often, groups only met to discuss formal matters on a fortnightly or monthly basis. At a more basic level, in several cases potential respondents had stopped camping altogether and lost contact with the clubs within which they were once members, in other cases they had passed away.

Some groups and individuals may not have responded because of a fear, or resentment of, external institutions and researchers (in particular from academia).[171] Groups may be sceptical about the value of research due to a fear of exploitation or derogation.[172] Access was particularly problematic with regards to naturists. Whereas some respondents were happy to supply me with their names, addresses and phone numbers, others would only deal with me through their club. As will become clear in Chapter Four, naturism and membership of naturist clubs is often closely guarded and several of the groups and individuals I spoke to had themselves or knew others who had a great fear of being mis-conceptualised. In this sense research into naturism can be seen as 'sensitive'.

[170] See Jo Spence and her attempts to photograph female factory workers. Spence, J. and Holland, P. (1991) (eds) *Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography*. London: Virago.
[171] I found that by adding my membership numbers to the letters helped enormously.

Lee defines sensitive research as 'research which potentially poses a substantial threat to those who are, or have been, involved in it'.[173] Following Farberow, a sensitive topic is an area equated with those areas of social life surrounded by taboo or those which are laden with emotion or which inspire feelings of awe or dread.[174] 'Sensitivity' can potentially affect almost every stage of the research process 'from the formulation of a research problem, through the design and implementation of [a] study, to the dissemination and application of the findings'.[175] Because of their 'sensitivity', the naturist interviews raised a number of methodological and technical problems. The presence of a researcher is sometimes feared because it produces a possibility that 'deviant activities' will be revealed, in other situations, particularly organisational, 'fear of scrutiny' is also common.[176] The majority of those who participated and learned more about my research said they were glad someone was doing research that focused on something other than sex or 'oddness'. Whilst some agreed to take part under the protection of a pseudonym others preferred not to take part, all participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.[177]

In highlighting the importance of personal experience and academic background of the theorist as critical to subsequent understanding and theory construction, a feminist perspective 'encourages the makers of theory to question the political agendas implicit in their explanations'.[178] Schoenberger states that,

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[172] Lee, R. (1993) *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*. London: Sage.
[173] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[174] Cited in *ibid.*, p. 3.
[175] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[176] *Ibid.*, p. 6. Lee also discusses 'threats' posed to the researcher and their research (pp. 9 - 11). See also Chapter One of this thesis.
[177] Bailey, C. (2001) 'Geographers doing household research: intrusive research and moral accountability', *Area* 33 (1) pp. 107 - 110. Bailey also discusses researcher accountability.
[178] Christopherson, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

> we are people doing research and [...] questions of gender, class, race, nationality, politics, history, and experience [will] shape our research and our interpretations of the world, however much we are supposed to deny it [t]he task, then, is not to do away with these things, but to know them and to learn from them.[179]

This approach moves away from the 'surveilent eye' of spatial science and the disembodied, unmarked researcher towards more reflexive, situated and embodied knowledges and requires identifying one's own position relative to the object.[180] For example, how the 'body' of the researcher is 'presented' in interviews and meetings can greatly influence responses, information gleaned and the sites and situations which can be successfully accessed.[181] Feminist writers have emphasised the importance of acknowledging and addressing the differences between the researcher and the researched.[182] For example, gender is a significant issue in the interviewing procedure.[183] Following McDowell and Schoenberger I believe that my age and gender made a significant difference to my research.[184] As mentioned in previous paragraphs, naturism can be viewed as a sensitive topic, most of the people I interviewed were aged fifty and above and, as a young woman, I believe I had an easier time 'getting in the door' than a male colleague may have done because I was seen as 'less threatening, more intriguing, or presumed to be a better audience for the recounting of exploits'.[185]

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[179] Schoenberger, E. (1992) 'Self-criticism and self-awareness in research: a reply to Linda McDowell', *Professional Geographer* 44 (2) pp. 215 – 218 (p. 218).

[180] Haraway, *op. cit.*; Rose, *Feminism*, *op. cit.*; Christopherson, *op. cit.*; Gilbert, *op. cit.* On the 'crisis of representation' and the forms this has taken see McDowell, 'Multiple voices', *op. cit.*, p. 62. For several articles on positionality and situated knowledges see the 'Women in the field: critical feminist methodologies and theoretical perspectives' special issue of *Professional Geographer* (1994) pp. 54 – 102; Bonner *et al*, *op. cit.*

[181] Bale, J. and Philo, C. (1998) 'Introduction: Henning Eichberg, space, identity and body culture', *Body Cultures: Essays on sport. space and identity. Henning Eichberg.* London: Routledge pp. 3 - 21; May, *op. cit.*

[182] Gilbert, *op. cit.*

[183] Winchester, *op. cit.*

[184] McDowell, 'Multiple voices', *op. cit.*; Schoenberger, *op. cit.*

[185] Schoenberger, *op. cit.*,p. 217. See also Winchester, *op. cit.*

Finally, an in-depth interview is always a collaborative process, constructed through the unique interaction between the interviewer and respondent - a relationship which has been particularly scrutinised.[186] The question of how much one gives away about one's own politics or view of the world is an interesting one.[187] To expect a person to share important and personal information without entering into a dialogue is 'untenable', such 'disengagement' further reflects a masculine paradigm of research.[188] It is recommended that interviewers should expose something of themselves and give something back to those whom they interview, in this sense interviews should be 'a two way street'.[189] Though it is widely accepted that the most productive way to illicit information is to assume a non-argumentative, supportive and sympathetically understanding attitude.[190] In my research, I endeavoured to share my experiences of camping and naturism with the people I interviewed, however, I was forced to take a non-committal approach when individuals expressed highly controversial views or criticised other people whom I had interviewed previously.

Towards an embodied perspective

This chapter has outlined the theoretical progression from spatial analysis towards a 'geographical humanism' and emphasised the fact that bodies cannot simply be reduced to abstraction; they are embedded in the immediacies of everyday, lived experience.[191] Although one of the aims of humanism and humanistic geography was to uncover and

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[186] Valentine, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[187] Schoenberger, *op. cit.* Smith, D. M. (1988) 'Towards an interpretative human geography', in Eyles, J. and Smith D. M. (eds) (1988) *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography*. Cambridge: Polity Press pp. 254 - 267.
[188] May, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
[189] Okley cited in Winchester, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
[190] Winchester, *op. cit.*
[191] Davis, *op. cit.*

discuss the myriad ways in which people experience environments there has not been a great deal of work upon the ways human bodies 'sense' and 'feel' their surroundings.[192] As Lefebvre has argued, 'the embodied nature of our relationship to the world has come to be narrowly and regrettably "focused" upon the visual sense which incorporates the spectacularization of life'.[193] This 'de-sensitisation' of experience has had enormous consequences.[194] In the last two decades geographers such as Burgess, Philo and Olsson, have started to work with humanistic ideas in research.[195] More recently, authors such as Corbin, Pocock, Sennett, Rodaway, Macnaghten and Urry, Nast and Pile, Stewart, Crouch and Smith have started to discuss the possibilities of moving away from - though not rejecting - the visual as the only valid way to experience the environment.[196] Similarly, the dichotomy of humans and nature is being replaced by a different relationship in which humans are embedded in nature and the body is fluid.[197] McDowell states that the notion of embodiment captures a sense of fluidity, becoming and performance.[198] Over the last few years there has been growing interest amongst social and cultural theorists in the idea of embodiment as 'discursively produced' in that the body cannot be understood outside place.[199] Embodiment is 'multi-faceted' and cannot simply be reduced to body-contact or 'more-than-seeing': it has the potential to unpack the relations between the power of representations and their mediation by human

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[192] Tuan, *op. cit.* For a highly statistical exploration of recreational experience see Hull, R. B., Stewart, W. P. and Yi Young, K. (1992) 'Experience patterns: capturing the dynamic nature of a recreation experience', in *Journal of Leisure Research* 24 (3), pp. 240 – 252. On the experience of walkers in Scotland and attempts to study their experiences see Prentice, R. and Guerin, S. (1998) 'The romantic walker? A case study of users of iconic Scottish landscape', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 114 (3) pp. 180 – 191.

[193] Cited in Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*, p. 105; Lefebvre (1991) *op. cit.* See also Urry, *op. cit.*; O'Tuathail, *op. cit.*

[194] Mitchell, W. J. T. (1980) 'Editor's note: the language of images', in *Critical Inquiry* VI pp. 359 - 62; Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.*

[195] For a comprehensive discussion see Philo *et al*, *op. cit.*

[196] Corbin, *op. cit.*; Pocock, D. (1993) 'The senses in focus', *Area* 25 (1) pp. 11 – 16; Sennett, *op. cit.*; Rodaway, *op. cit.*; Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit.*; Nast and Pile, *op. cit.*; Stewart, *op. cit.*; Crouch, *op. cit.*; Smith, 'Performing', *op. cit.*

[197] Martin, *op. cit.*

[198] McDowel, 'In and out',*op. cit.*, p. 39.

[199] Longhurst, '(Dis)embodied', *op. cit.* Longhurst cites Grosz, E. (1992) 'Bodies-cities', in Colomina, B. (ed) *Sexuality and Space*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press pp 241 - 254.

subjective practice.[200] For example, in *Places Through the Body*, Nast and Pile state that, 'we all have bodies, but the idea that we *have* bodies - that bodies are a possession that the individual has - is culturally, historically and geographically specific. Further, the impression that the individual is located *in* a body and that being in a body is also about being in a place warrants further security'.[201] They argue that we should think about the ways in which bodies and places are understood, how they are made and how they are interrelated.

Embodied theory requires interaction between theories about the body outlined in this chapter and analyses the particularities of embodied experiences and practices.[202] My thesis thus extends these ideas further by providing examples of how two particular groups of people, who more than most, are concerned with the question of feeling the environment through the body. Situating my discussion within a period in which the body and health through exposure to the natural environment was at the forefront of national debate as outlined in Chapter Two. The thesis provides explicit examples of the ways in which people, specifically naturists and campers, have experienced the natural environment through embodied practices and experience and go some way towards highlighting the richness of their personal narratives. Using a conception of the body-environment relationship as 'recursive' and examining literature from the naturist and camping movements, I consider the embodied and sensuous nature of outdoor experience and the ways in which the environment was thought to impact upon the body, both mentally and physically. I believe traditional concerns with the observable world has led to valuable sensory experience being lost, ignored, devalued and under-

[200] Crouch, D. (2000) 'Embodiment/practice/knowledge', paper presented in the Enacting Geographies session at the *Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers*, University of Sussex.

used. Groups in society have been writing about their sensual and embodied experience in various forms. By researching these narratives, and situating them within concrete social, cultural and historical contexts, we can begin to gain valuable insight into the ways in which specific groups conceptualised, valued and attached meaning to the body and environment.

[201] Nast and Pile, *op. cit.*, p. 1; Robbins, *op. cit.* See Löfgren's personal description of being 'in' a landscape rather than simply 'passing through'. Löfgren, O. (2001) *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing.* London: University of California Press (p. 51).
[202] Davis, *op. cit.*

Chapter Four

'It's only natural': naturism, naturists and morality in the early twentieth century[1]

> No sight earth yields is lovelier than
> The body of a naked strong young man.
> O watch him course the meadows flecked with shade
> Beside a stream, before his plunge be made!
> Then watch him ridge the water to its brims
> With rhythmic measure while he gravely swims;
> And watch him issue, shining even more,
> 'Run, leap and prove himself upon the shore,
> Intent to warm his limbs and have them dry,
> Making great efforts, seeming as he would fly.
> Ah! He can fill an hour up in this way
> And never hear a voice within him say
> 'Why art thou not at work?' for it is true
> That all he is approves what he doth do.[2]

Introduction

T. Sturge Moore's evocative poem 'The Bather' is an imagined and highly romantic dramatisation of a naked body within the natural environment. Yet his descriptive

[1] Welby, W. (1937) *It's Only Natural: The Philosophy of Nudism*. London: Thorsons
[2] From *The Deed* cited in Stanley, A. (ed) (1937) *The Out-of-Doors Book*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons (p. 357).

language provides a useful starting point to this chapter on naturism and the body by introducing several key themes that will filter through the discussion. The first theme simply concerns the presence of the human body within the natural environment and the ways in which the two act and react to one another. As the bather's body courses through the environment one can almost feel the warm breezes wafting across the meadow, the shock of the icy water and the taught heat of sun dried skin. The bather is enveloped by the multi-dimensionality of the environment and appears to have complete freedom of movement as his body expands and contracts to fill the spaces available to him. The second theme is that of morality. Moore presents an image of such vitality, beauty, strength and health as might dispel any claim that the body in its 'natural' state could be wrong or ill conceived. The bather's entire being speaks for itself and is justification enough. The final theme that Moore's poem highlights is that of observation. For example, as Moore encourages the reader to imagine the youth as a spectacle his naked body becomes the object of the gaze.

In contemporary society, clothes are central to the public presentation of the self: 'they disguise our bodies and bring them more into accord with the social ideal; and they express our social position and individual personality [to] be without them is to be without these supports'.[3] Naturism, to live without clothes, is therefore a pursuit that challenges the central constructs surrounding the body in contemporary society. The early naturist movement in Britain was founded at a time when new theories regarding the body were beginning to circulate. For example, sex was being demystified by psychoanalysis (most notably in the work of Freud), birth control pioneers were becoming widespread, and dress reform movements had begun to free most Europeans

[3] Twigg, J. (2000) *Bathing: The Body and Community Care*. London: Routledge (p. 46).

from the constraints of corsets, bustles and gaiters.[4] Ordinary people began to stage small-scale personal revolutions against prudery and a repressive value system by taking off their clothes. As discussed in Chapter Two, this atmosphere of reform reflected a deeply rooted discontent with the state of contemporary civilisation.[5] For example, there was a general conviction that human civilisation had become cut off from nature and that life had become too artificial to the detriment of its health and happiness. As contemporary observer Maurice Parmelee remarked; 'in the course of cultural evolution much has been lost as well as gained and the net human gain is not so great as is ordinarily assumed'.[6] Naturism can therefore be seen as a European-wide movement that sought to counter the ill effects of urbanised industrial life upon the human body.[7] As Phelan states, somewhat crassly, the 'naked body became increasingly viewed as a machine to marvel at – and one that wouldn't choke cities with smoke or accidentally pull the limbs off dirty-faced orphan labourers'.[8]

Yet the history of the naturist movement is not a straightforward one. At the height of its popularity in the 1930s, and even today, public nudity and the practice of naturism was still capable of arousing both personal passion and public dissent. This is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the conventions of representing naturism which are deeply embedded within the public imagination. Take, for example, the 'saucy postcard' genre

[4] Wise, S. (26/09/99) 'Carry on camping', *The Observer Magazine* pp. 22 – 23; Bandy, J. (1998) *The Origins and Development of the English Nudist Movement, 1918 – 1939*. Unpublished dissertation. I am grateful to Jim Walker for allowing me access to this material.
[5] Krüger, A. (1991) 'There goes this art of manliness: naturism and racial hygiene in Germany', *Journal of Sport History* 18 (1) pp. 135 – 158.
[6] Parmelee, M. (1929) *Nudism in Modern Life: The New Gymnosophy*. London: John Lane (p. 16).
[7] Ewing, W. A. (1994) *The Body: Photoworks of the Human Form*. London: Thames and Hudson.
[8] Phelan, S. (4 – 10/10/99) 'A very rude awakening', *The Big Issue* (p.n.a.).

Figure 4.1 Naturist inspired postcard by 'Fitzpatrick'. Published by Bamforth and Co.

as shown in Figure 4.1, which depicted the 'goings on of "they nudists", [big] eyed, busty blondes cavorting in the altogether with bewiskered ancients or slightly simple (sic), bug-eyed youths'.[9] The supposition that naturists were fanatics or just plain peculiar was, and continues to be, fuelled by the popular media. For example, describing an exploratory visit to a modern day naturist club Wise commented;

> on the one hand it has a languorous, deeply relaxing charm - utterly civilised and grown-up; on the other, it provokes a snigger, calling to mind many comedies of yesteryear; *Dads Army, Hi-De-Hi, The Carry Ons*. The things that have made the British laugh for decades - bottoms, bosoms, Germans, class divisions, group mentalities, euphemisms, double entendres.[10]

[9] Anon (Spring 1966a) 'Saucy postcards', *British Naturism* 8 p. 15. The author of this article approached a manufacturer of such postcards 'Bamforths' of Holmfirth, Yorkshire and was told that the nudist card range had 'good sales, but of course entirely depended on the idea'.

[10] Wise, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 – 23. The film featured in 'Carry on Camping' was 'Nudist Paradise' the first nudist film designed for public showing. Directed by Charles Sunders the film was shot in 1958 in the grounds of Woburn Abbey and a naturist club called Spielplatz. Mallion, I. (Summer 1987) 'Carry on Camping', *British Naturism* 92 p. 24.

As a direct consequence of naturism's marginalisation as a pursuit pursued by cranks, perverts, health nuts, women with matronly figures and their lecherous husbands, as something to be smirked at and hidden behind closed gates or high fences, it has also been marginalised as a subject worthy of academic merit. Pursuing the themes raised by Moore further, in this and the following two chapters, I demonstrate that naturism was not only a pursuit that forced people to confront their attitudes towards the body and sex, but also it was one that allowed direct contact between the human body and the environment and opened up the senses to embodied experience.

This chapter provides a broad introduction to naturism. The histories of naturist movements in different Western nations bear significant similarities, although this does not to imply that they were in no way influenced by specific national (and sometimes nationalist) ideologies and cultural attitudes.[11] Tolerance of nudist literature and practice differed from country to country, but by the early 1920s nudism was extensive throughout Germany and the movement quickly gained many followers across northern Europe and Scandinavia.[12] The progression of this movement has been well documented and it is not my intention to repeat these debates in any great depth. My particular concern here is to provide a comparative account of the early twentieth century German and English movements. I do this in order to illustrate both the ways in which ideas about (individual and national) health, the body and spiritual and moral well-being influenced the growth of naturism and to demonstrate the ways in which these movements were interconnected.

[11] Bell, D. and Holliday, R. (2000) 'Naked as nature intended', *Body and Society* 6 (3 – 4) pp. 127 – 140.

In the first section of this chapter I outline the development of nudism in Germany focusing, in particular, on the influence of National Socialism, the Beauty Movement, the Youth Movement, and Modern Dance on early nudist ideas. In discussing these movements I argue that naturism had many influences and practitioners; it is too simplistic to conflate the terms 'nudism' or 'naturism' with eugenics or the racial hygiene associated with National Socialism. In the second section of the chapter I discuss the rise of naturism in Britain highlighting connections with Germany and the extent to which 'clean-living', fresh air and sunlight as a means of securing physical and mental health influenced early practitioners.[13] In many ways naturism in Britain fulfilled many of the prescriptions of the state, health reformers, outdoor enthusiasts and preservationists. Naturism provided an opportunity to sample the delights of so-called 'natural' living by bringing the body into contact with the natural environment and promised renewed health through exposure to sun and air. However, despite an emphasis on a return to a more natural life in harmony with nature, naturists continued to occupy a liminal position within Western society due to the ambiguity of nudity.

The final part of the chapter considers the impact of contemporary morality on the naturist movement and the extent to which naturists had to circumvent their activities. The history of naturism is also the history of the fascination and revulsion that surrounds the body in Western society. For example, in a recent article in *The Guardian* Margolis remarked;

> even if we accept that naturism today is an acceptable eccentricity, there is a darker side to the movement's background: set aside the suspicious, if comic

[12] Lewinski, J. (1987) 'The nude for general consumption' and 'The neglected sex: the male nude in photography', *The Naked and the Nude: A History of the Nude in Photographs, 1839 to the Present.* New York: Harmony pp. 112 – 125 and 197 - 213; Cooper, E. (1995) *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography.* London: Routledge.

exhibitionism and the problem that more men want to be naturists than women and the naked photos of children, naturism's serious dubiousness lies in its roots.[14]

Whilst nakedness can represent chastity, virtue and godliness it is more commonly associated with immorality, 'irrational' behaviour and eroticism or confined to the realm of the 'primitive'. Early naturists tried to counter these assumptions by insisting that naturism was not only beneficial to bodily health, it also instilled an appreciation of more traditional 'natural' values. Naturism was stridently promoted as a morally educative activity that instilled character, citizenship and required great discipline to be undertaken properly. Yet, the fact that naturism did not (and still does not) fit squarely within the desires of wider culture reveals not just the attitudes towards nudity and sex (questions that continue to haunt the naturist movement today), but also, the attitudes of naturists themselves.

The German Nudist Movement: National Socialism, beauty, youth and freedom of expression

Though the German nudist movement is often thought to have originated in the Weimar era, it actually dates from the turn of the century when the term 'nudism' was coined by Hienrich Pudor (1865 - 1943), a Dresden sociologist and social hygienist.[15]

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[13] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[14] Margolis, J. (12/06/1999) 'Dark side of the fresh air utopians', *The Guardian (Saturday Review)* p. 3.

[15] Fussell, P. (1980) 'The new heliophilly' and 'The places of D. H. Lawrence', *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 137 – 140 and 141 - 163; Van der Will, W. (1990) 'The body and the body politic as symptom and metaphor in the transition of German culture to National Socialism', in Taylor, B. and van der Will, W. (eds) *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*. Winchester: The Winchester Press pp. 14 - 52; Lewinski, *op. cit.*; Toepfer, K. (1997) *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910 - 1935*. London: University of California Press. Though

Fedor Fuchs later claimed to have been the founder of the first 'fenced-off' nudist area just outside Berlin, however, 'Freilichtpark', opened by Paul Zimmerman in Klingberg, north of Hamburg in 1903, is widely recognised as the first nudist resort in Europe.[16] The first written account of Freilichtpark, *Amongst the Nudists* was published in Britain by an American couple, Frances and Mason Merrill, in 1931. From the 1890s onwards, German writers such as Pudor had begun to argue for the benefits of exposing the body to the sun and air and, in *The Cult of the Nude*, Pudor assured the reader that his claims were based on rigorous 'scientific assessment'.[17] The most prominent propagator of early nudism in Germany, however, was Richard Ungewitter (1868 - 1958) (Figure 4.2) who published *Die Nacktheit* (Nakedness) in 1905.[18] Described recently by Margolis as a 'utopia of nude living' the book, which was daringly illustrated with photographs of Ungewitter and his followers walking nude in the woods, shocked late imperial Germany.[19]

Ungewitter was active in setting up a number of nudist clubs.[20] The first of these was established in 1906 and attracted more than 2000 members, though as Cooper states 'ominously, in view of later developments, members had to be "Germanic" – fair haired and blue-eyed – and to eat raw food'.[21] Ungewitter advocated nudism in the belief that it would generate 'healthier' social conditions. In particular, as an expungent of sexual

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Toepfer notes that the term may have appeared as early as 1870.

[16] Margolis, *op. cit.*; Cooper, *op. cit.*; Thompson, H. (1984) (Writer and presenter) *Carry on up the shrubbery: British naturism in the Thirties*. BBC Radio Four transcript (Tape TMR39/473L80 4N) Broadcast 27th September.

[17] Cooper, *op. cit.*

[18] *Ibid.*; Margolis, *op. cit.*; Krüger, *op. cit.* Ungewitter published five other similar books: *Nackt* (1909), *Kultur und Nacktheit* (1911), *Nacktheit und Kultur* (1913), *Nacktheit und Aufstieg* (1919) and *Nackheit und Moral* (1925). Each of his books sold in excess of 100,000 copies and each was presented in a way as to shock the audience.

[19] Margolis, *op. cit.*; Cooper, *op. cit.*

[20] Margolis, *op. cit.*; Krüger, *op. cit.*

[21] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

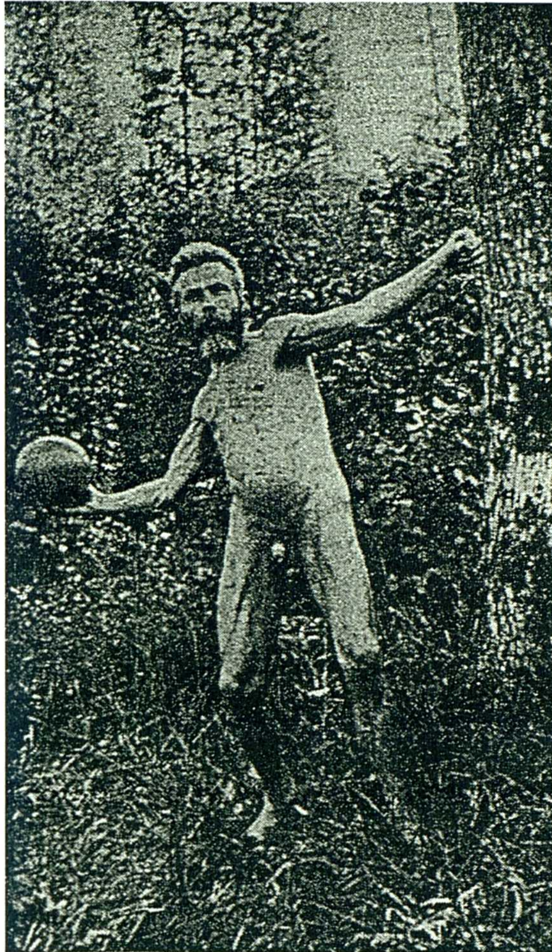

Figure 4.2 'Richard Ungewitter in a pleasant game. From R. Ungewitter *Die Nacktheit* (Stuttgart, 1905)'. From Krüger (1991) p. 152.

neuroses, he considered nudism an ideal preparation for, and an extension of, married life and the key to preserving racial purity. Nudism allowed future mates to see each other in the nude and thus enabled them to make an informed decision regarding possible physical and mental 'defects' of a potential partner. Ungewitter also disclosed a deep 'commitment to spartan military ideals' and in 1919 he edited a monumental anthology, *Der Zusammenbruch: Deutschlands Wiedergeburt durch Blut und Eisen* (The Collapse: Germany's Rebirth Through Blood and Iron), in which he incorporated compulsory nudity into a 'gigantic Nibelung-scale plan for renewing German cultural, political and economic power'.[22] It was uncommon, however, for promoters of nudism

[22] *Ibid.*

to make such 'explicit and narrow connections' between nudity and racial politics and unsurprisingly Ungewitter's followers declined significantly after World War One.[23]

In the quote at the beginning of this section, Margolis hints at the eugenical potential of nudism and, more specifically to the assumptions popularly made regarding the movement's connections with Nazism. Social Darwinism had a distinctive impact on Germany in comparison to other countries and was absorbed more as a collective, rather than individual, responsibility.[24] At a time when imperialist and nationalist feelings were running high, Germany was also experiencing a dramatic population decline and just as in Britain and the United States, 'racial hygiene' had the potential to improve the national stock by selective reproduction. However, the preoccupation with the national population was so immense in Germany that traditional taboos such as mixed communal nudity were rapidly accepted under the auspices of racial hygiene. Gymnosophist Maurice Parmelee was one person who quickly realised that racial prejudice was a serious problem and that gymnosophic practices sometimes intensified racial prejudice in a person who had such prejudices from the start.[25] Gymnosophy and the influence of Parmelee's ideas on the British naturist movement will be discussed in greater depth below but, for now, it is important to document his sentiments on racial hygiene. He stated that some people;

> favour gymnosophy as a means for developing a physically strong and healthy race which will exalt the nation, crush its enemies in combat and demonstrate its superiority to other races. While they may also believe that gymnosophy is enjoyable in itself and promotes wholesome relations

[23] Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Cooper, *op. cit.*
[24] Krüger, *op. cit.*
[25] Parmelee, *op. cit.*

> between the sexes, they advocate it primarily for these ends, which are utterly incompatible with the essentially gentle, gracious and human practices of gymnosophy.[26]

For Parmelee and others like him, the emergent German nudist movement, with its nationalism, militarism, race pride and prejudice, formed a group of ideas and principles diametrically opposed to nudism as understood in Britain (and his native America).

Undoubtedly some nudists, such as Richard Ungewitter and Heinrich Pudor (who was openly racist), later had no difficulty in claiming that they were among the forerunners of National Socialism. However, Toepfer has argued that,

> those who embraced Nazism and those who didn't acted for uniquely personal reasons rather than because body culture somehow predisposed them to follow one direction or another; people embraced body culture for equally personal reasons rooted in powerful, individual desires rather than in self-sacrificing devotion to abstract concepts such as Nation, state or class.[27]

It would therefore be a mistake to 'uncritically reduce all images of healthy white bodies involved in body culture that date from the 1920s and 1930s to a generic notion of a fascist body which is totally different from "our" democratic, free bodies'.[28] It is also unproductive to make simplistic social, cultural and political assumptions regarding the connections between both nudism and Nazism and the naturist movements in Britain

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 37.
[27] Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[28] Burt, R. (1998) *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, 'Race' and Nation in Early Modern Dance*. London: Routledge (p. 110).

and Germany.[29] Just as nudism was not exclusively German, neither was it confined to those sympathetic to right-wing nationalist ideologies. As a whole, German body culture was neither a united nor a unifying force on the European cultural scene and produced 'a bewildering variety of contradictory goals, motives, ramifications, strategies, implications, and consequences'.[30] Toepfer states that as a manifestation of modernity, German body culture was accessible to a wide spectrum of political positions and therefore cannot be reducible to a single or dominant set of ideas, personalities, or events.[31]

Initially the National Socialists perceived *Nacktkultur* as a hot bed for socialistic activity.[32] On attaining power in 1933, Hitler's first reaction was to impose a general ban on nudism putting a stop to the practices of some three million people.[33] Nudism was said to lead women to lose their natural feeling of shame and men to lose their respect of women.[34] It was not only socialist life-reform movements that were prohibited and systematically persecuted by the Nazi state: bourgeois and right-wing movements also were forced to dissolve 'voluntarily'. However, the *Reichverband fur Freikörperkultur* had many National Socialist sympathisers and, as an 'easy target for ideological and organisational incorporation', nudism was eventually incorporated into the National Socialist *Verband fur Leibesübung*.[35] Principles of 'ideal beauty' and 'healthy living' could easily be re-accentuated as demonstrations of racially ideal types and paramilitary fitness training. During this transformation, the somewhat eclectic

[29] For example, it is just as misguided to label *all* nudists in this period 'racist' as it would be to denounce all vegetarians as Nazi sympathisers in the light of Hitler's vegetarianism.
[30] Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[31] *Ibid.*
[32] Welby, W. (1939) *The Naked Truth About Nudism*. London: Thorsons.
[33] Cooper, *op. cit.*; Van der Will, *op. cit.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*; Bell and Holiday, *op. cit.*; Anthony, S. (Dir.) (1998) *Witness* (Television documentary about British naturism). London: Channel Four. Broadcast 22nd November.
[34] Van der Will, *op. cit.* On the role of women within Nazi culture see Haste, C. (2001) *Nazi Women*. London: Channel Four.
[35] *Ibid.*

Nazi state also appropriated the heritage of the youth, reform and body culture movements for its own propaganda and adapted them in order to propagate the 'Aryan' philosophy.[36] Nudism was thus integrated into Nazi ideology and not a product of it as is often assumed. The once forbidden nudist games of establishments such as the *Körperkulturschule Adolf Koch* became the military nudism of the *Schutz Staffel* (SS), the hiking tours of the autonomous *Wandervögel* groups became the uniformed marching groups, the nudist film *Nattürliche Leibeszucht* (Natural Body Discipline) was given official approval as 'educative', and naked bathing was permitted once more in a political decree of 1942.[37]

Adolf Koch was probably one of the most popular promoters of nudism in inter-war Germany. A primary school teacher and educational innovator, Koch introduced open-air nude exercise to male and female children suffering from the effects of vitamin deficiency in 1921. The state was sympathetic until a female visitor to the school made a complaint regarding the practice of 'nude dancing' in a state institution and the school promptly forbade nude exercise. Koch went on to form the *Gruppe freier Menschen* (Group of Free Human Beings) in 1923, later the 'Proletarian Life Reform and Free Body Culture Group' within the framework of the Union for the Health of the People. For him, nudity meant a new start, and nudism therefore signalled a renewal, a fresh beginning and a reconciliation of humans with nature. The nudist 'Adolf Koch School for Body Culture', founded in 1926 had more than 4,000 members in Berlin and was affiliated with such sexual reformers as Magnus Hirschfeld and also presided over its own nudist grounds. The school recruited proletarian men and women aggressively and

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[36] Lewinski, *op. cit.*; Eichberg, H. (1990) 'Race-track and Labyrinth: the space of physical culture in Berlin', *Journal of Sport History* 17 (2) pp. 245 - 260; Richardson. A. (1990) 'The nazification of women in art', Taylor, B. and van der Will, W. (eds) *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design. Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich.* Winchester: The Winchester Press pp. 53 – 79.
[37] Eichberg, *op. cit.*; Van der Will, *op. cit.*; Burt, *Alien Bodies*, *op. cit.*

had considerable success, partly because, when employed, members paid five per cent of their income to the organisation, and partly because, when unemployed, as many were in the 1930s, the school supported them until they found a job. By 1930, Koch had influenced schools in Berlin, Breslau, Barmen-Elberfeld, Hamburg, Ludwigshafen, and Mannheim with a total enrolment of 60,000. Koch was shut down by the Nazis in 1933 possibly owing to the complexity of his thought, but more probably due to the power wielded by his establishments.[38]

Die Schönheitsbewegung (The Beauty Movement)

There were indisputable class distinctions within the early German movement and clubs often discriminated freely according to an individual's social standing or political affiliation. In the 1920s when the politicisation of German public life was at its height, it was quite natural to have bourgeois as well as workers' nudist clubs and many produced journals specific to their own cause.[39] In Britain, naturist clubs were less likely to turn people away because of their political affiliation, class, or how they looked. Catholics, Protestants, members of the conservative political parties, supporters of the capitalist system, monarchists, anti-Semites, upholders of the prevailing marriage system and even a very few social snobs could all be found in British naturist clubs.[40] Despite this, doctors and solicitors were said to be the best represented professions and in the 1930s some British clubs did select members according to their religious beliefs.[41]

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[38] Eichberg, *op. cit.*; Van der Will, *op. cit.*; Toepfer, *op. cit.*

[39] Krüger, *op. cit.* 'Land of Light' and 'The New Age' are just two examples of this media. Koetzle, M. (1994) *1000 Nudes: Uwe Schied Collection.* Koln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag GmbH.

[40] Parmelee, *op. cit.*

[41] Margolis, *op. cit.*

Nudism in Germany first became prevalent amongst the elite upper-middle classes. In bourgeois circles nudity suggested the purity of life before it became depraved by the 'sophistication', 'cultural corruption', 'social disunity' and 'decadence' of overcrowded urbanised civilisations.[42] German bourgeois nudism can be viewed as an attempt to regain, in the face of the ravages of industrialisation, physical and ideological spaces for the restoration of life in harmony with nature.[43] At its inception it was embedded in a rarefied cult of beauty, more commonly known as the *Schönheitsbewegung* (Beauty Movement) which, it was assumed, had reached its unsurpassed cultural climax in the polis of classical Greek antiquity and the texts tended to stress the exposure of the body to the sun in the open air and the display of its beautiful proportions.[44] For example, circa 1906 Bruno Judeich wrote '[w]hen the beauty of nudeness is again purely sensed (as in ancient Greece) then nobody will be capable of soiling it with their impure thoughts'.[45] According to Van der Will, these groups 'aimed to re-live an assumed ideal of ancient Greek beauty, to adhere to an elevated notion of sexual purity, and to keep aloof from what was regarded as the primitive sexuality of the proletarian masses'.[46] Though the ethics and aesthetics of English 'Sun Clubs' were marked by more middle-class tastes and morals, naturism was also viewed by various British groups to be a contemporary reflection of life in ancient Greece (where to be naked was usual rather than exceptional) and they attempted to model their lifestyle along classical lines giving their clubs names such as 'Diogenes', 'Gymnic' and 'Arcadia'.[47] As I discuss in

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[42] *Ibid.*

[43] One can of course draw a significant comparison between these ideas and Nazi ideology, the roots of which were located in the fiercely antiurban *völkish* movement. For the latter, indusrialisation and urbanisation was thought to have cut the 'bond' between man and soil and 'caused "uprootedness", the symptoms of which were understood to be moral degeneration, disharmony, and a profound sense of alienation'. Prominent symbols included the tree which connected earth and sky, and the sun which radiated 'cosmic life energy' over man and nature. Activities such as naturism and camping which brought man into close contact with nature were therefore praised. For a general discussion see Binde, P. (1999) 'Nature versus city: landscapes of Italian Fascism', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17 pp. 761 – 775 (p. 770).

[44] Van der Will, *op. cit.*

[45] Krüger, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

[46] Van der Will, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[47] Bell and Holiday, *op. cit.*; Cooper, *op. cit.*

Chapter Six the idealised ancient Greek body also formed an important part of Hans Surén's conceptualisation and representation of the nude body.

The main journal of the Beauty Movement, *Die Schönheit* (Beauty), which ran from 1902 to 1931, quickly became the voice of the German naturist movement.[48] In seeking to serve the classical ideals described above, the journal broke many taboos, and members argued that it was not nudity that was indecent but the lack of understanding of it. In 1907, the journal won the right to print photographs of nude men and women under the auspices of modern art and, in a 1908 soirée sponsored by the journal, Olga Desmond, the 'Venus of London', became the first dancer to perform completely nude.[49] Krüger remarks that nudist groups the length and breadth of Germany reported their existence within the pages of *Die Schönheit* and all of the adult bourgeois proponents of naturism were dealt with or published in the journal at some point.[50] According to the journal's ideology, a beautiful soul could only reside in a beautiful body and the illustrations depicted a youthfully slim ideal that was difficult to achieve. Again, this 'cult of beauty' clashed with the sensibilities of people such as Parmelee.[51] Whilst he recognised that æsthetic considerations undoubtedly influenced many who joined the gymnosophist movement, Parmelee believed that when 'deformed' and 'mutilated' persons were excluded such principles conflicted with humanitarian interests and led to a admittance policy which was inhumane and undemocratic. He questioned, for example, who decided who was and was not beautiful and how could a true gymnosophist justify such decisions. Like other journals in publication at this time, *Die Schönheit* also featured a higher proportion of nude women than men. This was a

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[48] Van der Will, *op. cit*; Krüger, *op. cit.*

[49] Toepfer, *op. cit.* Desmond was an English woman whose career developed almost entirely in Germany. She is famous for dramatising her nudity by dancing in partnership with the semi-nude male dancer Adolf Sage, a collaboration that would have been rare at the time.

[50] Krüger, *op. cit.*

distinctly non-representative ratio that can be demonstrated by the inaugural meeting of Berlin nudist group *Hellas* when forty men and only two or three women showed up.[52] This inconsistent and idealised representation of the male and female body is visible both in the images of *British Naturism* and in Surén's choice of images and approach to physical fitness.

By the 1920s, nudism in Germany had also gained credence amongst a wide range of social classes.[53] As a result of increased leisure time a large proportion of the middle classes were able to experiment with new recreational activities and innovative ways of improving health and fitness, however nudism found a particular resonance within Socialist and working class cultures.[54] Although these groups were also stimulated by yearnings for health and a return to nature, Socialist advocates of nudism further implied that people should

> not only discard their clothes but with them the whole armour-plating of authority-fixated conditioning which held proletarians deference to their masters: parental authority, the paternalism of school and church, the mass media, and the organs of law and order.[55]

Proletarian nudism became the vanguard of socialist culture providing a radical form of opposition to the so-called 'culture of "bourgeois" clothing'.[56] For example, in an unconventional focus on the male body, H. Sieker wrote,

[51] Parmelee, *op. cit.*
[52] Krüger, *op. cit.*
[53] Van der Will, *op. cit.*
[54] Cooper, *op. cit.*
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[56] Eichberg, *op. cit.*

> [t]he shyness of the European to go in the nude has its main reason in showing the private parts ... Much shyness has a good reason as the penis of the male adult has often become quite ugly ... it looks today mostly like this: in a green-grey colour of death as very few have ever let any sun or light at this part of the body which is sweating very much. The acid of the sweat is lixiviating the skin, giving it a loathsome color (sic) and a filthy smell ... this is a process of rotting ... If the penis is, however, exposed to the air and sun it will gain a silken skin and color (sic): the finest skin of the body.[57]

In this sense, the *Proletarische Freikorperkulturbewegung* (Proletarian Naturist Movement) was 'intended as a purgative of deep-seated anti-sensual prejudice and a radical method of discarding the chains of bourgeois ideas around proletarian minds'.[58] In a way this nudity can be equated with the libertarian, radical counter cultural nudity of bohemian groups in the 1940s.[59] For the bohemians, nudity signified 'rebirth', the recovery of identity and, for some, 'nakedness was a way of simultaneously challenging consumer capitalism and reaching to the inner core of an essential self'.[60] However, as we shall see below, whilst the bohemians welcomed the stigma of eccentricity, nudists actively sought to assimilate their activities with wider cultural norms.

Die Jugendbewegung (The Youth Movement)

One notable distinction between the German and British nudist movements was the

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[57] Cited in Krüger, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
[58] Van der Will, *op. cit.*, p. 31. The movement eventually became a subsection of the huge Worker Sports Organisation, which in turn was a part of the large Worker Culture Movement in the Weimar Republic.
[59] Burt, *Alien Bodies, op. cit.*
[60] Tytell, J. (1976) *Naked Angels: The Lives and Literature of the Beat Generation*. London: McGraw-Hill; Wilson, E. (2000) 'The heroism of everyday life', *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press pp. 159 – 178. Wilson notes that nudity was also a strategy used by the Beats during poetry readings.

role of the Youth Movement, or *Jugendbewegung*, which was far less evident in Britain. The only example was the 'Kindred of the Kibbo Kift', a break away from Baden Powell's Boy Scouts. Founded in 1920 by John Hargrave which set out its aims in a seven point covenant covering open-air education for children, camp training and naturecraft, and health of body, mind and spirit.[61] The Kibbo Kift (meaning 'proof of great strength') was ostensibly open to anyone, however its ideology tended to mirror the cult of beauty that characterised the *Schönheitsbewegung*; 'ugly people' were deemed immoral and were unwelcome to join.[62] Hargrave felt that close contact with the reality of the earth was missing from the Boy Scouts and he advocated nudity and open air living, though this group was never recognised as part of the naturist movement. Its members were viewed as odd by existing nudists who were keen to disassociate themselves from such 'back to nature' movements.[63] In later years, the informal dress of the Kibbo Kift was replaced by the infamous 'Green Shirt', a move which marked a change both in the organisation, methods and political motivation of the movement.[64]

In contrast, the German 'Youth Movement' which crystalised at the turn of the century was an important catalyst for nudism and eventually came to represent the van of the 'Back to Nature' Movement in post-war Germany.[65] The first youth league, the

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[61] See Elwell-Sutton, L. P. (1979) 'A history of the Kibbo Kift' http://www.enduser.co.uk/kibbokift/kkkhist.htm; see also Smith, C. J. (1995) 'John Hargrave – "White Fox": a biographical note' http://www.enduser.co.uk/kibbokift/jhbio.htm.
[62] Bandy, *op. cit.*
[63] Norwood, Rev. C. E. (1933) *Nudism in England.* London: Noel Douglas (p. 14).
[64] In the 1930s Hargrave found a possible solution to a problem that had troubled him for some time, namely, how could men and women enmeshed in modren urban life break away into the healthy, free open-air life. For him. the solution to this problem was a National Dividend, a living income which would be paid to every man, woman and child whether employed or not. For example, Hargrave decided that if unemployment was inevitable it was not something to be feared but to be welcommed as an opportunity to free people from wage-slavery. Whilst some of Hargrave's followers did not understand or agree with the connection between economics and the outdoor life others did and, in time, 'Social Credit' became the forefront of the Kibbo Kift's aims. This shift was accompanied by a change in uniform, the introduction of para-military techniques such as marching, drums and banners, and a preference for direct action which often met with violence from communist and fascist groups also active in the 1930s. Elwell-Sutton, *op. cit.*
[65] Eichberg, *op. cit.*; Krüger, *op. cit.*

Wandervögel, was initially founded at a secondary school in Berlin-Steglitz though soon spread rapidly throughout Germany. At a basic level, the *Wandervögel* were large scale, mixed rambling clubs which attempted to foster a sense of comradeship between the sexes rather than separation and are often seen as playing a key role in the emancipation of German women by encouraging girls to take part in physical activity.[66] They were noted above all for their love of the land and eschewal of the new modern conveniences of the cities, and represented a section of society which had become disenchanted with the older generation and their new sets of values, namely work and money.[67] Though German Youth were involved in around 2000 groups and organisations in the 1920s, the *Wandervögel* endured as the most popular. Followers advocated life reform, scoutism, and back to nature activities, and distanced themselves from the spatial environments of their parents, their schools, their city and the gymnastics halls. They practised in autonomous groups, seeking an alternative lifestyle out in the woods and the countryside via hiking trips, camping, folk dances and games, swimming and singing.[68] Their preference for being out in the open-air, their cultural criticism, and their political and religious sensibilities had much in common with contemporary neo-romantic Woodcraft movements in the United States and Great Britain.[69]

Whilst social nudism was not the main priority of those in the Youth Movement, it represented living in nature and living naturally, and it was suggested that one could therefore go nude if convenient. Whilst nudity and exposure of the body to the sun and fresh air was thought beneficial to the health of the individual, it could as a result also help to regenerate the body of the nation. As a pursuit acceptable for both sexes, sexuality was frequently discussed in publications sympathetic to nudism, in an attempt

[66] Van der Will, *op. cit.*
[67] Krüger, *op. cit.*; Eichberg, *op. cit.*
[68] Krüger, *op. cit*; Eichberg, *op. cit.*

to differentiate between 'moral nudity' and the 'immoral nudity' that could be seen in cabarets. It was acknowledged that sport and physical culture, particularly in the fresh air and sun, had an invigorating effect which could stimulate the sexual glands, however, taking a stand against the licentiousness of prostitution the youth groups focused on a more moral and biological relationship between the sexes.[70] Concealment of the body was considered to hamper development, encourage unhealthy mental complexes and create 'abnormal' relations between the sexes.[71] It was thought that visual, if not physical, contact with nude comrades of the opposite sex would help to avoid sexual frustration, particularly on the wedding night. I return to the subject of nudism and morality in the final part of this chapter.

Dance

A third influential force in the expansion of German nudism and 'nude tolerance' was that of modern dance. The term 'modern dance' refers to the work of pioneer dance reformers in the early decades of the twentieth century.[72] These included Ruth St Denis (1879 - 1968), Isadora Duncan (1877 - 1927), Martha Graham (1894 - 1991), Rudolf Laban (1879 - 1958), Mary Wigman (1886 - 1973), Kurt Jooss (1901 - 1979), and Sigurd Leeder (1902 - 1981), though little evidence or documentation survives in English regarding the choreography and performances of these artists.[73] Modern dance purposefully avoided the conventions and traditions which had been considered essential to the creation of theatre dance. Contemporary debate surrounding the city and

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[69] Eichberg, *op. cit.* The League was eventually incorporated into the Hitler Youth in 1933. Krüger, *op. cit.*
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Parmelee, *op. cit.*
[72] Burt, R. (1995) *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities.* London: Routledge.
[73] *Ibid.*

modern industrialism provided both subject matter and played a catalytic role in the development process.[74] An example of this is Kurt Jooss' ballet 'The Big City' (1932). Populated by a cast of generalised city types, the ballet evoked the anonymous scale and monotony of city life through references to popular dance movement. By this time Jooss and his audiences had learnt from bitter experience that economic crisis, instead of provoking revolution, had strengthened the far right and, far from celebrating modernity, Jooss drew the spectators' attention to social inequalities and problems.[75] Twentieth century modern dance became an arena for the forging of national identity and alternative values, while contemporary ballet became an arena for international competition.[76]

In a recent article on the issues of performativity and practice within cultural geography, Nash remarked that alongside 'the new language of performativity, the vocabulary of dance is being enlisted in order to rethink ideas of subjectivity, embodiment and social identities'.[77] Many open-air leisure pursuits that were popular in the inter-war period (for example swimming, running, horse riding and, as we shall see in later chapters, camping) can be explored as 'performative body-practices'.[78] As discussed in Chapter Three, there is a need to look beyond the purely visual to consider sensual and embodied personal experience. Dance is cited as a 'concentrated example of the expressive nature of embodiment'.[79] In Germany demand amongst the young 'for

[74] *Ibid.*
[75] Preston-Dunlop, V. (1988) 'Laban and the Nazis, towards an understanding of Laban, Rudolf and the Third Reich', *Dance Theatre Journal* 6 (2) pp. 4 – 7.
[76] Manning cited in Burt, *Alien Bodies, op. cit.*, p. 23.
[77] Nash, C. (2000) 'Performativity in practice: some recent work in cultural geography', *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (4) pp. 653 – 664 (p. 653). Nash highlights the fact that the appearance of dance and performativity in geography has largely been inspired by feminist work on the body and theories of the performance of gender and sexuality than by dance studies. See Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. London: Routledge; Butler, *Gender Trouble, op. cit.*
[78] Thrift cited in Nash, *op. cit.*; Thrift, N. (1997) 'The still point: resistance, expressive embodiment and dance', in Pile, S. and Keith, M. (eds) *Geographies of Resistance*. London: Routledge pp. 124 - 151 (especially p. 125).
[79] Thrift cited in Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 656; Thrift, *op. cit.*

Figure 4.3 'The Hellerau Dancing School'. From Surén (1927) p. 99.

knowledge about bodily performance and expressivity was very strong during the Weimar era, and even quite provincial cities could boast two or three schools for gymnastic or dance instruction'.[80] In 1911, after several years teaching specialist courses, Swiss pedagogue Émile Jacques-Dalcroze founded the first modern dance and gymnastics school, the Jacques Dalcroze Institute (*Bildungsanstalt*), at the 'new town' of Hellerau near Dresden.[81] Though the naturist approach to dancing was first introduced into Germany by Elizabeth Duncan, sister of Isadora, the work of Dalcroze may also be counted under the auspices of nudism as a system that considered itself to be a personal experience rather than a method. The combination of rhythmic gymnastics and nudity was designed to give individuals the feeling of being in tune with a common rhythm or an integral part of a larger, harmonious pattern.[82] Dalcroze argued that clothing impeded movement and that a person in a loose jersey with bare feet, as

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[80] Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[81] Hellerau co-founded by Wolf Dohrn (General Secretary of the German *Werkbund*, founded 1908) and Karl Schmidt (a *Werkbund* colleague) was a town inspired by the Garden City Movement and Ebenezer Howard's influential book *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform* (1898) (reprinted as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* in 1902). Roughly translated as the 'bright meadow', one of the main aims of Hellerau was to liberate workers from the 'dehumanisation' of modern industry and to free them from the 'squalid' conditions which characterised neighbouring industrial centres. Beacham, R. C. (1985a) 'Appia, Jacques-Dalcroze, and Hellerau, Part One: 'Music made visible', *New Theatre Quarterly* 1 (2) pp. 154 – 164.

[82] Van der Will, *op. cit.*; Graves, R. and Hodge, A. (1950) *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain 1918 – 1939*. London: Faber and Faber.

demonstrated in Figure 4.3, would move with greater ease than a person in tight clothes and narrow, high-heeled boots. Despite this, his previous appointment at the Conservatory of Music in Geneva was terminated when the management objected to his 'unconventional' views on clothing.

At Hellerau Dalcroze developed and refined his method of 'Eurythmic Gymnastics', a technique designed to heighten awareness of the body in space, and which involved the development of the senses, particularly aural perception, and the sensory awareness of musical tone to 'make feeling for rhythm a physical experience'.[83] In a bid to replace so-called 'unproductive intellectualism' and 'joyless athletic training', eurythmics was effectively based on the reunification of mind / body harmony epitomised by the ancient Greeks.[84] Classical exercise 'entailed both the mind and the body, and was linked to wider concepts of well-being [t]he harmony of mind and body was an important element in classical therapeutics, and underpinned the Greek ideal of the gymnasium'.[85] Hellerau was thus promoted as a future centre for the spiritual and physical regeneration of the German population which would, in turn, lead to widespread social renewal and regeneration.

The dance school at Hellerau attracted a great deal of attention as Dalcroze was both a talented pedagogue and effective at expressing and publicising his methods enthusiastically and articulately to others.[86] The Institute rapidly acquired an international reputation and, by 1913, was a constant source of interest and speculation from theatre artists and critics; through its yearbooks, newspapers and cultural journals

[83] Beacham, 'Music made visible', *op. cit.*
[84] *Ibid.*; Beacham, R. C. (1985b) 'Appia, Jacques-Dalcroze, and Hellerau, Part Two: 'Poetry in motion', *New Theatre Quarterly* 1 (3) pp. 245 – 261.
[85] Twigg, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 – 20.
[86] Beacham, 'Music made visible', *op. cit.*; Beacham, 'Poetry in motion', *op. cit.*

it also attracted and held the attention of the wider public. Beacham states that Dalcroze and architect Appia wished to,

> proselytise for the new cult of eurythmics; to bring about a change of consciousness in their audience through direct exposure to their work [...] and so help to herald and usher in a new age of individual and communal harmony, based on the beneficent reunification of mind with the body happily epitomised by the Greeks, and now offered again by eurythmics as an ancient birthright to dispossessed modern man.[87]

This success was short lived, however, in 1914 co-founder Wolf Dohrn died in a skiing accident and, after Dalcroze co-signed a letter protesting against the German bombardment of Reims Cathedral, he was prevented from re-entering Germany and thus returning to Hellerau.[88] He continued his work in Geneva and in the mid-twentieth century, researchers confirmed what Dalcroze had long suspected – that kinesthesia (kines = motion, thesia = awareness) is the sixth sense. In childhood, for example, all other senses are informed by kinesthesia, or constant movement.[89]

Rudolf Laban (c.1878 – 1958) was responsible for another new form of expressive movement which swept across Europe during the first half of the twentieth century.[90] Laban was interested in the 'art of movement', in particular, the movement principles to

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[87] Beacham, 'Poetry in motion', *op. cit.*, p. 245. For a discussion on performance at Hellerau see Darr, N. M. (1996) 'Reading the body and the blood of "Parisfal" and Richard Wagner: a performance of Hellerau', *Musical Quarterly* 80 (4) pp. 629 – 647.

[88] Beacham, 'Poetry in motion', *op. cit.* On the future of Hellerau see Beacham, 'Music made visible', *op. cit.* and Darr, *op. cit.*

[89] See IJDG (2002) 'Jaques-Dalcroze', http://www.dalcroze.chlinstitut/lifeof.htm.

[90] Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.*; Connolly, M and Lathrop, A. (1997) 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Rudolf Laban – an interactive appropriation of parallels and resonances', *Human Studies* 20 (1) pp. 27 – 45.

Figure 4.4 'The Laban Dance School. From Surén (1927) p. 45.

which he believed all living things conformed – from the crystalline structures of natural growth to the efforts and drives of animals and people. In an atmosphere of reform shared by James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Martin Buber and Carl Gustav Jung, Laban sought to free the body's expressive potential from the limitations and structure of classical dance, to return to the body's 'natural rhythms' and the authentic experience of movement (see Figure 4.4).[91] For Laban, control over one's inner and outer space led to control over one's performance and his technique led dancers and actors into an embodied and investigative journey into space, weight, time, effort, flow and finally into a multi-directional, and presumably multi-sensual, space continuum.[92] In rejecting the binary opposition between the sensual and intellectual, and between practice and theory, and as complex 'intersection of speech, writing, text and body' the efforts of Laban and Dalcroze provide an interesting insight into the recent work on dance in geography.[93] For example, their work demonstrates that dance cannot simply be considered as a

[91] Connolly and Lathrop, *op. cit.* Laban's was a vision of 'dynamic space' which countered the 'flat space' of the ballet and, in 1913, he had experimented with the idea of 'free' or 'absolute' dance at Lake Maggiore, Italy and Mt Verita, Switzerland, places also frequented by Joyce *et al.*
[92] Theodores, D. (1994) 'Laban for actors and dancers – Newlove, J.'; *Theatre Research International* 9 (2) p. 177. See also JNCLS (2002) 'Rudolf Laban' http://www.newlovemakepeace.demon.co.uk/rudolf.htm.
[93] Nash, *op. cit.*

preverbal or preliterate practice which suggests a separation between thought and action, mind and body as suggested by Thrift's 'non-representational theory'.[94] In addition, they show that not only is dance 'always mediated by words as it is taught, scripted, performed and watched but dance is also often highly formalized and styalized; even untrained dance is culturally learnt and culturally located'.[95]

During his career Laban founded several dance schools, training dancers in revolutionary new ways and had schools devoted to his work throughout Germany and in several European cities.[96] New dance schools sprang up in Hamburg, Berlin, Leipzig and Cologne which, inspired by Laban's ideas about *Bewegungstanz* (rhythmic movement dance) and themselves adopting *Ausdrucktanz* (expressive dance), strove to show naked bodies in gracefully configured motion.[97] Laban can only be considered to have had a small influence on the naturist movement because for him total nudity was only a means for supervising correct technique and displaying complete perfection.[98] Nonetheless, Laban's work is interesting because like many body culture practitioners he continued to work under the Nazi regime. In 1930, he accepted the prestigious position of Director of Movement at the Berlin State Opera, a position which he held for four years becoming one of Europe's most famous choreographers.[99] However, in 1934, as a non-German national and with no possibility of contract renewal, Laban was offered the Directorship of the *Deutsche Tanzbühne* under the auspices of the Propaganda Ministry. It was an attractive opportunity as it allowed him creative freedom and a chance to develop dance and movement.[100] In 1936 Laban was also

[94] See Thrift, *op. cit.*
[95] Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 657. For example, Nash provides a discussion of the cultural history of the tango.
[96] Theodores, *op. cit.*; Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.* Toepfer, *op. cit.*, states that no-one wrote more on dance, had more students nor more schools devoted to their teachings than Hungarian born Laban.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] Krüger, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[99] Theodores, *op. cit.*; Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.*
[100] Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.*; Connolly and Lathrop, *op. cit.*

appointed Director of the *Meisterwerkstaten Für Tanz* which had been established as part of the Olympic preparations. Unfortunately Goebbels' dismissal of Laban's work during the final rehearsals prevented the event taking place and signalled the end of Laban's career in Germany.[101]

Laban was criticised by contemporaries for staying too long in Germany and appearing to condone Nazi racial policies. Though perhaps understandably lured for a time by the prestige which the National Socialists attached to German nationalist body culture, Laban attempted to make his position clear by having a public relationship with a Jewish woman. However, in time, it became clear that Laban's vision for dance was far more pervasive than the Nazi world view could accommodate and his affiliation with Dadaism, socialism, pacifism, feminism and ethnic diversity inevitably chaffed against their Aryan sensibilities.[102] The German government started to burn his publications, prohibit his dance notation and arrested many of his colleagues and friends and, in 1937, Laban arrived in Paris destitute, malnourished and penniless as a political refugee. Eventually he was rescued by ex-student Kurt Jooss and brought to England in a state of mental and physical collapse.[103] The story of Rudolf Laban is pertinent to my discussion on two counts. First, the fact that Laban's ideology - unlike that of Dalcroze - was (on the surface at least) so easily assimilated into National Socialist culture ties in closely with my consideration of Hans Surén's work and his links with Nazi culture in Chapter Five. Second, it emphasises differences in the social and political ideology regarding the body and movement between British and German culture in the inter-war period. In Laban's story England is a refuge, a place where alternative techniques in

[101] Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit*; Connolly and Lathrop, *op. cit.*
[102] Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.*; Connolly and Lathrop, *op. cit.*

physical culture and free movement of the body could be appreciated and developed without persecution or wholesale domination by the contemporary political regime. In the next section I consider the British naturist movement and chart several key events and influences in the history of the movement.

The British Naturist Movement: sunshine and exercise

The origin and initial organisation of the British naturist movement is something of an enigma. Intellectual proponents included George Bernard Shaw, Mark Twain, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Graham Bell, and many famous names lent their support in print; C. E. M. Joad, Lord Dawson of Penn (physician to King George V), Kathleen Vaughan (gynaecologist), the Earl and Countess of Mayo, August Rollier, Sir William Arbuthnot Lane (royal physician) and Norman Haire (Founder of the Sex Education Society).[104] However, any attempt to provide a definitive history of British naturism is made difficult due to a significant lack of primary sources such as club records and first hand accounts.[105] In comparison, the rise of German naturism was more carefully documented.[106] Working with these themes, in this section I draw upon contemporary literature, photographic illustration and interview transcripts in order to provide a brief history of the British naturist movement focusing on key individuals and events in an attempt to provide a broad indication of the movement's popularity and main influences.

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[103] After Hitler's accession to power in January 1933 Jooss himself had been attacked in the press and warned to leave which he did with his company. He subsequently set up the Jooss-Leder company at Dartington Hall in Devon. Laban later opened the 'Art of Movement School' in Manchester in 1946. Connoly and Lathrop, *op. cit.*; Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.*
[104] Gray, J. (Autumn 1983) 'Retrospect – the early days', *British Naturism* 77 p. 5.
[105] Margolis, *op. cit.*
[106] Krüger, *op. cit.*

As documented in Chapter Two, the inter-war period witnessed the development of a multitude of cross-national theories concerning health and physical fitness, and representatives such as Prunella Stack (WLHB) travelled throughout Europe to study, compare and share ideas. The German nudist movement had a substantial influence on the early British movement and in its early days the British naturists drew a great deal on the social force of the former for advice, experience and leadership.[107] The connection between German and British naturism was further helped by the publication of two classic books from the German nudist movement in English translation. The first was J. M. Seitz's *Back To Nature* published in 1923 and, the second was Hans Surén's *Man and Sunlight* published in 1927, a book described as 'extraordinary' by ardent naturist Norman Tillet.[108] Chapters Five and Six provide a more explicit focus on Surén's book and the ways in which he conceptualised the body, nudity and the interaction of humans and the environment. However, in this section I concentrate on the development of the early British movement. Virtually all the people instrumental in the establishment of the latter were initiated into nudism in Germany. For example, the American author of *The New Gymnosophy,* Maurice Parmelee stated that while residing in Germany from 1920 to 1923, and again in 1926, he 'shared in all of the activities of the "Nacktkultur" movement, which advocate[d] the practice of nudity by both sexes in common for hygienic, social and aesthetic reasons'.[109] It was also common for new organisations to adopt Germanic names and follow the same structure as groups in Germany, adopting similar recreational activities. One, 'Spielplatz' (literal translation 'playground') founded by Charles Macaskie and his wife Dorothy in 1930, remains an important mainstay of the movement today as Britain's oldest (and only) residential

[107] Gray, *op. cit.*
[108] Stietz, J. M. (1923) *Back To Nature: An Exposition of Nude Culture* (Translated by Clifford Courdray). Dresden: R. A. Giesecke; Surén, *op. cit.*
[109] Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

naturist village.[110]

A scholar of German, Macaskie had been exposed to naturism whilst in Germany and once he returned home, had become a regular visitor to one of Britain's first clubs 'The Camp' (later Four Acres and then Five Acres due to expansion) located in woodland in Hertfordshire and founded by Rex Wellbye in 1926.[111] Eventually, the Macaskies sold their business and home in London and invested in a small patch of woodland where they built a one room chalet (now a seven room bungalow known as the White Lodge). When other naturists began to join them the running and maintenance of the site became a full time occupation, but with a small charge for membership and ground rent of 5/- per quarter the family were able to live on the proceeds.[112] Located in twelve acres of ancient forest, a quarter of a mile from the M25, Spielplatz now has thirty-four permanent homes and thirty which are rented each summer to seasonal visitors. The complex focuses on a 60ft swimming pool dating from the 1930s, and social life centres around the Clubhouse, a former cricket pavilion built in 1944 which houses a bar and restaurant and looks on to an immaculately kempt green.[113]

'Organised naturism' first began in Britain in the summer of 1922 when a small group of people began to meet in the grounds of a house (also known as 'The Camp') in

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[110] Thompson, *op. cit.*; Gray, *op. cit.*

[111] Rex Wellbye is considered to be one of the 'greats' of the British movement. A cartographer by profession, he was an original member of the 'English Gymnosophy Society' (discussed below) and, under the pseudonym 'William Welby', published several best sellers. See Welby, W. (1934) *Naked and Unashamed: Nudism From Six Points of View*. London: Thorsons; Welby, W. (1937) *It's Only Natural: The Philosophy of Nudism*. London: Thorsons; Welby, *The Naked Truth*, *op. cit.* Wellbye died at Fiveacres in 1963 aged ninety-two and this historic club is now under threat of development. Original visitors to 'The Camp' were carefully vetted and heard of the place through word of mouth or, rather less discretely, through advertisements in the London newspapers. Gray, *op. cit.*; Bandy, *op. cit.*; Kidney, A. (Autumn 1999) 'Historic club under threat', *British Naturism* 141 p. 8.

[112] For a description of life at Spielplatz see Sennet, C. (1941) *Nudist Life at Spielplatz: The Story of a Modern Experiment in the Art of Living* (With an art supplement of photographs taken at the Hertfordshire nudist resort by Stephen Glass). London: The Naturist Ltd.

[113] Wise, *op. cit.*

Wickford, Essex to bathe naked.[114] Led by Harold C. Booth (alongside co-founders M. H. Sorensen and Rex Wellbye) they named themselves the 'English Gymnosophy Society' (EGS) and over the following months held meetings to discuss plans for their future and the theory behind social nudity.[115] The group flourished and three years later the members changed their name to the 'New Gymnosophy Society' (NGS) and began to present popular public lectures on naturism.[116] Towards the end of the 1920s the number of private nudist or 'gymnic' clubs like the 'Diogenes Sun Club' and the 'Sun Bathing Society' began to grow rapidly.[117] The First and Second World Wars also provided a huge boost to naturism in Britain: men in the forces became used to communal nudity and sunbathing especially in North Africa.[118] A contemporary naturist Chris recalled,

> when I was in the Navy we used to swim naked on the beaches [...] I used to read *Health and Efficiency* and other publications and was very interested in body building and making my body fitter and healthier. (02/07/00)

Unfortunately for this interviewee, marriage and a reluctant partner 'rather put a lid on' any naturist activity and he was unable to pursue his interests until later in life.

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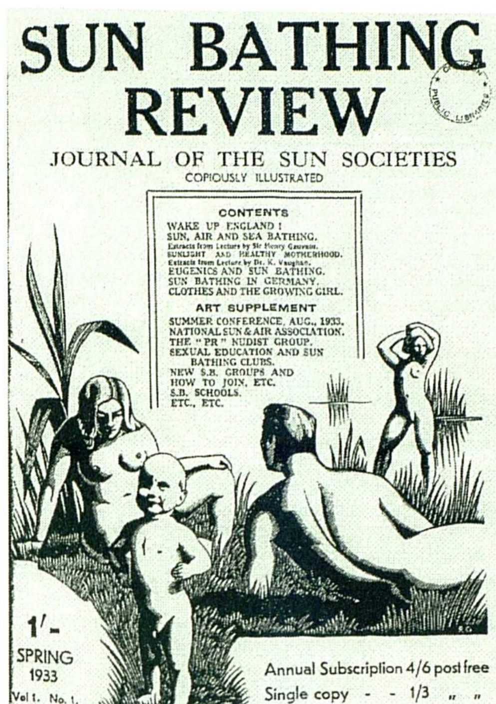
[114] Fryer, P. (1963) 'No nudes is good news', *Mrs Grundy: Studies in English Prudery*. London: Dennis Dobson pp. 193 – 208.

[115] Margolis, *op. cit.*; Krüger, *op. cit.*; Fryer, *op. cit.*; Farrar, M. (Summer 1987) 'Chong, Flang and Moonella', *British Naturism* 92 p. 23. The origin and collaboration of these groups is unclear and I have been unable to find two texts that concur. Farrar states that it was the 'Moonella Group' who originally met in 'The Camp' and then invited selected members of the NGS to join them. Members of the Moonella Group were carefully selected and the committee had self-perpetuating power. Members were also encouraged to wear sandals and brightly coloured headbands provided they were of Greek and not oriental style. The Group folded in 1925 and did not re-group until 1927 when 'Fouracres' (also initially called 'The Camp') was established.

[116] Bandy, *op. cit.*

[117] Fryer, *op. cit.* Indoor clubs were less common.

[118] Margolis, *op. cit.*



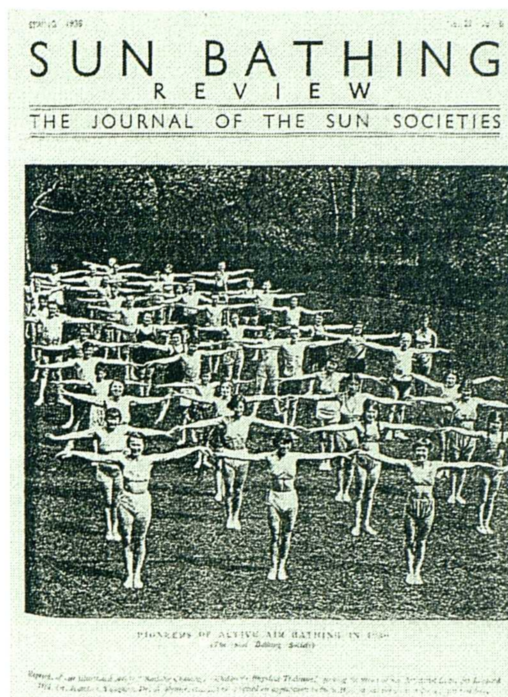


Figure 4.5 *Sun Bathing Review* front covers Spring 1933 and Spring 1938.

The 'Sun Bathing Society' (SBS) was founded by N. F. Barford in 1928. Barford had become a leading figure in the British naturist movement but was the first to create an ideological split.[119] He was opposed to naked bathing in public areas and believed that the NGS should arrange their facilities so visitors would wear bathing costumes, albeit the bare minimum. Using the 'Sun Lodge' in Upper Norwood, South London as a headquarters Barford took every opportunity to promote his new venture and publicise the society making the facilities available to the public.[120] The Society eventually became so popular that he also acquired the use of several acres of land in Selsdon on the outskirts of Croydon. Once cleared and equipped with exercise and swimming facilities it became the 'Yew Tree Camp' in 1931 although, unlike Sun Lodge, nude bathing was made welcome.[121] Over the years various clubs became affiliated with the SBS and to reflect this success Barford established a journal in 1933 to further promote the interests of the naturist movement. The *Sun Bathing Review* (*SBR*) (Figure 4.5),

[119] Bandy, *op. cit.* Many of the members of the NGS were absorbed into the SBS. Gray, *op. cit.*
[120] *Ibid.*

included informative articles on wide-ranging issues connected to the movement, listings of sun clubs, information on lectures and annual conferences and a letters page. [122] Contributors included prestigious names such as Eric Gill, 'Professor Flugel', George Bernard Shaw, Cyril E. M. Joad, Naomi Mitchison and Caleb Williams Saleeby. Saleeby was an ardent promoter of dress-reform who believed that the skin,

> this admirable organ, the natural clothing of the body [...] this most beautiful, versatile, and wonderful organ is, for the most part, smothered, blanched, and blinded in clothes and can only gradually be restored to the air and light which are its natural surroundings. Then, and only then, we learn what it is capable of.[123]

However, in 1938 considering his aims complete and believing that the SBS had served its purpose in furthering the cause of naturism (and therefore no longer had a purpose) Barford retired and the society ceased operation. *SBR* was sold on and remained in print until the end of World War Two.

Natural Healing: sunlight, tanning and heliophilly[124]

The popularity of nudity in Britain as a 'healthy' activity appears to owe something to the medical profession's efforts to combat diseases such as tuberculosis with *Luft und*

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[121] *Ibid.*

[122] The first issue of *SBR* opened with the words 'WAKE UP ENGLAND! WAKE UP! WAKE UP!'. The first conference was held at Fernden School near Haselmere, Surrey and lasted two weeks, including lectures from other camps within the movement and had facilities for sun bathing, etc. Other publications in this period included *Gymnos* (official organ of the Gymnic Association of Great Britain) also established in 1933, *Dawn*, *Verity* and *Sunlight*. Gray, *op. cit.*; Thompson, *op. cit.*

[123] Cited in Flügel, J. C. (1930) *The Psychology of Clothes*. London: Hogarth pp. 235 – 236; Nisbet, M. (ed) (1997) *205 Arguments and Observations in Support of Naturism* (Compiled by K. Bacher). London: Starkers Magazine in Association with The Naturist Society of America. I discuss the work of Saleeby in more depth below.

Licht Therapie (air and light therapy) or *Heliotherapie* (exposure to the sun).[125] As highlighted in Chapter Two, during the inter-war period the curative functions of air and sunlight were considered 'axiomatic' and the Ultra-Violet (UV) rays in sunlight replaced water as 'the most medicinal and hygienic agen[t] in the world'.[126] Following in the footsteps of the Natural Healing Movements in Germany and Switzerland, nudity for health means became tacitly acceptable in Britain.[127] This section will outline some of the more influential theoretical debates in Germany and Britain during the inter-war period which dealt with the physical and moral benefits of sun exposure and demonstrate one way in which these ideas were translated into public policy through 'open-air schools'.

After the First World War, German medics had discovered that sunbathing was an ideal remedy for vitamin deficiency in children, an ailment which had been compounded by the British blockade of Germany, and the same treatment was recommended for those recovering from the influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919.[128] Initially, the natural healing movement in Germany did not advocate *fully nude* public sunbathing and patients were treated in sexually segregated areas clad in bathing shorts. However, drawing upon the ideas of the 'playground movement' established circa 1882, many cities began to build sporting grounds, playing fields and public swimming baths and also advocated, in selected areas, the use of therapeutic nude sunbathing.[129] Laws in Germany did not prevent social nudism provided it was not done in public (attendance at a club or in the home was preferred), however, cities were permitted to reserve an

[124] In Germany this movement was called the *Naturheilbewegung*.
[125] Toepfer, *op. cit.* Welby, *The Naked Truth*, *op. cit.*, uses the term 'actino-therapy' for the treatment of disease by light (p. 29).
[126] Bourke, J. (1996) 'Inspecting', in *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*. London: Reaktion pp. 171 – 209.
[127] Krüger, *op. cit.*
[128] Graves and Hodge, *op. cit.*; Fussell, *op. cit.*
[129] *Ibid.* Berlin was one of the leading cities in this movement.

area - often unfenced - for nudists.[130]

A good example of such practice is the North Sea resort of Sylt which quickly obtained the reputation of being the 'island of the nudists' and has been described as 'Germany's answer to St Tropez'.[131] Of the 600,000 holiday makers today, 200,000 are estimated to be naturists. The white sandy beaches where Leni Riefenstahl shot the opening montage for her film *Olympiad* in 1936 are now populated by the wealthy German nouveau riche who sport Rolex watches and don cashmere sweaters in chillier weather. Though still a naturist resort, the contemporary emphasis is on 'wellness and beauty'.[132] In time, many of Germany's major parks and lakes also became the setting for large numbers of nudists. The only similar example in Britain was the introduction of mixed bathing at The Serpentine in Hyde Park by George Lansbury c. 1926, later affectionately known as 'Lansbury's Lido'.[133] Lansbury believed that setting up an official nudist colony in Hyde Park would have been 'crazy' as all London would want to watch and 'one wouldn't be able to see the park for people'.[134] In general, it was permitted for children to bathe naked although, as demonstrated by Figure 4.6, this was strictly regulated. Later mixed, but not naked bathing, of adults was permitted.[135] Laws surrounding nudity in Britain remain subjective.[136]

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[130] Fussell, *op. cit.*

[131] Krüger, *op. cit.*

[132] Bussmann, T. (23/10/1999) 'Naked Ambition', *The Guardian: Travel,* p. 2; Traynor, I. (21/07/99) 'Inside story: cold war over sunshine strip', *The Guardian* p. 4. For a memoir of Sylt see Black, D. (Spring 2000) 'Witt is de sand...": A Frisian memoir', *British Naturism* 143 pp. 18 – 19.

[133] Lansbury had become the First Commissioner of works with authority over all public parks although C. E. M. Joad was also a sympathetic campaigner.

[134] Fryer, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

[135] Bandy, *op. cit.* A certain amount of mixed naked bathing was allowed in England in the nineteenth century, but was forbidden as numbers increased and stringent laws were eventually passed regarding the wearing of bathing costumes. Cooper, *op cit.*

[136] Cooper, *op. cit.*, notes that the legal position of naturists in Britain has always been complicated. Whilst naturism is not illegal, indecency is. The problem resides in ascertaining what constitutes 'indecency', for example, the 1824 Vagrancy Act made it an offence for men to reveal the front (but not the back) of their body to women. Local by-laws generally compel bathers to wear swimming costumes (Note 11, p. 272). For a general discussion see NUK (1999) 'Naturism and the law', http://www.gravis.demon.co.uk/naturist/pages/begin/legal1.htm.

Figure 4.6 Naked youths being chased by a police woman, Hyde Park, London (1926). From Hulton Picture Co.

The natural healing movement reached Britain somewhat later than Germany. In 1921 *The New Statesman* published a series of articles by a writer – I suggest Dr. Caleb Williams Saleeby - using the pseudonym 'Lens', which advocated the exposure of the entire body to the sun and air.[137] Following a visit to Dr Rollier's clinic in Leysin, Lens stated that he had become convinced of the benefits that could be gained from sun treatments. Swiss physician August Rollier began to experiment with sunlight in the treatment of tubercular patients at his clinic in 1903.[138] A small place at an altitude of 1,450 metres in the Alps Vaudoises and sheltered from the north wind, Leysin had long been a resort for consumptives.[139] By 1921 Dr. Rollier had almost a thousand patients in more than thirty clinics all built with balconies facing south. Here, the patients were

[137] A number of the paragraphs published in *The New Statesman* are duplicated in Saleeby's 'Foreword' to Surén's *Man and Sunlight*. Saleeby was also instrumental in the translation and publication of Rollier's *Heliotherapy* in the early 1920s. Rollier, H. A. (1923) *Heliotherapy*. London: Oxford Medical Publications; Bourke, *op. cit.*; Bandy, *op. cit.*; Surén, H. (1927) *Man and Sunlight* (translated by David Arthur Jones). Slough: Sollux.
[138] Fussel, *op. cit.* See Rollier, *op. cit.*.
[139] Lens (15/10/1921) 'Modern Sun-worship: III - Its high priest and his temple', *The New Statesman* pp. 42 - 43.

Figure 4.7 'Outdoor Cure', a class of pupils raking hay in the open air at Dr. Rollier's Sun School in Switzerland. From the Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

thought to be cured by the action of the light on the skin through gradual exposure of the whole body. The patients were also encouraged to breathe pure air, eat fresh food free from the chance of further infection and were provided with the general apparatus of orthopædic surgery. Rollier detested overfeeding and prohibited meat and alcohol. Cereals, milk, fruit and vegetables were staples though Cod Liver Oil, famously tagged 'bottled sunlight' due to its high Vitamin D content, was not used.[140] To breathe pure air free from city contaminants was doubtless an advantage (see Figure 4.7), as was the removal of the threat of massive and repeated infection, however, it was sunlight that was believed to be *the* essential therapeutic agent.

Reviewing Rollier's clinics in one *New Statesman* article titled 'Modern Sun-worship: IV - Its rewards and warnings', Lens stated that the reward for the modern sun-worshiper was the prevention and cure of what he called the 'diseases of darkness'.[141] These included anything from diseases such as tuberculosis and other pulmonary

infections, to rickets, bronchitis, head colds and rheumatism, to a condition generally recognised as 'urban anæmia'.[142] In the same article he commented upon the effects of the abolition of coal smoke in New York in 1905. The 'restoration of sunlight' had been followed by a halving of the death rate from pulmonary tuberculosis in the following fourteen years. In comparison, the cities of Chicago and Philadelphia which still burned soft coal were 'hatefully dark' and 'abominably dirty'. This was a subject which also met 'neglect' and 'indifference' in 'blackened Britain' and Lens called for reform in the laws regarding smoke emissions and 'other noxious substances', building development, and the atmosphere in schools stating;

> the shameful death-rates, especially during the winter, from our diseases of darkness, the general lowering of vitality and *joie de vivre*, the gloomy scenes and the uniform sombre colour of the clothes in the streets - all these things lead to a regular hibernal escape from our cities on the part of all who can effect it.[143]

As noted in Chapter Two, the rich or well-to-do went to the Riviera and Switzerland whilst invalids and delicate children were sent to Bournemouth or convalescent homes at the seaside or in the country.[144] Everyone who could escaped the towns, though Lens' main concern was that the overwhelming majority could not escape. Between ten

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[140] Medical Correspondent (22/05/1928a) 'Sunlight and other vitamins: categories and functions', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xiii.
[141] Lens (22/10/1921) 'Modern Sun-worship: IV - Its rewards and warnings', *The New Statesman* pp. 71 – 72.
[142] On the effects of sunlight on rickets see Medical Correspondent (22/05/1928b) 'Sunlight and the skin', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xiii; Huldschinsky, Dr. K. (22/05/1928b) 'Open-air culture in Germany', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xxvii.
[143] Lens (12/11/1921) 'More light', *The New Statesman* pp. 162 - 164 (p. 163); quote in Lens, 'Modern Sun-worship: II', *op. cit.*, p. 71.
[144] One Russian doctor took this a step further in his conviction that, in thinking too much of the mountain and sea air, people had overlooked the sky. Yet, nowhere could be better for the treatment of ailments than a 'balloon hospital'. The problems of this venture would be 'purely technical' such as the inability to transport mail and the cost. However, such a hospital would offer a unique variety of ray treatments and doctors would 'joyously' write out prescriptions for wealthy invalids 'advising a close approach to the sun for influenza or a prolonged course of moon ray treatment for the mind and sending their ailing and enfeebled patients on a long and nourishing cruise along the Milky Way'. Anon (30/05/1929) 'The sky as a spa', *The Times* p. 13.

and twelve thousand people died each year in Britain from so-called 'surgical tuberculosis' alone.

In 1932 *The Times* published a letter, signed amongst others by George Bernard Shaw, Julian Huxley, Vera Brittain, C. E. M. Joad and Hull novelist and social reformer Winifred Holtby, advocating sunbathing and speaking out against the 'misguided morality' within contemporary society.[145] They wrote,

> [i]t is becoming manifest to the observant that this nation is rapidly awakening to the fact that so-called 'sun-bathing' or to be more correct 'active air-bathing' is extremely beneficial to the health and happiness of the indoor worker, and further that the discarding of all but a minimum of clothing for outdoor exercises and certain sports materially adds to their enjoyment. We have constantly before us the evidence of high medical authorities that, in spite of the development of medical science, the health of people in general and school-children in particular does not materially improve. These authors, however, are satisfied that it would be definitely improved if more light and fresh air were allowed to act directly on the skins of indoor workers and school-children. Besides improving the general health, these simple methods would bring about a sensational reduction in the incidence of rickets, dental decay, maternal mortality, tuberculosis, etc.[146]

Tuberculosis (hearafter TB) was by far the most deadly ailment throughout the inter-war period, however, contemporary treatments were pitifully inadequate, a shameful fact

[145] Margolis, *op. cit.*

reflected in the mortality records of British sanatoria. Although Lens was a supporter of experimental vaccination and the work of those such as the French bacteriologist Dr. Calmette, he repeatedly stated his belief in natural methods and exposure to sunlight as the ideal way to treat TB. Rather than concentrating on the 'surgical show', attention had to be focused on more natural treatments such as at Leysin where surgery had been abolished.[147] For Lens, the custom of opening the patient's lesion, thus making an entry for secondary infection, was an 'indefensible barbarism' in the light of Leysin.

One correspondent who wished to temper Lens' enthusiasm, however, was W. J. Benedictus. He worried that, although Rollier's results were 'magnificent', Lens conveyed a slightly false impression to the non-scientific or non-medical reader.[148] Whilst Rollier did treat tubercular infections by the sun cure, the only pulmonary cases he received were those incidental to some other tubercular infection. By far the most widespread, and the cause of greatest mortality, pulmonary TB could not in fact be cured with the direct rays of the sun alone. Instead, Benedictus directed attention towards the 'Sanatorium Populaire' where hundreds of cases of pulmonary TB had been successfully treated by Dr. Burnend's 'fresh air cure', specially protected from the sun's direct rays. Regarding Lens's claims of progress at Leysin, Benedictus warned against 'quick cure' propaganda;

> exaggeration should be studiously avoided [...] Let slums and overcrowding be abolished; let people be taught not be afraid of fresh air; let there be a compulsory medical examination of everybody yearly, by competent

[146] Badley, J. H., Bibby, H. P., Sloan Chesser MD, E., Churchill, LCC, S., Coppard, A. E., Flugel, J. C., Gibbing, S. R., Haire, N., Hotlby, W., Housmann, L., Hope-Jones, W., Huxley, J. S., Joad, C. E. M., Jordan, A. C., Mayo, M., Mitchinson, N., Nichols, B., Rollier, A., Russell, D., Shaw, G. B. and Vaughan, K. (18/03/1932) 'Sun Bathing: Benefits of Light and Air', *The Times* p. 10.

[147] Lens, 'Modern Sun-worship: II', *op. cit.*, p. 71; Lens, 'Modern Sun-worship: III', *op. cit.*

[148] Benedictus, W. J. (12/11/1921) 'Modern Sun-worship', *The Times: Letters to the Editor* pp. 165 – 6.

> medical officers; let all those suffering from tuberculosis - rich and poor alike - be in a position to obtain the best advice from specialists who have spent their lives studying the disease and its remedies in all its branches, not excepting heliotherapy [...] do not raise false hopes that by a few jabs of a hypodermic needle, a few visits to the radiologist, or a few weeks' sun worship, an almost certain cure can be obtained. Then and then only, will some progress be made towards the answering of the question, "Comment lutter contre la tuberculose?".[149]

Another correspondent, F. Ackroyd, also pointed out that one didn't have to go to Germany or Switzerland to obtain sunlight treatment.[150] The French Riviera offered similar opportunities with sun-cure establishments at Hyères (Dr. Jaubert), Cannes (Dr. Faux) and Nice (Dr. Montennis) and a start had also been made in England by establishments such as the Riposo Health Hydro, St. Leonards Park, Hastings.

The combined use of sunlight and fresh air as treatment for various ailments was very popular in both Britain and Germany. In 1891, there were 131 natural healing sanatoria and air bathing institutions in Germany and by 1913, over 380.[151] The Natural Healing Movement advocated both water cures, for which one had to undress partially, and the exposure of the completely naked body to the fresh air. The open-air regime known as the *Luft-Leigekur* (due to its German origins) was used in Britain in the treatment of pulmonary TB until the 1950s when triple drug chemotherapy was introduced.[152] In the 1930s sunbathing was encouraged as a public health measure and heliotherapy was used to treat TB, rickets, diphtheria, pneumonia, burns, varicose

[149] *Ibid.*, p. 166.
[150] Ackroyd, F. (05/11/1921) 'Modern sun-worship', *The New Statesman* p. 132.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[152] Campbell, M. (1999) 'From cure chair to *Chaise Longue*: medical treatment and the form of the modern recliner', *Journal of Design History* 12 (4) pp. 327 – 343.

ulcers, the bone infection osteomylitis, septic abscesses, anaemia and fractures.[153] In 1923 Saleeby published *Sunlight and Health* and founded the Sunlight League a year later.[154] A site devoted to sunbathing was opened by the Sunlight League, in conjunction with St Pancreas Borough Council, near to the Gloucester Gate in Regents Park on 18th August 1930 and comprised of a brick shelter (provided by an anonymous donor) and railed off enclosure.[155] Although initially intended for children from two to five years it was hoped to eventually extend this to fourteen years of age and around fifty children were present at the opening. The Sunlight League provided a salary for a fully trained supervisor while the Borough Council recruited the children from inner city districts and supervised the administration. The reasoning was that the 'normal' child population was sun-starved and subsequently less healthy and mentally alert than it should have been, the sunbathing area would allow children from congested areas of the neighbourhood to rest and play under hygienic conditions in an attempt to mitigate slum conditions. It is often said that the British began to take up naturism in a similar effort to get away from the sunless streets and fetid housing of industrialised cities.[156]

The institutionalisation of these ideas can be seen in the growth of open-air schools throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, when there was an increasing recognition that conventional education was also insufficient for the needs of many school age children in urban communities.[157] In addition to crowded classrooms, a child's health and surrounding social conditions made it impossible for them to benefit

[153] We now know that sunlight does aid the human body in the manufacture of Vitamin D which is essential for growth, teeth, bones and the immune system. In Britain today we only obtain one quarter of the recommended daily dose from our diet (i.e. margarine, dairy spreads, fatty fish, cereal, eggs, enriched foods) and medical research suggests that – in moderation – sunlight may be good for osteoporosis, rickets, TB, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, psoriasis and mental health. Bartlett, J. (13/06/00) 'Burning issues', *The Guardian (G2)* http://www.guardian.co.uk/health/story/0,3605,331270,00.html; Wise, *op. cit.*

[154] Bourke, *op. cit.*; Bandy, *op. cit.*

[155] Anon (19/08/1930) 'Sun-bathing for children', *The Times* p. 7; Sutherland (09/09/1930) 'Sun-bathing for children', *The Times* p. 8; See also Anon (17/09/1929) 'Bathing in the parks', *The Times* p. 7.

[156] Wise, *op. cit.*

[157] Turner, D. A. (1972) 'The Open-Air School Movement in Sheffield', *History of Education* 1 (1) pp. 58 – 80.

from the schooling provided. The initial idea behind open-air schools was to provide treatment for, and to aid the recovery of, children debilitated by TB and similar diseases.[158] The concept of open-air schooling was developed in Germany and the first open-air school opened in Charlottenburg near Berlin in 1904.[159] No doubt influenced by these developments, the first open-air school in England was opened in 1907 at Bostall Wood, Woolwich, and was followed a year later by schools in Bradford, Halifax, Norwich and subsequently Sheffield, Birmingham and Bristol.[160] Much of the impetus for open-air schooling in Britain came from TB specialists and the anti-TB campaign set up as a result of the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration report (1904) discussed in Chapter Two. The National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis (NAPT) also produced the film *Air and Sun* (1921) to publicise the benefits of open-air schools. Light and air were thought to be as necessary to the child as to the plant and the film highlighted 'the benefit to be derived from air and sun, not only as a means of special treatment for the diseased, but generally in strengthening and hardening the delicate and weakly, by a return for a time to a natural life which, owing to the restrictions of modern conditions, has been largely lost'.[161] The movement gained momentum through the inter-war years when, with backing from Senior Medical Officers and influential advocates such as the former Education Minister Sir John Gorst, the open-air school system was adopted with great enthusiasm.[162] At their peak in the late 1930s there were one hundred and fifty-five open-air schools (one

[158] Bryder, L. (1992) 'Wonderlands of Buttercup, Clover and Daises': Tuberculosis and the Open-Air School Movement in Britain, 1907 - 1939', in Cooter, R. (ed) *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare, 1880 - 1940.* London: Routledge pp. 72 – 95.
[159] Newman notes that a prototype school founded in 1902 by William Mather was based in Salford, Manchester. Newman, G. (1939) *The Building of a Nation's Health.* London: MacMillan and Co.
[160] *Ibid.*; Turner, *op. cit.*; Bryder, *op. cit.*
[161] Bryder, *op. cit.*, p. 80. The NAPT also produced a revised handbook, *Handbook on Tuberculosis Scheme in Great Britain and Ireland*, quinquenially from 1919.
[162] Newman, *op. cit.*

Figure 4.8 'Fresh Air Cure', pupils at Springfield House Open Air School, Clapham Common, London (November 1932). From The Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

hundred and one day and fifty-four residential) in Britain catering for some 16,000 - 16,500 children.[163]

Although school days were usually long and highly organised, the open-air school curriculum tended to be tailored to the specific needs of the pupils and often followed a programme of smaller classes, shorter and more concentrated study periods, open-air geography, gardening, handicrafts and manual work, conjoined with games and physical training, sunbathing, dancing, singing and wholesome food.[164] Much value was placed on the cultivation of good habits such as self-discipline and personal hygiene. Each child was allocated a blanket, rain cape, toothbrush, mug and towels, and were encouraged to shower twice a week with soap and loofahs provided by the school.[165] Experiments in British open-air schools noted that the children showed a marked increase in physical fitness, muscle tone improved and bodily activity increased, as did

[163] Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 229; Bryder, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[164] Bryder, *op. cit.*; Medical Correspondent (22/05/1928c) 'Schools in the open-air', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xiv.
[165] Turner, *op. cit.*

resistance to infections (see Figure 4.8).[166] More remarkable were the recorded mental changes, the children apparently became more competent at mental tasks, more vivacious and cheerful, happy and high spirited, full of fun and not infrequently more mischievous. In order to ensure that these standards were maintained in all areas of a child's life, teachers and health visitors regularly checked on them at home and, when it was impossible to influence the home environment, residential schools were recommended where constant supervision worked to prevent further 'deviancy'.[167] Thus the benefits of open-air schools were thought to extend further than the restoration of the individual child's physical health.[168] Such values were also extended to the child's home life where they were to adopt the role of 'health missionaries'.[169] Newman noted that 'school children returning to their homes [had] made a new demand for reform at home, and parents and children [had] together entered into a new kingdom at their doorstep - daylight saving and open-air'.[170] The possibilities open-air schooling presented to the 'normal' child was also apparent and, as shown in Figure 4.9, a wealth of schools began to accommodate these new ideas.[171] The advent of open-air schools also marked a new age in school design that moved away from the traditional nineteenth century 'central hall' format.[172] Schools were increasingly built with a southern aspect to make full use of natural light and in a pavilion style to allow cross-ventilation.[173] Those schools built in the traditional fashion and unable to adapt used playgrounds and parks to conduct lessons.

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[166] Medical Correspondent, 'Schools in the open air', *op. cit.*
[167] Bryder, *op. cit.*; Turner, *op. cit.*
[168] Bryder, *op. cit.*
[169] *Ibid.*
[170] Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
[171] Bryder, *op. cit.*; Medical Correspondent, 'Schools in the open air', *op. cit.*
[172] Bryder, *op. cit.*
[173] Turner, *op. cit.*; Bryder, *op. cit.*

Figure 4.9 'Healthy Living', a warm blanket and hot milk for the pupils at work in St. James Park, London (February 1936). From The Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

Though exposure to the sun and fresh air undoubtedly had a beneficial effect on the juvenile constitution, as at Leysin, it is unlikely that this was the only factor contributing to the recorded 'successes' of open air schools. Whilst the provision of fresh air was carried over from open-air schools to ordinary schools, the provision of food was not. Furnishing children with three meals a day was an important part of the open-air school system and all descriptions of the schools refer to the provision of 'good food', however, this was usually mentioned *secondary* to their wide-ranging outdoor activities.[174] Although virtually all the children in open-air schools showed an increase in height and weight well above average, improved nutrition was not seen to be the most significant contributory factor to their improved health.[175] Bryder notes that the schools were seen primarily as character-building institutions training in 'natural' living, and it was this emphasis on fresh air or 'communion with nature' which was carried over to general education despite the fact that it did not, in all probability, account for the health

[174] Bryder, *op. cit.*; Turner, *op. cit.*

improvements noted as a result in open-air school attendance.

The open-air school movement flourished throughout Europe and the United States in the inter-war period and was particularly popular in France. By 1937, sixteen nations had developed open-air schools and had held three international congresses in Paris, Brussels and Bielefeld.[176] However, though popular in their time, by 1939 the British open-air school movement was in decline. This cannot be singularly attributed to inclemency of the British climate as a similar decrease was also evident across Europe. In actual fact, a number of factors conspired to herald the demise of the open-air school. There was a general improvement in the health of all school age children partly due to improved housing conditions and the decrease in the average family size. The schools' spartan conditions (such as no heating) were, unsurprisingly, unpopular, and finally, many of the open-air school methods were simply unpractical when transferred to ordinary schools.[177] For example, in Sheffield, just as the open-air principle had begun to penetrate into the general school system, the School Management Committee was beginning to have second thoughts. While the committee had no doubt of the medicinal benefits of an education in the open air, they 'expressed the opinion that playgrounds and parks cannot usually be regarded as satisfactory classrooms'.[178] It was physically impossible to have all lessons in the open and much time was wasted moving equipment to and from parks.

[175] Turner, *op. cit.*; Bryder, *op. cit.*
[176] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
[177] *Ibid.*
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 70

The Physical Culture Movement; 'He who rests, rusts'[179]

Just as modern dance influenced the German nudist movement, the impetus towards naturism in both Britain and Germany was partly fuelled by the burgeoning physical culture movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Whilst in dance nudity stimulated a feeling of lightness and freedom in the body and mind, by exercising nude one could observe the movements of the muscles and joints and highlight areas where one might improve one's physique.[180] Dutch-American Bess M. Mensendieck (1864 - 1957), the first woman to publish a physical culture book in Germany, believed that nudity was fundamental in enhancing one's body consciousness 'which motivated all activity that made the female body strong, healthy and beautiful', and quoted Nietzsche to her students.[181] *Körperkultur der Frau* (1906) contained seventy-eight photographs of Mensendieck performing static exercises, posed as if a Greek statue. It emphasised figure and posture control and exercised a pervasive influence over German female gym instructors right into the 1930s.[182] Mensendieck believed that humans had lost much of their 'natural movement' – only in children and people still 'close to nature' could one find truly expressive movement - for her nudity in movement was a means to self-control.[183]

As noted in Chapter Two, the demand for labour and the economic constraints of wartime significantly aroused public interest in the composition of the body during the 1920s and 1930s.[184] A popular phrase during this period was '*mens sana in corpore*

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[179] Menzler, D. (1936) *Physical Culture for Women* (translation of *Körperschulung der Frau* by Pidcock, G. D. H.). London: John Lane the Bodley Head. In Germany physical culture was termed *Körperkultur*.
[180] Parmelee, *op. cit.*
[181] Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
[182] Krüger, *op. cit.*; Toepfer, *op. cit.*
[183] For a discussion on Mensendieck see Krüger, *op. cit.*, pp. 145 - 7 and Toepfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 – 44.
[184] Bourke, *op. cit.*

sano sit' (a healthy mind in a healthy body).[185] The healthy body was not simply attained by the use of natural healing procedures on the passive body but also by active physical exercise. Physical culture was a pre-requisite in the fight against disease and impairment, and the drive towards industrial and economic efficiency.[186] Even in times of peace 'the British body was presented as competing with other (foreign) bodies' and there was increased pressure to do something for one's own body, as it was readily compared to others 'at home' and abroad.[187] Indeed, the fear of losing one's employment due to a lack of fitness must have spurred many to experiment with physical culture.[188]

Chapter Two also documented the concerns voiced in Britain regarding the militarisation of physical culture. Whilst physical culture undoubtedly made the disciplined body susceptible to state interests; 'trained and responsive to its efforts towards bureaucratic efficiency, mass production, and military obedience', it is not enough to dismiss it as merely serving the state and militaristic concerns, 'peddling "false consciousness" to the duped masses'.[189] In embracing the modern culture of the body (both physically and ideologically) the individual also could attempt to fashion for themselves a 'distinctive' and 'positive' social identity.[190] Boscagli states that the,

> popularity of the bodybuilders body was fuelled by and contributed to Edwardian England's enthusiasm for physical culture: prowess and fitness were at the core of an over-determined cluster of meanings that associated the image of a strong muscular body with ideals of manliness, health,

185 Yapp, N. (1998) *The Hulton Getty Picture Collection: 1930s*. Könemann: Köln; Krüger, *op. cit.*
186 Garb, *op. cit*; Boscagli, *op. cit.*; Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
187 Bourke, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
188 Budd, *op. cit.*
189 Boscagli, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Gamman, L. and Marshment, M. (eds) (1998) 'Introduction', *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*. London: The Women's Press Ltd. pp. 1 – 7.

heroism and morality, ideals through which eugenics tried to redress the fear of racial and natural decay.[191]

The development of a 'heroic' manly body was an ideal way of erasing or concealing a man's imagined, or actual, lack of self-control or influence within society, or indeed, an individuals' lack of political power.[192] As we shall see in Chapters Five and Six, the male employees and workers of the pre-World War One period, regimented in Taylorised offices and assembly-line workplaces and deprived of the traditional prestige accorded to them *qua* men, were offered a new image of powerful masculinity in the popular replicas of the Nietzschean superman.[193]

It is important to note, however, that the Ling system of Swedish gymnastics, popular in Britain at this time did not have as much popularity in Germany as the system devised by Jens P. Müller.[194] Müller had tremendous international commercial success after 1904 and his work was translated into twenty-four languages. Whilst retaining the scientific appeal of Ling's system, Müller's programme could be completed by any individual in five to fifteen minutes per day. Müller criticised Ling's system for being too vigorous for the weak and not energetic enough for the strong.[195] For him, fresh air and exercise were the keys to health and, although he himself practised nudism, he did not make this the focus of his system. This highlights a central difference between 'physical culture' (*Körperkultur*) and 'free physical culture' (*Freikörperkultur*); in the former, nudity was accidental whereas it was the latter's primary emphasis.[196] One must be aware that neither of these systems were particularly liberating for women as 'much

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[190] *Ibid.*
[191] Boscagli, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[192] Budd, *op. cit.*
[193] *Ibid.*
[194] See Castle, E. B. (09/10/1931) ''Physical education: systems in Sweden and Denmark', *The Times* p. 8.
[195] Budd, *op. cit.* Krüger provides an extensive review of Müller's work (pp. 144 - 5).

of physical culture was to do with the demonstration of strength, it was a field where, for biological reasons, men were always superior to women'.[197] Chapters Five and Six will expand this discussion within the context of Hans Surén's guidelines for the training of male and female bodies.

Citizenship and morality

The final section of this chapter discusses issues of morality and the extent to which naturist practice was accepted in Britain and Germany. Probably the most notable event in the history of British naturism occurred in June 1930 when forty mixed-sex naturists were attacked by a mob of 200 people at the Welsh Harp Reservoir in Hendon, North London.[198] Sunbathing had been introduced into the area around 1921 by a man adopting the pseudonym 'Edgar Bray'.[199] The number of visitors to the reservoir gradually expanded until Bray formed the 'The Sun Ray Health Club' and 'New Health Society' of which a Captain H. C. Vincent became leader. Vincent was a colourful character, who wanted nudism to emulate the militancy of the suffragettes and, a regular visitor to Hyde Park, at one point he planned to lead a procession of 200 nude men and women.[200] He gained a notorious reputation, and caused a great deal of friction within the naturist community by attracting 'unwelcome publicity' and by being arrested on more than one occasion.[201] He was arrested in 1927 under the Parks Regulations Act (1872) for exposing the upper part of his body in Hyde Park and for indecent exposure

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[196] *Ibid.*
[197] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[198] Margolis, *op. cit.*; Jones, G. (Winter 1991) 'Angry mob attacks nudists - and a famous Naturist club is born...', *British Naturism* p. 33; Fryer, *op. cit.*; Thompson, *op. cit.* Mrs Marian Lili (founder and secretary of the National Sun and Air Association) was reportedly the first woman to practise nudism in mixed company. Welby, *The Naked Truth*, *op. cit.*; Gray, *op. cit.*
[199] Bandy, *op. cit.*
[200] Thompson, *op. cit.*

under the Vagrancy Act (1824) and Town Police Clauses Act (1847).[202] He was arrested again in 1930 and charged with 'soliciting alms', found guilty of advertising books and pamphlets on two separate dates and given thirty-two days imprisonment. He was arrested two years later for the same offence and imprisoned for a further twenty-one days.[203]

Until June 1930, the Welsh Harp bathers had remained 'decent' by wearing bathing slips, however, one weekend they voted to discard their attire completely. Word spread rapidly of this daring social experiment and the bathers were joined by other naturists. It must be noted, however, that the bathers were not the only ones to frequent the banks of the reservoir;

> people came from all parts of London to see them. There [was] also an extraordinary increase in the number of women bringing their dogs to the water's edge. Married women come (sic) with their babies and perambulators, having to negotiate barbed wire in order to get there. Girls of various ages, chiefly in two, come everyday and last week, at Hendon, a man received news that his wife had been seen watching the sunbathers since 9.30 a.m., it then being about 6.30 p.m.[204]

However, the change in policy angered the usually tolerant local residents and the experiment turned into a riot. The bathers defiantly stood their ground but, more significantly, they were backed by the police who moved the residents on (on the grounds that the bathers were on private property, 'out of sight' and not interfering with

[201] Farrar, M. (Summer 2000) 'Captain Vincent: A naturist pioneer, or a mixed blessing', *British Naturism* 144 p. 18.
[202] *Ibid.*
[203] Bandy, *op. cit.*
[204] Alan Sykes (narrator) cited in Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

anyone) and by the local press (because some of those beaten in the affray were women).[205] When the skirmishes continued, Willesden Council eventually gave the bathers one hour to evacuate the site. They first relocated to Hendon Recreation Ground from which they were later evicted by police on behalf on Hendon Council; they then relocated to an area of land owned by the Canal Company and were again ordered to go. Although initially unfruitful, the riot did leave a legacy in the establishment of more clubs such as 'The Gymnic Association of Great Britain' and 'The Sunfolk Society' founded in 1931 by Welsh Harp veteran W. R. D. Martin in Bricket Wood, near St Albans, Hertfordshire.[206]

Nudity in Western society

From the imagined start of human experience in the West, human identity has been inseparable from the theme of the personal body and self-consciousness as a physical creature. Warner states that there is an intrinsic ambivalence in the Christian tradition, between the 'innocent natural body' and the 'tainted carnal body', between 'divestiture as a sign of virtue' and the naked body as an 'occasion of sin', between 'denudation as a gesture of ascetic renunciation' and nakedness as an 'invitation to wantonness'.[207] As indicated in Chapter Two, this dichotomy has had particular relevance in the conception

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205 Jones, *op. cit.*

206 *Ibid.*, p. 33. Spielplatz is also located in Bricket Wood and the remnants of the Welsh Harp group originally met there. When a five acre site became available next door the members bought it and the Sun Folk Society have been located there ever since.

207 Warner, M. (1985) 'Nuda Veritas', *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*. London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd. pp. 294 - 328 (p. 307).

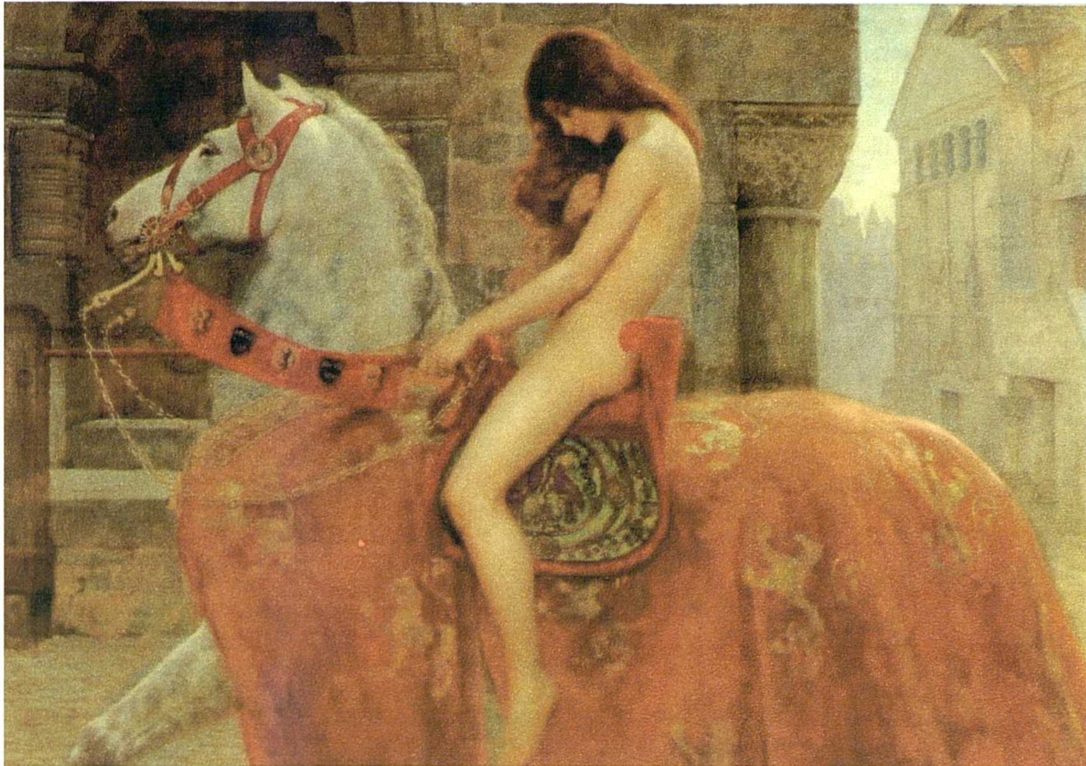

Figure 4.10 *Lady Godiva* by John Collier (n.d.a.).

of the female body as 'nurturing mother' or 'wanton whore'. In the story of Godiva depicted in Figure 4.10, for example, the Lady's nakedness plays on the Christian association between nakedness and purity, virtue and renunciation.[208] However, from the genital awareness indicated by the fig leaves of Eden, to Noah's exposure to his sons whilst intoxicated, nakedness in the West has largely been equated with shame, indecency and immorality.[209] The naked figure, especially indoors or in a city setting, stirs thoughts of the natural universe outside the confines of rational, 'decent' civilised society, and can readily issue an invitation to erotic fantasy and escape.[210] For example,

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[208] *Ibid.* The legend of Godiva first appeared in the Chronicle of Roger of Wendover in the thirteenth century. It is thought that the report contains mythical elements, as it also includes the story of a youth who mistakenly marries a statue. However, Lady Godiva (c.0980 - 1067) was a historical women documented in the Domesday book as a Staffordshire landowner. In Roger's account, Godiva longs to lighten the toll of taxation imposed by her husband Leofric III, Sixth Earl of Mercia (0975 - 1057), on the people of Coventry. When she continues to defy his interests he challenges her to 'ride naked, before all the people, through the market of the town'. Godiva duly took up the challenge, performed it and succeeded, thus persuading Leofric to deliver Coventry from the toll. Warner states that a more recent interpretation argues for a more metaphorical interpretation of Leofric's decree in that he simply urged Godiva to strip herself of her worldly goods and give them away in the market place. Peeping Tom only entered the story in the seventeenth century (pp. 307 – 311). See also ISD Inc. (2000) 'Lady Godiva: An Early Tax Protestor', http://www.isdesigners.com/lady.html; Fryer, *op. cit.*

[209] Warner, *op. cit.*; Nisbet, *op. cit.*, Note 188.

[210] Warner, *op. cit.*

Figure 4.11 *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Édouard Manet (1862 – 1863). From Fried (1996) Plate 3.

the naked woman in Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Figure 4.11) provokes the painting's frission because her companions are not only clothed, but clad in city dress. The naked woman out-of-doors seems to participate in the very essence of nature, to become herself one of its fruits. This is a theme that I return to in Chapter Six.

In an extension of this, nakedness is also characterised as that which is wild, or outside culture.[211] For example, Ewing demonstrates that in nineteenth century texts such as the *Photographic News*, images showing the nudity of people such as the Zulus were postulated as proof of their 'primitive morality'.[212] This was a period in which phrenology, physiognomy and 'sciences' that tried to 'read' the physical features of the body to determine the inner constitution were very popular. Nakedness was considered

211 Ewing, *op. cit.*
212 *Ibid.*

Figure 4.12 'The Nuer men protect themselves against the insects which infest the swamps by rubbing their bodies with ash [...] The women, however, only use ash for certain dances. This girl is wearing a necklace made of giraffe-hair'. From *The Geographical Magazine* (1936).

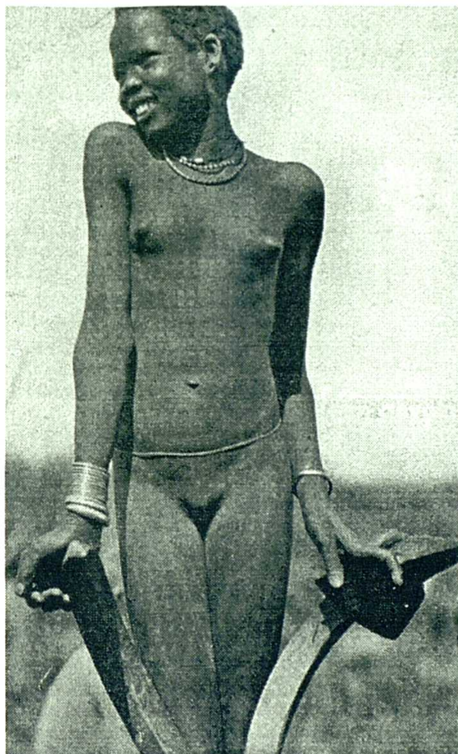

Figure 4.13 'The Nuer generally go completely naked (unmarried people, always), simply hanging ornaments about them – but missionaries are trying to stamp out this 'immoral' nakedness by clothing them in cheap cotton bought from Arab traders'. From *The Geographical Magazine* (1936).

the natural condition of savage races that were closer to nature and their animal ancestry, thus their nakedness was often equated with ugliness and looseness of morals.[213] Figure 4.12 shows two illustrations from an article published by the *Geographical Magazine* in 1936.[214] In both, it is primarily the Nuer's nudity that marks them out as different from Western society and their nakedness becomes a central feature of their 'primitive' or more 'natural' way of life. In Figure 4.13 the contrast between the Nuer's nudity and Western sensibilities regarding 'moral' and 'immoral' nudity is shown explicitly by the missionaries' attempts to enforce clothing regulations.[215] These images connect my research to wider geographical debates regarding nature, culture, gender and the 'Other'. For example, in the pages of magazines such as the *National Geographic* a perceived lack of modesty in dress amongst black women served to place them closer to nature.[216] Occasionally, their skin colour was darkened during the photographic printing process in order to make them 'more native' and to render their nakedness more acceptable to American audiences.[217]

It is important to remember that such explicit photographs were released on the eve of dress reform for both men and women, when there were still few opportunities for scrutinising either the human body or images of it, when nakedness was alternately fascinating and disturbing.[218] Koetzle remarks that the history of nude photography is

[213] *Ibid.*
[214] Bernatzik, H. A. (1936) 'Tribesmen of the White Nile', *The Geographical Magazine* 3 (1) pp. 1 – 16.
[215] The author's view on this matter is unclear as the images are not mentioned directly in the text.
[216] Lutz, C. A. and Collins, J. L. (1993) *Reading National Geographic*. London: University of Chicago Press (especially p. 172). It is interesting to note that the rise of naked sun bathing on Mediterranean beaches from the mid-twentieth century onwards was not documented in the *National Geographic* (p. 115). See also Atkinson, D. and Watterson, J. (1997) 'Dictating Geography: The *Geographical Magazine* as Imperial Archive', paper presented at the *Inaugural International Conference of Critical Geography*, Vancouver; Montgomery, S. L. (1994) 'Through a lens, brightly: the world according to *National Geographic*', *Science as Culture* 4 pp. 7 – 46; Rothenberg, T. Y. (1994) 'Voyeurs of Imperialism: *The National Geographic Magazine* before World War II', in Godlewska, A. and Smith, N. (eds) *Geography and Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell pp. 155 - 172
[217] Lutz and Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 82
[218] Ewing, *op. cit*; Koetzle, *op. cit.*

synonymous with the history of people's fascination with the topic.[219] For example, no other pictorial subject has produced such a variety of specialities: from the ethnological interpretation of the body such as the images above to the glamour shot, from nudist photography to the contemporary pin-up.[220] No other photographic field of appreciation has inspired as much desire as it has awakened official wrath: nude photography thus reflects the schizoid relationship that Western culture harbours with respect to the human body.[221]

Aside from ethnographical work, early nude photography was shot exclusively in the studio and could be divided into two main categories: the 'academy figure' and the 'saucy scene'.[222] However, the introduction of more mobile equipment and instantaneous techniques in the 1880s signalled new possibilities for outdoor photography. Naturist photography as a specific genre began to develop in the early 1920s but did not catch on until after World War One. Characterised by outdoor settings and the use of natural light, these open-air nudes did not demonstrate the æsthetic values to which traditional nude photography aspired.[223] Instead, these images displayed a deliberate simplicity (especially on a technical level) intended to distinguish the genre from the sophisticated glamour shots taken in the studio.[224] However, Koetzle notes that the stereotypic motifs they employed soon reappeared elsewhere, in the form of stereocards and postcards, a fact that only served to underscore the erotic significance of the genre.[225] In this sense the camera became an unwelcome intruder, 'a sort of

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[219] Koetzle, *op. cit.*
[220] *Ibid.*
[221] *Ibid.*
[222] *Ibid.*
[223] *Ibid.* For example, in studio work a certain amount of staging was required; 'if artistically oriented work, totally focused as it was on the sitters pose, could afford the simplicity of a neutral background, erotic photographic work, in contrast to this, required an intimately boudoir-like atmosphere in keeping with the taste of the day' (p. 606).
[224] Koetzle, *op. cit.*, locates the ideological roots of naturist photography in the middle-class reform movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which formed as a reaction to industrialisation, urbanisation, housing problems and rationing, etc.
[225] *Ibid.*

peeping Tom presenting the scenes and sights it recorded to a sceptical world all too ready to misinterpret and ridicule'.[226]

A significant cultural tradition within Western society seems to anticipate that when clothing norms break down the result can only be rampant sexual interest, promiscuity, embarrassment, jealousy, and shame.[227] In Western society nakedness,

> strikes a discordant note that disturbs normal social reality. To be naked in a social and not erotic context is odd and disjunctive and it has therefore to be presented in terms of a bounded form of intimacy from which the sexual has been consciously excluded.[228]

Within this context, Naturism is defined as deviant by many because of the naturist's disregard for clothing when in the presence of others, in particular, members of the opposite sex.[229] In Britain and Germany it was rare for naturist clubs and societies to use the words 'naked', 'nude' or 'nakedness' in their title, for as the ardent naturist Reverend Norwood wrote, such words had 'unpleasant associations'.[230] In his advocation of sun and air bathing, Saleeby did not promote nudity *per se* but neither did he make any recommendations regarding dress codes apart from offering advice with regard to sun burn, over-exposure and the protection of sensitive areas such as the head. In Germany, terms such as 'naked', 'nudity' or even 'nude' were considered to have such distorted or unpleasant connotations that terms such as *Lichtklied* ('dressed in

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226 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

227 Weinberg, M. S. (1976b) 'The nudist camp: ways of life and social structure', *Human Organisation* 26 (3) pp. 91 – 99.

228 Twigg, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

229 Weinberg, M. S. (1976a) 'Sexual modesty, social meanings and the nudist camp', *Social Problems* 26 (3) pp. 311 – 318. Lutz and Collins, *op. cit.*, remark that in 'American consumer culture' clothing is a 'social skin'; a means by which an individual can display or conceal their identity (p. 249).

230 Lewinski, *op. cit.*; Bandy, *op. cit.* Bandy highlights the short lived 'Fellowship of the Naked Trust' founded in British India in 1891.

light') or *Freikorperkultur* ('the culture of the free body') were far more popular than *Nacktkutur*.[231] In English, the phrase 'free body culture' was slightly incongruous so the term 'Gymnosophy' was invented and by 1930 had spread rapidly throughout Europe. Parmelee described gymnosophy as a philosophy of nature and cultural evolution which endeavoured to regain what 'mankind' (sic) had lost through civilisation.[232] The philosophy advocated the 'utilisation' and 'enjoyment' of 'every beneficent aspect of nature' and nudity where 'feasible'. For the individual, the philosophy connoted a thoroughgoing change in the outlook upon and mode of life.

In the face of adverse reactions such as the Welsh Harp incident, the pro-activism of Captain Vincent and the deviant connotations which saturated traditional understandings of communal nudity, British naturists adopted (and continue to employ) various strategies in order to continue practising what, to them, was a healthful and morally justifiable pursuit. Therefore, whilst insisting that 'sex was not an issue', naturist clubs went to extraordinary trouble to reduce the likelihood of it happening by attempting to provide a system of meanings and norms which negated these consequences.[233] The rules of admittance to clubs were complex and daunting for new applicants: obligatory false names or first name terms only, professional secrecy, certain codes of inter-personal behaviour, and enforced dress codes.[234] Naturists went to great lengths to insist on the respectability of the movement. Vetting, by questionnaire or interview, was a serious matter and, in general, only couples (with or without children) and single women were welcome, divorcees were not accepted and single men were generally

231 Lewinski, *op. cit.*
232 Parmelee, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 – 16.
233 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 86; Bell and Holliday, *op. cit.*; Weinberg, 'The nudist camp', *op. cit.*
234 Founder members of 'The Camp' all had club names such as Chong and Lorelli (Mark Harold Sorensen and his wife Helen Morley Sorensen), Flang or fflang (Harold Clare Booth), Gart, Moonella, Thweng (Roland Berrill), Tob (Mr L. B.) and Zex (Rex Wellbye). Farrar, *op. cit.*; Thompson, *op. cit.*; Graves and Hodge, *op. cit.*

turned away.[235] As contemporary naturist Stuart recalled;

> when we first joined [...] we had to sign an agreement that you wouldn't divulge your surname to anybody or ask anybody else for their surname [...] you couldn't divulge the whereabouts of the club and it still applies that you wouldn't tell a third party about [someone] being a naturist, that's their affair ... [. . .] it were (sic) totally top secret. (09/07/00)[236]

Whilst one may argue that such policies simply reaffirmed or fuelled traditional stereotypes of naturists as 'odd' and 'secretive', for some naturists the secrecy and protection of the naturist club allowed them to enjoy their pursuit 'free' from shame and accusation. For some naturism was (and still is) a completely separate part of their lives unknown even to their children.[237]

For some people, however, there was a higher price to pay for honesty and Stuart described the experience of a friend who been inadvertently exposed by another naturist on local radio;

> something that he said identified this girl to the radio environment as a naturist and she got drummed out of the Brownies [...] well he didn't positively identify her but he pointed the finger directly at her and she found it grossly embarrassing, and she shouldn't have been put it that position. (09/07/00)

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[235] See Weinberg, 'Sexual modesty', *op. cit.*; Weinberg, M. S. (1970) 'The nudist management of respectability: strategy for, and consequences of, the construction of a situated morality', in Douglas, J. D. (ed) *Deviance and Respectability: The Construction of Moral Meanings*. London: Basic Books Inc.

[236] Naturist clubs still enforce stringent guidelines for membership and behaviour, and are particularly vigilant regarding the dangers of paedophilia and sexual harassment. Stuart did point out, however, that at his club these rules were starting to relax slightly and several members had invited non-naturist friends and family over to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries at the club. All club members were always informed when non-members were entering the club grounds and, in turn, all visitors were explicitly informed that they may see people unclothed.

Now, as in the inter-war years, people such as Guide leaders, Scout masters and others, who work closely with children, and policemen, barristers, judges and members of parliament are at particular risk of identification. Another interviewee who had become a magistrate said his naturism was something he preferred not to talk about on the bench fearing unwelcome reprisals.[237] As stated above, nudity is traditionally associated with that which is outside rational society and in this case naturism could have been used as evidence of his unsuitability for the post. Indeed, he had only found out that a long-standing friend and fellow magistrate was naturist by accident. Comparing naturism to free-masonry, in which he was also interested, he stated, 'naturism is sort of a closed secret if you like, and in that respect, with free-masonry ... it's not really secret, the answers are there if you care to find out, as you are with naturism'.[238]

For better or for worse, photography and film have played an important role in heightening awareness about naturism and nudity.[239] For example, photographic media could provide a way of educating the general public about the benefits of sun-bathing and exercise in the fresh air away from the polluted confines of contemporary urban centres. One such film, *Back to Nature* was produced in 1925 by Wardour Films and exhibited at the special request of The British Association and The British Institute for Adult Education.[240] The German original *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* (Ways to Strength and Beauty) was a government 'culture film' directed by Wilhelm Prager and juxtaposed grim factory life which bucolic shots of radiant, active bodies in sun-dappled

[237] Stuart (09/07/00).
[238] Ted (09/07/00). It must be noted, however, that some naturists were not averse to subverting the 'suspect' image of naturism as a method of self-defence. Ted later remarked; '[t]here was one occasion when one guy, er, [from] a small engineering firm came up and left his van parked and the van had his home telephone number on it. Of course, he's wandering up the fence and the local committee members decided to ring his wife {laughs} to ask her if she knew where he was and did she know he was peeping over the fence of the local naturist club {laughs}'.
[239] Cooper, *op. cit.*
[240] Bandy, *op. cit.* British Film Institute, 35mm, Comb Pos. B/W ref: 40112AB.

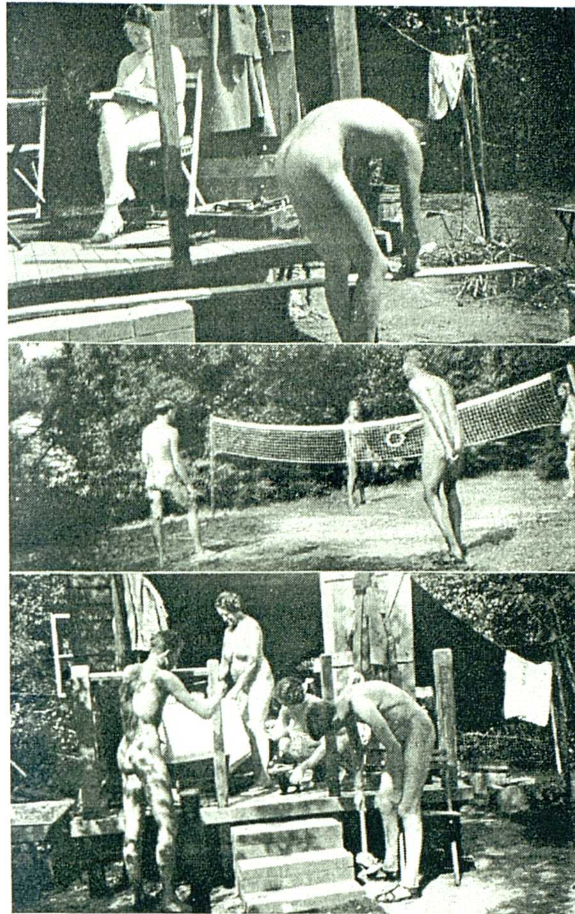

Figure 4.14 'At the "New Forest" Club'. From Welby (1939) p. 69.

meadows.[241] The British version was half the original length and edited to include sections not shown in Germany which were recorded at Elstree Studios, London. Although there are no figures to say how many British people saw this film or where it was shown, it was in circulation for some years and undoubtedly gave many members of the general public their first experience of naturism.[242]

Possibly due to the availability of photographic technology, but more likely due concerns regarding the representation of naturism as a whole and to protect individuals from unwanted public exposure, many clubs instated an official club photographer.[243]

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[241] Toepfer, *op. cit.*.

[242] Jim Walker *per com.*

[243] Club members could select and order a copy of the images they wished to obtain. Image-making continues to be closely guarded and in more recent issues of *British Naturism* and internet sites, people are strongly advised to seek permission before taking any photographs of naturist scenes or individuals.

Photographs could show evidence of the pleasures of being without clothes, suggest a range of activities with an emphasis on life out of doors, and were often designed to attract new supporters. As demonstrated by Figure 4.14, books and magazines published for the naturist community such as *British Naturism* placed a strong emphasis on families spending time together in a relaxed, safe, and wholesome environment. In his work on photography and the British Empire Ryan notes that 'as a practice of representation, photography did more than merely familiarise Victorians with foreign views: it enabled them symbolically to travel through, explore and even possess those spaces'.[244] This concept transfers readily to images circulated by the naturist movement; officially sanctioned images allowed people to 'see over the wall', 'enter' the clubs and private bathing grounds and almost get an experience of what naturist life was *really* like.[245] Just as photography of the Empire collapsed the spaces of home and away, photography transgressed and blurred the boundaries between inside and outside the naturist world. As Cooper states; '[w]hile the camera itself was an imposer, an inquisitive eye in the naturists's world, looking at and recording what outside society might label 'obscene' and 'degrading', it was at least able to present visual evidence of their way of life'.[246]

The Naked Truth About Nudism

By the late 1920s and early 1930s the popular sunbathing trend was accompanied by a proliferation of published books and pamphlets advocating the joys of 'nude'

244 Ryan, J. R. (1997) *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualisation of British Empire*. London: Reaktion (p. 214).

245 On photography as something that allows participation whilst confirming alienation see Sontag, S. (1999) 'The image world', in Evans, J. and Hall, S. (eds) *Visual Culture: The Reader*. London: Sage pp. 80 – 94.

246 Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

sunbathing. Bandy remarks that many were produced by 'proponents of the movement' and were therefore, 'generally propagandistic' and 'limited in an objective study' of the movement.[247] One such book, which Lewinski calls 'a charming dissertation on the advantages of shedding clothes' was *Nudism in England* written by Rev. C. E. Norwood in 1933.[248] Another was *The Naked Truth About Nudism* published by William Welby in 1939. Welby (a.k.a. Rex Wellbye or Zex) stated that the 'sane practice of ventilating the skin [allowed] it to absorb the life-giving rays of the sun [...] improve[d] the health and add[ed] to the general enjoyment of life by all those adopting it'.[249] He believed that there was a general connection between all nudists in their 'earnest desire to be healthy and happy in a natural way'.[250] Nudism was not only a means to bodily health but also it had a psychological value as it induced,

> a feeling of freedom in the mind as in the body, the friendliness, frankness and general camaraderie of a Nudist group has never been equalled in any ordinary club, practice is an indication of breadth of mind, a freedom from petty and artificial conventions and affectations, also a chastening effect which develops feelings of refinement and good taste.[251]

Although Welby remarked that no normal person could be wholly insensitive to the natural influence of sex, in joining a club one could bathe nude without offending others in a sympathetic and social atmosphere where intelligence was 'higher than average'.[252] Both Norwood and Welby attempted to convey the idealism of the movement and its desire for a natural way of life that was complete and unified. Their sentiments were

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[247] Bandy, *op. cit.*
[248] Lewinski, *op. cit.*, p. 121; Norwood, *op. cit.*
[249] Welby, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[250] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[251] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[252] cf. Weinberg, The nudist camp', *op. cit.*, p. 94.

echoed a decade later by Stephen Spender who provided what is now deemed to be a 'classic account of German sunworship' in *World Within World* (1951).[253] For the good-looking young Germans who befriended him, 'the life of the senses was a sunlit garden from which sin was excluded';

> the sun [...] was a primary social force in this Germany. Thousands of people went to the open-air swimming baths or lay down on the shores of the rivers and lakes, almost nude, and sometimes quite nude, and the boys who had turned the deepest mahogany walked amongst these people with paler skins, like kings among their courtiers. The sun healed their bodies of the years of war, and made them conscious of the quivering, fluttering life of blood and muscles covering their exhausted spirits like the pelt of an animal: and their minds were filled with an abstraction of the sun, a huge circle of fire, an intense whiteness blotting out the sharp outlines of all other forms of consciousness, burning out even the sense of time.[254]

Although such evocative language and images were intended as innocent expressions of a way of life they also could be interpreted as an invitation for sexual interest. Paradoxically, in celebrating the living, sensual (erotic) body naturist texts often reinforced the popular vision of a movement of sex-crazed fanatics always on the brink of orgies, homosexuality, a deviant lifestyle and an attack on moral values that undermined the status of the family.[255]

Ewing and Lewinski both state that a gradual lessening of moral restrictions in the

[253] Fussell, *op. cit.* See Spender, S. (1951) *World Within World: The Autobiography*. London: Hamilton.
[254] Cited in Fussell, *op. cit.*, p. 140. Poet and playwright Spender, also wrote about his experiences of nudism in Hamburg in his autobiographical novel *The Temple*. Written in 1929 the book was refused publication by Faber and Faber who deemed it pornographic according to law at the time. It was redrafted by Spender but not published by Faber and Faber until 1988. Bandy, *op. cit.* [illegible]

inter-war period provided a more liberal climate for the nude in Britain: a fact which they attribute directly to the growth of the naturist movement.[256] Yet the notorious suppression of non-naturist but sexually explicit texts such as William J. Ward's *Ulysses* (1923), Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1929) suggests that the wartime fear of sexuality did not end in 1918.[257] The press attacked naturism as cranky and immoral, and it was suggested that sexual crimes had risen as a direct response to the 'cult' of nudity.[258] Particular controversy surrounded images depicting the nude body and publishers and photographers fought a constant battle with the authorities for the right to print honest and accurate 'life' photographs without censoring the image.[259] Censorship was also directed towards artwork covering a range of subjects that 'post-war conservative society' wished to forbid.[260] For example, in 1929 police seized a group of nude drawings by D. H. Lawrence from a West End gallery because some of them showed the pubic area and Jacob Epstein's memorial to W. H. Hudson (1841 – 1922) depicting the nude figure of Rima (the bird-girl in *Green Mansions*) caused uproar when unveiled in Hyde Park.[261]

Although publications such as the *Geographical Magazine* and the *National Geographic* which featured the nude or semi-nude bodies of 'native' races were freely available from around 1896 onwards, the British public had to wait until the early 1930s to buy books featuring nude images over the counter easily and cheaply.[262] As

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[255] Cooper, *op. cit.*
[256] Ewing, *op. cit.*; Lewinski, *op. cit.*
[257] Hynes, S. (1990) *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*. London: Bodley Head p. 402; Ward, W. J. (1923) *Ulysses*. London and Cardiff: Ward Publications; Radclyffe Hall, M. (1928) *The Well of Loneliness*. London: Jonathon Cape; Lawrence, D. H. (1929) *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. New York: Random House.
[258] Graves and Hodge, *op. cit.*
[259] Cooper, *op. cit.*
[260] Hynes, *op. cit.*
[261] Lewinski, *op. cit.*; Hynes, *op. cit.*; Hudson, W. H. (1927) *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest*. London: Duckworth (first published in 1916).
[262] Lutz and Collins, *op. cit.*; Lewinski, *op. cit.*

mentioned above, these magazines relied on the connections made between self and 'Other' within Western society and the idea that in their nudity 'native' peoples were in some way closer to their natural state. Even then they needed a generous artistic veneer, or to adopt the guise of medical science, in order to stay within the requirements of the law.[263] One of the first examples of a book which depicted nudity amongst members of Western society was *Nudism in Modern Life* (1933) by Maurice Parmelee which boasted an introduction by Havelock Ellis and, under the shelter of science, could include thirty-four photographs which, though small and slightly blurred, showed unmistakably un-retouched pubic hair.[264] Conventionally no photographs of nudes could show even a suspicion of pubic hair or the sexual organs.[265] With *The Beauty of the Female Form* (1934) Bertram Parks and Yvonne Gregory were the first to publish a book of nudes in Britain independently of the naturist movement, this was followed by several other books, including *Sun Bathers. A Companion Volume to 'The Beauty of the Female Form'* (1935) and *Eve in the Sunlight. A Study of Sunlight and Shadows on the Female Form* (1937).[266] The public accepted these books eagerly and nude photography became a dependable additional income for many photographers such as John Everard with *Adams Fifth Rib* (1935) and *Life Lines* (1936) and Walter Bird with *Beauty's Daughters* (1938).[267] On the 14th July 1938 Horace Narbeth (a.k.a. 'Roye') - following his book *Perfect Womanhood* (1938), a direct commission from George Routledge - became the

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[263] Lutz and Collins, *op. cit.*, state that the first inclusion of bare chested women in the *National Geographic* was deemed to be in the 'interests of science', merely an attempt to show life as it really was (p. 115).

[264] Lewinski, *op. cit*; Cooper, *op. cit.* The book was first published in America in 1931 as *The New Gymnosophy.* Unfortunately Havelock Ellis reinforced the traditional taboo surrounding large-scale communal nudity somewhat by stating; 'I hasten to add that I have not myself the slightest intention of following Dr. Parmelee's example in joining any of the societies for the practice in common of the principles of gymnosophy. I am pleased that such societies exist [...] Personally, however, I am well content to continue to follow an old practice of simply encouraging the practice of nakedness privately and among personal friends'. Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[265] Lewinski, *op. cit.*, p. 114. The saga of hair would continue into the 1960s and beyond.

[266] *Ibid.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*; Parks, B. and Gregory, Y. (1934) *The Beauty of the Female Form.* London: Routledge; Parks, B. and Gregory, Y. (1935) *Sun Bathers. A Companion Volume to 'The Beauty of the Female Form'* (Introduction by Alan Warwick). London: Routledge; Parks, B. and Gregory, Y. (1937) *Eve in the Sunlight, A Study of Sunlight and Shadows on the Female Form.* London: Hutchinson and Co.

[267] Everard, J. (1935) *Adams Fifth Rib.* London: Chapman and Hall; Everard, J. (1936) *Life Lines.* London: Chapman and Hall; Bird, W. (1938) *Beauty's Daughters.* London: John Long. Though popular, Lewinski, *op. cit.*, notes that these books were all very small format and could be discretely carried in one's pocket.

first photographer to publish an outdoor nude in a national newspaper *The Daily Mirror*.[268]

In the 1930s debates surrounding the representation of nudity and naturism were prominent and to counter the 'rash' of literature promoting the judicious use of sun and air bathing, several books were published with radical philosophical arguments regarding the benefits or moral dangers of nudity. In 1935, Hugh Morris's grossly misnamed *Facts About Nudism: The Real Truth About the Nudist Movement* was a zealous attempt to end nudist activity.[269] Morris claimed that the movement was nothing more than a group of 'sexual perverts' feeding their appetites under a veil of health improvement and characterised them as 'manic depressives, cross-word puzzlers, miniature golfers and prohibitionists' and suggested that the movement had the power to disrupt the civilised world.[270] In response some later naturist texts seem keen to point out the more serious, worthy and 'non-fun' aspects of being naked. Tomes such as George Ryley Scott's *The Common Sense of Nudism: Including a Survey of Sun-Bathing and 'Light Treatments'* (1934) and Idrisyn Oliver Evans' *Sensible Sun-Bathing* (1935) recommended nude quoits, ping pong and skittles as character building and a way to promote family values.[271] Today interviews with contemporary club members reveal that most clubs are keen to display that they are family oriented and based around healthy but mundane social activities such as swimming, gardening and 'miniten'.[272]

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[268] Lewinski, *op. cit.*; Narbeth, H. (1938) *Perfect Womanhood*. London: Routledge. By this time, nudes were also being used extensively in advertising literature. Roye was later to become an important figure in the campaign for un-retouched photographs.
[269] Morris, H. (1935) *Facts About Nudism: The Real Truth About the Nudist Movement*. New York: Padell Book Co.
[270] Toepfer, *op. cit.*; Bandy, *op. cit.* Bandy notes that Nesta Webster's *The Socialist Network* described the movement as a subversive political organisation set on spreading socialist propaganda.
[271] Ryley Scott, G. (1934) *The Common Sense of Nudism: Including a Survey of Sun-Bathing and 'Light Treatments'*. London: T. W. Laurie; Evans, I. O. (1935) *Sensible Sun-Bathing*. London: T. Werner Laurie. Krüger, *op. cit.*, states that the nudists tried to act natural and going to a club became more of a family affair.
[272] Specialist clubs such as the 'Smooth and Cut Naturists' are in a minority. For information see SCN (2002) 'SCN' www.164northwood.freeserve.co.uk.

In the inter-war era when debates regarding citizenship and the nation enjoyed much popular currency, naturism was projected as a morally educative activity. The traditional naturist view was later summarised in *British Naturism*;

> we must prove to these millions that the essence of naturism is not mere nudity but the effect on our bodies and our psyche of fresh air, sunshine and healthy exercise unhampered by unnecessary clothes [we] must prove to them that we are fitter, more mentally balanced and healthier in body and mind because of naturism.[273]

In the same year, a 'Sunsters' article discussing the clashes between Mods and Rockers at Clacton, a member of the Central Council of British Naturism (CCBN) speculated upon such behaviour, suggesting a 'lack of responsibility', an 'out-moded morality' and a 'prohibitive system of education'.[274] Here, naturism was seen as an excellent and progressive remedy for social ills and for young people in particular as one was 'taken out of everyday life into an atmosphere reminiscent of tropical paradises, monsoon period perhaps, but with a taste of the primitive in the air'.[275] In the naturist club the healthy, sporting atmosphere provided ample facility for self-assertion without the need for violence which occurred in the gang environment. Without clothes, or uniform, one was just another club member. Denis the youth correspondent continued; 'I believe that Shakespeare, had he been a naturist, would have commented more favourably, in his Winters Tale, where he observed that youth between 16 and 23 were concerned with nothing 'but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing [and] fighting'.[276] As naturists, youngsters learnt to live their lives 'cleanly' physically, and

[273] Mitchell, F. (Summer 1964) 'Solar Flares', *British Naturism* 1 p. 29.
[274] Denis (Summer 1964) 'Mods and Rockers', *British Naturism* 1 p.18.
[275] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[276] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

hence, morally.

Most early naturist magazines had a similar evangelical zeal, however, and whilst they were keen to convert others to their cause, they took care to ensure that converts' motives were 'acceptable'. Commercialisation and wide-scale mass popularisation posed significant dangers. If it became 'chic' to go nude, it was argued that the movement could lose its moral imperative.[277] One of the first magazines to bring together a wide range of naturist and health issues in to the British mass market was *Health and Efficiency*. Aimed primarily at the middle-classes, the magazine began to promote naturism around 1925 and rapidly gained notoriety until, for non-naturists at least, it came to symbolise the movement as a whole.[278] Incorporating the earlier *Vim*, an illustrated monthly 'devoted to promoting vigour of body and mind', *Health and Efficiency*'s remit covered physical exercise, keep fit, health, social conventions, sexual relationships and sport.[279]

In the early years *Health and Efficiency* played a vital role in the growing cult of the body, advertising everything from vitamin supplements to hydraulic breast and penis enlargers.[280] Now renamed *H & E* it has retained its cult status and has a circulation of around 20,000.[281] However, as noted in Chapter One, the magazine obtained its infamy not because of its promotion of naturism *per se* but rather because it was, and still is, heavily illustrated with nude photographs. Cooper states that, 'articles and photographs which appeared in *Health and Efficiency* in the inter-war years suggested that naturism

[277] Cooper, *op. cit.*
[278] Phelan, *op. cit.* Established in 1899 as *Health and Culture* the magazine extolled 'natural' living. Later it became *Health and Vim* and encompassed natural living and diet reform. The publication only became *Health and Efficiency* in 1921. Cooper, *op. cit.*
[279] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 82; Budd, *op. cit.*
[280] Phelan, *op. cit.*
[281] *Ibid.*, p. 26; Margolis, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

was daring and risqué, an attitude which the press has continued to promote'.[282] Indeed, the contemporary editor of *H & E*, Mark Nisbet, is keen to stress that his idea of modern naturism doesn't conform to the traditional post-war image of 'dowdy nudists doing callisthenics in the woods', naturism is now a 'healthy and expanding leisure industry'.[283] The modern *H & E* is testament to this growth with its adverts for videos and books, nude cleaners, caterers and cabinet makers, escorts, masseurs and photographic development labs.[284]

Health and Efficiency was the first naturist magazine in Britain to show explicit images of naked people. Until the 1970s, air-brushing of the most 'sensitive' body areas was a common feature of almost all publications including *Sunbathing Review*.[285] Artists and scientists could commission nude photographs for research purposes, but naturist magazines were allowed to print only the most prudent of poses and still at the risk of prosecution. As I discuss in greater depth in Chapter Six photographs of men were usually carefully posed to cover the genitals or they wore brief thongs; women rarely appeared in naturist photographs at all until the 1920s and 1930s.[286] Naturists did complain about the prudish nature of airbrushing, however, when *Health and Efficiency* finally began to include unchanged photographs some of the readership were aghast. Though the main cause of concern was not the explicit nudity on display but that the photographs tended to show more images of women in somewhat provocative poses at the expense of those depicting families and men. One interviewee remembered an occasion when an alleged *Health and Efficiency* photographer came to take photographs in her club;

[282] Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[283] Phelan, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[284] *Ibid.*, p. 26; Margolis, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[285] Phelan, *op. cit.*
[286] Cooper, *op. cit.*

> I didn't like him very much, made people feel uncomfortable ... asked them to pose in positions they didn't feel appropriate or necessary. When we saw the photographs some of them were very suggestive and [...] the club didn't sign the form enabling *Health and Efficiency* to publish them. The club managed to get a set of prints but were unable to obtain the negatives [...] none of them have been published [...] they didn't portray the right image of the club or its members ... it's not the type of promotion we want or to encourage. (June, 02/07/00)[287]

H & E has now been boycotted by many clubs and is often described as 'nothing better than a top shelf girlie magazine which often border[s] on pornography'.[288]

Conclusion

Naturism in Britain developed at a time when awareness of 'the body', health, and morality at an individual and national level had been heightened by decline in population levels, increasing urbanisation, the turbulence of war and economic and industrial competition from Germany and America during peacetime. In particular, during the 1920s and 1930s, specific connections were made between the impact of surrounding environmental conditions upon the health of the individual body and suggested a link between the supposed physical and moral degeneracy of urban dwellers and the 'dark', 'airless' and insanitary areas they inhabited. In the philosophical

[287] For examples of the publicity debate between the members of CCBN see Sannar, A. R. (Winter 1966) 'Nudist publications and nudism's public image', *British Naturism* 11 pp. 16 – 17 and 'Walter' (Winter – Spring 1969) 'Before the TV camera – not QUITE the right image created?', *British Naturism* 19 pp. 6 - 8 .

backlash against modern urbanism and rising industrialisation it was widely conceptualised that the contemporary population had become removed from the 'natural' and healthy influence of the environment. Much emphasis was placed on the need for a renewal of natural bodily rhythms and a return to harmony in mind and body. Through a rediscovery of the unified natural body, humans could redirect culture towards a positive reconsolidation: public return to natural state was seen as a precondition for national cultural health.[289]

In Britain, naturists saw nudity as a sign of renewal, a fresh start and a practice which had the potential to regenerate the nation. It is undeniable that naturism in Britain was to some extent influenced by contemporary theories regarding racial hygiene and the drive to foster physically and morally 'pure' relationships between the sexes. However, naturist principles also appear to have been largely influenced by the concept of the natural environment as regenerative and restorative space and, in particular, by research into the therapeutic action of sun and air. Naturist ideology drew upon the work of health reformers such as Saleeby who advocated and proselytised the invigorating effects of sunlight, fresh air and physical exercise. For example, when naked one could witness the environment acting upon oneself directly through tanning and a general feeling of health, well-being and buoyant spirits. When the body was clothed and 'smothered' by artificial barriers the connection between person and environment was diminished and led to a partial 'existence'. In contrast, nakedness released the body and mind opening the senses to a more enriched and embodied 'experience'. Naturism purportedly allowed individuals to re-establish their connections

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[288] Jim Walker in personal correspondence with Jo Bandy (18/03/1998); Mann, J. Prof. (16/12/1999) 'Letter: Read the naked truth', *The Guardian* p. 19.
[289] Berman. P. G. (1993) 'Body and the body politic in Edvard Munch's *Bathing Men*', in Adler, K. and Pointon, M. (eds) *The Body Imagined: Human Form and Visual Culture Since the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 71 – 83.

with the natural environment, to return to a 'natural state' free from the corrupting influences of contemporary civilisation. It is important to recognise, however, that naturists were not simply calling for a 'return to nature'. In tune with other open-air movements, one of their over-riding concerns regarded the general direction in which contemporary civilisation was moving. The physical, spiritual and moral apex of naturist theory was beatified in the civilisations of Ancient Greece. Through modern dance and physical exercise, nudity not only encouraged freedom of expression but also became a personal experience within which mind and body were reunited in natural harmony. Control over one's body internally and externally led to control over performance and action.

Once the naturist had achieved physical and spiritual harmony they would, as a result, attain a higher moral standing. However, the majority of naturists lacked the desire for militancy demonstrated by Captain Vincent and the Welsh Harp volunteers. In 1929 Maurice Parmelee stated that the two great obstacles that stood in the way of 'gymnosophy' were moral prejudice (based upon artificial modesty) and ridicule by 'the mob'. He believed that the press was almost certain to treat the subject with 'more or less hidden or even openly salacious innuendoes', which would bring upon the movement both moral condemnation and ridicule; 'while a vigorous propaganda is desirable, extreme statements will do more harm than good'.[290] Naturists went to great lengths to reject any specific sexual interest in the body merely because it was naked.[291] For naturists, nudity was pure and natural, but did not suggest a return to a 'savage' or immoral state. As Berman notes, the emergence of nudism coincided with a reification of natural symbolism; man didn't stand outside nature but became its highest / noblest

[290] Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
[291] Cooper, *op. cit.*

product.[292] Rather than being a complete rejection of civilisation, naturism suggested an alternative modernity in which mind and body, humans and nature existed in harmony. Through its associated clubs and magazines naturism in Britain gradually became a closed secret, available only to those who could demonstrate that their interests were 'wholesome'.

[292] Berman, *op. cit.*; Garb, *op. cit.*

Chapter Five

'The senses react to every sound and smell about them...': naturism and embodied experience

> Hail to you all, you who have recognised the time! Hail to you, you who hunger to be out amid Nature, that you may steel and uplift the body and spirit! You are the bearers of the Olympic spirit! You are the leaders to sunlight-humanity![1]

Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter Four, the early British naturist movement drew a great deal on the social force of the German nudist movement for advice, experience and leadership.[2] The connection between German and British naturism particularly was helped by the publication of *Man and Sunlight* by a leading figure in the German movement, Hans Surén.[3] This chapter focuses directly upon *Man and Sunlight* (1927) an early gymnosophic text from the inter-war period and reflect upon the ways that the author, and the book's audience, British naturists, encountered, understood and reflected upon the spaces, places and environments around them. My interrogation of Surén's book provides a means of highlighting some of the main themes within naturism. In particular, I am interested in the sensual nature of the text and the ways in which Surén

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[1] Surén, H. (1927) *Man and Sunlight* (translated by David Arthur Jones). Slough: Sollux (p. 196).
[2] Gray, J. (Autumn 1983) 'Retrospect – the early days', *British Naturism* 77 p. 5.
[3] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*

considered and evaluated human-environment relationships. Surén's experiential descriptions are exquisite, detailed and multi-sensual and it is not unusual for him to value senses such as smell and hearing equally with, and sometimes above vision. The text also demonstrates the ideology of early naturism and hints at the way in which naturists conceptualised their close bodily juxtaposition with the natural environment.

In the first section, I provide a brief summary of Surén's work, the context within which he wrote and his approach to the relationship between humans and environment. I consider Surén's conception of 'civilisation' and its consequences for the contemporary populace and discuss his advocacy of mass education and his encouragement of like-minded people (i.e. 'sunlovers') to fulfil their duty as leaders (and 'strivers for truth'). I also examine the sensuousness of Surén's description and the ways he felt the environment impacted upon the body, both mentally and physically, and briefly discuss his thoughts on tanning. In the second half of the chapter I consider the embodied nature of Surén's out-door experience using a recursive conception of the body-environment relationship.[4] Drawing on ideas about the feminisation of nature, I also argue that Surén's work contains a duel conception of both intimacy with, and / or mastery over, the natural environment.[5] In this final section, I deal more specifically with the body examining Surén's theories concerning health and nudity.

[4] See Jones in Matless, D. (1992b) 'Regional surveys and local knowledges: the geographical imagination in Britain, 1918 - 1939', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, N.S. 17 (4) pp. 464 - 480. Geddes bound his theories of planning and social change to theories of evolution, blending strict Darwinian and Lamarckian approaches to produce a conception of humanity and the environment as dialectically bound. In employing this dialectical rather than determinist approach man and the environment are seen to act and react to each other, the environment is not merely passive, nor is man (sic) simply dominant.
[5] See Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism in Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity.

'Man and Sunlight'

> Greeting to you, you who are sunlovers! You bear ardent longings in your hearts! Longings after warm sunshine, blue skies, light and nature; after victorious strength, spiritual loftiness, and childlike faith. Painfully do you endure the lash of drudgery and the disfavour of the times. Exultingly do you rejoice when the smallest beam of light gilds the altar of your longings. Out of passion for sunshine springs the noble shrine of loftiest idealism.[6]

Alongside Adolf Koch, Hans Surén (1895 - 1972) was perhaps one of the most popular promoters of German *Nacktkultur* in the 1920s.[7] The founder of a well-known gymnastic system, he advocated physical exercise and exposure of the naked body to air and sunlight for both men and women. Though a former army physical training officer, and the son of an officer, Surén (pictured in Figure 5.1) was disdainful of the regimented 'command and drill' of military discipline preferring the self-discipline of

[6] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, (p. 1).

[7] Toepfer, K. (1997) *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910 - 1935*. London: University of California Press; Krüger, A. (1991) 'There goes this art of manliness: naturism and racial hygiene in Germany', *Journal of Sport History* 18 (1) pp. 135 - 158. He published extensively with works on breathing exercises, movement and gymnastics, skin care and self-massage, discipline, character formation and, somewhat more obscurely, the 'fight for Cameroon'. The latter book which concerns a former German colony lost in 1919 suggests that Surén was a nationalist. See Surén, H. (1925a) *Deutsche Gymnastik*. Berlin: Gerhard Stalling; Surén, H. (1925b) *Surén – Gymnastik mit Medizinbällen*. Stuttgart: Dieck and Co.; Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*; Surén, H. (1928) *Selbstmassage. Pflege der Haut. Für alle Leibesübungen, für alle Berufe*. Stuttgart: Dieck and Co.; Surén, H. (1929) *Surén – Atemgymnastik*. Stuttgart: Dieck and Co.; Surén, H. (1934a) *Kampf um Kamerun*. (publisher unknown); Surén, H. (1934b) *Volkserziehung im Dritten Reich. Mannesucht und Charakterbildung*. Stuttgart (publisher unknown); Surén, H. (1935a) *Kraftgymnastik mit natürlichen un sportlichen Geräten*. Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung; Surén, H. (1935b) *Schwunggymnastik*. Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung.

Figure 5.1 Hans Surén. From Surén (1927) p. 163.

gymnastics as a mode of self-discovery and 'will formation'.[8] First published in Germany in 1924, his book *Der Mensch und die Sonne* ran through 68 impressions (250,000 copies) in its first year of publication and continued in print until the end of World War Two.[9] When translated into English in 1927 (priced 6*s*), the book, supported by the highly esteemed Dr Caleb Williams Saleeby and the influential Dr William Ralph Inge, then Dean of St Paul's, was also a best seller in Britain.[10] Published during the politically and economically turbulent years of the Weimar

[8] *Ibid.* See also Taylor, B. and van der Will, W. (1990) (eds) *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich.* Winchester: The Winchester Press p. 39. An army officer from 1903 - 1925, after the war Surén was in charge of physical training in the army sport school at Wünsdorf. Krüger, *op. cit.*, believes this may explain why most of his work was directed towards the adult male. It may also be why he kept the sexes strictly separate during training sessions.

[9] Toepfer, *op. cit.* See also Taylor and van der Will, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[10] A man with similar concerns to Surén, Dr Saleeby M.D., Ch.B., F.Z.S., F.R.S.E., Chairman of the National Birthrate Commission, 1918 - 20 and Chairman of the Sunlight League (founded 1924, journal *Sunlight*), wrote prolifically about a variety of issues including national health, smoke nuisance, organic evolution, methods of race regeneration and eugenics. See Saleeby, C. W. (1923) *Sunlight and Health.* London: Nisbet and Co. See also Cooper, E. (1995) *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography.* London: Routledge; Anon (19/11/1927) Review of Hans Surén's *Man and Sunlight, The Times (Shorter Notices)* p. 184. It appears that religious opinion regarding naturism was divided, in 1936 *SBR* quoted the Bishop of Ely as saying that anyone who visited a nudist camp forfeited the right to be called a gentleman or a lady. Gray, *op. cit.* See also Eye-Witness (1933) *In a Nudist Camp! – Somewhere in England – Or The Naked Truth. By an Eye-Witness. An Exposure of Nudism, the New Menace to Christianity.* Glasgow: Scottish Protestant League.

republic (1919 - 1933) - a period which began with revolution and ended with counter-revolution - *Der Mensch und die Sonne* reflects Surén's thoughts and attitudes upon the contemporary situation. The years prior to 1924 were a time of intense political wrangling and widespread economic depression within Germany. The Treaty of Versailles had taken away rights to territory, colonial possessions and many raw materials, and the French occupation of the Ruhr region had been the last straw for an economy gripped by catastrophic inflation.[11]

Wider intellectual shifts were also occurring in this period as demonstrated in the work of Husserl and, later Heidegger.[12] Husserlian phenomenology provided a critique of Western positivistic scientific attitude (or 'natural attitude') and the dualism of subject and object. Providing a 'descriptive philosophy of experience', phenomenology was a metaphysical project designed to disclose the world as it showed itself before scientific enquiry.[13] Both philosophers identified a crisis in European society, however, it was Heidegger who provided the most powerful critique of Western modernity. His main concern was that European culture was suffering from the dislocation of a 'rationalistic', 'modernising' and 'nihilistic bourgeois *zivilisation*' and was therefore condemned to a perpetual state of spiritual decline.[14] It was these prevailing intellectual, socio-cultural and economic contexts that informed Surén's work.

Misguided civilisation

One of the most notable features of Surén's writing is his denigration of 1920s society and his criticism of that 'bedizened creature', twentieth century civilisation. A

[11] Carr, W. (1987) *A History of Germany, 1815 – 1985* (Third Edition). London: Edward Arnold.
[12] Wolin, R. (ed) (1993) *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press; Cloke, P., Philo, C. and Sadler, D. (1991) *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates*. London: Paul Chapman pp. 72 – 74.
[13] Cloke *et al*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 – 74. See Chapter Three above.

cursory glance at his work suggests that Surén adopts an anti-modern, anti-urban stance in his attack on the industrial societies of modern Europe in which individuals had become removed from the 'natural' and 'healthy' influences of the natural environment. As outlined in Chapter Two, Surén's arguments closely resemble other similar European debates, particularly in Britain and Italy.[15] Surén constantly argued that the contemporary urbanism of twentieth-century Europe was no suitable environment for 'man' (sic): '[l]ike slaves, they totter under the heavy fetters of drudgery for their daily bread, far from sunlight, far from Nature in the dungeons of the town'.[16] He observed a modern day population tied by the 'merciless conventions' of a 'short-sighted and pernicious morality'. For example, he stated;

> I have gone more closely in other works into the question of half concealing the body and its debasing effect on morality [...] Innate in mankind is a longing for the sight of the other sex [...] From this longing, which in itself is clean and natural, perverse fancies often develop, and the half-veiled body is a dangerous breeding ground for such. Unveiled nakedness, however, wipes out all foolish fancies with smiling naturalness and restores clean and joyous sense. How much beauty has to waste away through antiquated views of morality, since it must not be seen.[17]

He cursed the expansion of capitalism and 'materialistic' society with its 'dissolute, indiscriminate indulgence' in 'debasing literature', 'obscenity', and the 'evils of smoking and drink';

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[14] Wolin, *op. cit.*

[15] See Matless, D. (1998) *Landscape and Englishness*. London: Reaktion; Lorimer, H. (1997) 'Happy hostelling in the Highlands': nationhood, citizenship and the inter-war youth movement', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 113 (1) pp. 42 – 50; Boscagli, M. (1996) *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Westview Press; Horn, D. G. (1994) *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity*. Chichester: Princeton University Press; Joad, C. E. M. (1937) 'The people's claim', in Williams-Ellis, C. (ed) *Britain and the Beast*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. pp. 64 – 85. For a historical discussion on theories of degeneration see Pick, D. (1989) *Faces of degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848 - c.1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

> with fiendish glee civilisation has thrown us a few scraps at which we eagerly grasped so that in their glitter we might imagine ourselves lords of creation. From time immemorial the curse of money has been to estrange us from contentment and natural simplicity.[18]

However, despite his admonition of the urban, Surén found it incomprehensible that even in the country there was scarcely any sense of the healthy and natural mode of life.[19] He asserted that as soon as 'men' became strangers to sunlight and Nature, health and strength vanished, and with them went strength of character and morality.[20] Echoing Surén's sentiments, Saleeby's 'Foreword' to the translation of *Man and Sunlight* (previously published in *The New Statesman*) expresses similar concerns about the contemporary urban condition in Britain. Saleeby remarked that eighty per cent of the population inhabited crowded cities, in which atmospheric pollution excluded about eighty per cent of the UV constituents of the sunlight.[21] Of course, these figures would have been further compounded by the cramped living conditions many people had to endure and factors such as the 'blocking' effect of conventional glazing as outlined in Chapter Two; as far as both Surén and Saleeby were concerned civilisation had effectively 'descended into darkness'.

In Surén's opinion, the needs of the age were great. Surrounded by disease, decline and death, the future of the German people depended on physical and moral

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[16] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 2.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[19] Though TB was traditionally associated with urban areas it was also very common in rural districts. In 1922 in Germany, 100,000 people died of the disease at a time when the rural population was regarded as *the* hope for the strength of the race. TB was far more common there than in towns, a fact which Surén put down to the peasants' 'dark' and 'airless' houses.
[20] For a humanistic discussion on human alienation from Nature see Seamon, D. (1978) 'Goethe's approach to the natural world: implications for environmental theory and education', in Ley, D. and Samuels, M. S. (eds) *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*. London: Croom Helm.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. vi.

enlightenment. These sentiments alone would have struck a chord in the hearts of many social reformers in Britain at a time when the future of the British nation and, by extension, Empire was thought to be in crisis. Anxious that the German race must be put back on track urgently, Surén advised that 'deadwood' may have to be removed in order to produce a healthy core which would flourish in the future. Explicitly, he stated, 'Nature is our home! Let the wretches sleep on who find their happiness in the streets of the city, for they are lost; history will scatter them like chaff. We must grope back to Nature; in her we shall be able to rediscover the sublime; the wonderful - the divine'.[22]

Man and Sunlight was published in Britain in a period when the expansion of leisure and recreation in the natural environment was being welcomed as an opportunity for the culture of citizenship. This movement linked environmental and social improvement for the masses, working through contrasts of citizenship and anti-citizenship and followed the prescriptions of open air activists, preservationists, and planners from the 1920s onwards.[23] Citizenship was defined against anti-citizenship which was represented by individuals who did not live up to certain environmental standards.[24] This included the so-called 'degenerate' urban masses and individuals whose behaviour was considered out of place within the natural environment. In addition, particular emphasis was placed on improvement of the population through outdoor pursuits; an emphasis was placed on the *latent* 'citizenship' of the individual and the natural environment was constructed as the primary locus within which to nurture mentally alert, physically fit and spiritually whole citizens. By contrast, anti-citizens were imagined to reject the benefits of the healthy, natural environment. Paradoxically, although naturists took part in a healthy outdoor pursuit ideologically presumed to generate strength of character and physical fitness alongside an

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 149.
[23] Matless, *op. cit.*

appreciation of the natural environment, naturism was thought to be a fairly eccentric activity, which transgressed many moral sensibilities, and effectively made naturists 'anti-citizens'. However, like the preservationists, other naturists and many open-air enthusiasts in Britain, Surén was wary of the rapid, wholesale and potentially 'superficial' adoption of his ideas. He advised that initially, the longing for Nature and sunlight could only have limited expression, however, he also emphasised that someday, this would develop into a power which would lead the people to the 'strength and soundness of mind' that urban society was debilitating.[25]

By contrast to the decadent, degenerate physical stock of twentieth century urbanism, Surén celebrated an idealised bodily type and the notion of retrieving a lost, but perfect, physicality resonated throughout his book. Indeed, Surén's ideas about physical fitness, his evangelistic zeal for the improvement of the race and his idealisation of certain physiques (particularly the youthful, able-bodied male) were later echoed in the right-wing nationalism of Hitler's Germany. Van der Will believes that the Nazi-influenced 'racial upgrading' propagated by Richard Ungewitter (who wished to see German nudists as protagonists in the struggle to strengthen the 'racial basis' of the nation) is also evident and calculatingly expressed in *Der Mensch un die Sonne*.[26] Though Surén did become a Nazi in May 1933 altering and re-titling subsequent editions of the book to accommodate Nazi ideology, in the preface to the first edition he was particularly conscious of the message his book portrayed to British audiences.[27] To counter misunderstanding regarding his patriotism, morality and even his foreign

[24] *Ibid.*
[25] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 64; Matless, *op. cit.*
[26] Van der Will, W. (1990) 'The body and the body politic as symptom and metaphor in the transition of German culture to National Socialism', in Taylor, B. and van der Will, W. (eds) *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich.* Winchester: The Winchester Press pp. 14 – 52.

sounding name, he wrote at length about his Prussian family pedigree adding that his name was already being used as propaganda for movements 'entirely alien to [his] own spirit'. He noted, for example, that a concept of physical culture had arisen in opposition to gymnastics, sport and games, and appeared to almost amount to a physical cult.[28] As noted in Chapter Four, whilst Nazism promoted fitness and a national image of tall, muscular, blond men, Hitler himself disapproved of early nudist groups believing them to be centres of radical thought and potential subversion.[29] In contrast, Surén wrote,

> [i]t is deeply to be regretted that [...] opinions and forces are being aroused to try and restrain the furtherance of this healthy and natural trend. This view is unfortunately held on many sides that these tendencies are connected with political and revolutionary views. But nakedness and mixed bathing have certainly nothing to do with politics - no more than gymnastics, sport and games.[30]

It is not my intention here to determine the extent of Surén's Nazi connections. Rather, I simply note that the prestige granted to expressions of German nationalist body culture under National Socialism proved attractive to various advocates of the reform and body culture movements.[31]

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[27] After his accession to Chancellor in January 1933, Hitler proclaimed the National Socialist Workers' Party the only legal party in Germany. The re-issue of Surén's book was given a modified title to take account both of the arrival of National Socialism and the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin and to signal the full acceptance of the former: *Mensch und Sonne. Arisch-Olympischer Geist* (Men, Women and Sun, Aryan-Olympic Spirit).

[28] For a discussion on the association of body culture with National Socialism and Nazism see Toepfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 – 10; Boscagli, *op. cit.*; Eichberg, H. (1990) 'Race-track and Labyrinth: the space of physical culture in Berlin', *Journal of Sport History* 17 (2) pp. 245 - 260 (p. 257). For a more specific example see Preston-Dunlop, V. (1988) 'Laban and the Nazis, towards an understanding of Laban, Rudolf and the Third Reich', *Dance Theatre Journal* 6 (2) pp. 4 - 7.

[29] Cooper, *op. cit.*; Ewing, W. A. (1994) *The Body: Photoworks of the Human Form*. London: Thames and Hudson; Welby, W. (1939) *The Naked Truth About Nudism*. London: Thorsons. On suggested reasons for this see Van der Will, *op. cit.*

[30] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[31] Preston-Dunlop, *op. cit.*; Connolly, M and Lathrop, A. (1997) 'Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Rudolf Laban – an interactive appropriation of parallels and resonances', *Human Studies* 20 (1) pp. 27 – 45. A good example of this is the choreographer Rudolf Laban as mentioned in Chapter Four.

Surén stated that his book arose from the desire to call attention to the fundamental facts of national existence and development. He believed that decay in the strength of the body (both in terms of national unity and individual strength), regardless of the highest achievements of the spirit or most profound scientific knowledge, was proportionate to national decline and death. However intrinsic to this belief was Surén's faith in the beneficial effects of the environment upon the naked body. In common with the bourgeois nudist movement mentioned in Chapter Four, Surén was particularly interested in, and almost fascinated by, the ancient Greek body. For him, the ancient Greeks were the ideal race, kept at their height over many centuries, a 'feat' never afterwards attained by any other race in 'such measure and duration'. Surén's enthusiasm for the classical (and inherently youthful male) body resulted in it becoming his template for the 'ideal' body. Saleeby and Inge shared this view, describing the Classic Greek body as 'incomparably the highest material object in the known universe': an idea that gained widespread recognition across Europe and America around this period.[32] This will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Six, but for now, it is important to note that Surén believed that the roots of the German race originated from this ancient civilisation, and that the Germans had a 'natural heritage' as a fine race. The view was that this ancestry could be regained and to which the modern population should aspire was also held by others in this period, most notably the archaeologist Gustaf Kossinna.[33] However, given the present condition of 'decadent urbanism', Surén realised that society had to make radical changes in its outlook and organisation in order to develop or re-acquire these ideal bodies. Within Britain, these

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[32] On human æsthetics see Parmelee, M. (1929) *Nudity in Modern Life: The New Gymnosophy*. London: John Lane (chapters 10 and 11); Newman, G. (1939) *The Building of a Nation's Health*. London: MacMillan and Co. On photography Garb, T. (1998) *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*. London: Thames Hudson (chapter 2); Chapman, D. (1997) *Adonis: The Male Physique Pin-up, 1870 - 1940*. Swaffham: Éditions Aubray Walker; Ewing, *op. cit.* See also Matless, *op. cit.*; Boscagli, *op. cit.*; Bourke, J. (1996) 'Inspecting', *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*. London: Reaktion pp. 171 – 209.

[33] Trigger, B. (1989) *A History of Archaeological Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

concerns also would have reflected fears regarding the 'Empire' and the deterioration of 'national stock'. In the same way that unfavourable or 'destabilising' statistics regarding the 'fitness' of the British race were suppressed, Van der Will suggests that Surén's work may have been prey to elision in later editions because he showed up the average quality of this so-called 'master race'.[34]

Atmospheric vibrations and metaphysical forces: reflections on the body and mind in 'Man and Sunlight'

Following feminist and post-structuralist critiques of Western dualistic knowledges, Butler and Parr deliberately emphasise the connections between 'body' and 'mind', arguing that, as 'recursively constituted' entities, the two should be considered together.[35] For example, when attempting to define 'mind space' they found they were unable to do this 'without immediately referring back to the body given that feelings, impulses and thoughts are somewhere in the flesh'.[36] In his analysis of contemporary society, Surén initially appears to draw on and reproduce traditional mind / body dualisms of enlightenment and post-enlightenment theory discussed in Chapter Three, by making a distinction between rational / abstract thought and the sensual, feeling body. However, in this section it will become clear that Surén in fact actively argued *against* this separation, constructing a much more embodied and, following Butler and Parr, 'recursively constituted' conception of the mind / body relationship.[37]

Surén's analysis of contemporary society highlighted 'intellectualism' as

[34] Van der Will, *op. cit.*
[35] Butler, R. and Parr, H. (1999) (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability.* London: Routledge.
[36] Pile (1996) cited in *ibid.*, p. 14; Pile, S. (1996) *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space and Subjectivity.* London: Routledge.

particularly deleterious. He wrote,

> in the peoples of remote history we see the same corruptions of civilisation, although perhaps in other forms. Invariably it was intellectualism which took men along wrong paths, and overshadowed the free impulses of the heart, the conscience, and understanding.[38]

Surén talks of the 'rigid confines' of intellectualism, cultivated to the 'point of morbidity', and the 'dismal burden' of austere mental science: '[t]he mind may be cultivated to the finest pitch, yet on its cold heights, the soul, devoid of light, shudders in loneliness'.[39] Just as humanist geographers critiqued spatial science for its inability to discuss 'real world' concerns, Surén warned against the abstraction of science and what he felt to be partial and incomplete knowledges or understandings of human experience. In treating the body as incidental to the cultivation of intellect, science marginalised and effectively annulled the material concerns of human experience such as emotion, sensuality and belonging. Though indispensable for development, Surén felt that intellect had nothing to do with soul and spirit, the greatest happiness was peace in the soul achieved with the aid of physical exercise and light. Commenting on the futility of abstract thought he stated that 'the source of will lies not in learning. Through much study and knowledge we forget purpose'.[40]

Academia, and in particular, medical science drew strong criticism from Surén. However, in what may be a strategic move, he engaged with contemporary science and attempted to extend its debates considering the sensuous impact of Nature and the environment upon the body. This connection was not lost on the contemporary British

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[37] *Ibid.*
[38] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 151.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

audience: a review of Surén's book stated that he was 'obviously sincere, and from his photograph a very earnest looking man [though his] cult is an old one and typically of this age, it reappears under the auspices of science'.[41] Surén encouraged the reader, '[d]o not listen simply and solely to the scholarship of the present day - there are but few wise men among its servants - to many it is but a means of livelihood'.[42] Commenting on what he labelled the 'absurd scientific opinion' that a deep tan wasn't worth striving for (contrary to the opinion held by an 'exhalted race' - the Ancient Greeks - for whom a tan was entirely desirable), Surén scornfully remarked that most medical research regarding the influence of environments upon the naked body relied heavily on inaccurate and inappropriate measuring apparatus.[43] Though gaining much knowledge of the internal processes and interdependence of the body, this research did,

> not sufficiently [recognise] the influence of our surroundings on the body; of the atmospheric vibrations - yes, the metaphysical forces associated with us. These influences are very great, although their action is slow and cannot yet be established and measured by means of instruments.[44]

In this sense, Surén appears to share a similar philosophy to Husserl. As noted in Chapter Three, Husserl aimed to render that which was indeterminate and often invisible, determinate as a phenomenon in its own right. Surén recognised that emotion, sensuality and everyday attachments were integral to the ways in which humans encountered, understood and evaluated their experience of space and place. Such embodied (and sometimes fleeting) phenomena should not be ignored or devalued simply because they could not be measured within the bounds of contemporary science.

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[40] From Surén's *Gymnastics* cited in *ibid.*, p. 111.
[41] Anon, 'Review of Hans Surén's *Man and Sunlight*', *op. cit.*
[42] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[43] It appears to be general consensus throughout Europe that more needed to be known about the effects of the sun on the body. See Baylis, W. M. (22/10/1921) 'Modern sun-worship', *The New Statesman* p. 72; Lens (12/11/1921) 'More light', *The New Statesman* pp. 162 - 164.

Surén therefore recommended his readers to set about 'gladly surrendering [them]selves to the joy of nakedness'.[45]

As documented in Chapter Two, the effects of solar radiation on the body became a European-wide concern from the late 1920s onwards. Writing prior to this, Surén noted that there were some modern scientific experts who recognised the health-giving qualities of sunlight, but felt that their opinions had been very slow to gain recognition despite the fact that organisations for health by natural means had existed for decades. As such, Surén's work can be viewed as pioneering in bringing these ideas to a mass, international audience. Acknowledging Hippocrates (c. 440 B.C.) and Herodotus (c. 490 - 425 B.C.) as the first to record the effects of sunshine on muscle tone and nerves, Surén documented the contemporary advances of Swiss doctors Bernhard and Rollier and also outlined their predecessors including the natural healer Rikli (1855), the English doctors Downes and Blunt (c. 1877), and Finsen (1890).[46] Surén also commented favourably upon research that had been conducted into methods of generating artificial sunlight in the form of highly specialised 'quartz and mercury' or 'carbon arc' lamps which had 'splendid curative results' and were thought to improve human powers of endurance and athletic capacity.[47] Figure 5.2 shows the many uses of the 'Hanovia' sunlamp, however, lamps such as these were only substitutes, and Surén (as Saleeby) believed that at the present day there was an urgent need to find simple and natural means to health and fitness.

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[44] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 39.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[46] Various commentators argued that Dr. Oscar Bernhard of St Moriz was the *first* modern surgeon to apply 'heliotherapy' or general and local sun baths in the treatment of surgical complaints such as TB in 1902, two years before Rollier. See King Brown, Dr. R. (29/05/1928) 'Sun-baths in surgery', *The Times* p. 8; Cain, H. (06/12/1928) 'Sunlight in surgery', *The Times* p. 12. Lens proclaimed the Dane Dr. Niels Finsen a 'pioneer in the practice of modern sun-worship'. Working in the 1890s, undoubtedly with a knowledge of Robert Koch, Finsen attempted to cure Lupus, a form of cutaneous TB, by means of light. Working first with concentrated sunlight and then artificial light he obtained results far superior to those of surgical treatment and his research earned him the Nobel Prize in Medicine. Lens (08/10/1921) 'Modern sun-worship: II - Its history', *The New Statesman* pp. 10 – 12.
[47] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.* Quartz and mercury lamps emitted more violet and ultra-violet rays than sunlight but less of the heat rays; made from transparent quartz, an electric current was passed through a quartz vacuum tube containing mercury vapour to produce a very intense light. Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

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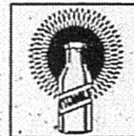

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Literature.—For wider reading on ultra-violet and its many applications, the following works are recommended. Supplied at prices shown (post free) — *Sunlight and Health*, by Dr. C. W. Saleeby, 5s. 6d.; *Man and Sunlight*, by Major Hans Surén, 8s. 6d.; *Ultra-Violet Rays and their Properties*, by W. D. McGillivray, 1s. 9d.; *Loss of Hair and its Treatment by Light*, by Dr. F. Nagelschmidt, 6s. 6d.; *Sunlight at Home*, by Dr. F. Thedering, 3s. 10d. Send orders, asking for full list, to The Sollux Publishing Company, Slough, Bucks.

Figure 5.2 'The British Hanovia Quartz Lamp'. From *The Times* (22nd May 1928) p. xxxiii.

Though indigent times had advanced understanding of new approaches in education, and fostered alternative lifestyles, such as naturism, vegetarianism, and abstention from alcohol and nicotine, Surén felt that new modes of thought were required to enable society to break away from the cultures and associated problems of urbanism. The redemption of society would depend upon knowledgeable leaders, 'the strong', and those, he added significantly, with 'the gift of leadership', those with 'sunlight in their hearts and their senses open to new perceptions'.[48] Like Baden-Powell (Boy Scouts), Seaton (Woodcraft Folk) and their contemporaries, Surén saw this potential leadership in youth. He believed that the rising generation had instinctively recognised the retrogressive nature of their education, and were beginning to explore new paths. The growth and spread of the Wandervögel movement facilitated other leagues and movements concerned with outdoor activities and the cult of nature and the body, heralding, in Surén's view, an age of greater freedom and self-discipline.[49] Surén reported them full of tenacity in their struggle for truth, and no longer deceived by rank authority and admonition, he saw them as forming a common flame freeing itself from the 'sunless urban dungeons' and 'outworn educational systems'.[50] However, Surén also believed that the youth ought to be much more conscious of their power. For Surén, this strength was not in politics as demonstrated in later years by the Hitler Youth. Youth and politics were opposites (like physical culture and alcohol), instead, 'the goal of youth [was] in victorious conflict against debasing literature, against the public house, against all obscenity in speech and picture, and against the truly pernicious evils of smoking and drink'.[51] He argued it was their duty to raise awareness of the beneficial nature of sunlight in the public imagination: to raise themselves above

[48] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.
[49] (translators note) *lit.* 'Birds of Passage'. Youth would visit weekend retreats and learn to hike and survive in the wilderness. See Eichberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 254 – 256.

the vicissitudes of the day and to be warriors, fighting for the rights and joys of sunlight. Surén appealed to the young to,

> take the torch of knowledge and go blazing through the darkness! [...] The nation is in dire need! Save it from the destroying flame! Its rescue is in your hands. Turn the intellect to your own salvation! Remember your duty! It lies in the strength, the future, the honour of your race![52]

As healthy and moral citizens, the young should bring 'light' and 'healing' to those who hungered, and fight their way through the 'darkness of the age'.

For Surén, the 'retreat' of humans into the towns and their 'abstraction' from Nature was a route to partial development. This conception of urbanity was reflected in an article, 'The nude road to healthy manhood', in *Verity* some years later;

> I am at Montalivet, in July. Leaving England and the petty foibles of "suburbia" far behind me, I have shed my cares and worries - and my clothes. Or, if I have not actually shed my clothes altogether then I have reduced them to their proper status in life - which is not to keep God's good sunshine from my body, and the mind.[53]

In surrendering his clothes to the sunshine this naturist felt that he had 'purged' from him, 'all the uncleanliness of thought that clothes have been slowly inoculating into

[50] Here I have taken 'truth' to indicate an original state in Nature, Surén states, '[i]n nature the very blood sings in our veins, we regain knowledge of feeling, of wonder, of belief. All this cannot be measured, gauged, or compassed by the intellect - and yet it is living truth. Truth; buried by the "achievements" of civilisation, by the miasma of the towns, by the evils of smoking and drink, and covered by the cloak of overbred intellectualism'. Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 – 150.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 99.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 166.
[53] Edward, R. G. H. (July 1963) 'The nude road to healthy manhood', *Verity* 61 p. 3.

[his] acts to mould [his] habits and [his] character'.[54] Civilisation had become synonymous with the urban and thus restricted the variety of human experience, for example, through 'morbid prudery' and a dulling of the senses.[55] In order for an alternative 'civilisation' to be progressive the individual (and later the nation) must be physically, spiritually, and mentally whole and the recognition of the natural needs and experiences of the body had to be acknowledged and understood.

This explicit notion of improving the body through Nature is just one of a number of ways in which Surén discussed embodied human-environment relationships within *Man and Sunlight*. In the first instance, however, it is important to note that Surén's wider conceptualisation of the human relationship with the natural environment was couched in terms of 'enlightenment', 'escape' and finally 'redemption'. For example, escape from the 'imprisoning' confines and spiritual 'darkness' of the urban areas, and also from the contemporary régime and traditions of non-naked cultures. Surén visualised this as a move from 'dark' - traditionally perceived as that which is bad, evil, deficient - to 'light' at the other end of the continuum. In this dichotomy between the 'man made' and the 'natural' environment Nature is seen as 'home', the innate habitat of all human beings and, as such, the only viable alternative to the contemporary civilisation. Although this suggests a dichotomy between the rural and the urban I believe Surén theorises more in terms of that produced by humans and that which he presumes to exist outside of and independent to human development. Therefore, once enlightened, one could experience the beneficial effects of the environment anywhere, even in the midst of towns. As will be demonstrated in the next section, Surén did not suggest a return to 'primitivism'. Instead, by taking the best parts of *contemporary*

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

civilisation and combining them with a revitalised understanding of the natural environment and bodily rhythms, the individual (and hence, collectively the nation) could return to a more balanced, natural state; indeed, such actions might even re-vitalize society. The following sections will discuss Surén's embodied approach to the body and look more closely at the ways in which he (and other naturists) felt that individual (and subsequently collective) physical, spiritual and moral harmony could be achieved.

'Nackt in der Natur': Embodied experience in Hans Surén's Man and Sunlight

> Clean, fine humanity thrills us like a holy thing when the warm sun kisses our naked limbs - when glad sunlight kindles the soul to wonder. In the web of verdant Nature, in the swirl of storm, in the waft of summer breezes, in the witchery of exquisite sunshine, the loftiest ideals appear near and attainable.[56]

Although Surén's explicit focus on the physical body may also suggest a separation from the mind, I would argue that he actually sought to counter this traditional dualism. Surén suggested that humans must spend equal amounts of time developing both mind and body and as such, become more aware of their physical and spiritual selves. Surén's discourse moves away from a traditional emphasis on visual observation; the body and the environment act and react to one another, embodied experience is realised

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[55] For a discussion of 'neurasthenia' in Simmel's *Metropolis* see Burt, R. (1998) *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, 'Race' and Nation in Early Modern Dance*. London: Routledge.
[56] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 1.

'through' the body, 'through' the environment.[57] He argued that sunlight enabled one to progress to the highest echelons of thought. Moreover, as a result of spending more time in the natural environment, individuals would also become attuned to more instinctive rhythms and would be better equipped to form a more cohesive and less decadent and corrupt society. In its fascination with the body, sensuality and feeling, *Man and Sunlight* provides a valuable case study for embodied theory. This section therefore examines the sensuality of Surén's experiential description and focuses, in particular, on the ways in which humans could enjoy a reciprocal relationship with the environment and the benefits which might then accrue. This discussion is supplemented by contemporary naturist literature and interview material.

'Through!'

In 1966, a correspondent to *British Naturism* wrote that when he shed his clothes in Spring he got a sense of,

> almost primeval excitement that the world was new again [we] are more closely joined with the rebirth with which Nature fills all her creatures at this time [the] senses react to every sound and smell about them [the] body quickens to the warmth of the sun, the balmy air [...] soothes away the tiredness of winter.[58]

Surén also believed that one's natural rhythm was 'intimately bound up with feeling for Nature'.[59] In *Man and Sunlight* he discussed the ways he thought the natural

[57] Nast, H. and Pile, S. (1998) *Places Through the Body*. London: Routledge.
[58] Anon (Spring 1966b) 'Tan Talk', *British Naturism* 8 p. 5.
[59] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 174.

environment impacted upon the body physically and mentally. Physically, he believed that sunlight had a chemical action on the organs, and that the skin, like the lungs was an organ for cleansing the blood. As soon as one removed one's clothes it was possible to witness the environment acting upon oneself; in this sense the 'tan' almost became the ultimate expression of embodiment. As well as making one feel (and look) physically fit and radiant, the environment also improved one's character, spiritually and morally. As we have seen naturists believed that nakedness and the contact of the body with the natural environment was educational and an important part of personal development: the development of open-air schools was premised upon the belief that sensory exposure to Nature had a regenerative or restorative effect on the body physically, spiritually and morally.

For Surén, the experience of Nature was a very meaningful interaction and he spoke of 'exultation at the tangible intimacy with Mother Earth'. He wrote,

> when early morning borders the distant summer cloudlets with gold, and the larks exult over field and meadow; when all that rejoices in the name of man is slumbering, then hasten forth; throw off the mundane, the care and trouble within [...] Doff your garments; rove and run in free and wealthy nakedness. *So true manhood reveals itself.* How wondrously the cool morning breeze caresses the naked limbs, and how every sense moves with the divine melody of the Lark's song (my italics).[60]

By 'inwardly surrendering' to Nature, Surén felt one could achieve an 'inexhaustible strength', 'wondrous learning' and 'peace of soul', and commented that 'despite our misdirected civilisation, a little bit of primitive sleeps in everybody, and this only needs

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

awakening'.[61] It must be noted that Surén did not wish to go so far back to Nature that the race became associated with traditional ideas of primitivism which, as discussed in Chapter Four, made explicit links between nudity and savagery. He wrote; '[c]ertainly we cannot again live the life of the natural savage - that would mean a great retrogression in our development; yet we must once again win for ourselves the health and strength of these peoples of the past'.

Surén described how, when seized by 'inexpressible' longings, he and his male students would spread their arms wide and 'drink deep of the delicious morning air', how '[w]ith innermost delight they revel in the cool freshness of their skin, this fresh naked skin gives us the experience of true manhood'.[62] Surén incorporated many of the particularly pleasurable experiences he often enjoyed whilst alone into courses at this training school. He wrote, '[o]ut of pure unbounded joy of body and being and love of Nature, I used to hurl myself in wet weather prone on the earth, naked in soft, muddy ground. Thus was born my idea of making the Sporting Mud Bath'.[63] Figure 5.3 shows an illustration of Surén (on the far right) and a group of male students enjoying a mud bath. To Surén such nakedness was an education, when one could feel the breathing of Nature, 'every tree and every shrub whisper deep slumbering wisdom into our souls [...] awakens in us the deep intuitive knowledge of true humanity and all of the transitoryness of our school learning'.[64] Mud bathing as a health giving pursuit appears to have become a popular pastime in Britain amongst men and women from the 1930s onwards, these could be taken indoors, in a spa environment, or outdoors with friends as shown in Figure 5.4.

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[61] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 59 – 60.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Figure 5.3 'My sporting mudbath'. From Surén (1927) p. 187.

Figure 5.4 'Mud Bathers' (c.1934). From The Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

Nakedness in Nature was an incredibly sensual experience for Surén - a time when his senses of touch, smell, hearing and taste became heightened and inflamed. He commented that his senses, powers of observation, instinct for Nature and capacities for insight had all been marvellously increased since going naked. Identifying the foot (the 'root' of the body) as a particularly direct point of connection with Nature, he wrote;

> [i]f only men knew what sheer pleasure it means to go barefoot through the grass, and how strengthening it is to wander in sand heated by the sun. [...] There are forces in the earth, not yet measurable by the apparatus of science, but which can be felt to stream into the body when the way is opened to them through the foot.[65]

Such sensual description is also evident in other naturist texts of the same period. For example, whilst describing the pleasures of swimming and then drying off without a bathing suit, Parmelee enthused;

> I climbed on top of the dune and lay down upon the soft warm sand, which yielded hospitably to my body. A gentle breeze played over every portion of my skin, agreeably cooling and exhilarating it. No artificial covering separated me from the earth and air, wind and sun. Never had I felt so completely part of nature.[66]

Although contemporary naturists appear to be attracted much more to the social benefits of club life, the sensual delight and joy of being naked within the natural environment was also resonant in the accounts of several of my interviewees;

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[66] Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

> freedom [...] if the environment's right and you can take [your clothes] off you feel better, it feels good [...] the air around your body, sensual [...] the breeze caressing your body, the sun warming it, it feels good, I like nothing better than to lay out on the sun lounger with the sun on me, it's like getting a massage almost. (Stuart, 09/07/00)

Yet, conscious of the erotic undertones this may imply contemporary naturists were much more circumspect when describing their experiences, as the above interviewee continued; 'it's sensual rather than sexual, you know it's a big difference, it feels really nice'.

Surén and his followers also showed great pride in their complete indifference to the adversities of Nature. Surén stated that he often ran naked in the rain and the drenching storm;

> [t]he sensation of virile and primitive manhood becomes even stronger if one achieves the will and the fortitude to expose one's body naked to storm and wild weather. An unspeakable feeling of well-being and unimagined joy of living animate the body in rain and strong wind.[67]

The ability to brave the environment and extremes of weather in only slight discomfort was a particularly highly regarded quality. Surén described running cross-country: '[t]he wind stirs the branches more violently, and the rustling song of the leaves grows wilder. The rain crashes down, and with unbounded joy we battle against it'.[68] He and his students aimed to harden themselves by naked cross-country runs in all weathers as

[67] Surén, *Man and Sunlight, op. cit.*, p. 104.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

often as at all possible and regardless of obstacles. They would force their way through the environment,

> over and under - often through boggy ground where the earth shook around us and soft mud and water squelched between the toes. We had no fear and went hullooing over everything that came in our way; our motto was "Through"![69]

Surén delighted in the fact that it taxed one's utmost fortitude to stay the whole course and involved great self-discipline and presumably provided an opportunity to separate the 'wheat' from the 'chaff'.

To Surén, an inclement climate was incidental. Regardless of location, he believed every opportunity should be taken to enjoy light and air on the naked body. He stated it was possible to enjoy nature in the country and in small towns as opportunities to be naked could always be found. He also argued that a warmer climate such as in Greece should not be presumed more preferable due to the extreme heat.[70] Rather, the German climate with its sharp seasonal changes, was still better suited to make the body resistant to disease and corruption, and to acquire physical and mental health like steel.[71] In *Nudism in Modern Life* Parmelee took a similar approach to the British climate.[72] Similarly, a correspondent in *The Times* complained that the variable English climate was often abused yet,

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[69] *Ibid.*, p. 184.
[70] The Olympic Games were held in the particularly sultry vale of Alpheios and athletes were disciplined in strength and endurance of great exertion.
[71] For a discussion on the suitability of the variational German climate see Huldschinsky, Dr. K. (22/05/1928b) 'Open-air culture in Germany', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xxvii.
[72] Parmelee, *op. cit.*

> no climate is better suited to the needs of the invalid seeking sunbaths and treatment by sunlight than that of the Southern portion of this island [...] swift alternations of light and shade, tempered warmth, clouds and rains affords at once protection against danger and such interruptions in the process of stimulation as are calculated to increase its power [...] variety of location (inland / seaside) plays as great a part as light itself [...] stay at home, don't go abroad [England is the] healthiest island in the world.[73]

Debate in *The Times* shows that attitudes towards the weather did not change significantly until the 1930s.[74] Previously, it had been widely believed that the health giving qualities of every holiday season could be measured in terms of sunlight. Records were taken by voluntary observers for the Met Office using the 'acetone blue' method and selected ones were published daily in *The Times*. It was noted that places remote from smoky cities such as Torquay and Lowestoft received far more UV rays than places polluted with smoke such as Hull and Huddersfield. For 1926, the monthly average was Lyme Regis 3.7, Hampstead 2.6, Kingsway (London) and Hull 1.5 in comparison to the winter monthly average for Assuan (Egypt) which was over 10.[75] These views were gradually modified, however, in the light of experience and more complete knowledge. For example, one open-air school in Salford showed that despite a lack of UV rays in winter a life spent wholly in the open air, even with minimal skin exposure, was enough to cure rickets and make robust children.[76] In addition, it was discovered that relatively cold and wet summers were often characterised by a high degree of physical fitness and were followed by winters in which morbidity rates and mortality were low.

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[73] Anon (07/06/1930) 'England for sun baths', *The Times* p. 13. See Parmelee, *op. cit.*
[74] Anon (18/09/1936) 'Weather and Health', *The Times* p. 13.
[75] Hill, Dr. L. (22/05/1928) 'Ultra-violet radiation and its measurement', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xv; See also Hill, L. (14/07/1928) 'Sunlight and sunburn', *The Times* p. 15. It is unclear what unit of measurement was used here, however, I believe the units are still helpful in showing the ratio of difference between the areas.

Towards the mid-1930s then, emphasis was increasingly placed on 'variety' 'and the advantages derived from sharp 'bracing' encounters with Nature. By the late 1930s, most people were eager to acknowledge the year-round benefits they received from a life in the open air and give great assurance that neither rain nor cold kept them indoors. 'Durability' was also held in high regard amongst campers and will be discussed in Chapter Eight. For Surén, seasonal illness was not the result of a 'cold spell' but rather an 'entirely wrong upbringing and mode of life'.[77] Therefore, one could even expose one's body in winter, rain was, 'in general, most salutary, a tonic and a joy to the healthy', though a 'prolonged rain bath [could have] an exciting effect on the brain, spine, and nerves of those of nervous disposition'.[78] Similarly, whilst Surén agreed with H. Sieker (highlighted in Chapter Four) in his belief that irradiation of the genitals had a great effect in increasing strength, health and the joy of life, he cautioned that 'sexual power [was] not signified by its physical expression alone; its sublimation and transference to the plane of mind and spirit is of supreme importance'.[79] Central to nudism was athletic development and the enhancement of physical strength through exposure to the sun with a sublimation of libidinal energy of the type collectivity and camaraderie shown in Figure 5.5.[80]

After a period of 'correct bathing' the individual should feel natural tiredness, supreme physical well-being, buoyant, cheerful spirits, and healthy sleep.[81] The effect

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[76] Though one must note the extreme conditions at this school. The children, though warmly clad, were provided with no artificial heat, except for drying clothes and cooking. They slept in an open shed and spent their days in the shed or out in the open playground. Hill, 'Ultra-violet radiation', *op. cit.*, p. xv.
[77] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*
[78] *Ibid.*, p. 51. See Hill's (22/05/1928), *op. cit.*, observations of the stimulatory effects of cold or cool air on the nervous system, muscles and metabolic process. For him light *and* cold seemed to be the ideal combination.
[79] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[80] Berman. P. G. (1993) 'Body and the body politic in Edvard Munch's *Bathing Men*', in Adler, K. and Pointon, M. (eds) *The Body Imagined: Human Form and Visual Culture Since the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 71 - 83 (p. 78).
[81] Medical Correspondent (22/05/1928c) 'Schools in the open-air', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xiv; Lens (15/10/1921) 'Modern Sun-worship: III - Its high priest and his temple', *The New Statesman* pp. 42 – 3.

Figure 5.5 'Watermen'. From Surén (1927) p. 12.

of combined sun and air bathing could be compared with physical effort similar to athletic exercise. For example, Surén referred to the work of Professor Bier, who considered 'sun baths' to be equivalent to 'naked exercise' which formed the muscles and visibly beautified the body. Bier used sunbaths in his sanatorium at Hohenlychen in the treatment of TB. He treated hundreds of cases where the patients were instructed to lie still for hours in the summer sunshine, though as noted above, opinion within the medical profession concerning the effectiveness of these 'sunlight' treatments was divided. Properly aired and lighted the skin became a velvety, supple, copper-coloured tissue, absolutely immune from anything of the nature of pimples or acne and its little hairs usually showed considerable development.[82] Yet, people had to become gradually accustomed to the sun's rays.

In 1929 *The Times* stated that the 'happy holiday-maker, cultivating the sunburn now so fashionable for trunk as well as limbs, may easily take an ultra-violet

[82] Lens, 'Modern Sun-worship: III', *op. cit.*

overdose'.[83] The in-experienced enthusiast often embraced sun-bathing with an ardour which often led to disappointment and disaster. It was a mistake to suppose that intense, prolonged and regular sunshine was a necessity and most advocates, including Surén, stipulated that excessive exposure was dangerous unless precautions were taken.[84] It was certainly possible to have *too much* of a good thing. The dangers of over-exposure to the sun were acute and ranged from reddening of the skin to sun-stroke and severe blistering and inflammation.[85] Fatigue, listlessness, irritability, malaise, nausea, headache, faintness, pyrexia, loss of appetite, and biliousness were also signs that exposure had been too prolonged, and it could not be too strongly emphasised that such symptoms had to be avoided.[86] This applied especially to those who had not become accustomed to light or who were in poor health. Exposure should be gradually increased in time and amount of skin surface revealed, particularly in the initial stages.[87] One should never be too hot or too cold, the skin should not be allowed to blister nor should one be shivering and one's head should be protected from fierce sunlight. Whilst Surén advocated vegetable oils for skin protection, towards the mid-1930s suncreams, such as 'Larola' demonstrated in Figure 5.6, became increasingly popular.

[83] Anon (19/07/1929) 'In the sun', *The Times* p. 15.
[84] Medical Correspondent, 'Schools', *op. cit.* See also Parmelee, *op. cit.*
[85] Lens commented that few cases so-called were rarely sun-stroke, the greater number actually being heat-stroke, an entirely different thing. Lens (24/09/1921) 'Modern sun-worship: I - Its creed', *The New Statesman* pp. 670 – 671. See also Roberts, H. (1940) 'Climate and Health', *Geographical Magazine* 12 (1) pp. 26 – 35 (p. 29) and Medical Correspondent (22/05/1928b) 'Sunlight and the skin', *The Times 'Sunlight and Health Number'* p. xiii. For a scientific explanation of sunburn see Hill, 'Sunlight', *op. cit.*
[86] Medical Correspondent, 'Schools', *op. cit.*; Lens, 'Modern Sun-worship: III', *op. cit.* Contemporary naturists are very aware of the damage UV rays can cause, see Anon (Summer 1987) 'Skin cancer: the facts', *British Naturism* 92 p. 28.
[87] Medical Correspondent, 'Schools', *op. cit.*

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Figure 5.6 'Larola – Sun Tan without Sun Burn'. From *Women's Magazine* (August 1934) Volume 55, Issue 11 p. 21.

Surén was very proud of his own ability to expose his body to the noon sun in summer, but he warned that beginners, should err on the side of caution until the skin was evenly tanned. In the case of children, judicious medical guidance was essential until the child's individual tolerance was correctly ascertained. As the skin became tanned, the risks of over-exposure diminished as 'pigmentation' of the skin was thought to protect the patient from the harmful effects of an overdose of UV radiation.[88] In his section, 'Health Hints for the Conduct of Light, Air and Sun Baths', Surén gave beginners helpful tips and advised that out of condition people should begin by air bathing for short periods in warm weather and, in time, airbaths could be taken by a healthy man at any temperature even in cool, wet or windy weather. In contrast to the benefits of sunlight, the action of cosmetics and artificial measures (for example, suncreams) on the skin was problematic for Surén. For example, he felt that great harm was done by soap. Comparing the mechanisms of the body with photosynthesis he wrote;

> the endings of our nerves and large blood vessels must be sought in their minute ramifications and branchings in the skin. Just as the tree with its myriad leaves draws its life from air and sunlight, the skin with its countless terminals of blood vessels and nerve's is man's connection with the outer world, from which all of us, for the most part unconsciously, draw part of our power.[89]

Convinced that people used soap excessively and thus deprived the skin of fat, he also advised his readers to dress the skin lightly with vegetable oil after washing or bathing. It is not *explicit* why Surén disapproved of all 'artificial' body dressings, however, a consideration of his views regarding human-environment relationships suggests that

[88] *Ibid.*

such products may have created a barrier between the two. For example, by adding an 'unnatural' layer, the body would have been prevented from experiencing the full sensation of the sun and air and, in turn, the environment would have been prevented from acting upon the body to maximum effect.

Nakedness

For Surén, nakedness was imperative if one was to get the full benefit of air and sunlight. He stated that '[s]imple, austere nakedness in the midst of Nature breaks bars in heart and mind, and opens the sense for clean humanity'.[90] For Surén, open nudity was a sign of health, strength and beauty and as long as people remained remote from, unable to see and experience, their bodies, they would enjoy none of these.[91] Adults should follow the children's example and make use of every spot of ground, every flat roof, and every garden to gain strength from the sunlight. He acknowledged that initially, nudity may be embarrassing for those unused to it, unfortunately, in contemporary society, 'people often don[ned] the pleasant cloak of virtue and loudly denounce[d] foul depravity'.[92] It was easier to follow tradition rather than challenge it. Instead, Surén preferred to speak of the 'nobility of nakedness' as, when 'steeled and weather-hardened, [the body] is freed of all that which was the cause of depravity through centuries'.[93] He reassured the audience that they should not be alarmed when a degenerate civilisation talked of 'fanaticism' to the delight of those who only knew the 'cult of clothing'. In regret, he wrote;

[89] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
[90] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[91] Toepfer, *op. cit.*
[92] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

> Friends of the sun, this is our frequent experience. Ridiculed by the common herd, misunderstood by those who are true seekers but along wrong paths, we carry the torch of this knowledge. We know full well that in the present age this way is shut to many, since man's various stages of development are all too diverse. We know that we can never recruit from all.[94]

He spoke of the ignorance of the public when it came to the most 'elementary relations of their body to Nature'. Nakedness in Nature was a deep and meaningful experience and clothes inhibited its finest influences, 'we must struggle through to recognition of the fact that we have means of wonderful invigoration in the forces of Nature, unfortunately still so little known'.[95]

Surén advocated nakedness at every opportunity, particularly when incorporated into everyday life. He suggested that, in factories away from main lines of traffic, workers, such as those in Figure 5.7, could work naked, and commented that, 'strength and purpose of trades unions should not be squandered in mere political conflict, but ought to be applied first of all to the simple questions of health and strength'.[96] Describing the natural brown bodies of the children depicted in Figure 5.8, who 'gambolled' in 'exuberant spirits', he asked 'what immeasurable treasures of piercing beauty are lost through the miserable concealment of our bodies'.[97] He urged people to

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 102. Several images in *Man and Sunlight* show individual children posing, or groups of children laughing and playing. The children are always naked though the girls often wear flowers and ribbons in their hair. In the light of the contemporary furore which surrounds photographs of naked children (see the court case of Julia Somerville in 1995, the accusations of 'exploitation' thrown at photographer Sally Mann and the recent outcry at Tierney Gearon's *I Am A Camera* exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery), I believe that these images were included in the book to show the vibrance and health which could be gleaned from a 'natural' upbringing. It is not my intention in this thesis to discuss the matter of 'child pornography', however, the following references provide an interesting insight into the recent Gearon debate: Morrison, B. (11/03/2001) 'No place for this moral panic; A sick mind can make anything out of anything. And last week's police raids on the Saatchi Gallery have not helped', *The Independent on Sunday* p. 25; Gearon, T. (13/03/2001) 'There's nothing seedy about these pictures of my kids. They are not "child porn". They are wholesome', *The Independent* p. 1; Anon (17/03/2001) 'Saatchi Gallery Photographs; UK newspaper response to the pictures of the American photographer Tierney Gearon's naked children', *The Independent* p. 6. See also Higonnet, A. (1998) *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Figure 5.7 'Happy work in the right dress'. From Surén (1927) p. 93.

Figure 5.8 Childhood exuberance. From Surén (1927) p.87.

be free of present day prudery and 'morality' and to restore an open-minded, healthy state of nakedness. As highlighted in Chapter Four, the term 'nudity' was laden with troublesome and immoral connotations in both Britain and Germany, and Surén carefully differentiated between the open-air nudity of modern dance and the licentiousness of nudity in establishments where alcohol and tobacco were consumed. Surén worried that the term 'nudist' threatened to become an expression for the worst excrescence's of a morally debased civilisation, becoming a catchphrase for the degrading and obscene naked dances in cabarets and saloons. He attempted dispel these myths by describing the 'natural' nudity of certain communities (such as the Zulu and Nuer), and by linking this to a common heritage in the West. Describing the customs of various countries he had visited, Surén discussed the nature of 'indecency'. He noted that sexual morality was most strict amongst peoples who lived mainly naked and also that, for many primitive peoples (sic), the parts of the body concealed in 'civilised' societies were not considered indecent. In fact,

> we do not need to range far afield, for in the history of our own development we find represented the most bizarre views on decency. It need only be mentioned here that not many centuries ago the naked body was very generally encountered, and accounted most natural.[98]

However, Surén did stress that one must never try to force the sight of one's naked body on others. Though naked bathing was not illegal in Germany and was *tolerated* to some extent on British beaches, Surén advised extra caution and recommended that all mixed bathing spaces should, as a fundamental and absolute principle, be kept free of alcoholic

[98] Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

drink, '[t]he finest medicines - sunlight, air and water - should not be contaminated with this poison!'.[99]

Conclusion

Man and Sunlight demonstrates and promotes a great embodied sensitivity to the outdoor environment. For Surén, nakedness was a way of re-opening the connections, flows and an intimacy between the human body and the natural environment and emphasised that multi-sensual, embodied experience. The experience of Nature was a very sensual interaction: he 'felt' the rain, delighted as the sun warmed his skin. This chapter has provided explicit examples of the ways in which Hans Surén and others experienced the natural environment through embodied practice and experience and, to some extent, highlighted the richness of their personal narratives. However, as this chapter demonstrated, there are two human-environment relationships evident within the text. The first is an 'intimacy' with Nature; naturist experience of the natural environment is a dynamic yet highly embodied, reflexive and multi-sensual encounter through which one experiences a heightened awareness of one's body in space, its movement through space, sensual perception and action of the environment upon the body. The environment was experienced multi-dimensionally *through* the body via the senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing and sight; nakedness allowing direct and total contact with the environment[100] For example, Surén highlighted the need to re-evaluate the traditional mind / body dualism in which the body became merely an incidental container for the mind. He directly opposed any attempt to marginalise material concerns of human existence celebrating, instead, the 'immeasurable' effects of the

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[100] Sight does not necessarily take the dominant role.

environment on the body, the fleeting encounter and the minutiae of environmental experience. Following Laban, for Surén, nakedness and freedom of the body in nature became an embodied and investigative journey through space.

The second human-environment relationship concerns the desire to be in control of this experience and the value placed on the ability to channel this experience in the pursuit of specific aims — in this case the regeneration and rejuvenation of the individual and nation. The sun-kissed body was strong, healthy, and durable; it was able to plough *through* the environment regardless of barriers and extremes of climate. However, one must experience both to achieve harmony. Surén believed that an increased intimacy with Nature could help build character and restore morality and purity to the German nation, whilst at the same time, with appropriate leadership, one could cultivate a new strength and self-mastery over Nature, and as such a mastery over one's destiny. By combining the best parts of 'civilisation' and the 'primitive' Surén believed that individuals could discover and experience their 'true' selves. This discovery of one's 'true self' would, in turn, necessitate and later sustain, a more harmonious being, balanced in body and mind. Surén believed that there were a number of ways in which this 'truth' could express itself. For example, as we shall see in Chapter Six, everybody was expected to 'improve' their physique, but males and females were differentiated directly by physical constitution and rather more indirectly by their assumed relationships with Nature. In returning to a natural state and encouraging individuals to fulfil a specific role according to their gender, age and ability, Surén envisaged that they would be able to work coherently as a whole in order to strengthen and further the race. However, it is important to note that these roles worked to, and were measured against, a schema in which the youthful, able-bodied male was embodied as the ideal.

Chapter Six

Celebrating the body in Hans Surén's *Man and Sunlight*

> Inborn strength is a splendid endowment, which is only too often misused - but self-acquired strength, the result of gymnastics, steels the inner man. To be a gymnast means to gain a character! The gymnast wins in sport - and wins in life![1]

Introduction

A great believer in the positive influence of sun and air on the body and spirit, Surén emphasised that nakedness broke down the barriers between the body and the environment and encouraged individual freedom of expression unbound from intellectual convention and traditional morality. In such a state, the forces of the environment streamed into the body through the pores and orifices as the body moved through space. However, though Surén moved away from the primacy of vision towards a more embodied and sensual experience of the environment, it is still necessary to problematise his conception of the bodies that moved through and were positioned within this space. For example, though his theory of 'self-acquired strength' professed to be inclusive, Surén's idealistic body was measured upon a specific set of assumptions that involved an able-bodied norm and particular ideas

[1] Surén, H. (1927) *Man and Sunlight* (translated by David Arthur Jones). Slough: Sollux (p. 166).

of masculine and feminine beauty, appropriate behaviour and differential relationships with nature.

As I have argued throughout the thesis, from the turn of the century fears of degeneracy, population decline and economic competition had led to a heightened awareness of 'the body' throughout Europe. In order to illustrate his concerns and demonstrate the potential of future civilisations Surén's book used a number of striking photographic illustrations. Although he rarely alludes to specific images within the text, the images appear to have been influenced by two main contemporary genres of photography. As *Man and Sunlight* was first published in 1924 it is justifiable to assume that most of the images pre-date this, however, the photographer's identities are unclear. The majority of the images feature students from Surén's training school, the Hellerau Dance School and the Laban School of Dancing (Berlin Ballet), and were presumably taken by instructors, publicists or by professional photographers. The only identifiable photographer is Selma Genthe who produced the Dora Menzler-Schule images.[2] None of the subjects are referred to by name although Jacques-Dalcroze is known to have used Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Maud Allen and Olga Desmond.[3]

No consideration of embodiment can be discussed simply in terms of 'body-contact'. As discussed in Chapter Three, embodiment is discursively produced; the body cannot be understood outside of place or, indeed, historical context and is open to mediation by

[2] Some of the un-attributed images are reproduced in Menzler's *The Beauty of Your Body* (n.d.a.) and again in Menzler, D. (1936) *Physical Culture for Women* (translation of *Körperschulung der Frau* by Pidcock, G. D. H.). London: John Lane the Bodley Head. For further discussion of Menzler's work see Toepfer, K. (1997) *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910 - 1935*. London: University of California Press (pp. 44 – 45).
[3] Beacham, R. C. (1985a) 'Appia, Jacques-Dalcroze, and Hellerau, Part One: 'Music made visible', *New Theatre Quarterly* 1 (2) pp. 154 – 164.

human subjective practice.[4] This chapter focuses upon the representation of the body within *Man and Sunlight* and the ways in which Surén promoted an able-bodied masculinised body based upon an idealised classical physique. Following a brief discussion of the genres of physique photography and dance photography, the first part of the chapter highlights the ways in which contemporary photographical techniques may have impacted upon the images Surén used to illustrate his text. The second part of the chapter considers the images Surén used more closely and highlights the presence of a distinct gender differentiation between his sun-children in both practice and representation. I examine the ways in which Surén's text and, to a greater extent, the images he used to illustrate his argument reproduce traditional gender stereotypes and associated females as somehow 'closer' to nature.[5] The gendering of nature is also evident in other contemporary texts such as those by Parmelee and Joad, however, the illustrations used by Surén are somewhat more problematic and require a greater depth of analysis.[6] In the third section I examine the ambiguity of photography in the representation of the male nude and suggest reasons why Surén chose to use images in which the males take on poses traditionally associated with the female form.

[4] Crouch, D. (2000) 'Embodiment/practice/knowledge', paper presented in the Enacting Geographies session at the *Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers*, University of Sussex.

[5] Macnaghten, P. and Urry, J. (1998) *Contested Natures*. London: Sage; Rose, G. (1996a) 'Geography as a science of observation: the landscape, the gaze and masculinity', in Agnew, J., Livingstone, D. N. and Rogers, A. (eds) *Geography: An Essential Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell pp. 341 – 350; Nash, C. (1996) 'Reclaiming Vision: looking at landscape and the body', *Gender, Place and Culture* 3 (2) pp 149 – 169; O'Tuathail, G. (1996) *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*. London: Reaktion; Rodaway, P. (1994) *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.

[6] Parmelee, *op. cit.*; Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*. With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber.

Images of the body

To obtain an understanding of the significance of the photograph it is imperative to consider photography within a larger framework of cultural processes. 'The visual' is important in the construction of many kinds of geographical knowledges, as 'knowing' the world is very often about 'seeing' the world.[10] Representation is a complex cultural process and photographs must be understood as moments in broader discourses, as 'ways of seeing', which require historical delineation.[11] Though it is impossible to view photographs in the precise ways in which they would have been viewed by contemporary audiences, by positioning photographs in their historical context we can begin to understand the imaginative worlds and cultural conventions which fashioned their meaning. It is necessary then, to consider the photograph both as an object *and* as a social practice the meanings of which are structured through specific cultural codes and conventions.[12] For example, when looking at a painting, sketch or map one usually regards the *object* itself (the texture, material, optical patterns), however, when one looks at a photograph one is usually drawn to the *referent* and not the photograph.[13]

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[7] Crouch, 'Embodiment/practice/knowledge', *op. cit.*

[8] Macnaghten and Urry, *op. cit*: Sage; Rose, G. (1996a) 'Geography as a science of observation: the landscape, the gaze and masculinity', in Agnew, J., Livingstone, D. N. and Rogers, A. (eds) *Geography: An Essential Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell pp. 341 – 350; Nash, C. (1996) 'Reclaiming Vision: looking at landscape and the body', *Gender, Place and Culture* 3 (2) pp 149 – 169; O'Tuathail, G. (1996) *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*. London: Reaktion; Rodaway, P. (1994) *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge.

[9] Parmelee, *op. cit.*; Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*. With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber.

[10] Rose, 'Geography', *op. cit.*

[11] Ryan, J. R. (1997) *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualisation of British Empire*. London: Reaktion; Scherer, J. C. (1990) 'Historical photographs as anthropological documents: a retrospect', *Visual Anthropology* 3 pp. 131 – 155; Garb, T. (1998) *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France*. London: Thames and Hudson; Hall, S. (1997) 'The work of representation', in Hall, S. (ed) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage / TOU pp. 13 – 75; Schwartz, J. M. (1996) '*The Geography Lesson*: photographs and the construction of imaginative geographies', *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (1) pp. 16 – 45.

[12] Ryan, *op. cit.*; Hall, *op. cit.*

[13] Ryan, *op. cit.*; Barthes, R. (1984) *Camera Lucida*. London: Flamingo.

Ryan states that the 'powerful visual presence conjured by the photograph stems from its status as an indexical sign, where the chemical tracings of light and dark are linked insolubly to a pre-photographic referent'.[14] Photography has long been believed to be the purveyor of 'absolute truth'; a painting is seen as the artist's *interpretation* of what was there, whereas a photograph tends to be viewed as an *exact copy* of the scene.[15] As the art critic Jules Janin enthused, it was no longer 'man's (sic) unstable gaze, distinguishing shadow and light from a distance, no longer his shaky hand that [captured] on short-lived paper the capricious form of the world'.[16] This confidence in the image as a reflection of 'truth' has been critiqued in a number of ways, each of which 'problematise the claim to represent "truth" by exploring unequal social relations produced, reproduced and resisted in the creation and reception of any image'.[17] For instance, Ewing states that politicians and ideologues of all persuasions have used photography to put forward visions of 'perfect' bodies as emblems of their own conceptions of a healthy body politic.[18] Therefore, all photographs of the body are 'potentially political in as much as they are used to sway our opinions or influence our actions [and] ideological statements are sometimes oblique'.[19] As the photograph can never be assumed to be a straight-forward mirror of reality Rose encourages researchers to use alternative theoretical orientations in order to produce a new set of methodological questions.[20] For example, instead of asking how accurately an image replicates the real world, we should ask instead how an image functions to produce a

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[14] Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[15] Ewing, W. A. (1994) *The Body: Photoworks of the Human Form.* London: Thames and Hudson; Scherer, *op. cit.* On the 'authority' of the image see Sontag, S. (1999) 'The image world', in Evans, J. and Hall, S. (eds) *Visual Culture: The Reader.* London: Sage pp. 80 – 94. On photography as a means of surveillance and evidence in law see Tagg, J. (1987) *The Burden of Representation.* London: Macmillan pp. 60 - 102.
[16] Janin in Koetzle, M. (1994) *1000 Nudes: Uwe Schied Collection.* Koln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag GmbH (p. 8).
[17] Rose, 'Geography as a science', *op. cit.*, p. 283.
[18] Ewing, *op. cit.*
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 324.
[20] Rose, G. (1996b) 'Teaching visualised geographies: towards a methodology for the interpretation of visual materials', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 20 (3) pp. 281 – 294. On the practices involved in producing tourist photographs see Crang, M. (1997) 'Picturing practices: research through the tourist gaze', *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (3) pp. 359 - 373. See also Scherer, *op. cit.*

particular representation of the world. Instead of assessing the representativeness of an image and worrying about bias, we should inquire into its significance and try to elucidate the ways in which particular social power relations structure its meaning. Following the work of Ryan and Rose, this section of the chapter situates the images used by Surén within a wider historical context and outlines their position within contemporary genres of photography.[21]

Physique Photography

The ideal Western male body has undergone many changes. For example, until the mid-nineteenth century a generous stomach was a sign of honourability, robust good health and sturdy prosperity. The early stage strongman often resembled this well-fed ideal as indicated in Figure 6.1, the 'typical music hall Hercules resembled a huge mountain of flab and sinew swathed in yards of leopard skin'.[22] However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, body shapes began to change and the ideal developed into a more athletic, slim and muscular shape as strongmen and physical culturists invented new ways of shaping and moulding their physiques to fit a more classical ideal of bodily perfection.[23] Performance style also started to reflect this shift around 1893 moving from feats of strength to more classically inspired poses such as 'The Dying Gaul' by Napoleon Sarony and, later, 'The

[21] Ryan, *op. cit.*, Rose, 'Teaching', *op. cit.*
[22] Chapman, D. (1997) *Adonis: The Male Physique Pin-up, 1870 - 1940*. Swaffham: Éditions Aubray Walker p. 5; Budd, M. A. (1997) *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire*. London: Macmillan.
[23] Chapman, *op. cit.*; Budd, *op. cit.* The term 'physical culture' became part of popular vocabulary at the end of the nineteenth century as a way of describing fitness and exercise.

Discus Thrower' by Kurt Reichert (see Figure 6.2).[24] To an extent these transformations were a reaction to shifts in the positioning of the body within the popular imagination and coincided with debates about physical fitness, health, popular entertainment, military power. For example, moral concerns for the nation's well-being had begun to converge with attempts to salvage the physical body of the 'degenerate' masses.[25] From the 1830s onwards, cultures of the body in Britain were increasingly influenced by athletic and gymnastic movements on the Continent and the 1860s had witnessed the rise of 'muscular Christianity', the 'Cult of Manliness', and the reform of sports education through 'New Athleticism'.[26]

Whilst the physical culture movement placed its emphasis on the æsthetics of body building, proclaiming bodily beauty as its ultimate goal, it did so in the name of general health and moral virtue. Physical culture was regarded as a potential way of safeguarding a race that was widely perceived as threatened and degenerate. The physically and morally healthy body was also the well-developed body, the 'pristine condition of the internal organs supposedly represented by the perfection of the exterior form'.[27] For example, a large chest would inevitably house 'vast and healthy lungs', a tight, muscled abdomen told of an 'efficient digestive system', well-developed arms general strength and vigour and strong muscled legs an 'aptitude for running and jumping'.[28] The classical aesthetic ideal - its symmetry, proportions and perfectly balanced musculature - was appropriated for a new

[24] Boscagli, M. (1996) *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century.* Oxford: Westview Press. The changing spectacle of the popular body was presaged in the 1880s rage in the United States for 'living statuary' based on the French *poses plastiques.* For more information on Sarony's work with Eugen Sandow and Oscar Wilde see Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[25] Budd, *op. cit.*; Boscagli, *op. cit.*
[26] For more information on each of these movements see Budd, *op. cit.*
[27] Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[28] *Ibid.*; Budd, *op. cit.*

Figure 6.1 Nineteenth century strongman Professor Louis Attila (1891). From Chapman (1997) p. 7.

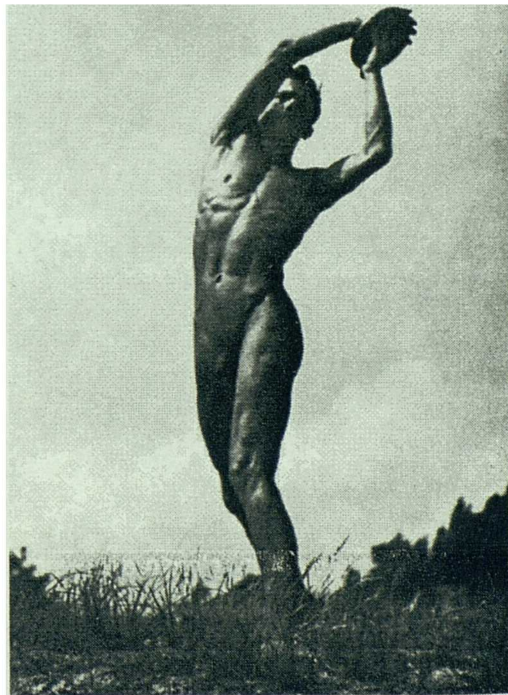

Figure 6.2 'The Discus Thrower' by Kurt Reichert (c.1935). From Cooper (1996) p. 74.

medical and social discourse that aimed at remodelling the enervated contemporary body along ancient lines. This physique, however, could only ever be articulated by the masculine body; the body that showed the closest correspondence between external form and muscular effort.[29] For example, Forty states that,

> in antique sculptures of the male figure, the quality that was especially admired was the representation in static form of the combined concentration of muscular and psychic effort [the] ideal female anatomy, on the other hand, lacked this correspondence between internal muscle structure and its outward, visible form, so the [female] figure could never realise this quality of frozen energy and conventionally, classical sculpture of the female nude showed a motionless figure, frequently at rest.[30]

The classical body as projected by the physical culturists of the *fin de siécle* thus became the standard by which modern bodies could be appraised and consumed. This ideal masculine shape lasted for quite some time, a perfect example being Johnny Weismuller the broad shouldered, ample-chested Olympic swimmer who played Tarzan in the film adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912).[31]

As a popular icon the athletic body became marketable and was assimilated into the popular imagination by circulating in adverts and in popular performances such as that of

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[29] Forty, A. (2000) *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*. London: Thames and Hudson.
[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 57 – 58.
[31] Ewing, *op. cit.* Weismuller is perhaps the most famous Tarzan actor producing twelve films between 1932 and 1948. These included *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932), *Tarzan and his Mate* (1934), *Tarzan finds a Son!* (1939) and *Tarzan and the Huntress* (1947).

the gymnast and the strongman in the music hall, in the circus, and later, in the cinema.[32] From the late nineteenth century, bodybuilders and physical culturists came to depend on photography as a means of propagating this image of ideal masculinity. Such images were often based on ancient prototypes and were an important vehicle through which they could establish their links with an ancient and noble past.[33] Ancient sculptures and modern men could be happily juxtaposed in the two-dimensional world of the photographic print, thereby 'setting up analogies and invoking comparisons between ancient and modern that were perfectly sustainable in the photographic medium'.[34] Garb notes that a number of famous bodybuilders earned their livings as artists' models, using standardised poses and claiming to be modern incarnations of classical heroes.[35] Contemporary photographers also worked from a set of preconceived notions about how a muscle man should be portrayed, imitating attributes and scenes considered conventionally artistic. Ancient Hellenic statuary meant the athletes were often placed in an illusory 'Greco-Roman fantasy world', using clichés such as animals skins, Roman sandals, curling moustaches, fig leaves, and an 'armoury of destructive devices'.[36]

Mass produced *cartes de visite* of actresses, body-builders, gymnasts and dancers were very popular from the mid-1860s onwards.[37] Some individuals realised that they could cause a sensation by appearing in skimpy costume and a well posed photograph could result in greater fame and notoriety. For example, the photographic image of body-builder Eugen

[32] Boscagli, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
[33] Garb, *op. cit.*
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 55; Chapman, *op. cit.*
[35] Garb, *op. cit.* Boscagli, *op. cit.*, suggests that in early photographic studies of the male nude there was a collusion between the valorisation of classical poses and photography's effort to present itself as a decorous and serious art form.
[36] Chapman, *op. cit.* Other influences included the academic picture and the drama of the theatre.
[37] *Ibid.*; Ryan, *op. cit.*; Boscagli, *op. cit.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*; Alter, J. B. (1994) *Dancing and Mixed Media: Early Twentieth Century Modern Dance Theory in Text and Photography.* New York: Peter Lang. Dancers and dance schools often produced cards which received national distribution. Dancers were expected to sign postcards and photographs of themselves for spectators and even other dancers. Cigarette companies eventually produced special albums such as *Das Orami-Album* (1933), *Der Künsterliche Tanz* (1933) and *Der Tanzbühnen der Welt* (1934). Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

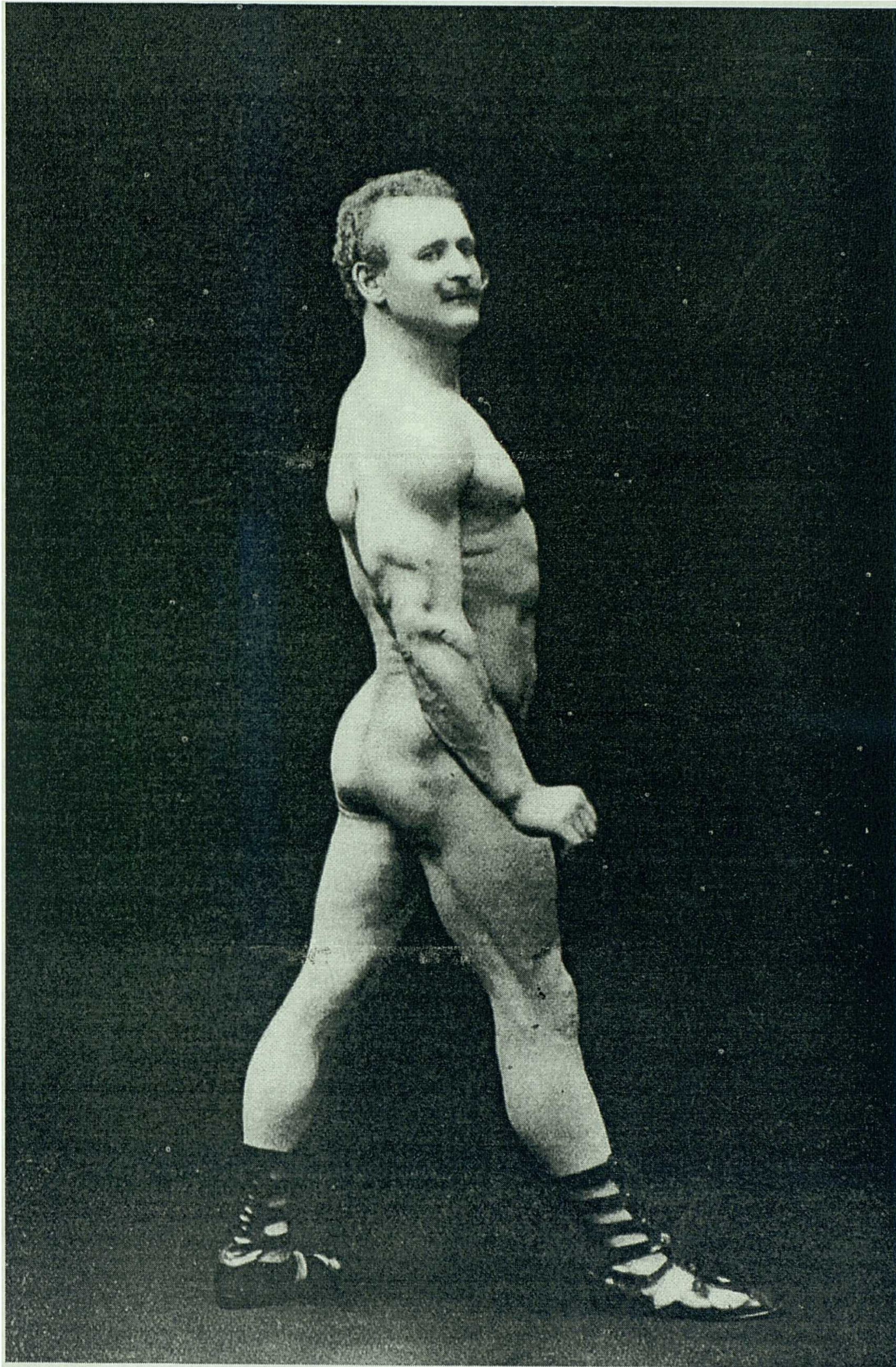

Figure 6.3 'A New Sandow Pose' by D. Bernard & Co. Melbourne (c.1910). From Cooper (1996) p. 70.

Sandow appeared on millions of *cartes de visite*, cigarette cards, larger format 'cabinet cards' and in beer advertisements. Sandow pictured in Figure 6.3, was born Frederick Müller in 1867, and claimed to have been first inspired by the sight of ancient sculptures of heroes and athletes whilst in Rome as a youth.[38] Using a self-devised training method he developed what Boscagli describes as a 'spectacular masculine physique'.[39] Sandow promoted himself effectively as a model of physical perfection rather than as an exemplar of brute strength and got his message across through a judicious use of advertisement and promotional photography.[40] Chapman states that with his 'curling blond locks', 'steely blue eyes' and 'rippling muscles' this German Adonis was as familiar as any matinee idol, admired and fawned over by men and women alike.[41] Publicists claimed that Sandow had a 'perfect' physique but he was also intelligent and ambitious. He was a great populariser of health and fitness and one of the first to make a fortune opening gyms and selling his muscle building secrets to a rapt and willing public. Sandow promoted an ethic free from traditional Christian morals, dependent on circumstances and consequences as opposed to rigid taboos.[42] His book *Strength and How to Obtain It* (1897) was a best seller, claiming that *anyone* could attain a similar physique through training and will-power.[43]

The image of the 'sports celebrity' and the genre of physique photography did two radical things. First, whilst creating a space for male display other than the gymnasium or swimming baths, they also made the display of the naked male acceptable as an image

[38] Budd, *op. cit.*, cites his Christian name as Ernst.
[39] Boscagli, *op. cit.*
[40] Sandow also had his own magazine *Sandow's Magazine of Physical Culture* (founded 1898). Budd, *op. cit.*
[41] Chapman, *op. cit.*
[42] Budd, op. cit.
[43] During his lifetime Sandow endorsed everything from *Bovril* to Spalding Brothers Sporting Goods, his body was immortalised in a short film by Eddison, a plaster cast by the British Museum and in the phrase 'as happy as a Sandow' and he worked for a time as an advisor to the British Army. He died tragically in 1925 at the age of 58 trying to lift a car from a ditch after a road accident. For more information on Sandow see Boscagli, *op. cit.*, pp. 104 – 7; Budd, *op. cit.*

(albeit filtered through the canons of classical beauty).[44] Second, the 'putative veracity' of photography made it the ideal vehicle for the mediation of this body to a new audience.[45] Previously, the only experience of a truly 'muscular' body that most people would have come into contact with would have been the huge bulk of the strongman in the context of the 'freak show' at funfairs. Through the work of people such as Edmond Desbonnet pictured in Figure 6.4, entrepreneur and founder of the French physical culture movement, the fit athletic body was made familiar to the ordinary person for the first time. In the 1880s Desbonnet developed a method of training male and female physiques which involved progression from light to heavier weights working so that no part of the body would be more developed than another.[46]

As illustrated in Figure 6.5, Desbonnet marketed the effacy of his method through carefully posed images including before and after photographs of himself and graduates.[47] On entering the reception room, visitors and aspirant students to Desbonnet's school on the Faubourg Poissonnière (Paris) would be confronted by an enlarged photographic print of the professor surrounded by smaller pictures of pupils and disciples who had developed exemplary physiques.[48] The bodybuilding studio was filled with yet more photographs from Desbonnet's 6,000 strong collection, all of which followed the conventions of contemporary physique photography, drawing upon classical prototypes whilst conforming

[44] Boscagli, *op. cit.* By 1925 nudity on the French stage was beginning to be the norm rather than a rarity and the postcard was produced with an eye to a large market, though the first nudes for general consumption were not easily obtainable in England or America. Lewinski, J. (1987) 'The nude for general consumption' and 'The neglected sex: the male nude in photography', *The Naked and the Nude: A History of the Nude in Photographs, 1839 to the Present.* New York: Harmony pp. 112 – 125 and 197 – 213.
[45] Boscagli, *op. cit.*; Garb, *op. cit.*
[46] Ewing, *op. cit.*; Boscagli, *op. cit.*; Garb, *op. cit.* For men Desbonnet promoted the well-muscled body of a Samson or Mercury and disapproved of certain sports (e.g. swimming) because they resulted in the over-development of some muscle groups at the expense of others.
[47] Garb, *op. cit.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*
[48] Garb, *op. cit.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*

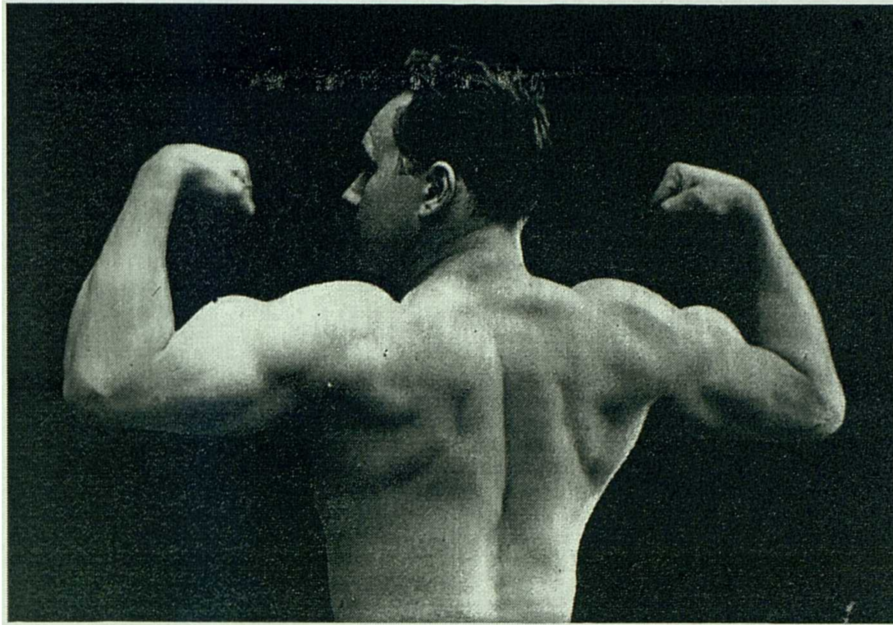

Figure 6.4 'Edmond Desbonnet' (c.1885). From Ewing (1994) p. 171

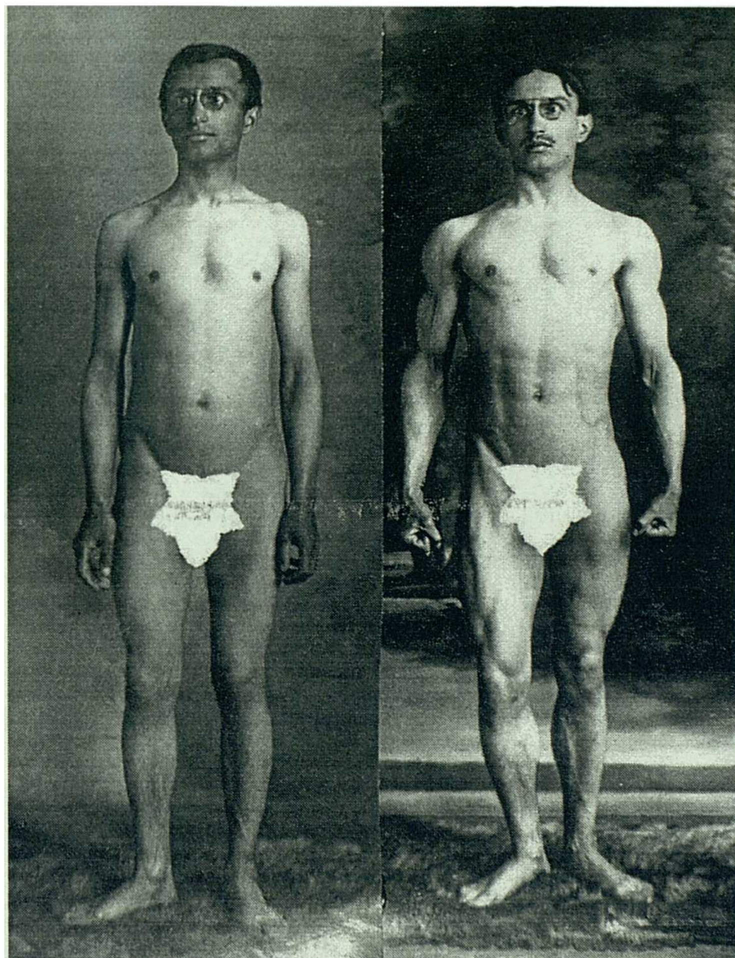

Figure 6.5 'Before and After, Or the results of the Desbonnet Method'. From Ewing (1994) p. 279

to accepted standards of modesty and bodily decorum.[49] Such narcissistic display was not unusual, however, gyms and physical culture studios (and beaches) became crucial sites for the display of imagery; liminal sites where the male body could be rubbed, oiled and shown off.[50]

The depiction of *real* people rather than *idealised* representations on prints, suggested that the well-developed body was within reach of everyone.[51] Through these images body builders such as Sandow and physical culturists like Desbonnet and Surén provided a muscular and well-formed ideal for others to emulate. Take, for example, Earl Elias Tupper of 'Tupperware' fame. In 1923, aged sixteen, Tupper committed himself to a strict dietary regime in an attempt to imitate the bodies he admired in the pages of *Physical Culture* magazine.[52] Using photographs and short biographical descriptions, the publication featured semi-clad male and fully dressed female 'specimens' chosen for their 'physical perfection' and 'harmonious symmetry'. Clarke notes that Tupper was so awe-struck by the physical prowess of one particular male specimen, he contacted the journal to ascertain more biographical information, in order to strive for a comparable standard of self-discipline and physical control. Throughout the 1930s Tupper recorded details of his height, weight, exercise regime, and diet as he charted his progress toward the balance of his inner moral state and physical well-being.[53]

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[49] Garb, *op. cit.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*

[50] Pumphrey, M. (1989) 'Why do cowboys wear hats in the bath? Style politics for the older man', *Critical Quarterly* 31 (3) pp. 78 – 101.

[51] Ewing, *op. cit.*

[52] The concept of naturism had been introduced in America as early as 1903. However, the first group was not established until 1929 when German nudist Kurt Barthel, wanted to continue after emigrating. Bernarr McFadden, early strength performer and editor of *Physical Culture* enthused over the nudist cults in Germany and the spiritual and physical benefits of nudity. Budd, *op. cit.*; Cooper, E. (1995) *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography.* London: Routledge; Krüger, A. (1991) 'There goes this art of manliness: naturism and racial hygiene in Germany', *Journal of Sport History* 18 (1) pp. 135 – 158.

[53] Clarke, A. J. (1999) 'To be a better social friend: designing for a moral economy', in *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America.* Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press (p. 12). I would like to thank Suzy Reimer for bringing this reference to my attention.

Garb remarks that if developments in myology, anatomy and human hygiene provided the apparent scientific basis for the rhetoric of the physical culturists then academic pedagogy such as Desbonnet's was the source of its symbolic power. The physical culturists lent an aura of high-minded scholarliness to their work by appropriating certain art school practices within the context of the gym, for example, in addition to photography. Edmond Desbonnet's 'measuring school' was also filled with antique sculptures, plaster casts of the human body, sculptures, measuring instruments, and diagrams of the human skeleton and major muscle groups.[54] Armed with the authoritative power of art and medicine, and the technical apparatus of the gym and photographic studio, Desbonnet and his colleagues set out to shame and reform their fellow countrymen by setting them a good example.

Dance photography

As mentioned in Chapter Four, dance was considered to be one of the most direct ways in which humans could experience a return to natural rhythms and achieve harmony in mind and body. Surén shared many of his views on health reform, well-being, freedom and movement with dance pioneers such as Laban and Dalcroze. Like sports photography, dance photography is an essentially twentieth century phenomenon; by the 1920s and 1930s, developments in photographic practice allowed photographers to record moments of

[54] *Ibid.*

Figure 6.6 'Leaping man' by Gerhard Riebicke (c.1930). From Ewing (1994) p. 193.

athletic triumph and preserve the fleeting art of dance without blurring.[55] Arnold Genthe, an early photographer of 'dancing nudes' was undoubtedly one of the first to capture the spontaneity and authentic movements of the dancers and choreographers mentioned in Chapter Four, disposing with conventional static poses.[56] His *The Book of the Dance* (1920), provides 'a goldmine of visual information' about the 'natural' dancers active in the early decades of the twentieth century.[57] Genthe was an enthusiastic fan of modern dance and was the first to record the controversial Isadora Duncan.[58] Other prodigious

[55] Budd, *op. cit.* See Chapman, *op. cit.*, on the posing constraints prior to the 1920s.
[56] Lewinski, *op. cit.*; Alter, *op. cit.*
[57] Alter, *op. cit*, p. 103.
[58] Genthe also had an international reputation as a portraitist of famous personalities (including Hollywood stars). Lewinski, *op. cit.*, p. 114 – 5.

photographers in this period included professionals such as Lotte Herlich, Kurt Reichert and Gerhard Riebicke whose work is displayed in Figure 6.6.[59]

The sinuous and graceful movements of modern dance later began to turn up in the elegant poses of some body-builders in the 1930s and 1940s, borrowed from the progressive choreographers of the day and then translated into the positions assumed by the athletes.[60] German photographer Leni Riefenstahl's images of the 1936 Olympic Games One are some of the most famous examples of this.[61] Some of the poses were modelled on the antique Greek ideal, but others depicted 'superbly athletic bodies soaring gracefully through the air' and 'knifing effortlessly through the water'.[62] Ewing remarks that Riefenstahl brought a new sense of heroic glamour to the photography of athletes: not rooted in individual celebrity but in worship of the 'natural man' the being of sun and clean air, of 'sound mind in sound body', the 'superhuman being – Hitler's Aryan or Teutonic Man'.[63] These Olympic idols took on the aspect of transcendent Greek Gods: beautifully modelled in light, seemingly defying gravity, their magnificent bodies must have convinced many impressionable minds of the supposed superiority of the German people.

The images taken from Surén's training sessions appear to reflect some of the imperatives of the New German Photography prevalent in this period. Mellor notes that at this time, attention to surface, skin texture and a 'dramatic three dimensionality' were becoming 'dissolved' into 'an evocative image of the desired, mythical Weimar culture – a

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[59] For a discussion on Reibicke (1878 - 1957) see Toepfer, *op. cit.*, p. 375
[60] Chapman, *op. cit.* For a discussion on the use of dance in sculpture, architecture and cinema see Toepfer, *op. cit.*
[61] Riefenstahl's images were commissioned by Joseph Goebbels. The film *Olympiad* is a classic and the book *Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf* is also spectacular but less well known. For a discussion on Riefenstahl's work in relation to totalitarianism and 'mass ornament' see Burt, *op. cit.*, Chapter 5.
[62] Ewing, *op. cit.* Riefenstahl also used devices characteristic of New German Photography: striking diagonals, tight croppings, bird's eye and worm's eye views (camera was not an earth bound witness).
[63] *Ibid.*

cyper for the mythology of sunbathing, athletics, bare flesh and high technology'.[64] Surén's gleaming male bodies appear to represent the 'new man' described by Karl Nierendorf in his preface to Blossfeldt's *Urformen der Kunst* (1929): 'A new kind of man is appearing: a creature who enjoys play, is confident in both air and water, tanned by the sun and determined to discover and open up a brighter world for himself'.[65] Though exhibitions of German photography were rare, several interacting channels ensured that the New German Photography also exerted an influence on the British visual imagination between 1929 and 1932.[66] Film, photobooks, magazine reproductions, cinemas, magazine advertisements, personal networks of family and friends all aided the spread of this imagery. *Urformen der Kunst* was also published by Zwemmers in English translation as *Art Forms in Nature* in 1929, and was given enormous publicity in *The Times* (a surprising but consistent ally of the 'new photography').[67]

Hans Surén must be considered as an active self-promoter and pedagogue in the same vein as Sandow and Desbonnet. Photographic imagery not only enabled Surén to provide his readers with examples of technique, but also, to underscore specific philosophical assumptions regarding the state of the German (and by default the British) nation and the ways in which contemporary men and women could facilitate the regeneration of future civilisation. Surén's ideas regarding nakedness and development of the athletic, slim and muscular body were reflected in and reinforced by the images and techniques of contemporary physique photography. Following a set of pre-conceived notions regarding the classical body the physique photograph made the audience familiar with the muscular

[64] Mellor, D. (1978) 'London-Berlin-London: a cultural history. The reception and influence of the New German Photography in Britain, 1927 – 33', in Mellor, D. (ed) *Germany: The New Photography, 1927 – 33*. Arts Council of Great Britain pp. 113 - 129 (p. 118). One of Mellor's interview respondents stated 'in the Hitler years, no-one would use the term 'New Objectivity', because it was identified with the Weimar Republic' (p. 129).
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 118.

body and, through the work of people such as Surén, this masculinised body became the body against which all others were evaluated. For Surén, nakedness and physical exercise led to harmony in mind and body; '[s]imple austere nakedness in the midst of Nature breaks bars in heart and mind, and opens the sense for clean humanity'.[68] As outlined in Chapter Four, the internationally renowned Dalcroze and Laban shared Surén's concerns about the dislocation of the human body from nature in contemporary culture and the importance of a healthy and balanced body. Surén would have found their work useful in demonstrating his own ideas about natural rhythm, harmony in mind and body, and embodied experience of the natural environment.

Models of Sunlight Physique

> Only deeds cultivate will-power. The deed of to-day is the purpose of to-morrow. And will and energy master every life. Paired with due judgement, they achieve the beauty of strength. Not mere regularity of feature; but power, strength and beauty. True beauty is seldom inborn; it must be won by personal attainment. Only continual training of the body produces beauty. Reverence then such beauty![69]

Surén echoed Desbonnet's philosophy believing that any physical training must culminate in 'all-round' performance and harmony in mind and body. Though timidity and bashfulness had not yet been overcome by everyone, Surén assured his readers that natural

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[66] *Ibid.*
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 123.
[68] Surén, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
[69] From *Surén's Gymnastics* cited in *ibid.*, p. 111.

rhythm and strength could be acquired through nakedness and special exercises such as rhythmic gymnastics, expressionist gymnastics, and eurythmics. Indeed, self-acquired strength of body and soul brought deep joy and delight, 'the sense of being ruler over civilisation. This [was] true culture!'[70] Surén declared that it was one's sacred duty to discipline one's body by daily gymnastic exercise. No-one should suppose they had no time or were too weak, for the future of any population depended on the physical and moral condition of every member.[71] He was quick to comment that all the photographs of himself in the book showed a strength which was almost entirely self-acquired. However, one must be cautious, the ill-advised often groped blindly or plunged headlong down the wrong paths. Surén noted that ambition, as the inducement to good performance, was certainly a good spur, but nearly always led astray:

> Youths joining the sports clubs may well be keen to find strength and beauty, but often find only the spirit of 'record-snatching' and selfish specialisation, and still worse, the evils of smoking and drink.[72]

It was impossible to become beautiful and hardy through specialisation, which could never command the highest admiration. Surén complained that a common trend was to disregard the body in favour of its feats;

> [t]he public and onlookers are already so perverted that they will only be satisfied with sensational events at sports meetings [...] The club "stars" - and always the same ones - are hounded the whole summer through into dozens of contests, to the applause of the mob. These stars are usually specialists through

[70] From Surén's *Gymnastics* in *ibid.*, p. 8.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

> some inborn aptitude, and are therefore eagerly sought after by the clubs [...] Even during the winter months the sportsman is urged, in harmful wise, into indoor events. Ought questions of gate money to have power to hinder our development of true strength?[73]

In contrast, the Olympic spirit was rooted in the harmony of all-round achievement, and as such, the desire for all should be a healthy, vigorous beauty. To Surén, true physical culture should take a 'man' on to advanced age, and give him such strength and beauty as to inspire the artist. He advocated that the public must be guided towards the idea of nakedness in sport, and educated to delight in the beautiful naked physique. Only then would admiration be for the naked body harmoniously and thoroughly trained rather than for individual performances. The body noble in its nakedness, would act as a great incitement to enthusiasm and emulation of the strong brown body 'like a statue in bronze'.

It is clear from the above that Surén's 'ideal' was not only young, male and tanned, but also able-bodied. This is perhaps most startlingly obvious when he commented that,

> Nature graciously effaces the physical deficiencies which most people display [...] Everybody knows how free movement alone ennobles the body, and all faults recede through the naturalness which speaks so eloquently from nudity [...] all unnatural and artificial things are startlingly repulsive in the naked life; coquetry and flirtation are impossible in Nature's garb of light.[74]

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[72] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 141.
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 91. On the ways in which sport emphasises the body beautiful and attracts attention to the 'unwell' body see Wearing, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Body part	Description
Neck	Long enough to give the head the prominence it deserves. Not so long as to make the head appear too much detached from the torso.
Shoulders	Broad and somewhat sloping and not too square. Collar bones should be faintly visible.
Arms	Should taper gradually from the shoulders.
Chest	Upper torso should be the most massive part of the body.
Breasts	Men - only slightly prominent. Women - saucer or cup shaped and so firm that they vibrate only slightly when the body is in motion; large and pendulous is not beautiful.
Hips	Men - slightly narrower than the chest; side lines from the chest to hips should be almost straight and vertical. Women - hips must proportionately be somewhat broader to provide room for the womb.
Abdomen	Comparatively flat, curving towards the side and crotch.
Distance between the navel and the pubes	Greater in women than men; a large abdomen is a female, infantile and primitive trait.
Navel	Round and hollow, flat and with button visible.
Thighs	Should taper from hips to knees.
Calves	Moderate swelling below the knees.
Feet	Vary considerably in size; shape of foot is of most importance from an æsthetic point of view. Well formed: narrow ankle, thin upper heal, high arch, inner side should be straight from heel to end of big toe, an appreciable space should separate the big toe from the adjoining one, other four toes should be closer together and lie parallel but not press against each other, tips of the toes should make a fairly straight line running diagonally backward.
Back	Should be fairly flat, curving gently into the shoulders. Middle of the back should curve in gently and then out into the rump which should be well-rounded but firm.
Height	Of little importance if the body is well proportioned.
Skin	Smooth and clear, pliable but firm. As to colour, no æsthetic standard can be adducted.

Figure 6.7 Standardising the body. Adapted from Parmelee (1929) pp. 154 – 167.

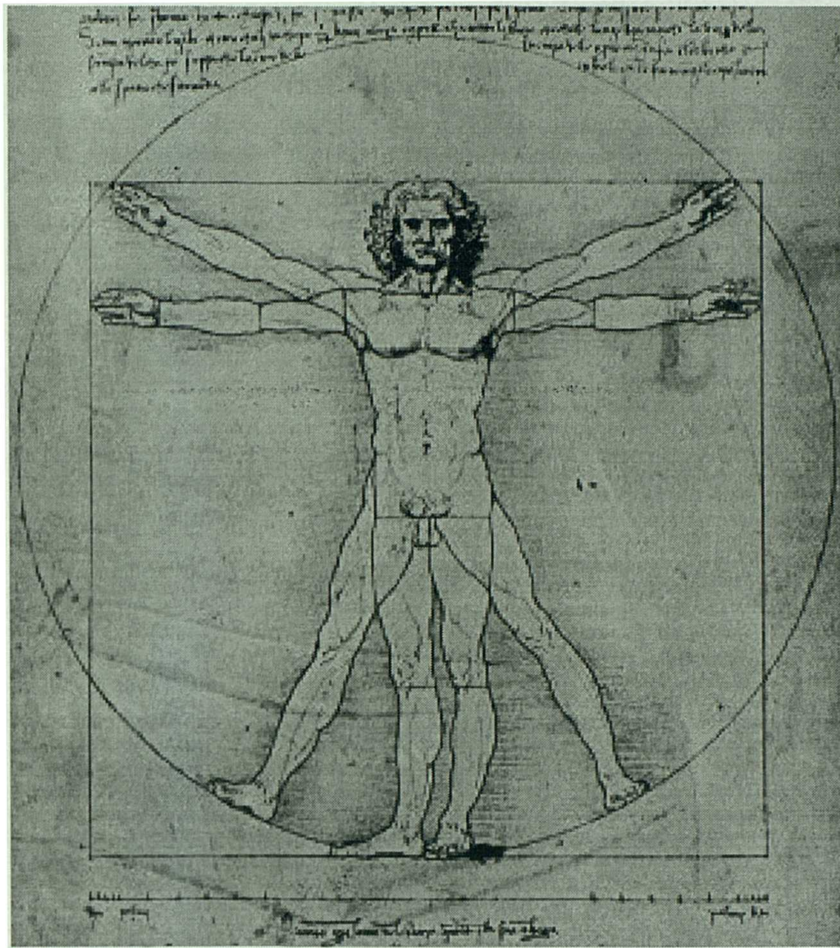

Figure 6.8 'The Vitruvian Man' by Leonardo da Vinci (c. 1492). From Reuteler (2000).

Preferably, one's 'ambition must be directed more toward beauty and all-round strength, to the strenuous overcoming of all natural deficiencies - to fitness of character and inward nobility'.[75] In later pages Surén noted that only the Olympic champions of ancient Greece were immortalised in marble, '[g]ranted [...] disease and mental deficiency existed even then, yet these were far outshone by the light of mighty physical and spiritual beauty'.[76] Surén's was thus a quest for the 'correction' and perfection of the whole body. The individuals' body could never be accepted as it was. One must always strive to 'be better' and to attain the ideal as this was the only body of value.

[75] Surén, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 129.

It is important to note that Surén was not alone in his quest for the correction and perfection of the body. Whilst providing a detailed description of his 'ideal' body (Figure 6.7), Maurice Parmelee stated, 'when one has slept nude, when one gets up in the morning to exercise, one can observe the movements of the muscles and joints, and note all the defects which should be corrected'.[78] However, whilst Parmelee acknowledged that the 'standards and ideals' of human beauty would fundamentally be determined by racial 'type' and sex. Following Imrie, Surén's was a much more 'essentialist' depiction of the body in the Vitruvian sense demonstrated by Figure 6.8: 'seemingly able-bodied, taut, upright [usually] male, an image projected as self-evidently invariable, normal, vigorous and healthy'.[79] Surén's enthusiasm for this ideal body was conveyed through the book's illustrations, though he stressed that his primary aim was to display educational examples of the ideal body, to show 'embodiments of health and strength', 'bodies, governed by firm character'.

The Classical Ideal

In the images of Surén's training school a variety of methods were employed to construct an idealised and 'natural' body, a process that often began before the photograph had even been taken. I use the word 'natural' here to differentiate these images from other

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[78] Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

physique photographs from around the same period in which athletes were often depicted as pieces of sculpture or *poses plastiques*, remote from the real world as calm and impassive as marble. A sense of cool detachment was often reinforced by applying a coating of talcum powder to the body making the men seem pale and stone-like.[80] First, the men in Surén's photographs are always heavily oiled. This protected and cared for the skin but, as demonstrated by Figure 6.9, oil also gave definition to the muscle as it glistened in the sunlight. Both Surén and Jens Müller opposed 'unnecessary' display of the muscles and, in keeping with classical Greek sculpture, muscles were never seen flexed unless absolutely necessary. Müller derided the 'strong man' who tried to impress everybody with his biceps however, he also mocked Surén's use of oils. The extent to which Surén used oil for skin conditioning or display is unclear, however, as noted in Chapter Five, he did go on to write a number of books on skin care and self-massage. The lighting was also often positioned behind or to the side of the photograph in order to exaggerate the shade contrast and take full advantage of the subject's physique.

Second, the men in these images are all very highly tanned and, although Surén stated categorically that they were not made up with brown colour to be photographed, a popular technique during this period involved burnt cork or reddish powder being applied to the body in order to emphasise muscle tone.[81] It was also custom to remove superfluous body

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[79] Imrie, R. (1999) 'The body, disability and Le Corbusier's conception of the radiant environment', in Butler, R. and Parr, H. (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability.* London: Routledge pp. 25 - 45 (p. 27). The Roman architect Vitruvius attempted to demonstrate that the human body was structured by geometrical relationships. This idealisation of the human form and the idea of its mathematical perfection is most famously demonstrated in the Renaissance drawing by Leonardo da Vinci, 'The Vitruvian Man' (c. 1492). Sennett, R. (1994) *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilisation.* London: Faber and Faber; for an image see Reuteler (2000) 'Vitruvian Man', http://www.banzai.msi.umn.edu/leonardo/vinci/vitruvian.jpg.

[80] Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 6. For a discussion of the more 'natural' look favoured by Surén see Garb, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 - 72.

[81] Garb, *op. cit.*

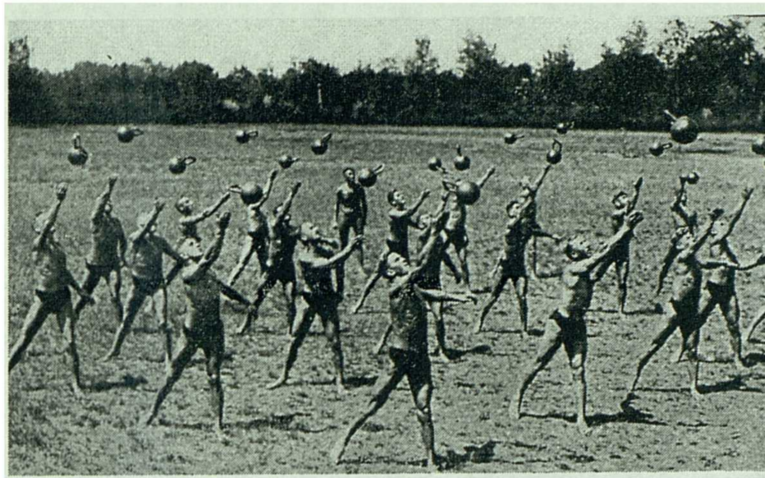
Figure 6.9 Sunlight gave definition to oiled muscles. From Surén (1927) pp. 121 and 19.

hair, however, again it is unclear whether Surén did this for display purposes or if it had some other physical practicality.[82] In *German Gymnastics* Surén cryptically remarked that the hirsute body was a chief obstacle to many participating in the campaign for gymnastics.[83] Although Surén allowed for the possibility for numerable gradations between those with sensitive skin and those on a 'fully natural plane' realising that not everybody would be turned brown by sunlight, wind and weather, and that dark-haired people would go a much deeper brown hue than blondes. Surén believed that tanned skin was the first requisite of a man and, in contrast, a pale skin was 'unmanly' and effeminate. It is unclear how this view fitted into the Aryan discourses which were beginning to circulate in Germany around this time and Surén confuses matters further by boasting '[a]s regards healthy brown skin, I could vie with any Moor or Arab'.[84] In elevating the Moorish and Arabian skin tones to a position of healthy desirability and, in addition, describing the skin of 'Northerners' as 'sickly pale' and unclean', Surén does not appear to concur with Aryan rhetoric. However these are the only times he discusses racial skin colour directly despite the wider context of the book.

In *Man and Sunlight* the male body is predominantly tanned and oiled with incredible muscular definition, full of 'explosive power'. The exercises Surén and his students performed were fast, strenuous and dangerous involving difficult manoeuvres, concentration and discipline. As demonstrated in Figure 6.10, they threw iron weights high

[82] *Ibid.*; Cooper, *op. cit.* In Britain hair removal is traditionally associated with the emasculation of the female sex.
[83] For a discussion on the complex history of hair in the visual arts see Pumphrey, *op. cit.*
[84] Surén, *op. cit.*, pp. 41 – 42.

Figure 6.10 Students at Hans Surén's Training School. From Surén (1927) pp. 17 and 30.



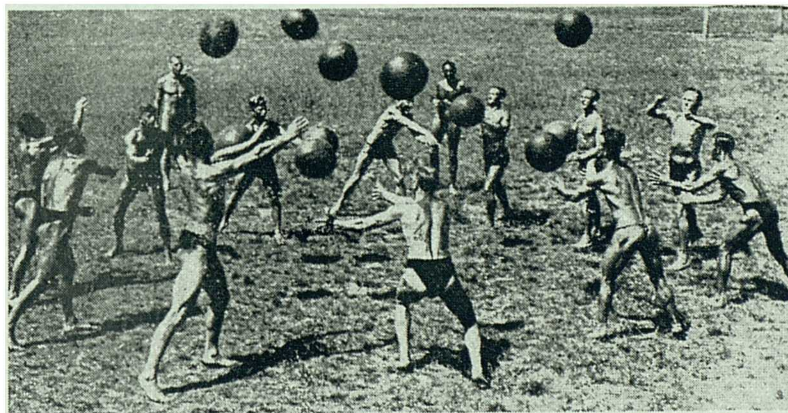


Figure 6.10 Students at Hans Surén's Training School. From Surén (1927) pp. 17 and 30.

into the air, hurled medicine balls to each other forcefully, boxed, wrestled and stretched. The iron weights they used in these illustrations could have weighed around 20 to 30 lb. and medicine balls - traditionally made of leather and stuffed with cork and cotton - up to 15 lb. The subjects were posed to display their honed bodies to perfection, well-balanced and in control, though they also often made use of a number of conventional classical poses to denote strength, stamina, speed and endurance.

After production, the photographs were subject to alteration by airbrushing. The 'air-brush' (or 'pneumatic pencil') was invented in the 1890s and proved excellent for use on photographic prints to tidy up images and remove unwanted detail. [85] As discussed in Chapter Four, in this period nudity was a sensitive issue in Britain and it was common for images of naked men and women to go through a 'de-sexing' process which involved masking out bodily features such as pubic hair and nipples on the photographic print.[86] For example, by censoring images in the *National Geographic* magazine the nudity of 'others' was rendered more acceptable to Western and, in particular, American audiences.[87] The 1927 edition of Surén's book appears to have been a casualty of British publication policy. It is important to remember that Surén was trying to sell the book to a British audience un-used to frank and public displays of nudity and, in particular, nudity amongst Westerners. Some of the men already wear 'athletic slips' like the one in Figure 6.11, but many have had 'trunks' blacked in if their poses were too explicit, though the women's breasts, nipples

[85] Cooper, *op. cit.*; Lutz, C. A. and Collins, J. L. (1993) *Reading National Geographic*. London: University of Chicago Press.
[86] Ewing, *op. cit.*
[87] Lutz and Collins, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 and 174. Genitals and, in particular, male genitalia were rarely photographed at all.

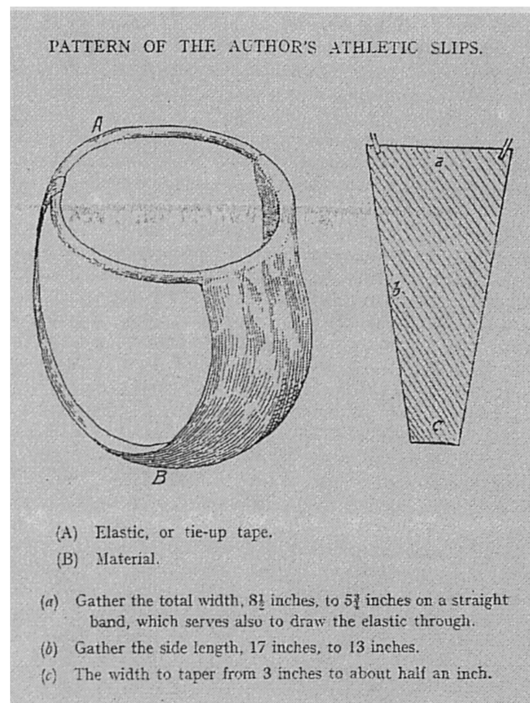


Figure 6.11 'Pattern of the Author's Athletic Slips'. From Surén (1927) p. 199.

and under-arm hair are clearly seen. This is in stark contrast to the images featured in the 1924 German edition of *Der Mensch und die Sonne* in which the males were totally naked.[88]

In both editions some of the photographs were altered extensively (e.g. removal of backgrounds such as in Figure 6.12), however, Surén stated that 'uniformity' was often introduced at his request solely to make the pictures more presentable and to show the exercises more clearly. He stated; '[i]f we intend our trained naked bodies to be models, they must give the impression of statues, and be freed of all which could recall mere exposure'.[89] The images were designed simply to help give witness to the purity of his motives, deliberately including very few pictures of life in common, their chief purpose to

[88] Toepfer, *op. cit.* See Chapman, *op. cit.*, for a discussion of censorship in photography.
[89] Surén, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

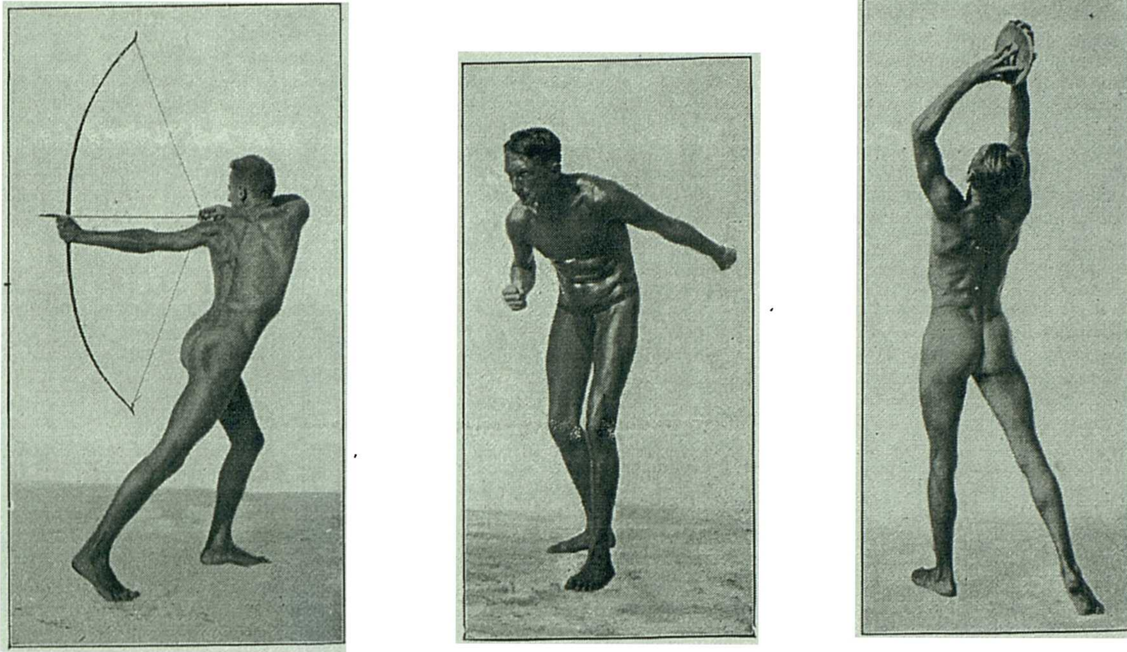


Figure 6.12 A selection of classical poses used to display bodily perfection. From Surén (1927) p. 37.

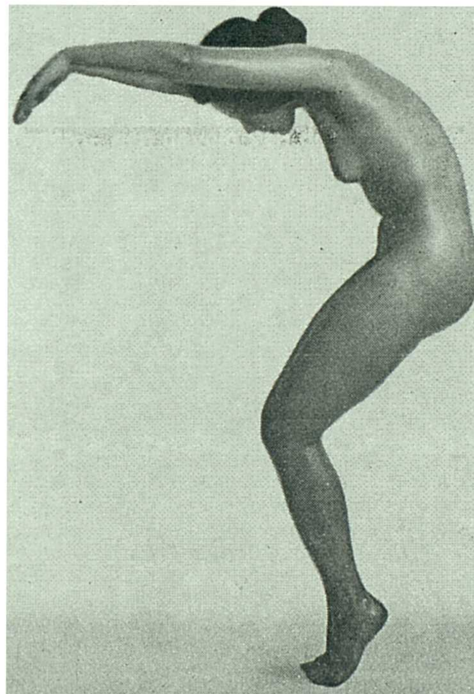


Figure 6.13 The Dora Menzler technique. From Surén (1927) p. 159.

show models of physique which, he believed, were found too seldom. This technique was also common in the Dora Menzler Schüle images, see for example Figure 6.13. Whilst the neo-classical posturing and textual content of the book made ideological connections to a 'grandiose' sign of tradition or history, following Toepfer, images such as Figures 6.13 and 6.13 established an air of modernity of the body by freeing it of any visible historical context.[90] The poses and images of these bodies idealise the muscular sleekness of the body and proclaim the newness of this quality by situating the body within a pure white zone that contains no contaminating signs of the past, no attachments to history.[91]

Not only was Surén's conception of the 'ideal' body specific to a youthful able-bodied norm, it was also inherently gendered. Stating, '[a]nd so - you men and women - teach your youth', Surén called for both men and women to be future leaders although his work was very much based on the premise that males and females were psychologically different.[92] Through his work one notices not only the development of a particular 'ideal' physique but also firm ideas concerning appropriate behaviour and activities for men and women. The perfection of both sexes in their specific ways was designed to further develop the strength of the German race. As stated above, Surén valued the male figure above all other bodies stating that when ennobled by Nature, he 'becomes creation's crown, highlighting and showing the path for his striving brethren'.[93] In a passage detailing the training of boys Surén states that,

> [u]nfortunately, many young men think they can attain strength and manly beauty in gymnastic schools conducted by women, and do not perceive how

[90] Toepfer, *op. cit.*
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] Surén, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

much it goes against Nature that a man should try to gain strength under feminine guidance.[94]

Although physical exercise instruction was a predominantly female profession before and after World War One, Surén's discourse is underscored by contemporary fears regarding the 'feminisation', weakening and passivity of the male body.[95] For a woman to instruct and examine the male body would have undermined the traditional gender hierarchies of Western society.[96]

The ancient Greeks that Surén so admired also had differing conceptions of the male and female body. The value placed on nakedness in ancient Greece was partly derived from the way the people, particularly in Pericles' time, conceptualised the internal functioning of the human body.[97] For them body heat was the key to human physiology, the greater the heat the stronger the body as it possessed the strength to act and react. Women were thought to be colder versions of men and therefore did not expose their bodies in public, and were instead confined to the interiors. Among the ancient Greeks a naked body marked the presence of a strong rather than vulnerable person and the civilised Greek made his exposed body into an object of admiration.[98] To marshal the powers in a boy's body he was sent to the *gymnas*.[99] Unfamiliarity with the Greek cult of nudity can also lead one to assume mistakenly that the Greeks did not live under the taboo of sexual constraint: in mixed company they did. Whereas athletes and warriors, gods and heroes in

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[93] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 175.
[95] Bourke, *op. cit.* On the fears of homosexual relations between men stemming from Oscar Wilde's prosecution in 1895 see Budd, *op. cit.*
[96] Budd, *op. cit.*
[97] Sennett, *op. cit.*
[98] *Ibid.*

Greek art reveal their naked bodies without primary erotic connotation, the female nude, in its earliest classical manifestations, was assigned to Aphrodite's sphere. Depictions of the female pubic triangle carried a circumscribed sexual meaning and the area was often concealed by a hand or cloth, unlike male genitals, which were rendered with observant simplicity.[100] A woman was erotic in her person, desirability was a female condition.[101] This has resonances with naturist practice, for example, it was acceptable for males to display their genitalia freely whilst females were politely requested to keep their knees together.[102]

In the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, prowess was defined as an essentially masculine attribute and connoted certain qualities of 'manly vigour'. Though prowess is now more likely to signify physical ability rather than virility, dexterity rather than brute strength, expertise rather than fearlessness, a century ago the female body builder would have been considered a travesty of nature.[103] As Garb remarks,

> a "masculine woman" or "feminine man" represented an unnatural aberration, a grotesque distortion of a preordained set of distinctions that were rooted in biology, decreed by nature and endorsed by the complex organisation of sexual and social behaviour which characterised modern society.[104]

[99] The word 'gymnasium' comes from the Greek *gumnoi* which translates as 'stark naked'. Sennet states that, '[t]he naked, beautiful body seems a gift of Nature, but Thucydides, we recall, wrote about nakedness as an achievement of civilisation. The gymnasium taught young Athenians how to become naked'. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[100] Warner, M. (1985) 'Nuda Veritas', *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*. London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd. pp. 294 – 328. Garb, *op. cit.*, highlights the *Venus Pudica*, 'a marble sculpture of a bare-breasted standing female figure with one hand placed defensively over the genitals, serving both to preserve the figure's modesty and to draw attention to her sexuality' (p. 147). See also Salomon, N. (1996) 'The Venus Pudica: uncovering art history's "hidden agendas" and pernicious pedigrees', in Pollock, G. (ed) *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*. London: Routledge.

[101] Warner, *op. cit.*

[102] Similar rules apply in contemporary naturist clubs.

[103] Ewing, *op. cit.*; Hall, *op. cit.* Ewing also debates the class-based nature of prowess.

Parmelee concurred with this view in *Nudism in Modern Life* stating, 'each sex is beautiful according to its own norm: male traits in a woman and female traits in a man impress most persons as unpleasant and ugly'.[105] Although female weightlifters were not unknown, their preordained and unequivocal 'freakishness' worked to valorise more 'normative notions of femininity'.[106] Budd notes that female strength performers usually also occupied the traditional roles of wives and mothers alongside their stage routines and their 'uniqueness' was often made more 'palatable' by reassurance that they were 'born' and not 'made' strong.

In *Man and Sunlight* Surén praised the beauty of the classical female body, 'strength befitting the years, endurance, dexterity, swiftness, and iron hardihood, together with a healthy mind'.[107] He described it 'magnificent form'; [s]trength and agility are eloquent in their bodies! Wonderful are the curves of the back – classic the trunk and firm the breast'.[108] Convinced that the future of the race rested in the joy of nature, Surén declared that sunlight and exercise would inspire women and girls to 'set everything on becoming beautiful and strong'.[109] Yet, whilst he encouraged women to become 'strong and hardy' and to take part in outdoor activity whatever their age, he was adamant that they must never lose what he called their 'eternal nature-feminine harmony of movement and of body'.[110] In Surén's work one notices that the female bodies depicted are very different in stature to those of the male athletes. In Figures 6.14 and 6.15, for example, the women are toned and

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[104] Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[105] Parmelee, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
[106] Budd, *op. cit.*
[107] Surén, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
[108] *Ibid.*, pp. 193 – 4.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Figure 6.14 Woman Kneeling. From Surén (1927) p. 59.

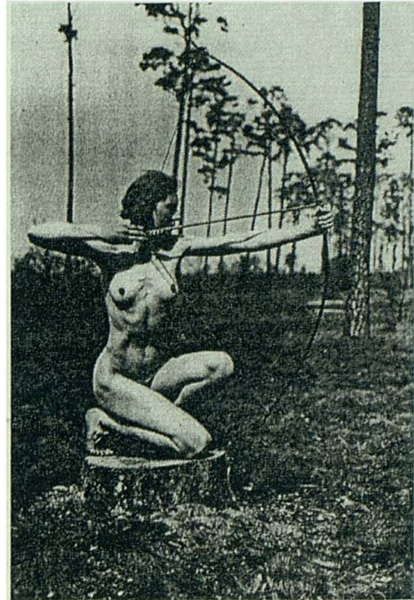
Figure 6.15 Women at the water's edge. From Surén (1927) p. 15.

firm but not muscular, their bodies are composed of soft, rounded shapes rather than hard and angular, their skin is pale and they exudes an air of delicacy and grace in comparison to the forceful will or self-sacrificial determination of the students in Figure 6.10. Though Surén encouraged women and girls to take exercise, he placed his emphasis on activities far removed from those of the men. He was particularly anxious that women did not undertake so-called 'masculine activities', warning:

> there are many questions still unsettled [...] one does not know whether all forms of masculine activity are good for the female body. It would be a great pity if our maidens became clumsy, unfeminine, inharmonious through one-sided exercise.[111]

For Surén, for a woman to possess a muscular, heroic body would have been the very antithesis of what it was to be feminine.[112] In keeping with his calls for the improvement of the race, a hard, muscular body would ultimately have also been inappropriate for childbearing and nurture. The images in *Man and Sunlight* thus stand in stark contrast to the contemporary images featured in Figure 6.16. These women are muscular and take part in activities which Surén appeared to code as 'masculine'. Indeed, the woman exercising on the 'Ayro wheel' appears to share similar dimensions with Da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man', yet in Surén's discourse it seems impossible that there could ever be a 'Vitruvian Woman'.[113] Surén's illustrations embody quite a narrow conception of femininity grounded in ideas based on the contemporary constructs of classical beauty and the duty of

[111] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[112] Budd, *op. cit.*
[113] See Forty, *op. cit.*



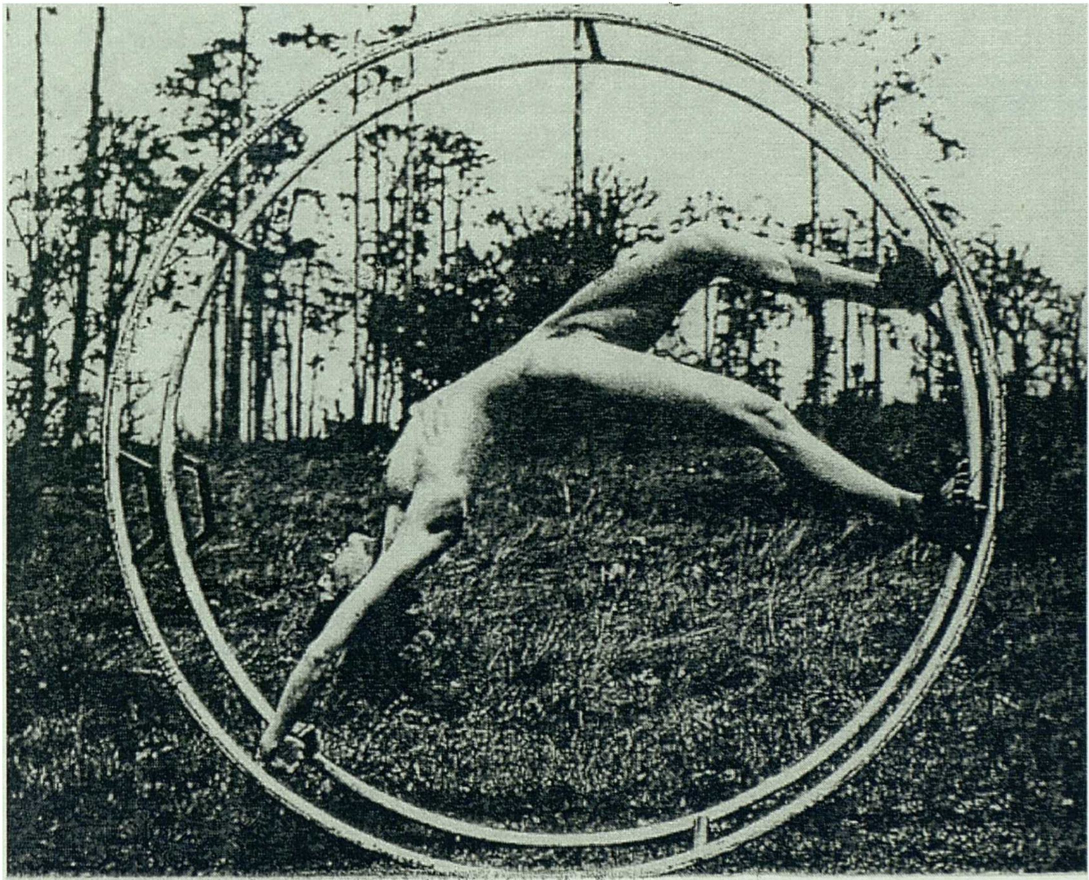


Figure 6.16 Active Women c. 1930s. From Koetzle (1999) pp. 629, 564 and 596.

motherhood. Compared with the women in Figure 6.15, the women in Figure 6.16 appear to occupy an ambivalent position in relation to the harsh environments that surround them.

Surén's text promoted an ethos of renewed freedom and heightened embodied experience for both males and females. The interaction of the women with the natural environment in Figure 6.15 suggests that Surén's ideology was also informed by the traditional association between nature and femininity in Western society.[114] Many of the images in *Man and Sunlight* also show an inherent assimilation between the feminine and the natural, however, it is important to consider these within the wider context. Images with captions such as 'Dryad', 'Nymph', 'Water Fairy' and 'Woodland Charm' depicting sunlit women reclining on grassy banks, exploring lakeside reeds and wandering through leafy glades were repeated time and again naturist literature. From Figure 6.17 in William Welby's *The Naked Truth About Nudism* to the more contemporary images in Figure 6.18 it is possible to see that the female nude within nature has represented an enduring theme throughout the history of naturist photography. Such images share similar attributes to those observed by Rose in nineteenth century landscape art in which a woman's:

> sexuality as well as her fertility was explored in images of classical, fantastical or allegorical women surrounded by wild nature; they are found in fields and woods throughout the late nineteenth century art, entwining themselves as nymphs or dryads in trees or lying on the leaf covered earth, languid, vulnerable

[114] McDowell, L. (1999) *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Cambridge: Polity; Rose, G., Kinnard, V., Morris, M. and Nash, C. (1997) 'Feminist geographies of environment, nature and landscape', Women in Geography Study Group *Feminist Geographies: Explorations in Diversity and Difference*. Harlow: Longman; Shiva, V. (1997) 'Women in nature', in McDowell, L. and Sharp, J. P. (eds) *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings*. London: Arnold pp. 174 – 177; Davis, K, (1997) *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: Sage; Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism in Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity.

Figure 6.17 'Meditation' by Walter Bird. From Welby (1939) p. 2.

Figure 6.18 Women posing in *British Naturism* (1969).

> [...] In a final iconographic twist, women become allegories of nature herself, for the seasons, for weather, for the time of day, for flowers.[115]

In both genres woman was commonly presented as an 'elemental creature, frolicking freely in the undergrowth'.[116] As discussed in Chapter Three, feminist theorists such as Nochlin and Garb have highlighted the ways in which these representations are underscored by networks of power within Western society which, in turn, reify the masculine 'gaze'.[117] For instance, Nochlin looked at the way in which;

> representations of women in art [were] founded upon and [served] to reproduce indisputably accepted assumptions held by society in general, artists in particular [...] about men's power over, superiority to, difference from, and necessary control of women, assumptions which [were] manifested in the visual structures as well as the thematic choices of the pictures in question.[118]

And, considering the open-air female figure in Renoir's *Nude in the Sunlight* (1875 – 1876) Garb states;

> [like] a nymph of the woods drawn from some timeless arcadia, Woman (sic) takes her place in a world of water and foliage, feathery and full in its textual evocation, in which flesh, vegetation, hair and cloth provide a soft and downy pillow on which the weary urban viewer can rest his (sic) eyes.

115 Rose, 'Geography as a science', *op. cit.*, p. 347.
116 Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

Nature is here conceived as the site of solace, and Woman, devoid of the artifaces of culture, fits seamlessly into the natural world that provides her setting'.[119]

More recently, in examining the work of contemporary artists, Nash has pointed to the 'arbitrary' and 'constructed authority' of figuring the female body as nature and considered the way in which such techniques can also be applied to the male physique: '[i]t is easy [...] to find curves in the male body to correspond to apparent rounded forms in the landscape [thus freeing] the body-landscape metaphor from any essential equation between nature and femininity'.[120]

Whilst Surén did include a number of images depicting the male nude within the natural environment, the overriding emphasis within the images of female nudes in *Man and Sunlight* is that of a soft, nurturing body in tune with its natural rhythms; fit, healthy, true to itself and ready to fulfil its duty to the nation. However, with regards to my discussion of the association commonly made between nudity and 'primitive' society in Chapter Four, it does seems important to Surén that this assimilation did not go too far. Whilst the image of the woman in the wood is still an inherently gendered image, photographic techniques make the distinction between 'primitive' and 'civilised' human

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[117] Nochlin, L. (1989) 'Women, art and power' and 'Eroticism and female imagery in nineteenth century art', in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*. London: Thames and Hudson, pp. 1 – 36 and 136 – 144; Garb, *op. cit.* See also Bonner, F., Goodman, L., Allen, R., Janes, L. and King, C. (eds) (1995) *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity.

[118] Nochlin, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[119] Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 145. Garb notes that for Renoir, like many *fin-de-siècle* men, 'only those roles that were conceived of as an extension of women's biological and organic constitutions were regarded as appropriate. Modern aspirations and fashions destroyed women's essential reproductive and nurturing capacities [...] high heels led to the dropping of the womb, corsets constrained the uterus, and elaborate hairdos distorted women's natural beauty'. Yet, although Renoir's views on fashion appear to coincide with those of feminist dress reformers, where they aimed to prepare women for the world of work, he was averse to any task that took women away from what he believed to be their 'natural and all-consuming destiny' as wives, mothers and house-keepers (p. 165).

[120] Nash, 'Reclaiming', *op. cit.*

Figure 6.19 Women in the wilderness. From Surén (1927) p. 55.

clear.[121] In Figure 6.19 the woman is naked in a wooded landscape and appears as a nymph of the forest with a garland of flowers around her head and she peeps around a rock. However, she is very pale against the damp dark background and standing on the lush plants and other greenery she takes on a strange luminescence. She is muscular but at the same time looks delicate against the rugged forest. In her femaleness she seems to be part of this verdant, fertile nature whilst at the same time the rock and the translucent glow of her skin work to separate her from it.

[121] Techniques such as 'dodging' and 'burning' at the printing stage enable the photographer to place more or less emphasis on selected areas of the print by exposing them to varying amounts of light making them darker or lighter.

Alternative readings of the female body

Analysing images of the naked body, especially those produced by naturists, provides a means to address the representation of men and women.[122] Visual representation of the body can clearly operate to reflect and reinforce contemporary constructions of masculinity and femininity, as well as sexual, class and racial oppression: 'naked or clothed, the body in representation is cloaked in convention, conforming to society's expectations in setting, pose, attributes and physical characteristics'.[123] However, it *can* do otherwise, it can provide a space for the body's rebellion, 'its somatic seepage beyond the margins of carefully demarcated roles and strictly policed desires'.[124] Following Nash, I do not wish to dismiss or diminish the importance of feminist geographies of landscape representation, nor to suggest that representations of landscape or the body can be easily detached from a set of limiting and oppressive meanings and subject positions.[125] For example, Nash highlights the tendency to ignore the issue of female spectatorship, suggesting that the production and consumption of visual imagery is more complex than the general assumption that images of women are produced for the pleasuring and empowering of men.[126] Despite the role of visual imagery in construction of femininity, women can also be understood as viewers and potential artistic producers as well as objects of vision.[127] Indeed, the denial of the woman as viewer highlights the 'potency' of women's active viewing; 'asserting women's visual pleasure resists both the idea of women as passive objects of the male gaze and hegemonic versions of what is an appropriate feminine viewing position and objects of view'.[128]

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[122] Nash, *op. cit.*
[123] *Ibid.*; Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[124] Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Nash, *op. cit.* See also Gamman, L. and Marshment, M. (eds) (1998) 'Introduction', *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*. London: The Women's Press Ltd pp. 1 – 7.
[125] Nash, *op. cit.*
[126] *Ibid.* See also Gamman and Marshment, *op. cit.*
[127] Nash, *op. cit.*
[128] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

Figure 6.20 'Artistic gymnastics'. From Surén (1927) p. 81.

Figure 6.21 'The Laban Dancing School (Berlin Ballet)'. From Surén (1927) p. 102.

As stated above, Surén's conception of the body was highly gendered, however, the modern dance images he used to supplement his text problematise assumptions that the female body was inherently passive. Some of these photographs such as Figure 6.20 depict female gymnasts leaping and gliding through sheltered, enclosed and verdant natural settings whereas others, as in Figure 6.21 show dancers bursting into the open space of parkland.[129] On a basic level, outdoor exposures were one way round the technical limitations of dance photography as there was plentiful light for quick exposures.[130] However, by the end of the nineteenth century the outdoors motif increasingly began to correspond with a desire on the part of certain dancers to commune with the natural environment in an attempt to heal the rift that was felt to have opened between nature and the human soul. Natural outdoor settings could also be used to convey the 'healthy ambience' associated with this new form of dancing.[131] Some of the most famous contemporary dancers including Duncan, Fuller and St. Denis were all photographed dancing barefoot either by the sea or in woodland, heads thrown back and arms ecstatically extended in a similar manner demonstrated to the English dance students featured in Figure 6.22.[132] Alongside Dalcroze, Isadora Duncan believed that the dancer's body must be free to move unrestricted by clothes to be in harmony with nature and to sense the space which

[129] The photographs are very beautiful images, however, whilst Surén appears to have thought carefully about visual representation in his book, Dalcroze actually resisted thinking of eurythmics either as a technical method or as a spectacle. Beacham, *op. cit.*, notes that eurythmics was intended to 'enable the student to react to and express whatever music he (sic) applied it to, without lapsing into the purely abstract or improvised creation of pleasing visual effects [...] so that its expression through the body became a deeply personal and liberating experience' (p. 160).
[130] Ewing, *op. cit.*
[131] Alter, *op. cit.*
[132] Ewing, *op. cit*; Burt, *op. cit.*

Figure 6.22 'Joie de Vivre', dance students at Worthing, East Sussex (May 1933). The Hulton Getty Picture Archive

surrounded them.[133] The body thus freed would radiate a 'special kind of natural beauty'.[134] Duncan was particularly notable for her barefoot movements and flowing 'diaphanous' Grecian draperies designed to reflect the swaying of the trees and the rocking of the ocean waves.[135] Whilst she recommended studying the movement of children, Duncan's main inspiration came from the forces of nature;

> [s]ince all things on earth are subject to the pull of gravity, nature generates and controls all movement and manifests the pattern of attraction and repulsion,

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[133] For more information on Duncan see IDFCD (2001) 'About Isadora Duncan' http://www.isadoraduncan.org; Bresciani, J. (2001) 'Who was Isadora Duncan' http://www.nyu.edu/pages/nyc/duncan/who.html; Dickson, S. (2001) 'Isadora Duncan, 18-78 – 1927' http://www.sfmuseum.org; Encyclopædia Britannica (1999) 'Duncan, Isadora' http://www.women.eb.com.

[134] Alter, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Duncan was not alone and other dancer-writers such as Helen Moller shared her opinions on clothing. Moller spoke adamantly against 'fashion' blaming it for the decadent state of dancing and sculpture (pp. 32 - 33).

[135] Seymour, M. (27/01/2002) 'Footloose and fancy-free. A review of *Isadora: The Sensational Life of Isadora Duncan* by Peter Kurth', in *The Sunday Times (Culture)* pp. 33 – 34. The Greek-style tunic, which tied at the waist or slightly higher to create a bodice, was popular amongst all so-called 'natural' dancers, with variation only in length and colour. Alter, *op. cit.*

resistance and yielding [...] One sees this pattern in the motion of ocean waves, of sound, of light, in wind, in the seasons, in the movement of animals, especially of birds in flight.[136]

Consequently, Isadora's dance movements were flowing, undulating and rhythmic, qualities that could be found in the pattern of everyday human movement: walking, running, skipping, rolling, stirring, rocking, swinging.[137]

The skipping position displayed by the artistic gymnast in Figure 6.20, complete with outstretched arms and raised knee (signature moves of Isadora Duncan and Helen Moller respectively), was common to many images of natural dancers. Alter believes that crucially, this pose reveals a 'shared aesthetic' and 'common vocabulary of movement' amongst modern dance practitioners, and is a link that can be traced back each time to the work of Delsarte.[138] For example, Duncan's conceptualisation of the body, in particular, her ideas regarding women's clothing reform reflected the influence of the American Delsartians who 'valued the beauty and grandeur of a woman's nude body'.[139] She criticised the restrictive nature of masculinised ballet stating that it did not suit the tall, supple bodies of American women but, above all, she detested its lack of expression, 'its aristocratic origins, its subjugation of women, its upper-class support, its artificial subject matter, its restrictive costumes, and its unnatural technique'.[140] Though this image also reflects the stature of the typical female in *Man and Sunlight* - young, pale skinned, slim, toned and supple – it is possible to note a certain amount of freedom of movement and

[136] Duncan cited in Alter, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 – 29.
[137] *Ibid.*
[138] See *ibid.*, pp. 106 - 108 for a more in-depth discussion of these links.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 27. The American Delsartians (such as physical culturist Genevive Stebbins) were disciples of Francois Delsarte (1811 - 1871), a researcher of human emotions and teacher of natural acting techniques. They applied his teachings first to elocution and public speaking and then to health and hygiene. Toepfer, *op. cit.*

expression. When not nude the women in the book wear small cropped-tops and shorts or 'classical style' tunics with their hair in short bobs or tied back in a knot.[141] In the 1920s the wearing of short skirts, short hair, small hats and practical cami-knickers, and an androgynous boy / girl figure with a suppressed bosom was a prevailing fashion: the 'indulgent' and 'abundant' curves of Edwardian girls had been replaced by trim, slim figures and small breasts.[142] For example, in 1912 bohemian Nina Hamnett cut her hair into a short bob fashionable amongst female students at the Slade School of Art. They were 'known as "cropheads", and the cut signalled that the wearer was an artistic, radical woman'.[143] The women in these images therefore suggest an alternative femininity running parallel to the inherently gendered conception of the female apparent in the images discussed in the previous section. In adopting new techniques and altering their hair and clothing (or dispensing with it altogether) to enable freedom of movement and self-expression the women in these images suggest a modern femininity sufficiently in tune with the natural environment and their bodies to herald a new age of civilisation.

Adroitly, Alter points out that, through their publications and teachings, dancer-writers can be accused of simply preaching to the converted and the people who could afford to buy their books. The upper and upper-middle class women who attended dance schools not only had the leisure time to study outside regular hours but also the money to pay for their

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[140] Alter, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[141] The age of the women in the dance school photographs is another example of Surén 'selecting' images representative of his ideology. For example, children as young as five and older members of the community all took part in the classes and performances at Hellerau.
[142] Lewinski, *op. cit.* On the narrow-hipped, tailored look as a natural and positive ideal for women in Nazi discourse see Richardson. A. (1990) 'The nazification of women in art', in Taylor, B. and van der Will, W. (eds) *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design. Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich*. Winchester: The Winchester Press pp. 53 – 79 (especially pp. 71 – 74).
[143] Wilson, E. (2000) 'The heroism of everyday life', *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts.* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press pp. 159 - 178 (p. 169).

tuition.[144] During the last 150 years professional dance has not been considered an appropriate activity for white men to engage in. Artistic impression became increasingly gendered and '[a]rt, as an emotional (and therefore feminine) representation of the inner life became even further estranged from science, the representative mode of thought in the cruel emotionless masculine world outside'.[145] The obvious exception is the artist as the inspired genius.[146] Since the nineteenth century it has been considered inappropriate for men to appear soft and be emotionally expressive, the individual who does not conform to these behavioural norms, and cannot claim to be a genius is in danger of not being considered a 'proper man'.[147] Yet modern dance, like naturism, was a powerful aid to feminism, removing both the artificial barriers of dress, destroying the notion that sex was mysterious or seductive, and strengthening feelings of solidarity and comradeship between the sexes.[148] As Burt notes;

> the predominance in the dance profession of women dancers and choreographers largely from middle-class backgrounds meant that during this period, theatre dance (both popular and artistic) was an arena in which the differences between male and female response to modernity were particularly clearly articulated.[149]

Allowing freedom of expression, emotive gestures and demonstrative limb movements, sport and dancing were activities which allowed these early twentieth century women to enjoy a new freedom from traditional physical and social restrictions regarding what was

[144] In America, for example, the average wage in the 1920s and 1930s ranged between $5 to $10 per week whilst Moller's book sold for $6. Women who attended college at this time usually relied chiefly on the affluence of their parents.
[145] Hoch cited in Burt, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[146] *Ibid.*
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] Parmelee, *op. cit.*

and was not considered appropriate feminine behaviour. This is a topic that will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Eight in relation to female campers and the implications of their mobility and masculine dress had on the reception the received from non-campers and locals.

The male nude

I now turn to focus explicitly upon issues surrounding the representation of the male nude within Surén's text. I focus in particular, on the ways in which the subjects manage to retain their masculinity whilst assuming poses which depict the masculine body as vulnerable and available to the gaze of the spectator. In comparison to female nudes, images of the unclothed male body amounted to no more than two per cent of the total images taken during the first 120 years of the existence of the photographic medium.[150] In England, few authenticated photographs of the nude male can be found until the end of the nineteenth century and the exhibition and publication of male nudes was still relatively rare in inter-war Europe. The controversy that surrounds the super-realistic images of male nude by contemporary photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, demonstrates that the representation of the male body remains a contested issue even in the twenty-first century.[151] 'Water Rats' by Frank Meadow Sutcliffe (see Figure 6.23) is a good example of

[149] Burt, *op. cit.*, p. 24. Denied creative access to positions within ballet, traditionally the preserve of male choreographers, women tended to dominate the modern dance arena. As they didn't have any vested interests in upholding the specialist traditions of ballet, women were therefore freer than men to develop new and alternative forms of dance.

[150] Lewinski, *op. cit.*, p. 198. For a discussion on nineteenth century male nude photography, in particular that of Eadweard Muybridge and Thomas Eakins see pp. 198 – 199.

[151] Lewinski, *op. cit.* See also Mercer, K. (1999) 'Reading racial fetishism: the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe', in Evans, J. and Hall, S. (eds) *Visual Culture: The Reader*. London: Sage pp. 435 – 447.

Figure 6.23 'The Water Rats' by Frank Meadow Sutcliffe (1886) © Sutcliffe Gallery, Whitby.

the early genre and great controversy when first exhibited.[152] However, Lewinski locates the 'true birth' of male nude photography, as an artistic and aesthetic undertaking, in the small Sicilian coastal village of Taormina around 1890 where German photographer Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden, lived and worked.[153] Von Gloeden photographed handsome young local boys whom he invited to wander and sunbathe in his lush villa and a favourite pastime of his was creating imitation classical tableaux. Though not remarkably gifted and often accused by some of 'bad taste' with leanings towards pornography, von Gloeden was celebrated and regarded as a fine artist by others.[154] Von Gloeden paid his models generous

[152] Lewinski, *op. cit.*
[153] *Ibid.*; Ewing, *op. cit.*
[154] Lewinski, *op. cit.*

fees and repeat fees when photographs were sold to collectors though, unfortunately, most of his negatives were destroyed by the German soldiers who occupied Sicily in 1944.

As demonstrated by the multiple readings the work of Sutcliffe and Von Gloeden, the abundance of information in photographs, invariably well in excess of that intended by the photographer, opens them to a multitude of uses and meanings. Any single image has diverse attributes; what these attributes are depends as much on what the viewer reads into them as what the photographer intended.[155] Whilst photographers, publishers and editors might attempt to condition the consumption of photographs through their books and lectures, they could neither determine fully nor limit the meanings which might be projected onto their images by their audience.[156] Ryan states;

> although individual photographers, through their technical abilities, aesthetic sensibilities and cultural prejudices certainly shaped their own images as well as the wider body of work of which they were part, their precise role in constructing the meanings of their photographs is not too easy to determine. For beyond their technical production, photographs took on a life of their own and could undergo serious alteration in the process.[157]

In his study of the 'black male' in advertising, Jackson observed that new 'circuits of culture' are initiated when consumers begin to undermine an image's intended messages and supply alternative readings.[158] The interpretation of the body is laden with open-ended possibilities and can suggest not just other forms of feminine sexuality but also, other

[155] Ewing, *op. cit.*
[156] Ryan, *op. cit.*
[157] *Ibid.* p. 220.

versions of masculine sexuality; as passive and desired rather than active and desiring.[159] In every case, the reader brings individual experience and desires to bear in consuming physical culture products and images.[160] For example, is it all too easy for the contemporary viewer to read images such as Figure 5.3 and 5.4 in Chapter Five as implicitly 'gay-coded'.[161] As Krüger questions, are these works discussed mainly in terms of homoeroticism because we are not used to the show of shining skin and vigour or is it because 'group pictures of male nudes, oiled as if bathed in sweat, are coded in our late twentieth century sex / gender system as a homosexual gathering?'[162] Whilst there is no doubt that the beautiful bodies in von Gloeden's images, the display of muscles in Sandow's poses, and male camaraderie of Surén's mudbaths made the body available to both the hetero- and homoerotic gaze, it is important not to neglect other equally valid avenues of discussion which may be derived from closer inspection of such images.[163]

The nude male and the problem of display

In her study of the 'Western' film genre, Pumphrey observes that 'cleanliness', and the nudity that one might expect 'getting clean' to involve, plays a crucial role in the coding of character.[164] Firstly, as a sign of being 'unprepared', naked bathing implies weakness, lays the body open to potential threat and thus diminishes a man's masculinity. In order to retain his masculinity, the hero's nudity must be consistently 'masked'; cowboys don't just

[158] Jackson, P. (1994) 'Black Male: advertising and the cultural politics of masculinity', in *Gender, Place and Culture* 1 (1) pp 49 – 57.
[159] Budd, *op. cit.*; Nash, *op. cit.*
[160] Budd, *op. cit.*
[161] *Ibid.*
[162] Krüger, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
[163] For more information on von Gloeden and Sandow see Boscagli, *op. cit.*
[164] Pumphrey, *op. cit.*

wear hats in the bath, they also don 'trousers, shirts and underwear'.[165] Secondly, cleanliness is not simply linked to 'civilised' city life, but also with a concern for appearance that is conventionally coded as feminine or unmanly. When the Western hero wears his hat in the bath, he signals both his estrangement from civilisation and distances himself from the demands of physical display.[166] In Surén's images as in other naturist images, the ease with which the men occupy space appears 'uncompromisingly manly' appearing to depend upon general associations between sport and 'race', manliness and muscularity and the readers' socially constructed knowledge, yet the fact that they are *photographed nude* means that the question of their 'masculinity' remains laden with anxiety.[167]

Through physique photography, heroic narratives and idealised bodies helped to create an elevated image of manliness. The use of 'weaponry, action, pose and strategically placed body coverings [contrived] to create an assertively phallic image of masculinity, one in which the male body [was] both beautiful and complete'.[168] Yet, paradoxically, in this age of heroism there was no room for the superman. In the early decades of the twentieth century, machines were beginning to supplant the strength and energies of the human worker on a larger and larger scale. The muscular body became surplus to requirements in the office and the mechanised Taylorist factory and employers increasingly demanded fewer craftsmen and more technicians. In effect, the powerful, muscular and unclothed male body 'the blond beast on display', existed mainly to be consumed as a spectacle, an image that masses of people could pursue as an ideal, imitate, or simply watch on the stage of the music hall. Boscagli states that;

[165] *Ibid.*, p. 80
[166] *Ibid.*
[167] Garb, *op. cit.*; Jackson, *op. cit.*

> while urging the new man to master his own excesses in a gesture of superior spirituality as was visible in the self-imposed discipline of the athlete and in the sacrificial self-expenditure of the patriotic soldier, the early twentieth century production of masculine corporeality also displayed the male body as an object of consumption. The unclothed body exposed to the gaze - either at a sporting event or during the ramblers' hike, on the beach or in the sentimentally homoerotic scenes as those of soldiers bathing from World War One - became sexualised and upset bourgeois norms of visibility and propriety. In these figurations the male body was sexualised by its staging in public and through the very practices that were supposed to produce a socially healing and safer image of the masculine.[169]

As a model on display the body-builder was open to both the masculine and feminine gaze. The physique photographs of strongmen posing as Greek statues and the images of Surén and his students such as Figure 6.10, could therefore be read not only as 'inspiring imperial imagery' but also as 'erotic fodder'.[170] As Budd remarks, 'for men who desired other men, playing the double game was enabled and encouraged by dominant presumptions about the reliability of the body's surface'.[171] Physical culture and naturism certainly provided space for men, such as Earl Tupper, at least desiring to look at or compare themselves with other men.

A large part of the success of physical culture was its assertion of the male body as 'heroic' rather than 'erotic', in the body's depiction as under control rather than out of

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[168] Garb, *op. cit.*, p. 26. See also Wearing, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
[169] Boscagli, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

control.[172] For example, anxieties over the line dividing the sexes, or the normal from the perverse, were subsumed in new forms of representation that supported various interpretative visions of the natural past. Historicized ideas of masculine beauty and bodily autonomy were placed above other abstractions or experiments of the self; the deviancy and weakness of the effeminate dandy was set against the apparent power, purity and historical weight of the neo-classical sculpture as imitated by the strongman. Erotic capability was thus controlled through the distancing realm of historical narrative.[173] Physiques such as Sandow's were asserted as the epitome of modern embodied manliness and photographs linked athletic posing with power and ideal manhood.[174] The heroic stance of the strongman was characterised by control – the exertion of power and the promise of mastery. However, in their attempts to replicate classical sculptures, and use of props such as sandals and leopard skins, body-builders like Eugen Sandow were in danger of becoming 'kitsch' copies of the originals.[175]

Boscagli highlights the fact that despite his statuesque, sculpted physique shape with 'muscles illuminated one by one, visually chiselled by the use of light', Sandow's body was very different from the 'aristocratic' and 'androgynous' body of the Greek statue.[176] For example, the leopard skins are a reminder of the circus world, the zoo and the colonial hunting trophy, and introduce an element of exoticism, contained wildness and lower-class entertainment into the image. At the same time, the 'exaggerated bulk' of Sandow's legs, the veins visible in his calves, and the artificial, produced masculinity suggest effort rather

[170] Budd, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[171] *Ibid.*, p. 77.
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] Berman, *op. cit.*
[174] Budd, *op. cit.*
[175] Boscagli, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
[176] *Ibid.*

Figure 6.24 Male posing with javelin. From Surén (1927) p. 76.

than classical repose.[177] Although, in a similar way to the semi-clad cowboy, it is specifically because of these iconographical conventions that the body-builders body could be positioned as the object of the gaze without being 'feminised'.[178] Yet, apart from several images such as Figure 6.24 in which the man takes on the guise of 'the hunter' poised and ready for action with his javelin, very few of the photographs in *Man and Sunlight* reflect the kitsch, almost forced, posturing of Sandow *et al* and it is necessary to look for other ways in which to examine these images.

In 1907 artist Edvard Munch broke with the normative vision of the male nude in nineteenth century art. In *Bathing Men* (Figure 6.25) one witnesses not only the representation of the naked male body, but also an unusual and unconventional focus on the 'manly' nude; the naked bodies of mature men 'unencumbered by rhetorical distancing devices'.[179] Whilst he acknowledged the tradition of classical male nudity through archetypal Antique athletic postures, the figures in Munch's painting are distanced from the rhetoric of antiquity through the striking contrast between their bronzed heads, necks and hands and the whiteness of their torsos and legs; it is clear that they are usually clothed.[180] Although the men in Surén's book are tanned, all over, comparison with the men in Munch's painting offer some insight into the structures which prevented them from being feminised. For example, Munch's image also exudes a sense of movement and energy. In

[177] *Ibid.*
[178] *Ibid.*
[179] *Ibid.*, p. 76. Painted in the village of Warnemünde on the German Baltic Coast and a monumental 206 x 227 cm *Bathing Men*, the centre piece of an tryptisch, was initially rejected for exhibition in Hamburg, however, it was bought by the Ateneum Museum, Helsinki in 1911. Critics in the Finnish press referred to it both as 'a style of art that exercises a strong influence on the modern imagination' and an example of a 'passing fad' (p. 73).
[180] *Ibid.*

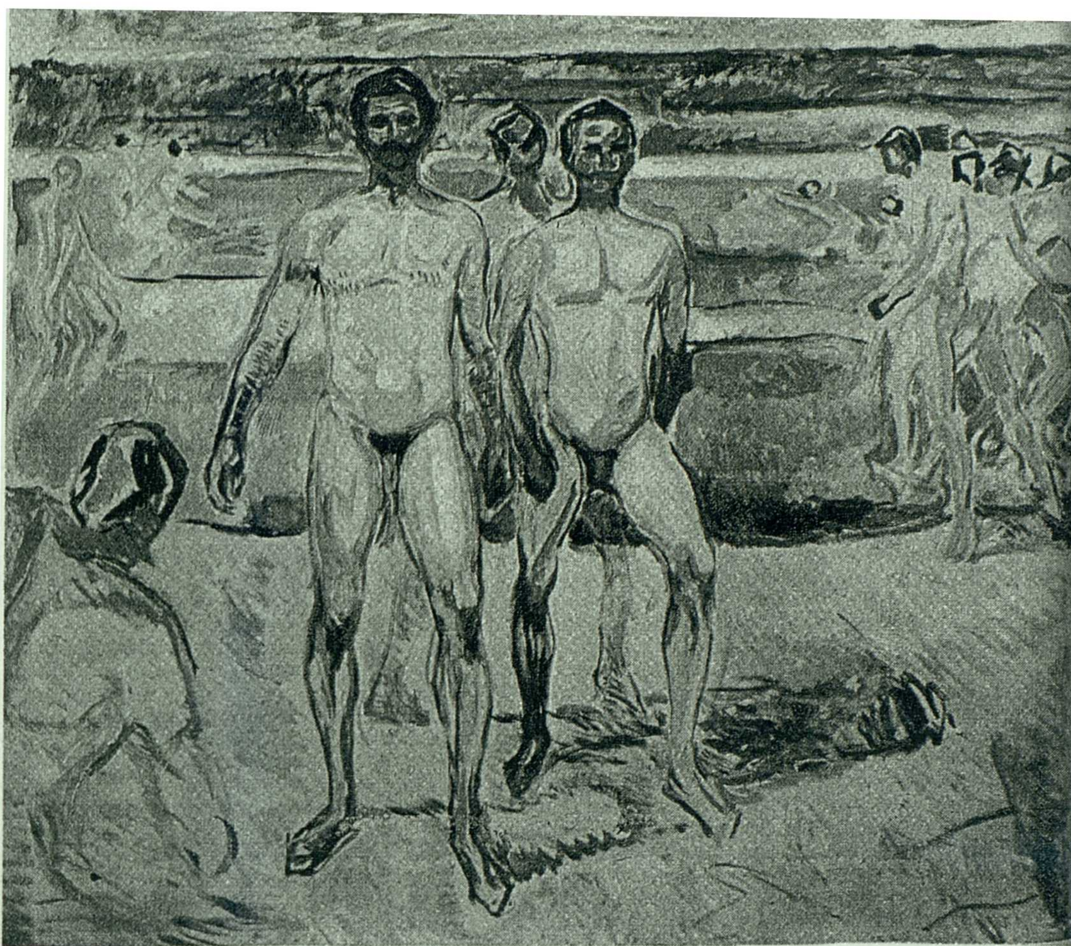

Figure 6.25 *Bathing Men*, triptych centrepiece. Edvard Munch (1907 – 1908). From Hodin (1979) p. 108.

later naturist photography, for example, it is common to find male naturists engaged in pursuits such as gardening, building, sport, 'activities' which represent and reinforce dominant ideas of masculinity. Thus, in *Bathing Men*, as in the images of Surén's training school, it is the men's degree of 'maleness' which is their defining form, in their maturity, muscularity and *activity* they are magnificent emblems of virile male authority and are thus 'separated' from passive representations of a feminised masculinity.[181]

Another interesting feature of Figure 6.25 is the way in which the men hold the spectator's attention through their confrontational gaze. As documented above in images of

the female nude, the woman on display traditionally adopts a passive pose that allows her to be consumed by the viewer. Burt states that from paintings to contemporary pin-ups, the female nude almost always averts her eyes from the viewer and acknowledges them, thus allowing herself to be surveyed as an erotic object.[182] In contrast, male pin-ups, like Munch's bathing men, tend to look out actively, often upwards, barely acknowledging the viewer and thus resisting the attempts of the viewer to objectify them.[183] This is the point where some of the images of nude men in *Man and Sunlight* become problematic. For example, in Figures 6.26 and 6.27 the subjects of the images adopt passive postures more commonly associated with images of the female nude. In the first image the boy at repose averts his eyes from the viewer and thus acknowledges their presence, whilst in the second image, the man's body appears vulnerable both to the penetrating gaze of the viewer and the cold, unyielding rocks on which he is posed.

In considering Figure 6.26 it is useful to look at wider developments within Northern European art in the early twentieth century. As the thesis demonstrates, in this period, the purification of the body through contact with the sun and fresh air had the potential to initiate a return to a human condition in which all the undesirable features of modernity were eliminated. However, one of the preconditions of this regeneration was the concept

[181] *Ibid.* See also Burt, *op. cit.* Lutz and Collins note that in photographs of black males in the *National Geographic* magazine 'male muscles take the place analogous to female breasts as signs of gendered sexuality' (p. 174).
[182] Burt, *op. cit.*
[183] *Ibid.*

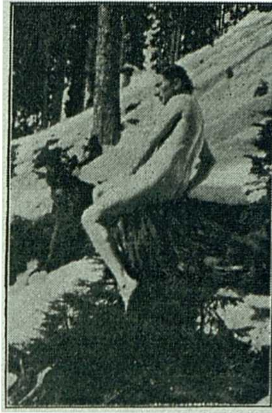
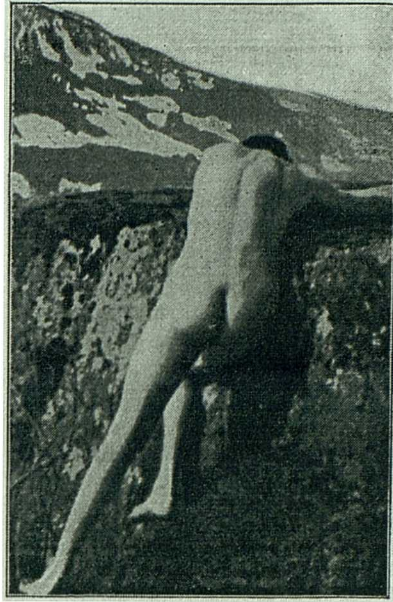

Figure 6.26 Nude male in the wilderness. From Surén (1927) p. 27.

Figure 6.27 Boy at repose by the seashore. From Surén (1927) p. 41.

that humans – in particular men - and nature were both spiritually and biologically connected.[184] This transformation was particularly noticeable in Scandinavia, where the image of the athletic male nude (which normally resided on the margins of social acceptability) became legitimised through its association with a masculinised concept of nature and began to replace the 'febrile' images of women as the embodiment of nature which had populated work of the late nineteenth century. This legitimisation was supported by nationalist literature and, in turn, by the German philosophical discourse that informed them and, as Surén's book demonstrates, the representation of the male nude came to be accepted as emblematic of health and sunlight.[185] As such, men were relocated from a state of culture to a state of nature and 'in an elastic inversion of the nature / culture duality, nature became a male sphere of activity'.[186] For example, when in a landscape setting, the male nude signified athletic aspiration, when positioned in relation to others in the sunlight, it became symptomatic of masculine community engaged in the purifying search for identity and health. As Berman remarks, 'the private realms of the beach and the bath house were thus accorded significance as emblems of a collective, public return to a natural state as the precondition for national cultural health'.[187]

Berman cites Swedish artist J. A. G. Acke as one of the first artists to focus on the male nude in 'open nature' as primary subject matter.[188] The founder of a nature colony near to Stockholm in the 1890s Acke attempted to provide a setting for artists and intellectuals in nature away from 'urban distractions'. He viewed nature as an agent of purification with which humans – particularly men - were spiritually and materially linked, but from which

[184] Berman, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Berman notes that confirmation of this linkage was partially provided by Monism or 'Vitalism', a philosophy which claimed there was an inter-relatedness among all living things.
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[187] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

they had become alienated; according to Acke, by re-engaging with nature, men's creativity and intellectual life could be freed from modern day constraints. His paintings of nude males stretching in the sun or warming themselves on rocks gave form to his ideas. In believing that humans could 're-engage with their instincts through unfiltered exposure to the elements', this philosophy appears to echo that of Surén and fellow naturists and provides some explanation of the reasons why Surén chose images such as Figure 6.27 to illustrate his text.[189] This image is symptomatic of the repositioning of man as an extension of unspoiled nature within Northern European social theory at the turn of the century.[190] Alongside this image, *Man and Sunlight* features images of lone figures sitting or standing arms outstretched in vast landscapes and wandering naked through forests in the crisp white snow.[191] At a time when the 'pre-industrial' natural environment was revered as the embodiment of a 'ahistorical primal state, untouched by the materialism of the modern urban environment', open nature would have signified for Surén, a moment of relief from the corrupting influences of over-socialisation.[192]

An analysis of Figures 6.26 and 6.27, however, is aided by an examination of the work of Gustave Caillebotte.[193] In 1882 and 1884 respectively, Caillebotte, an impressionist painter and collector, painted two of the most unconventional images of the human body produced in the nineteenth century, transgressing all the accepted conventions for the decorous presentation of the nude. The first image, 'Nude on a Couch', shows a female model draped indecorously on a sofa, her 'indolent' body bearing the impression of

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[188] *Ibid.*
[189] *Ibid.*, p. 78.
[190] *Ibid.*
[191] I am reluctant to read too much into the poses that suggest sun-worship as the men don't face the sun in all the photographs. Maybe their arms are outstretched to gain full exposure to the sun's rays, though nudist Harold Vincent expressed the belief that 'God and the sun are identical'. Cited in Bourke, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
[192] Berman, *op. cit.*
[193] *Ibid.*

discarded garments, her pubic hair flamboyantly covering her genitals, and her hand lingering suggestively on a nipple. The woman represented is no nymph or goddess, no ethereal other-worldly creature, her hands are rough and ruddy, the soles of her feet worn, pinched and tarnished. However, with regards to this research it is the second painting, 'Man at His Bath' (see Figure 6.28), which provides the greatest insight into Surén's figures.

In this image Caillebotte outrageously inserted an assertively male body into a 'prosaic' domestic setting, stripping the figure of both its clothing and its traditional heroic attributes. The mundane, 'matter of fact', sparse setting chosen by Caillebotte removed the usual 'idealising strategies' with which the contemporary audience would have been accustomed. All the viewer is confronted with is the 'brute reality' of a naked body and the stark lack of conventional narrative indicators forces the attention onto the figure itself. In showing only the rear view of the male nude in Figure 6.26 and in his eschewal of traditional techniques which advocated the presence of exaggerated musculature on the torso in Figure 6.28, Surén presented an image which had the potential to portray the male body as vulnerable. The association between males and nature seems at odds with both romantic constructions in which nature is characterised as female and also feminist positions which focus on the construction of associations between femaleness and nature.[194]

[194] Jones, O. (1999) 'Tomboy tales: the rural, nature and the gender of childhood', *Gender, Place and Culture* 6 (2) pp. 117 - 136.

Figure 6.28 'Bathing Man' by Gustave Cailebotte (1884). From Distel *et al* (1994) p. 254.

Yet if we consider Caillebotte's *Man at his Bath* it is the 'body alone which [becomes] the locus of men's manliness, the site for an elaboration of an invigorated modern masculinity'.[195] Therefore, in Surén's images the body speaks for itself and is allowed to guarantee its own claims to power, it becomes a symbol of physical and moral health, unencumbered by the trappings of tradition and modernity.

Conclusion

This chapter considered the ways in which Surén and his contemporaries used photographic imagery to promote a vision of a healthy body politic. The images used by Surén reflected nineteenth century changes in ideal body shape and contemporary debates regarding fitness and the physical and moral fibre of the nation. In celebrating a masculine, able-bodied, and athletic ideal Surén not only made an ideological connection with the classical body, but also presented his vision of a new humanity. For example, the idealised Greek body was heralded as a lost, but renewable, physicality which was not just attainable but *essential* to survival.[197] The well-rounded, self-disciplined 'models of sunshine physique' depicted in his photographs provided an exemplar for others to emulate. For Surén, the return to natural harmony was also an inherently gendered process and involved individuals taking their place in an assumed natural hierarchy. However, it is important to note that *Man and Sunlight* is not entirely representative of the naturist genre — particularly in terms of the book's segregation of the sexes and its ignorance of female athletic activity other than modern dance. Similarly, Surén's images of the mobile, dancing

[195] *Ibid.*, p. 28.
[196] Garb, *op. cit.*

female body also provide the potential for contestation. Whilst they all demonstrate an inherent nature-female harmony, these images are transgressive in that they reflect an alternative, more radical, definition of femininity which was beginning to circulate in the early twentieth century.

Images of the male nude were, and remain, highly controversial. Stripped of the physical and ideological protection afforded by clothes the naked male body can be viewed as vulnerable and open to threat. Naturist imagery challenged the norms of representation by opening the male body to both the masculine and feminine gaze and situated the masculinity of the naked figure in a position of anxiety. In order to counter the potential feminisation of the male body, physical culturists and naturists used a number of conventions and cultural signifiers in their images in order to create an overt sense of 'manliness'. In *Man and Sunlight*, and wider naturist literature, the movement and energy of the athlete and the mundane activity of the club naturist both represented and reinforced dominant ideas of masculinity. The 'manly nude' was separated from 'passive' representations of feminised masculinity further, by the subjects' confrontational gaze or active refusal to acknowledge the gaze of the spectator. Surén's overt insertion of the male body into the traditionally feminised natural environment and the depiction of somewhat 'passive' poses in several of the images is potentially problematic. However, in displaying the male body within the natural environment Surén's images reflect the 'repositioning' of man as an extension of unspoiled nature within Northern European social theory. Such discourses emphasised the spiritual and biological connections between humans and nature and the importance of a return to natural harmony as thought to have experienced in ancient history. In his eschewal of contemporary idealising strategies in his images of men at

[197] Garb, *op. cit.*

repose and within the natural environment, Surén forced the viewers' attention onto the figures themselves. The 'natural' male body was displayed as testament to a well-rounded lifestyle, harmony in mind and body and was emblematic of the benefits of health and sunlight. The body, as the locus of men's manliness and the site for an invigorated modern masculinity, was capable of representing itself and needed no explanation.

Chapter Seven

'A means to the quiet enjoyment of the fresh air of the country'

> I love the fresh air, it's great I declare, wide open spaces for me.
>
> With trailer and car I set out afar, a rover I meant to be.
>
> Over hills and dales,
>
> Over slugs and snails.[1]

Introduction

While often naive and romanticised, the association between the restorative powers of Nature and the development of the spiritually, morally and physically whole person contributed significantly to the cults of camping and rambling in the 1920s and 1930s.[2] A central element of camping culture was a reaction against the perceived ugliness, anonymity and artificiality of modern urban industrial society and the imagined physical, mental and moral deterioration of the population that resulted. Such concerns drew upon the social, cultural and political dislocation and anxieties consequent upon the First World War and the instabilities and economic depression of the inter-war

[1] Verse One from 'Trailing around in a trailer' by George Formby. GFS (2000) 'Trailing around in a trailer', www.georgeformby.co.uk/lyrics.

[2] Warren, A. (1987) 'Popular manliness: Baden Powell, scouting and the development of manly character', in Mangan, J. and Walvin, J. (eds) *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800 – 1940*. Manchester: Manchester University Press pp. 199 – 219.

years.[3] It is important to understand camping as part of a wider culture of landscape, citizenship and reconstruction debates, particularly from the 1940s onwards.[4] On a national scale the sentiments of 'never again' reflected the perceived chaos and poverty of the 1930s. These debates and anxieties were reproduced repeatedly in camping literatures of the period which suggested that antidotes to the growing complications of civilisation resided in the extension of the simple way of life which was so close to our natural state.[5] This 'natural state' they contended could be found in the carefree life of the camper.

In this and the following two chapters I consider the ways that British campers encountered, understood and reflected upon the natural environment in the period between 1920 and the late 1950s. Literatures surrounding camping in inter-war Britain were scattered through various newspapers and magazines but were particularly focused in publications such as the Camping Club's journal *Camping*. Using photography, poetry and interview material, I use these debates to explore the everyday geographies of camping and the campers' responses to the natural environments within which they sought to immerse themselves. Although camping was just one element of a much wider realm of open-air recreation in this period, campers argued that their sport exposed individuals to nature and the open-air life in a way that no other leisure activity could. Camping in the countryside was a privilege, an opportunity and an education; the camper was an individual in charge of their own destiny and a good companion.[6] In the chapters that follow, I address the campers' consideration and evaluation of human-

[3] Boscagli states that fears of national and racial degeneration which fed such 'anti-decadent rhetoric' and looked to Nature as an agent of renovation were also fuelled by Nietzschean and eugenicist discourses both prominent in the pre-war years. Boscagli, M. (1996) *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Westview Press.

[4] Matless, D. (1996) 'Visual culture and geographical citizenship: England in the 1940s', *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (4) pp. 424 – 439. In using the term 'reconstruction' Matless does not just refer to the post-war period; plans were being drafted for the envisaged reconstructed world as early as 1939.

[5] Warren-Wren, S. C. (1952) *Camping With a Purpose: A Concept of Canvas Camps for Young People*. (Foreword by Donald S. Langridge, Chairman, The Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland). Kingswood: Andrew George Elliot (Right Way Books).

environment relationships, their understandings of the urban environment and, notwithstanding their belief that all humans had an intuitive affinity with nature, the connotation that only the lightweight or true camper might experience a truly meaningful relationship with nature.

In contemporary popular culture the ideas of camping and, more recently, caravanning have come to symbolise a number of visions. At one extreme camping and caravanning represent anything from the absurd;

> What's with this camping lark? Fans of this absurd pastime boast that they're going to escape from their cosseted urban existence, return to nature and find their true selves, yet the first thing they do is buy a luxury tent to keep nature out [...] in reality they're simply taking their homes to the country, fully equipped with microwave cooker, posture-sprung mattress, portable lavatory and even a satellite dish for their widescreen TV.[7]

... to the apocalyptic;

> The smell of burning flesh fills your nostrils. The rain beats down relentlessly, leaving everything sodden and prey to fungus. Yes, it's fried-breakfast time on the typical 1970s caravanning holiday - and I don't even dare mention the pong from the Elsan.[8]

At the other end of the spectrum campers and caravanners are regarded with a certain amount of amusement. In risqué comedy films such as 'Carry on Behind' and 'Carry on Camping' caravan sites are places where working class people struggle to cope with

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[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Anon (n.d.a.) 'Slowly driven mad', *The Daily Mirror.*

increased wealth and leisure time, (extra-) marital relationships and the 'freedom' of the great outdoors.[9] Similarly, in John Godber's play Perfect Pitch, first time campers Ron and Yvonne's pastoral paradise, resplendent with barbecue, awning and colour-coded Tupperware, is turned into a 'caravan hell' when new arrivals Grant and Stephanie descend bearing drink, destruction and a prolific sex life.[10] In each example, one or more of the central characters live too loudly for country leisure or fail to overcome the boredom of living in a field.[11]

Despite such popular sentiments, recreational camping and caravanning in contemporary Britain takes numerous forms. Each year four million holidays are spent caravanning and some two thirds of a million households are members of the two main clubs in the United Kingdom - the Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland and the Caravan Club.[12]. Their meetings range from District Association or 'DA' campers who regularly attend weekend rallies held in farmer's fields, through to those who camp less often and only on official 'Club' sites, to those for whom camping is part of an annual holiday either in Britain or abroad. Of the Camping Club members, approximately twenty per cent take part in weekend rallies which can attract anywhere between two and sixty units.[13] The number of people attending these rallies varies, often depending on the time of year, the weather and the location of the site. If a specific event is being held such as a 'Midsummer' or 'Regional' meet numbers can be well in excess of two hundred units. More recently camping and caravanning activity has been severely limited due to the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001. In this

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[8] Johnston, R. (22/04/01) 'Trailer bash', *The Sunday Times (Style)* p. 6.
[9] Crouch, 'Intimacy', *op. cit.*
[10] 'Perfect Pitch' directed by Bob Carlton. Performed at Hull Truck Theatre, 19th – 30th June 2001.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] House of Commons (1995) cited in *ibid.*, p. 262. The Caravan Club of Great Britain was founded in 1907 and is now the largest caravanning organisation of its kind in the world and has over 800,000 members. Tent campers are not welcome at 'members only' sites and Certificated Locations. Akhtar, M. and Humphries, S. (2000) 'The caravan craze', *Some Liked it Hot: The British on Holiday at Home and Abroad.* London: Virgin; CC (2002) 'The Caravan Club', http://www.caravanclub.co.uk.
[13] Crouch, 'Intimacy', *op. cit.* A 'unit' usually refers to one tent, caravan or family group.

chapter I focus on the Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland (formerly the Camping Club) and attempt to chart the activities and experiences of some of its members and their understandings of nature and the environments that surround them.

The Camping and Caravanning Club (hereafter the 'Club') is the oldest camping organisation in Britain and celebrated its centenary in 2001, an anniversary that was marked by the Club's biggest annual event the 'National Feast of Lanterns' at the Romsey Estate in Hampshire, and the publication of *First in the Field*, a history of the Club by the Honorary Archivist Hazel Constance.[14] In December 2001 membership stood at 317,901, a figure which grows, on average, by about six per cent each year.[15] The Club is the second largest campsite operator in the world and currently owns ninety-three sites throughout the United Kingdom. In addition, it presides over around 1,300 members-only certificated sites run by independent owners.[16] In 1947 the Club was incorporated as a company Limited by Guarantee; turnover for the financial year ending October 1997 was in excess of £14.5 million.[17] This figure is expected to rise to over £20 million by the end of 2001. An average of £3 million per year is spent adding to and improving the main Club site network.

The club represents a broad spectrum of campers from those who tow caravans (fifty-six per cent), to motor-caravanners (nineteen per cent) through to those who use trailer tents (twelve per cent) and tents (eighteen per cent).[18] All members receive the monthly magazine *Camping and Caravanning* (formerly *Camping and Outdoor*

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[14] Constance, H. (c2001) *First in the Field: A Century of the Camping and Caravanning Club*. The Camping and Caravanning Club.
[15] Annual Report and Accounts of the Camping and Caravanning Club (2001) p. 3 issued (February 2002) in *Camping and Caravanning* 97 (2); CCCGBI (2001) 'Camping and Caravanning Club Facts', http://www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/news/facts.htm.
[16] CCCGBI, *op. cit.*
[17] *Ibid.*

Leisure; formerly *Camping*) which has a circulation in 2001 of 154,076.[19] In addition to general camping activities, the Club has nine different special interest sections ranging from nature conservation through to folk dancing and photography. These are all organised by ninety-three District Associations under thirteen Regional Councils while the youth section has approximately one thousand members. At present, the Club works with and advises a number of organisations including the Central Council for Physical Recreation, Ordnance Survey, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency. In addition, Club's standards of conduct have been adopted by the British Government and other site operators and are now used as a blueprint for campsites across Europe.[20]

It is clear then that despite caricature and popular humour, the contemporary Camping and Caravanning Club is an organisation of some social and cultural significance. In this chapter I locate camping as a sport within the wider context of the inter-war period. I first provide a brief history of the Camping Club and then consider the reasons why people were driven to camp. In particular, I focus on the desire to escape from the towns and the wish to return to a more 'natural' state. In Chapter Eight, I move on to consider camping as an embodied experience. Firstly, I discuss the sensual nature of the camper's descriptions and experiences and, following Crouch, place an emphasis on the embodied subject.[21] Thereafter, I examine the intimate relationship between body and environment. I consider the reflexive nature of this relationship and the distinction between campers and non-campers and alternative forms of camping. Finally I consider the particular qualities of the 'moss-back'.

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[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Cited in *Camping and Caravanning* (May 2001) p. 1.
[20] CCCGBI, *op. cit.*
[21] Crouch, D. (1999a) 'The intimacy and expansion of space', in Crouch, D. (ed) *Leisure / Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*. London: Routledge pp. 257 – 276.

The Camping Club

In 1901 Thomas Hiram Holding, pictured on the left in Figure 7.1, a tailor and pioneer of lightweight camping equipment, formed 'The Association of Cycle Campers' in collaboration with the Rev E. C. Pitt-Johnson, MA, then an under-graduate of New College, Oxford.[22] The inaugural camp was held in August of that year at Wantage and was attended by Holding, Pitt-Johnson, T. W. Lowther, G. W. P. Penn, A. J. Penn and T. R. Penn. By 1902, the group had drawn up a set of rules, set the subscription rate at 2*s* 6*d* and at the inaugural meeting appointed newly recruited members Fred Horsefield and Stephen Hilhouse as Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer respectively.[23] Stephen Hilhouse (1880 - 1959) was a bank manager who became interested in the Club through a chance meeting with Fred Horsefield whilst reading one of the articles about the group's activities published by Holding in the *CTC Gazette*. Hilhouse later recalled Holding as a 'stocky little man and a very forceful character'.[24] For instance,

> he liked his own way of course as all such men would, and I remember one such occasion as an example of his impetuosity. When he was at the camp at Dorchester-on-Thames, we had two jars, one containing paraffin and the other containing stone ginger beer as it was known. It was a very hot day and Mr Holding came in and poured himself a mug of what he thought was the ginger beer, but turned out to be paraffin. He took a swig and said "ugh, it tastes like paraffin" and then he took another swig.[25]

[22] CCGBI (1965) *Handbook of Camping and Caravanning*. London: The Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland (p. 10).
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 14; Interview with Stephen Hillhouse recorded 27/10/1953. Stephen Hilhouse was member number thirty-six and later President of the Club from 1950 until his death in 1959. Mr J. A. Champion then took over the position in 1960. I am grateful to Hazel Constance for bringing the tape of this interview to my attention.
[24] Interview with Stephen Hillhouse, *op. cit.*
[25] *Ibid.*

Figure 7.1 Thomas Hiram Holding, founder of the Association of Cycle Campers sitting outside his purpose built tent. From CCCGBI (2001)

Figure 7.2 Children playing next to the river at the Rickmansworth camp site (c. 1930). From Camping and Caravanning Club Archive.

In the same interview Hilhouse referred to camping as 'the love of my life', though it appears that his wife was not similarly enamoured. His daughter Stephanie Hilhouse recalled that her mother 'wasn't quite so keen [she] always said that she was a camper by marriage not by nature'.[26] When her husband was away on Club business visiting sites such as the permanent one at Denholm and Rickmansworth, shown in Figure 7.2, 'she felt that she was a grass widow, literally!'.[27] At this point, it is important to note that Mrs Hilhouse's feelings did not necessarily represent those of all women who camped. As we shall see in Chapter Eight, some women found camping to be an exhilarating and enabling pursuit that allowed them far more freedom and flexibility than that which they experienced in their everyday lives. Indeed, it was perfectly acceptable for women to undertake camping trips alone as Stephanie Hilhouse demonstrated when she cycled and camped along the Pilgrims Way. However, this is not to say that female campers enjoyed as much 'freedom' as their male counterparts. To the contrary, in the same way that the public nudity of female naturists was associated with immorality and 'unladylike' behaviour, as active bodies in their (traditionally masculine) attire of shorts and boots women who camped were often marked out as 'unfeminine' and 'indecorous'. They were 'out of place' not just because they were urban dwellers in the rural environment, but also because the activity of their bodies within the public realm of the countryside (traditionally a place where males proved their worth) transgressed traditional gender / sex binaries.

Over the course of the next decade, camping as a 'sport' became increasingly popular and the Association of Cycle Campers took part in various public exhibitions from 1906 onwards.[28] This year also saw the formation of The Camping Club and the

[26] Interview with Stephanie Hillhouse (02/08/00).
[27] *Ibid.*

Figure 7.3 The little green 'un. From the Camping and Caravanning Club Archive.

two organisations formed a Camping Union with a joint office. By 1907, individual District Associations (DAs) had begun to flourish with the intent to foster the aims of the Club nation-wide and keep the Club spirit alive as membership increased.[29] In 1907 the Club also produced the first issue of its official organ *Camping* which united with the journal *Cycle Camping* two years later. The magazine was often fondly referred to as the 'little green 'un' on account of its illustrated bottle green cover, as shown in Figure 7.3. Early cover illustrations like these favoured bucolic images such as the camp surrounded by wild flora and fauna, or the tent as a cosy haven amidst the natural world. However, these images were gradually replaced in the 1930s by changing photographic images. Written 'by' members 'for' members, the magazine was produced by volunteers and distributed free to the membership. Many of these volunteers, such as the long serving editor Alexander Papps, not only held several positions within the Club, but also had full time careers. By the 1930s, eleven issues were being published annually. Typical contents included official notices, forthcoming events, details of meetings, camp site lists, details of 'non-official' camps, general news

[28] CCGBI, *Handbook*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

and information regarding DA activities, member contributions, correspondence, adverts for camping related products and later, descriptions and details of tours both home and abroad.[30] Until the late 1930s, the magazine also included the names and addresses of new members.[31] The production of a more commercially oriented journal for public consumption was debated many times over the years, however, each time this was thought to be difficult, expensive and speculative. These debates were amplified in 1934, however, by more general concerns that members didn't read the magazine themselves and by accusations from various quarters that the magazine was 'out of date' and needed to change.[32] It is this journal that I use, in part, to develop my arguments in this chapter.

In 1909 the Association of Cycle Campers and the Camping Club amalgamated to form the 'Amateur Camping Club' - recognising that campers did not always proceed by bicycle, some arrived on foot, some went by canoe, others by horse, and others by motors.[33] Eighteen months later the Association of Cycle Campers united with the National Camping Club (founded in 1906 as the National Cycle Camping Club). But regardless of their mode of travel, the Club recognised that they could act not only as a source of information for campers, but also as a repository of equipment. In the early years the Association of Cycle Campers supported the development and perfection of light-weight appliances enthusiastically although, most early members made several components of their own kit. Later the Club held regular 'gadgets evenings' at the London headquarters to distribute and promote new ideas. For example, Fred

[30] The number of adverts increased with time and, instead of featuring only on the back page, began to proliferate throughout the magazine. One of the criticisms launched at the contemporary magazine is that it is more advert than content. Tour Itinerary Number 17 published in March 1928 covered the area surrounding Hull and visited places such as Wilberforce House, Hull Docks, Beverly Minster and Bishop Burton.

[31] This practice ceased in the late 1930s though it is not clear if this was due to increased security consciousness or to the exponential increase in members.

[32] Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (February 1933) Pamphlet inserted in *Camping* XXIX (2); Papps, A. (March 1934) 'Read Your Gazette', *Camping* XXX (3) p. 49; Anon (May 1934) 'Correspondence', *Camping* XXX (5) p. 110; Papps, A. (June 1934) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXX (5) p. 125; Papps, A. (July 1934) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXX (5) p. 145.

Horsfield's wife invented a triangular or wedge shaped canvas bucket which didn't spill as much water as the conventional cube or spherical design.[34] An entire article in 1936 was devoted to technical matters because 'actual camping practice, indulged in consistently week after week from Easter to Christmas in all weathers, disclosed difficulties that had to be met by inventions and adaptations, some of which have survived whilst others have been discarded'.[35] In defiant mood, TRE (a.k.a. Mr E. T. Hicks) stated 'if it wants to rain, let it, - and we'll keep dry'.[36]

As the Amateur Camping Club grew it became necessary to supply various special articles of equipment to members and the Club founded a 'Supplies Department' in 1909. This again was run by voluntary labour and Stephen Hilhouse remembered 'doing up parcels in the evening and generally running a business after one's ordinary activities had ceased for the day'.[37] The venture eventually became so large it was considered unfair that a few members should sacrifice their spare time for a business for which they derived no benefit and which, owing to its limited clientele, could not sustain a professional staff. The Supplies Department was thus formalised in 1911 with loans raised from members and three trustees were appointed to undertake the future administration. The Department closed partially during the First World War mainly due to the impossibility of obtaining material, however, it was revived after the cessation of hostilities and was registered as a co-operative society under the name of Camp and Sports Co-operators Limited. Stephen Hilhouse proudly remarked that 'the name of Camp and Sports Co-operators became the hall mark, in fact, the materials were really

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[33] Interview with Stephen Hillhouse, *op. cit.* See also Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*
[34] Interview with Stephanie Hillhouse, *op. cit.*
[35] Papps, A. (April 1936) ' Editorial', *Camping* XXXII (4) p. 74. For examples of winter camping see the Tours Secretary's Notes (January 1920) 'Camping in the "Off-season', *Camping* XXVI (1), p. 7; Veltom, H. M. K. (February 1922) 'A winter cycle camp', *Camping* XVIII (1) p. 5.
[36] TRE (January 1933) 'Kit Notes: "On keeping dry', *Camping* XXIX (1) p. 6.
[37] Interview with Stephen Hillhouse, *op. cit.*

the Rolls Royce's of the movement'.[38] Members were invited to take up shares in this subsidiary organisation but this never proved an adequate source of income and, following further difficulties during the Second World War, it passed into commercial hands.

The First World War presented a severe test to the young organisation and much of its success can be attributed to the zealous work of then Honorary Secretary Mr R. B. Searle. During the 1914 - 1918 period Searle devoted himself to the conservation of the Club and what remained of the Supplies Department.[39] From its inception in 1906, the Club's membership had risen steadily and, according to the Club, was an indication of the growing popularity of camping as a national pastime and of the Club's directing influence that was, as before, universally appreciated.[40] As an example, in 1921 around 160 members turned up to the Club's closing camp, 'The Feast of Lanterns' at Deep Dean.[41] In comparison, the same meet at Maple Durham in 1953 was attended by no less than sixteen hundred members from all over the country.[42] However, comparing themselves to the Scouts Association (founded in 1908 by Robert Baden-Powell) which had experienced massive subscription rates, the Club concluded that there was room for improvement.[43] As documented in Chapter Two, this was an era in which large numbers of people were being encouraged to take up healthy and more moral recreation

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[38] *Ibid.*

[39] CCGBI, *Handbook, op. cit.*, p. 11.

[40] Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (January 1928) Pamphlet inserted in *Camping* XXIV (1).

[41] The name 'Feast of Lanterns' was introduced by Mr D. B. L. Hopkins, a navel officer who was on the China station and who observed the Chinese celebrations by the same name. Interview with Stephen Hilhouse, *op. cit.*

[42] Interview with Stephen Hillhouse, *op. cit.*

[43] Since its foundation the Scouts Association membership had risen to a world total of over 2,070,00 by 1932 and this would increase to nearly 2,500,000 by 1935 covering 47 countries. Anon (01/02/1932) 'Boy Scouts of the Empire', *The Times* p. 9; Anon (30/10/1935) '2,500,000 Boy Scouts: A movement covering 47 countries', *The Times* p. 7.

Year	Membership figure
1925	2,222
1926	2,612
1927	3,334
1928	3,918
1929	4,592
1930	5,464
1931	5,944
1932	5,694
1933	6,049
1934	6,417

Figure 7.4 Membership figures for the years 1926 to 1934.[44]

in an attempt to boost national fitness and restore the well-being of the population. Groups such as the Scouts, Guides, Woodcraft Folk, Ramblers' Association and Cyclists' Touring Club were developing large followings and the Club, considering itself to be in the optimum position to provide meaningful recreation, did not wish to be left behind.

In 1933 the Club embarked on a massive recruitment drive concluding that a large proportion of the estimated 100,000 campers in the country still needed to be recruited.[45] The Club was also well aware of its progress in relation to camping groups in other countries. A table in the February 1933 issue of *Camping* recorded that the *Deutscher Kanuverband* (*DK*) had 20,000 members, owned 220 sites and leased 280; *Les Campeurs de France* had thirty members and leased ten sites; and the Club themselves had 5,842 members, owned two sites and leased three.[46] Although camping was often an individualistic pursuit, Club membership was thought to be beneficial to

[44] Anon (January 1925) 'Untitled', *Camping* XXI (1) (n.p.a.); Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (January 1928) *op. cit.*; Papps, A. (August 1930) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXVI (8); Papps, A. (December 1934) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXX (11), p. 232; Anon (February 1939) 'Membership Campaign', *Camping* XXXI (2) p. 35; Anon (28/01/1935) 'The right to camp: Local Authorities and control', *The Times* p. 9. See also Footnote 48 regarding the statistics for 1933.

[45] Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (February 1933), *op. cit.*

[46] L. M. W. (February 1933a) 'International News', *Camping* XXIX (2) p. 39. See also Papps, A. (March 1933) 'Let's make it 10,000!', *Camping* XXIX (3) p. 49. It must be noted that official membership figures for 1933 are not consistent. In June 1933 they were stated at 5,246. Anon (July 1933) 'Council Meeting, 17th June', *Camping* XXIX (7) p. 156.

both the individual and the Club. In turn, increased membership figures would help the Club to influence people's behaviour in the countryside, and strengthen its claim to be the main voice of the camping movement. The Club's 1965 Handbook states that the 'twenty years between the wars were filled with happy and far-sighted progress and membership increased in leaps and bounds'.[47] Figure 7.4 shows that membership numbers did indeed increase rapidly in this period. However, the target of 10,000 remained elusive and the campaign continued through 1935 and beyond.[48] Despite this, by 1939 the Club had over 8,000 members. Not everyone was in favour of the development of camping as a pursuit for the masses — some campers believed that the movements' aims would gradually be 'diluted'. One columnist 'Lone Star' (also known as E. W. Topham-Steel), questioned the assumption that increasing numbers were a sign of progress. He worried that the true campers might be squeezed out of the Club's central ethos by groups such as mountaineers and canoeists to whom camping was merely a secondary phase in their outdoor diversions.[49] It is not clear the extent to which other members shared his views.

New members were recruited by active canvassing at campsites and by word of mouth; members were told to be proud of their pursuit and wear badges and fly pennons from their tents to identify themselves. Other methods deployed to enlist new members included advertisements in the newspapers, radio broadcasts, promotional literature, and recruitment through various exhibitions such as the National Camping and Allied Sports Exhibition in 1935.[50] At these events members were told to;

> Make a point of bringing in the non-member. The man or girl you have been

[47] CCGBI, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[48] See Anon (22/10/1934) 'The simple life: Camping Club's good year', *The Times* p. 21. See also Papps, A. (February 1935) 'Special Appeal', *Camping* XXXI (2).
[49] Lone Star (June 1934) 'Letters to the Editor: "The Club Gazette', *Camping* XXX (6) p. 133.
[50] Formerly the 'Holidays, Sports and Pastimes Exhibition' (1925, 1930) and the 'National Exhibition of Camping,

talking Camping (sic) to in the train or at the local club – The chap who doesn't believe your yarns about the Tent (sic) that weighs a pound or the Caravan (sic) that can be towed by a motor-bike. COAX them; CONVINCE them; CONVERT them into campers.[51]

Co-operative agreements with organisations such as the Workers Travel Association (WTA) also boosted numbers.[52] The WTA had 22,000 members and it was agreed that the Association would recommend the Camping Club to anyone who enquired about camping as a holiday pursuit. The Club also made use of its numerous illustrious connections such as the Everest mountaineer F. S. Smythe (vice-president), public health campaigner Dr. Caleb Williams Saleeby (vice-president), Antarctic explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott, (president from 1909 until his untimely death in 1912), and most notably, founder of the Boy Scout Association, Robert Baden-Powell who was President from 1919 until his death in 1941.[53] His grandson, the third Lord Baden-Powell, is President today. In the same year that Baden-Powell became president the Club also changed its name to 'The Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland' and became *the* national body for camping. Though it took some years to obtain a Royal Charter, King George VI finally granted his patronage in 1948 which remained in place until his death in 1952.

From the late 1920s onwards *Camping* magazine began to document the remarkable growth in the 'cult of the open air life' as increasing numbers of people began to spend their weekends and holidays under canvas or in motor-caravans'.[54] The

Hiking and Allied Sports' (1933, 1934).
[51] Advert for the National Exhibition of Camping, Hiking and Allied Sports (February 1933) in *Camping* XXIX (2).
[52] See for example Anon (April 1925) 'A talk about camping to an unseen audience', *Camping* XXI (3); Anon (June 1925) Review of BBC broadcast in *Camping* XXI (6) p. 136.
[53] V. G. B. (February 1933) 'Vice-President F. S. Smythe', *Camping* XXIX (3) p. 50; V. G. B. (January 1937) 'Memories of Captain Scott', *Camping* XXXIII (1) (n.p.a.). Captain Scott is said to have taken a silk pennon embroidered by the ladies of the Club with him to the Antarctic.
[54] Anon (May 1931a) 'The Home Office Supports Camping', *Camping* XXVIII (5) p. 77.

Club saw this as direct evidence of camping's growing popularity amongst the general population. Camping was also central to groups like the Boy Scouts, Boys Brigade, Woodcraft Folk and Guides. Baden Powell was said to have remarked that he could not think of a,

> better education for youngsters. They were in the fresh air, enduring hardships and sometimes bad weather, but above all they were learning to do for themselves. International camping [...] would help bring together the nations, and because of better health and understanding enabled youth to face with confidence the strenuous nature of modern life.[55]

Camping was also widely encouraged in schools in an attempt to mitigate the effects of urbanisation and slum dwelling. According to the Ministry of Education camping was thought to,

> play an important part in developing character by presenting new situations requiring decision, perseverance and sometimes a measure of courage, and so help a youth to stand on his own two feet and discover his own strength and limitations [offering] a unique outlet for such fulfilment in enterprises which are socially acceptable.[56]

By 1928, fifteen local education authorities were running camps for school children and by 1931, camping was included in the training of specialist women teachers for the first time.[57]

[55] Anon (26/10/1936) 'Camping for health', *The Times* p. 19.
[56] Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 41 (1961) *Camping and Education.* London: HMSO (p. 2).
[57] McIntosh, P. C. (1952) *Physical Education in England Since 1800.* London: G. Bell and Sons; see also Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 41, *op. cit.*

Although camping was often an individualistic pursuit, Club membership was considered beneficial, as one was 'able to mix, on the basis of interest in a common sport, with people of widely diverse types and tastes, occupations and idiosyncrasies'.[58] During the inter-war period the Club fostered many national and international links with other like-minded organisations. The growth of the Club in Edwardian Britain also led to the first official Club 'tour' to Holland, undertaken in 1913.[59] The members toured extensively, providing something of an unusual sight for the local inhabitants;

> I think we were regarded rather as wild fowl in those days, certainly [the locals] had never experienced anything like it, and they were astounded at the weight or the absence of weight of our light tent which was carried on two bicycles.[60]

Stephen Hillhouse believed that the benefit of these tours (and later International Rallies) was in meeting friends from other countries; 'the welcome one receives is so very gratifying and leaves the most pleasant memories in one's mind'.[61] Indeed, friendships were still being cemented with campers in Germany in 1939 despite 'the political clouds that darken[ed] political relations'.[62] Following every trip the members generally would get together for a reunion or small supper, where they would exchange photographs, create photo-montages to send to friends and family, and celebrate the tour in retrospect. But towards the late inter-war period, attention was increasingly focused upon tours of Britain – at a time of financial crisis campers were assured that one didn't have to go abroad, one could have just as many adventures at home.

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[58] L. M. W. (February 1933b) 'Club reunion, March 18th 1933', *Camping* XXIX (2) p. 30.
[59] Stephen Hillhouse noted that he undertook a cycle camping tour of Switzerland in 1904. Interview with Stephen Hillhouse, *op. cit.*
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Anon (May 1935) 'Untitled', *Camping* XXXV (5) p. 102.

In 1928 the Club joined together with other British out-door pursuit associations to form the watchdog 'Central Committee on Camping Legislation' and, in 1932, assisted in the formation of the International Federation of Camping Clubs (IFCC) of which Club representatives acted as President and Honorary Secretary between 1933 and 1948.[63] The Club was also host to the first International Rally in 1933 at Hampton Court, in 1948 at Foots Cray near Sidcup in Kent, and in 1959 at Carshalton. Stephanie Hillhouse remembered particularly happy times as a teenager at the international rally in Weisebaden in 1937 and as an assistant to the Royal Dutch Camping Club in Holland in 1947. During this period the growing prestige of the Club was recognised by Middlesex County Council who, in 1938, entrusted to the Club the administration of three permanent National Fitness Sites set up by the Council.[64] Proof of the Club's increasing presence within British society came when Lord Justice Scott's Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas took evidence in Spring 1942. The Camping Club was one of the six open-air organisations represented, alongside were the Ramblers' Association, the Youth Hostels Association, the Worker's Travel Association, the Holiday Fellowship, the Co-operative Holidays Association and the Cyclists Touring Club.[65] As noted previously, at first the Club was conducted on a voluntary basis, however, with the rapid increase in activities during the inter-war period a number of paid officials were appointed, including H. W. Pegler who was appointed General Secretary in 1934.[66]

The Second World War provided another test to the Club. The early 1940s saw the number of issues of *Camping* per year drop dramatically due to paper shortages,

[63] CCGBI, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[64] Anon (16/01/1939) 'The camping year', *The Times* p. 15.
[65] Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country.* With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber.
[66] He remained in this position until he retired in 1958.

enlistment, evacuation and severe distribution problems.[67] Across the country large tracts of land previously used for camping were ploughed to create arable land for crops. Camping was severely restricted along the South and East coasts, near airports and military camps, and normal blackout restrictions were enforced rigorously within camp. Campers were also required by law to camouflage their tents.[68] Pat Constance recalled;

> I sent off for a can of stuff called Grangers Cammo-Green [...] Grangers is a firm that's still going, you know, Grangersol was their thing for proofing canvas [...] it was a clear liquid, but what they did was they added green or brown [dye] a suspension I suppose. You had to really shake it up to mix it up, which is the mistake I made {laughs}. I didn't really stir mine sufficiently and it came out pretty pale. This white tent came out a sort of dirty green {laughs} a pale green colour but it was sufficient {laughs} I wouldn't have got arrested for it {laughs}.[69]

Thanks to a core group of staff, led M. P. Lindsèy who had been appointed Chairman in 1940 and H. W. Pegler, who remained in London throughout the Blitz, the Club survived. In 1947, steps were taken to improve the provincial organisation by the creation of regional councils.[70] The austerity of the post war years prevented the resumption of numerous activities that many had taken for granted prior to 1939, and levels of holiday makers inevitably suffered. A British Holiday and Travel Survey revealed that in 1951 just fifty per cent of the adult population took substantial holidays

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[67] Editorial (March 1943) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXIX (2).

[68] Interview with Stephanie Hillhouse, *op. cit.* Caravans, classed as leisure vehicles and not associated with the military, did not have to be camouflaged but some people did paint their roofs brown.

[69] Interview with Pat and Hazel Constance (26/07/00). It is interesting to note, however, that Albert Payne and Harold Lees, who camped mainly in the north of England and Scotland were unaware of the rules regarding camouflage.

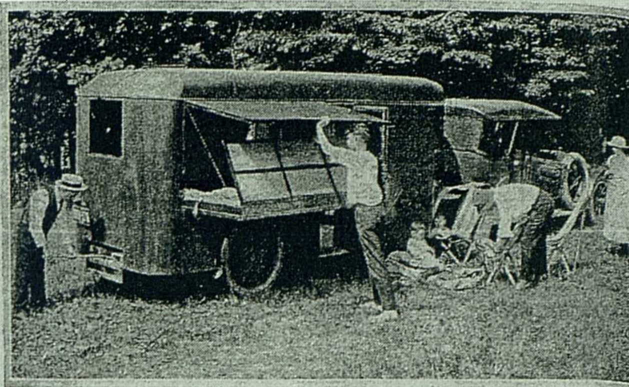
[70] For details on the formation of the North West Regional Council see the Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales D. A. Annual Report for the Year Ending 30th Sept 1948.

(i.e. a week or more) away from their home towns.[71] Those who didn't were said to have spent considerable amounts of money on day trips.[72] Although the war appears to have had a positive influence on many people's lust for the open air life, in the immediate post-war years camping was made more difficult by bad weather, the introduction of petrol rationing, and the prohibition of camping at locations such as Alderley Edge by the National Trust.[73] Groups such as the Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales DA did not see a return to pre-war activity until after 1949.[74] Yet, camping was established in the nation's social and cultural fabric, and its recovery was aided by constant articulation of the importance of engaging with nature and the benefits that ensued from a life in the open air.

Goldfish bowls and tin tents: the rise of caravanning

In George Formby's song 'Trailing around in a trailer', featured at the beginning of this chapter, the popular entertainer spoke for a growing trend when he remarked 'ee it's champion camping out. It's just like the real gypsy life'.[75] Although my research focuses primarily on lightweight, or tent campers in the first half of the twentieth century, by 1934 the caravan holiday also had begun to provide an alternative to the 'conventional fortnight by the sea' in a boarding house or cheap hotel (see Figure 7.5).[76]

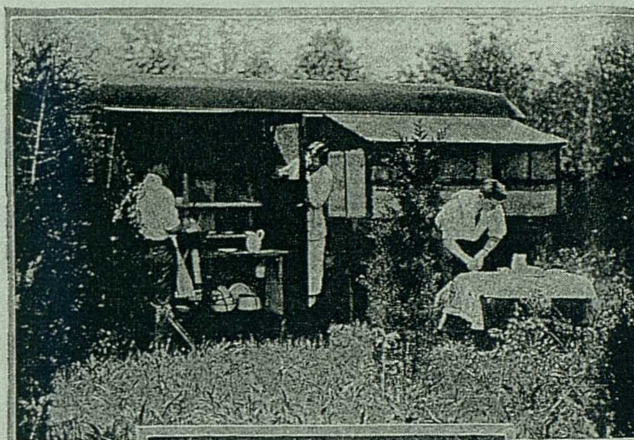
[71] McRae, A. (1997) *British Railway Camping Coach Holidays: The 1930s and British Railways (London Midland Region), Scenes From the Past: 30 (Part One)*. Stockport: Foxline (p. 38).
[72] McRae (1997) *op. cit.*
[73] Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales D. A. Annual Report for the Year Ending 30th Sept 1948. See also Akhtar and Humpries, *op cit.*
[74] Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales D. A. Annual Report for the Year Ending 30th Sept 1949.
[75] GFS (2000) *op. cit.*
[76] Lawton, G. (1934) 'Where my caravan...', *Woman's Magazine* 55 (7) pp. 22 - 25 (p. 22).



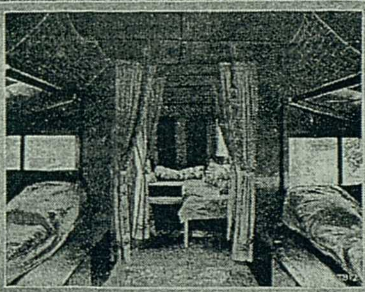
The camping trailers or "motor bungalows", designed by Glenn Curtiss, are being made in two sizes by a new company. They attach to any car. Dimensions are: width, 5 ft. 8 in.; length, 14 ft., with full head room

How to Spend Leisure Hours

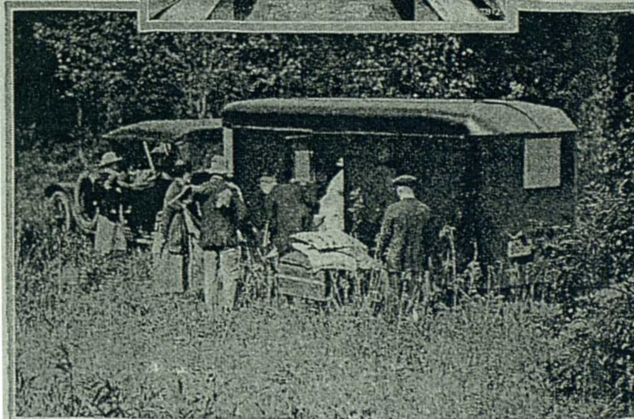
More About the New Fad, Motor Camping



Opened up in two minutes, the car becomes a 9 x 6 ft. room with two double beds, lounge, kitchenette, running water, food closets, ice chest and clothes presses



It is not necessary to go dressed for "roughing it" to enjoy the "motor bungalow." With this living room, there is no need to go outdoors in bad weather



No piles of equipment on your running boards, no setting up of tents and no dependence on farmers for milk, water, etc., make ideal a Saturday-to-Monday or month's hunting trip in the "automobungalow." Breaking camp is a matter of moments

Figure 7.5 'How to spend leisure hours'. From *Vanity Fair* (September 1920) p. 92.

The differences between tent camping and caravanning will become apparent throughout the chapter as I document the assumptions often made about a person depending on the type of camping they preferred. However, because light-weight campers frequently positioned themselves in opposition to 'other' types of camper it is interesting to note a few of the different forms camping could take. In the first instance social commentators such as Davidson stated that,

> [w]hether the medical explanation depends on ultra-violet rays or the lack of ventilation in almost all houses, it is undeniable that a week's living in the open air has ten times the recuperative effect of a hotel holiday; and caravan parties usually return home in the wildest and rudest health.[77]

Described as 'upmarket tenting', caravanning was lauded for its attendant health benefits and the supposed spiritual and mental gains that could be derived from a period in the open-air.[78] Traditionally, people who wandered through the countryside with no apparent or fixed abode were stereotyped into two groups.[79] On one hand, there was the 'professional tramp', a character usually treated with a certain amount of fear, contempt or disdain. On the other hand, the Romanticisation of the 'artisan tramp' had imbued the wanderer with a 'strong rural character, placing him or her firmly within the remit of the rural idyll'.[80] Gypsies were associated strongly with this romantic vision, representing a life unfettered by modern day concerns and constraints. The *New Statesman* noted that many motorists, in a reversion to these 'gypsy ideals', were beginning to seek release via the caravan towed behind the car.[81] As George Formby

[77] Davidson, R. E. (14/05/1927) 'About motoring: caravanning', *The New Statesman* p. 164.
[78] Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[79] Halfacree, K. H. (1996) 'Out of place in the country: travellers and the "rural idyll', *Antipode* 28 (1) pp. 42 – 72.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[81] The horse-drawn caravan first emerged in the nineteenth century as a vehicle for travelling showmen and, by the end of the century, had been adopted by gypsy travellers. At this time, camping for leisure was restricted to the upper classes, the most famous example of which is Dr William Gordon Stables and his two ton 'land yacht' *The Wanderer*. Akhtar and Humpries, *op. cit.*; Stables, W. G. (1886) *The Cruise of the Land Yacht 'Wanderer'; or Thirteen Hundred*

documented, caravanning's image was also embellished by the stereotypical imagery of Gypsy life and the rural idyll. In keeping with this tradition, *Camping* ran a series of articles on 'Gypsy life, lore and literature' in the 1920s in which many aspects of the Gypsy world were covered. The column was occasionally supplemented by articles which discussed public attitudes towards Gypsies and how it affected attitudes towards camping.

In the same period, *Woman's Magazine* captured the romance of;

> a leisurely excursion through the leafy lanes of the English country-side [...] a new and delightful experience, providing a complete change and bringing with it perfect rest and contentment [...] the surest way of fortifying oneself against the ravages of the coming winter.[82]

In the 1930s, caravanning was associated with health, rural life and above all freedom. Caravans were marketed as the ideal and convenient opportunity for the motorist to break free from boarding houses, with their social regulations, booking requirements and costs.[83] A powerful incentive was provided by the proliferation in most resorts of;

> overcrowded, sub-standard boarding houses where dragon landladies imposed petty rules and regulations on their guests. In popular mythology, the dragon landlady was a red-faced ogre, broad spoken, hair in curlers, feet in carpet slippers and with a husband long cowed into submission. In an era before the development of consumer protection and the grading of holiday accommodation holidaymakers were vulnerable to hostelries that wanted to

Miles in my Caravan. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

[82] Lawton, *op. cit.*, p. 22. For an example of one woman's journeys in her caravan see Carlisle, C. (1934) 'With camera and caravan', *Woman's Magazine* 55 (9) pp. 545 - 546.

[83] Davidson, *op. cit.*; Anon (24/03/1928) 'About motoring: holiday caravans', *The New Statesman*, pp. 776 – 777;

make easy money during the high season. Bed and breakfast in the back streets of Southend and Blackpool was a cottage industry in which home owners with other jobs packed as many holidaymakers as they could into their spare rooms [...] The unfortunate families who innocently arrived at such establishments never forgot the experience – and never returned.[84]

Caravan holidays did entail limited space and domestic chores but, according to the brochures, they were far out-weighed by the benefits. One could be sure of one's accommodation, its costs, the food on offer and with no restrictions. In addition, one could locate in the centre of natural beauties rather than townscapes. More importantly, one would also be protected from the harsher realities of this environment. As we shall see in Chapter Eight, fears of getting soaked by rain, bitten and stung by various fauna and flora, and a general feeling of foreboding often discouraged many people from going tent camping. Davidson stated that,

> [t]he tent is probably a more popular substitute for the hotel than the caravan; and without doubt the[t]he tent is probably a more popular substitute for the hotel than the caravan; and without doubt the tent scores appreciably in portability and cheapness [though] a single night in a tent during wet, windy weather is enough to cure most women and many men of a taste for camping. Whereas a caravan defies the weather.[85]

To compliment one's stay, the daily 'news and music [could] be provided by radio. Collapsible boats, portable wireless sets, screened baths, screened sanitary equipment - every mortal accessory [could] be hired'.[86]

Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*

[84] Akhtar and Humpries, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[85] Davidson, *op. cit.*

[86] Anon (24/03/1928) p. 776.

MAY 14, 1927 THE NEW STATESMAN 165

Uplands Caravans

MOTOR CARAVANS FOR SALE OR HIRE

SIX WEEKS AGO the writer of this announcement was a "nervy" jaundiced soul, out of tune with life. He acquired an "Uplands" Caravan, and has spent the week-ends—and, for the sheer joy of it,—some week-nights, too—in living through the wonder of Spring's renewal. And the result? Bubbling energy for work, new joy in life, and a cheery philosophy. Try the "Uplands" cure for "the cameelious hump"!

"UPLANDS" MOTOR CARAVANS are of new design, and embody many exclusive features. They provide accommodation and are fully equipped for four adults. Interior drive, spacious saloon by day; two sleeping cabins (two berths in each), spring beds, bath, wardrobe; puncture-proof tyres; excellent sanitation, electric light, stove, linen, china, cutlery, &c.

AN "UPLANDS" HOLIDAY will not only provide a novel experience, with such a sense of perfect freedom and mobility as the normal holiday-maker never knows: it is also one of the cheapest. Even in the high season, four people—sharing costs—can have a perfect time for a fortnight, and spend less than £10 per head for all costs. Let me tell you how.

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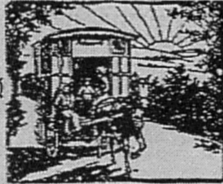

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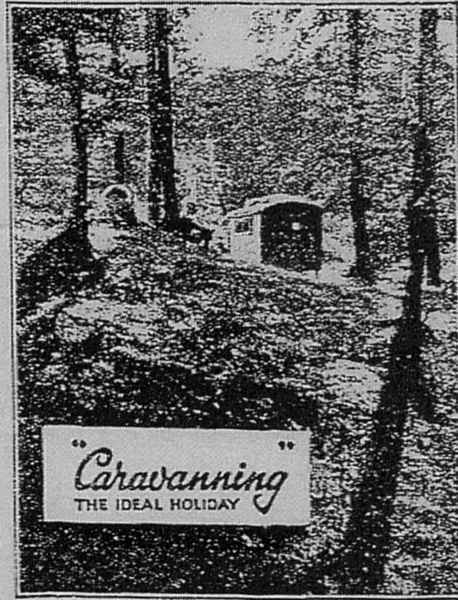

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ONLY the owner of an Eccles Trailer Caravan knows what it is to be free to go away for week-ends, weeks or months whenever work permits, and without making previous plans.

We offer a complete and unique service, both hire and sale, founded on a wealth of practical experience of the needs of motor caravanners and campers. Our experience and the organisation we have built up as a direct result are at the disposal of every motorist to whom the spirit of adventure and the desire for healthy outdoor holidays make an appeal.

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The Holiday Caravan Co., Ltd., Oxford.

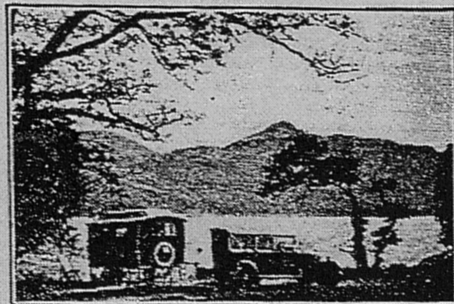


Figure 7.6 Caravan advertisements. From *The New Statesman* (May 1927) p. 165.

As a small towing 'van may cost around £200, any unpremeditated outright purchase of a 'van was not advised until a hire experiment had been made.[87] Hire prices ranged from £2 per week for a small 'van in spring or autumn up to £10 per week for a four-berth 'van in August (the real savings were thought to be made on the food bill and by eating healthily but frugally). A substantial industry sprang up with companies such as Eccles, Melville Hart, Uplands, Bertram Hutchings and The Holiday Caravan Company supplying caravans and equipment both for sale and hire (see the adverts in Figure 7.6).[88] Caravans were marketed as safe, reliable and above all, comfortable. Amenities inside the 'vans were feted as a 'marvel of ingenuity'.[89] However Akhtar and Humphries remark that Eccles, founded in 1919 and based in Birmingham, 'had some difficulty convincing the public that their models, which were little more than sheds on wheels, would provide an enjoyable introduction to a new recreational activity'.[90] Despite this, the popularity of camping grew in the inter-war years as the motoring 'revolution' spread across the country;

> [it] became part of a romantic notion of getting out onto the road, people talked about being "motor gypsies" or "savouring the gypsy joys of caravanning" and early models were like country cottages on wheels with imitation tile roofs, pitched roofs, half timbering, fancy bay windows and leaded light windows.[91]

In time, other manufacturers developed the 'Cheltenham', the 'Car Cruiser', the 'Raven' and the Rolls Royce of caravans the 'Winchester' (figure 7.7). Caravans were made to

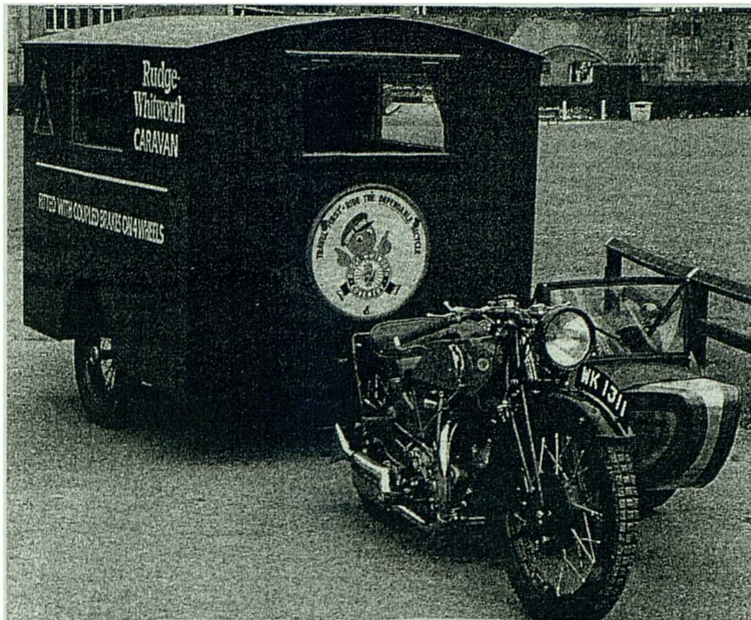
[87] Davidson, *op. cit.*; Anon (24/03/1928).
[88] Davidson, *op. cit.*; Anon (24/03/1928).
[89] Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

Figure 7.7 'A 15ft. "Winchester" caravan'. From Lawton (April 1934) p. 22.

order and constructed by craftsman to high coachbuilding standards and, for a long time, caravanning remained a rich man's pursuit.[92] It was only in the 1930s when Eccles introduced the batch built 'National' which sold for only £130 that caravanning became a cheap family alternative to tenting.[93]

In a more unusual twist, the Rudge-Whitworth motorcycle works started experimenting in 1927 with a combination-towed caravan (figure 7.8).[94] Measuring 7ft 3in by 4ft 10in by 4ft 7in the 'van was equipped with two bed-settees, a table, cupboard,

[90] Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
[91] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[92] *Ibid.* This was further compounded by the fact that in the early days of the Caravan Club one had to be proposed by an existing member to ensure that only the right sort of person would join.
[93] *Ibid.* Akhtar and Humpries provide further information on the development of caravanning from the 1950s onwards (pp. 73 – 81).
[94] Currie, B. (October 1986) 'A good idea at the time', *The Classic Motorcycle*, pp. 54 - 58. I am grateful to Robert Morris for this reference.



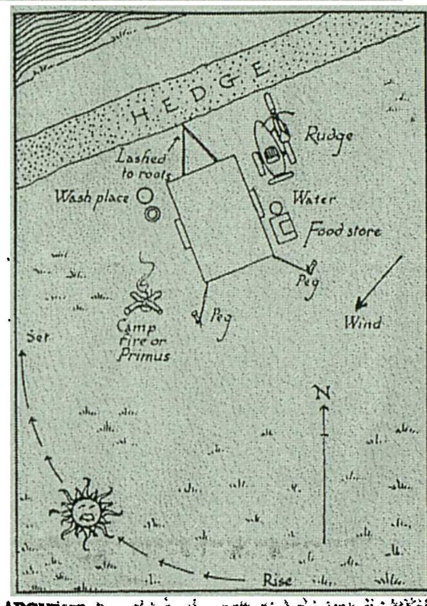


Figure 7.8 The Rudge-Whitworth caravan and camp site plan. From Currie (1986) pp. 54 and 55.

washing basin, cooking stove (a Primus) and lockers for food, clothes, crockery and cooking utensils; it was designed to 'take [one] to places where railways and other useful but oppressive manifestations of civilisation do not exist'.[95] Once at the site there was 'no struggling for an hour to pitch your tent, only to find you've erected it over the entrance to a fully-inhabited wasp's nest [no] worrying about ground sheets nor a midnight hunt for a haystack'.[96] Camping with the aid of a motor-cycle increased in

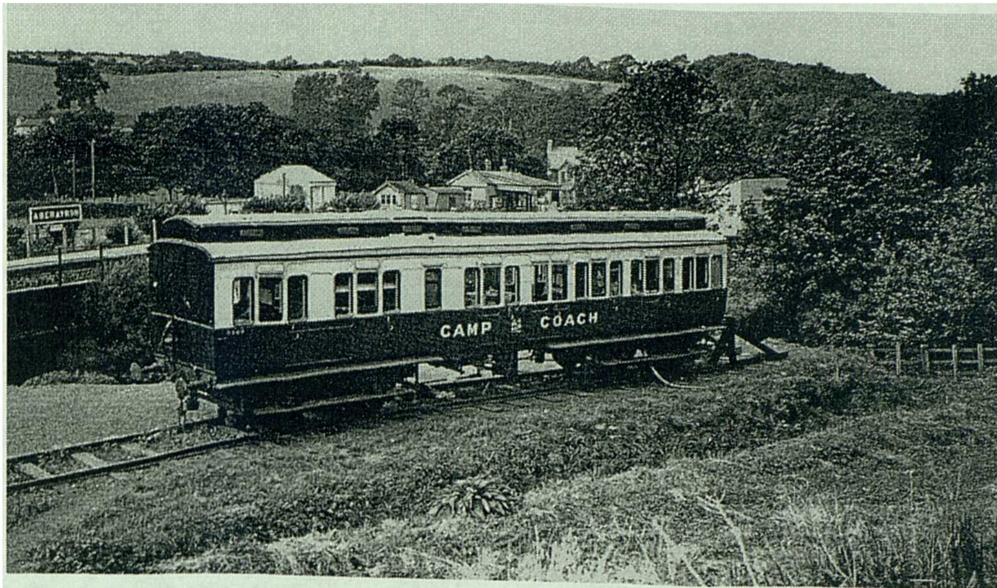
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

popularity throughout the mid-1930s.[97] However, like the prototype 'sub-aqua' and 'two-storey' caravans patented the 1930s, this idea did not take off and only around eight 'vans were ever built by the company.

Other schemes developed in the 1930s were more successful. The growing popularity of open-air recreation and, in particular, camping and caravan holidays prompted the publication of the London and North Eastern Railway's (LNER) *Camping Holidays* in 1938. This pamphlet detailed three forms of camping enabled by train travel and the cheap ticket deals introduced by the company: camping coaches, youth hostelling, and camp sites within easy reach of train stations. The main focus of this pamphlet, however, was placed on camping coaches (or camping *de luxe*) and the benefits of this form of 'camping'.

LNER was the first rail company to introduce 'camping coaches' in July 1933.[98] The coaches were comprised of ordinary rolling stock converted into accommodation for up to six, and later eight, people.[99] As demonstrated by Figure 7.9, they consisted of two sleeping compartments, a shared living room and a kitchen with two Primus stoves and a sink. Items such as cutlery, kitchen utensils, bed-clothes and crockery were provided along with a laundry service once a week.[100] Despite the rather lavish advertising brochures complete with immaculately turned out models sporting the latest in outdoor fashion, camping coach literature was aimed primarily at families such as the one in Figure 7.10 and those of slender means. The minimum hire charge was £3 3*s* per

[97] Hallworth, K. (February 2001) 'From our archives: 1934 – Riding through recession', *Classic Motorcycle* 28 (2) pp. 22 – 28. I am grateful to Robert Morris for this reference.
[98] Carter, C. S. and MacLean, A. A. (1988) 'LNER camping coaches', *British Railway Journal* 23 pp. 159 – 166; McRae, *op. cit.*; Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.* Other innovations around this time included the conversion of double-decker buses and 'log cabins' (a.k.a. Victorian wooden railway carriages).
[99] LNER (1938) *Camping Holidays*. London: London and North Eastern Railway. See Carter and Maclean, *op. cit.*, for a description of coach types and specifications.
[100] LNER, *op. cit.*; Carter and Maclean, *op. cit.*



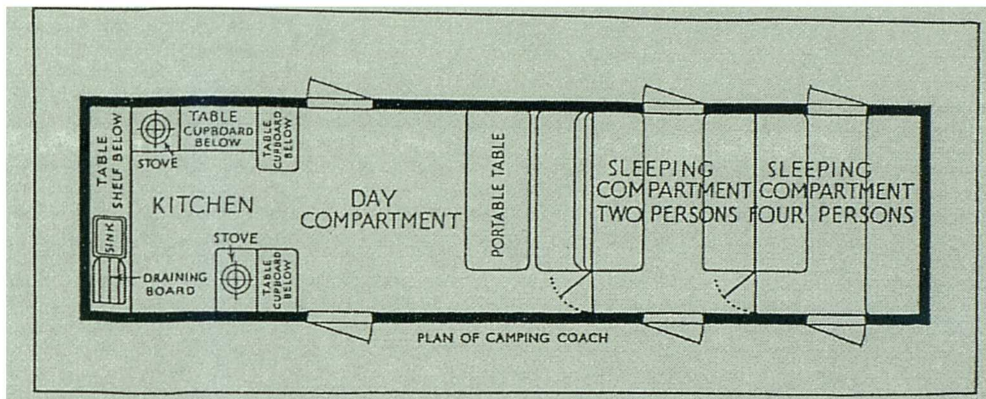


Figure 7.9 Exterior and interior plan of a camping coach. From McRae (1997) p. 15.

Figure 7.10 Camping coach interior. From McRae (1997) p. 40.

week plus four adult returns to the destination station, with added extras for food and fuel only.[101] Camping coaches were located at selected seaside and inland sites along the railway, more often than not placed in remote locations consistent with the camping ethic. The first ten coaches were sent to the north eastern destinations of Pately Bridge, Staintondale, Bowes, Alston, Glaisdale and the lines between Skinningrove - Whitby, Pickering - Grosmont, Leyburn - Hawes, Kirkby Stephen - Penrith and Alnwick - Coldstream.[102] They were popular from the start: 1,773 enquiries were received within one week of advertisement leading to 129 of the 130 coach weeks available being booked up until the end of September 1933.[103] In 1934, the Great Western Railway (GWR) followed this lucrative venture along with Scottish (Scot) and London Midland Railways (LMR) which tended to concentrate its camping coaches in large groups of thirty plus at single sites in Lancashire and North Wales. Southern Railways (SR) conceded in 1935 though the idea was never as popular in the southern counties. The rail companies also diversified into 'touring camping coaches' which travelled set routes over the period of a week and 'camping apartments' located in converted buildings at (often disused) stations.[104] As the various companies became involved, the choice of locations also diversified. By the Second World War there were 439 coaches across Britain, though the largest concentration remained in the North East on the Yorkshire Coast, numbering twenty between Hull and Kettleness.[105]

As stated above, LNER attempted to appeal to those familiar with the camping ethic rather than those whose favourite forms of relaxation revolved around traditional holiday resorts. The wider ethos of camping even extended to camping coaches. Popular crazes such as dancing and the cinema were adopted as enthusiastically by

[101] LNER, *op. cit.* This of course was relative to contemporary hotel prices, however, Albert Payne recalled that this would still have been fairly expensive for most families.
[102] Carter and Maclean, *op. cit.*
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[104] LNER, *op. cit.*; McRae, *op. cit.*

many open air lovers as much as the rest of the population, but to some campers it was in other popular commercial forms of leisure - gambling, drinking, spectator sports - often associated with seaside resorts, that were unacceptable forms of mass culture.[106] As camper Warren-Wren stated, the 'masses can find pleasure but real happiness comes only to the few' and LMR's attempt to appeal to the masses by locating them by coastal resorts happened at the expense of their coaches being regarded with disdain by both lightweight campers and regular patrons of other companies.[107] Popular in their time, the camping coach idea survived the Second World War when many coaches were requisitioned to provide temporary quarters for troops, however, their popularity withered in the 1950s and they were finally discontinued by British Rail in the 1970s.

'God made the country, man made the town'[108]

> Tragic indeed is the way in which we waste our little lives, hemmed in by our shops and houses, and yet *for those who have not allowed the latent streak of nomad to be civilised out of them*, the way out is easy: get a bicycle [...] the voices of Nature (sic) [are] calling you back to her from strife and turmoil, from the noise and bustle of the town, calling you to peace and rest as she takes you to herself. (my emphasis) [109]

In this section I examine some of the reasons why people went camping, in particular the desire for freedom and escape from urban areas and the way in which this

[105] McRae, *op. cit.*; Carter and Maclean, *op. cit.*
[106] Taylor, H. (1997) *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement.* Edinburgh: Keele University Press (p. 241).
[107] Warren-Wren, *op. cit.*, p. 17; McRae, *op. cit.*
[108] Editorial (March 1940) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXVI p. 21.
[109] C. G. C. (May 1933) 'We cyclists', *Camping* XXIX (5) pp. 99 – 100.

was conceptualised by the camping literature. By the 1930s the movement of people into the countryside for the purpose of open-air pursuits had reached the proportions of a mass exodus, particularly at weekends and on public holidays. In every town a multitude of local clubs and societies developed to support people with these interests. Harold Lees, a keen cyclist in the late 1930s, recalled that the Oldham branch of the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) catered for all types and abilities; 'they had an A Section ... that was us, the young lads, there was a B Section with medium riders, there was a C Section ... there was a Saturday afternoon Section, there was a camping Section and there was a Tuesday afternoon Section for the shop-keepers.[110]

As members of the Cyclist's Touring Club (CTC) Mr Lees and his contemporaries were (if somewhat unknowingly) part of the 1930s open air 'revolution' witnessed by Joad in Manchester, when walkers kitted out with rucksacks, shorts and hobnailed boots would catch early trains to Edale, Hope and the Derbyshire Moors.[111] Albert Payne described the flight from his home town of Oldham in Lancashire,

> [i]t was the beginning, about the time when we started. The search to get out you know. Hiking had taken up. Everybody didn't really take to bikes although, you know, in a town like Oldham besides the CTC and Oldham Century and Oldham Clarion [...] there must have been upward of half a dozen [clubs] in Oldham cycling area, cycling clubs that might turn out with twenty or thirty, but they weren't as serious as we were about it. You know, they used to come and go these clubs [...] there was umpteen clubs in Oldham with fancy names that, er, you never heard of them again after the war, but hiking, as it was just began (sic) to be called, was having a surge of popularity in the late thirties. You could get a train down to Manchester and

[110] Harold (28/07/00).
[111] Joad, *op. cit.*

> out to Edale. A special one and it would be crammed full of hikers and climbers, the last train back from Edale, you know, some time in the evening [...] the buses out of Manchester on Sunday mornings, you couldn't get on it in Oldham because it was full of climbers that had got on when it left Manchester. (28/07/00)

The reason for this were many and diverse but reflected wider cultures and debates that interpreted urbanisation as an unhealthy setting for human bodies. In many literatures, including camping cultures, cities were denigrated and rural life, even in small doses, was celebrated. Below, I concentrate on three broad themes that emerged from my interviews, archival research and examination of wider camping literature: escape from the urban environment and a desire for freedom, sociability and, in tune with the times, the rise of the natural health movement.

Camping in the great outdoors: a correction for civilised ills and mental troubles

In *Always a Little Further* (1983), an account of outdoor pursuits in inter-war Scotland, Borthwick describes modern city life as 'where we live on wheels and use our bodies merely as receptacles for our brains'.[112] One central character, Hamish, is said to 'come alive' when escaped from the city, a life which he endures like a cork 'waiting to

[112] Borthwick, A. (1983) *Always a Little Further: A Classic Tale of Camping, Hiking and Climbing in Scotland in the Thirties*. London: Diadem (p. 220). In a recent issues of the RSPB magazine McNeish expressed similar concerns when he stated that, '[t]here's something significant about waking in a tent halfway up a mountain, a real sense of privilege, and again I became aware of the value of such places as a sanctuary, a haven where modern man can find respite from the pressures of civilisation, places where we are wholly free to embrace those positive, precious life forces of solitude and silence'. McNeish believes that the natural world is the refuge of the human spirit in a world that is becoming increasingly 'frantic' and 'fast-paced'. For him, nature has not been re-arranged or re-created, or rehearsed by the hand of 'man' (sic) and thus offers a perspective from which to view the 'complexities of modern life'. For the masses, however, urbanisation has cut their ties with the land and they live their lives to an artificial rhythm. McNeish, C. (1999) 'Wild land: the refuge of the spirit', *Birds* (RSPB), Spring, p. 41. I am grateful to Albert Payne for bringing this article to my attention.

explode'.[113] Borthwick's account is typical of much outdoor literature from this period that considered civilisation a mixed blessing. Whilst modern urbanism was a necessary aspect of everyday life and could be a valuable source of stimulation, its complications, artificalities and tendency to specialisation were thought to have robbed the individual of the capability for independent thought. Machines had robbed the young of the exercise necessary for physical fitness and modern industry and communications had encouraged reliance on ready made articles and second-hand information, opinions and experiences.[114] Given all this, in *The Way to Camp*, Walker emphasised that camping and other outdoor pursuits were essential;

> we need [their] honest good fun, good fellowship and adventure in these days of synthetic celluloid adventure and blaring radio 'entertainment'. As civilisation becomes more hectic, [and] speed-up, the need for camping out increases. Civilised folk are gradually getting softer and softer, the physical standards of the nation are becoming weaker and more blurred. We need a balance, a corrective for civilised ills and mental troubles.[115]

Towns were thus seen as the harbingers of disease and the locus of a maladjusted population. Yet camping and other such countryside pursuits could provide a cheap and efficient means of escape to a healthier, more simple environment and a suitable antidote to the 'frustration' and 'disappointment' thought to be experienced by many urban dwellers as a result of their complicated and artificial daily existence.[116] Camping was lauded as a means of escape from toil, drudgery, traditional gender roles and grime.[117] The move from the city to the country was one of great release. H. J. Lewis wrote that camping as,

[113] Borthwick, *op. cit.*
[114] Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 41, *op. cit.*, p. 4; Warren-Wren, *op. cit.*
[115] Walker, S. H. (1949) *The Way to Camp*. London: Methuen (p. 11).

> a means to the quiet enjoyment of the fresh air of the country [a] valuable boon to city workers; it is a means to a quiet, natural life, [a] return to Nature' which sooner or later becomes necessary to most of us who are caught in the toils of existence, with its nervous and physical strain.[118]

When city dwellers became weary of the town, they would 'yearn for their truly natural environment - the wide world out of doors'.[119] Although most people had become irreparably 'entangled in the web of modern civilisation', for many, an instinctual love of freedom and fresh air remained.[120]

For Harold Lees, a resident of 1930s Oldham, the city was also a place of extreme boredom:

> well you can just imagine we lived in different circumstances, everybody has cars [now]. We lived in Oldham in [the] poorest houses, no bathrooms, no inside toilets, and Oldham was dirty in those days, really dirty, all the mills. You never got out of Oldham [...] in the summer when we were setting off, er, two o'clock Saturday afternoon ... we rode along, er, Union Street. All the people our age would be walking up and down, girls on one side, boys on another. That's all you did. Or the park. Or the chicken run up by the park. That's all you did. You never got out of Oldham. (20/07/00)

Whilst boredom and frustration were important factors when Albert Payne and Harold Lees began cycle camping, economic considerations also played a part in their

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[116] Warren-Wren, *op. cit.*; Wearing, B. (1998) *Leisure and Feminist Theory*. London: Sage.
[117] I return to discuss gender roles and camping in more depth in Section Three.
[118] Lewis, H. J. (June 1925) 'Light-weight camping', *Camping* XXI (6) p. 23.
[119] Warren-Wren, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[120] Editorial (March 1940), *op. cit.*, p. 21.

decisions. In the midst of the 1930s depression people rarely got away from Oldham except for cheap day trips to Blackpool. Camping and cycling opened up a whole 'new' world for these young people who found they could get away cheaply for longer periods,

> You lived in your town and your town was what you knew and, I mean, in the cotton towns there wasn't a lot of money and when it was Wakes [local holiday], a lot of people only went on two or three day trips. They didn't even go away for a week, you know, that kind of thing. So nobody had cars, you see, so there was no travelling out of your town, so when they went on their bikes it was a real opening to a new world. I mean now if you set off on a bike and you were going somewhere, you know what it's like because you've seen pictures of it [...] We used to set off to Scotland for ten to eleven days last week [...] in August with about twenty five shillings in my pocket and I was assured by the older ones, oh you'll have plenty left, you know, and you could buy a Mars bar on the way home. (Albert Payne, 20/07/00)

By contrast to the poor health and boredom of modern urbanisation, the countryside - rendered accessible by camping - was deemed by camping advocates as a place of redemption. Camping also entailed sociability and adventure - two elements of leisure that cannot be commodified, according to Simmel.[121] The sport was therefore a 'reaction of civilisation', both restorative and accessible, a way in which 'civilised people' could rediscover and learn the 'essentials of life'.[122]

In August 1937 Alex Papps, one of the cycle and pedestrian campers who sought

[121] Wearing, *op. cit.*
[122] *Ibid.* ; Frost, A. W. (October 1922) 'The camping spirit', *Camping* XVIII (7) p. 100.

'simpler pleasures' by 'getting close to Nature', related his own experiences,

> the cycle was the means of our emancipation from the narrow environment of towns, a captivity relieved only by conventional annual holidays at the seaside [...] In addition to an increased love of Nature and of the open-air and a greater realisation of the benefits accruing, came the experience of true freedom and knowledge that the simple things of life are the best and most enduring [...] character-building [...] We sincerely trust that members will not overlook the mental and spiritual benefits of camping, they are as real and important as the physical.[123]

Warren-Wren concurred:

> camping in the wild places where man little frequent will bring them back to *realities*, to the *basic things of life*, where *bodily habits and mental processes come back to normal* [...] They will delight in the sunshine and in the rain and will battle manfully (sic) for self-preservation with the storm and the tempest, realising that to grapple with Nature in all her fury and to win through will give a sense of satisfaction not experienced through any other effort. Finally, the sharing of both success and failure will develop companionships and friendships so strong that they will not be easily broken or misused (my emphasis).[124]

Yet, despite these grandiose claims, camping and camping etiquette remained a contested realm, much debated and dissected by its adherents. For example, in 1920 the meaning of 'going camping' was discussed in relation to the cover image of *Camping*

[123] Papps, A. (June 1939) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXV (6) p. 127; Quote from Papps, A. (August 1937) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXIII (8) p. 178.
[124] Warren-Wren, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

which recreated a familiar cartographic image of the time. As shown in Figure 7.11, a man and a woman are silhouetted against an upland landscape with a river winding through the valley below. The man stands and the woman sits on the hillside, gazing over the landscape. The man has a walking stick and smokes a pipe - the smoke curling upwards - and both are fashionable and young.[125] In the same year G. Dalton wrote in to complain about the 'unsuitable dress' of this woman, criticising her 'drawing room attire', a type of dress more suited to the town.[126] However, I do not believe that he intended to infer (as did parallel debates) that the woman was 'out of place', rather that such fashions were more suited to those 'looking' at the landscape from a distance without actually interacting with it and therefore did not represent the interests of most campers. Another correspondent and possibly the illustrator himself, Mr Hargrave, agreed stating that the woman's attire, in particular, was far 'too civilised and tame'; '[p]ersonally, I should prefer a wild man of the woods on the cover - without shoes or stocking - but this, I am told, might frighten our more dignified and townified brothers'.[127]

[125] The illustration is hand-drawn with Art Deco lettering and signed Hargrave.
[126] Dalton, G. (April 1920) 'Letters to the Editor', *Camping* XVI (3) p. 47.
[127] Hargrave (April 1920) 'Letters to the Editor', *Camping* XVI (3) p. 47. This use of the term 'wildman' comes before the emergence of the 'mythopoetic men's movement' characterised most famously by Robert Bly's *Iron John*. Iron John is the mythical hairy wild man reputed to dwell in the male's inner soul whom they can call upon in times of threat - should they choose to look for him. According to Bly, most modern men have lost all sense of their inner 'manliness'. Though he acknowledges male oppression of women, he attributes much of the blame to women, feminism, and their consequences for male to male relationships. Bly urges men to spend their leisure time in the woods, taking part in group bonding activities in order to rediscover the Wild Man within them — such actions are designed counteract the erosion of 'true manliness' experienced in contemporary civilised society. However, it is crucial to note Wearing's assertion that men have always used leisure to prove their manhood (especially when it is threatened), and instead of deconstructing patriarchal power relationships, mytho-poetic male therapy through leisure groups only serves to reinforce hierarchically configured gender relationships. With the assumption that men must be returned to a 'lost' masculinity, Bly not only reinforces the traditional conception that love, caring and compassion are 'feminine' qualities and that to be a man is not to be a woman, but also neglects the potential of 'bonding' to subsume crucial differences between men. Bly, J. (1990) *Iron John: A Book About Men*. Wokingham: Addison-Wesley; Jeleniewski Seidler, V. (1997) *Man Enough: Embodying Masculinities*. London: Sage; Wearing, *op. cit.* See also Faludi, S. (07/09/99) 'Sins of the fathers', *The Guardian* pp. 4 – 6. Fauldi adds that although the enemy appeared to have a 'feminine face', the gaze said to plague men does not emanate from a feminine eye but from the wider culture. The femininity supposed to have hurt men is artificial, a socio-cultural construction. Paradoxically, 'whilst women could frame their battle as one against men, men [were] already identified as the oppressors' (pp. 5 - 6).

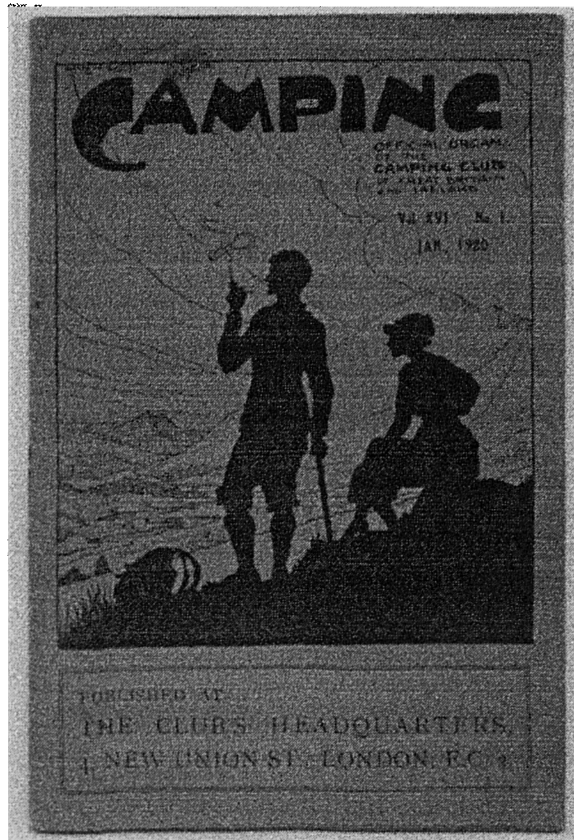

Figure 7.11 Front cover of *Camping* magazine (January 1920).

Whilst I disagree with the anti-feminist stance favoured by the mytho-poetic men's movement literature, I believe it can provide an alternative insight into Hargrave's critique of his 'townified brothers'; so detached are they from the natural rhythms discussed in Chapters Four and Five that they are afraid or unable, through the effects of civilisation, to confront their inner selves and realise the benefits of life in harmony with nature. In a contemporary article which discusses the 'withering' and 'atrophication' of the harmonious spiritual relationship between humans and nature, McNeish cites Henry Thoreau; 'I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived'.[128] Instead of being a place associated with fear and barbarism, Thoreau's woods are a place to re-connect with the natural world, as McNeish himself states, a 'return to the wild places furnishes a reminder of the

[128] McNeish, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

elemental connection, a trail down which we can return to some semblance of awareness of who we are and where we have come from. It's almost a return to the womb'.[129]

Rounders, singsongs, sandwiches and tea: creating social bonds

The second theme I wish to discuss in this section is that of sociability and the concept of the Camping Club as an 'imagined community'. Each of my research participants described camping as a highly sociable experience, particularly tent camping. People tended to make such strong links within the Club that after particularly good weekends it was a wrench to return home, back to the everyday. Joyce remembered;

> I've seen times when it's been a really good weekend and everybody's been outdoors all the time and people are reluctant to go home [...] One particular Sunday everybody was really reluctant to go home and er, it got to about seven o'clock and people had packed up but we were still sort of sat outside on our chairs and everything and we were getting hungry ... "has anybody got any bread left", somebody would fetch some bread ... "has anybody got any jam left" ... and we've had bread and jam sandwiches quite happily and sat out there 'till eight and nine o'clock just before we set off for home you know, to stay a bit longer. (10/07/00)

In this sense, the camp site was not just a space of communal activity, but also a space of bonding and shared emotion. Camping was a way in which like-minded people

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[129] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

could meet, discuss common interests and escape everyday urban life that gradually deadened the self and dulled the imagination.[130] Borthwick described life after his initial camping trip;

> I found a world whose existence I had not been brought up to expect [...] a young world, governed by the young [...] people who, like myself, had only recently discovered that they could leave the city, class and the orthodoxy of their elders behind them at weekends and create their own lives for a day and a half a week beyond the influence of these things.[131]

In camping therefore, one could break the cycle of 'neurasthenia' documented within Simmel's *Metropolis*.[132] When camping one would not only rediscover meaningful, satisfying sensual and physical experience, but also develop lasting human relationships that would counteract the fleeting encounters of modern urban life.

Joyce regretted that today, however, this sense of community spirit was diminishing a fact that she blamed partly on caravans. As communication diminished, made more difficult by lockable doors, glazed windows and more enclosed space of the caravan, some people now felt like strangers in their own DA;

> I think we had the best years ... people starting now that's starting with a caravan with all mod cons ...well they won't know what they've missed really. The comradeship isn't there anymore [...] a tent was open and people [...] would stop, rather with t' caravan they've got their televisions and all mod cons, the central heating. There's no spontaneous Saturday night singsongs outside or dancing outside ... somebody would start a game

[130] Crouch, D. (2001) 'Spatialities and the feeling of doing', *Social and Cultural Geography* 2 (1) pp. 61 – 75.
[131] Borthwick, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

> of rounders after tea on a Saturday and end up with a singsong in a hollow, you know [...] this was before people used to take lots of beer and wine [...] we used to have family walks religiously every Sunday. (10/07/00)

Though campers were free to pick and choose when they participated in communal activity and individual pursuits such as walking, bird watching, taking exercise, reading, sewing and visiting sites of historic interest or natural beauty were interspersed with camp life. Games, singsongs round the campfire and communal eating were times when people gathered to talk, share memories and joined together to celebrate their mutual interests. To a certain extent the modern day barbecue has taken on a similar function to the camp fire;

> provide[ing] a physical focus for eating together, [it] happens in public space. It is visible, strongly smelling, audible. People gather and turn to each other, making the fire, in conversation and laughter, one-up*man*ship, use the chance to meet and tell stories of the day's event and of previous rallies.[133]

Yet, several of my interviewees remarked that, because most people now had their own barbecues, it was easier for people to 'keep themselves to themselves' and complained of anti-social 'cliques' amongst certain groups.

At one level then, the camp site constituted a geographical location (albeit at different places each week) where people came together in pursuit of a common interest. However, this is not to suggest that these bonds were dependent on the meeting of people within a 'physical' space in the way that naturist clubs did. For

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[132] Wearing, *op. cit.*

example, DA campers who lived in the same town or neighbouring areas retained and renewed links with other campers through winter walks, dinner dances, exchanging addresses and by being 'on call' or willing to help whenever a fellow member required assistance in their daily lives. At another level, membership of the Club and the feeling of belonging to a select group of people in tune with the natural environment and capable of withstanding its excesses brought campers together in an 'imagined community'. For example, even in the early days, the members would not have known most of their fellow members, have met them, nor even have heard of them, yet in pages of the journal *Camping* and 'in the minds of each [lived] the image of their communion'.[134]

Sun bathing in camp

Health and the environment were central concerns in Britain during the inter-war period and the Club was no exception. As discussed in Chapters Two and Four, open-air activity within the natural environment was considered crucial to the development of healthy human beings, with particular emphasis placed on the benefits of sun and air bathing. The sun was thought to be particularly beneficial to one's health and a number of lectures on this subject were reviewed in *Camping*. For example, N. F. Barford's oratory 'Sun-bathing in camp' at the Edibell Theatre, Wardour Street in London in April 1931 was reported as being very popular.[135] Attendance was described as 'very busy' and, in the next issue, campers interested in sun-bathing were invited to a meeting at the Food Reform Restaurant. During the lecture Barford showed films of the Sun-Bathing

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[133] Crouch, *op. cit.*, p. 65 (original emphasis).

[134] Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso (p. 6).

[135] H. S. (May 1931) 'Sun-bathing in camp', *Camping* XXVII (5) p. 81.

Society's exercises and games at the Sun Lodge and the open air treatment of tuberculous children at Dr Rollier's clinic in Switzerland. In his review, H. S. reported that the audience had been informed that their skin,

> was largely put out of action by living indoors, by wearing heavy clothing, and by prudery. A healthy skin felt no discomfort when exposed to cold. The great improvement in women's health was due to their wearing lighter clothing, and the girl of today was outstripping her brothers in athletics and sport [...] loss of air is quicker than loss of food, and our skins should inhale more air than our mouths. The average City worker went from a stuffy home by a stuffy train to a stuffy office, and back again without once getting any real fresh air throughout the day. People who [went] to the Sun Lodge in heavy clothes and misery were persuaded to strip, take an air bath, and went away happy and cheerful. Everyone should take an air bath a day [and be educated] to understand that a man with his shirt off was not a mental deficient.[136]

This focus on the benefits of sun and fresh air highlights the construction of moral geographies and reflected the belief of both urban reformers and campers, that the typical urban environment was dirty, polluted and physically and spiritually restrictive. Camping, if only at the weekends, was valuable in exposing city dwellers to the apparently 'unpolluted' and healthy atmosphere of the natural environment, encouraging the restoration and regeneration of the mind, body and spirit.

Campers believed strongly in the perceived positive effect of the natural environment upon the body and criticised traditional dress codes for being heavy, constricting and unhealthy. In an apparent rejection of contemporary senses of

morality, the Club fully supported dress reform for both men and women and the pursuit of health and happiness. However, this also raises an interesting moral paradox. Although H. S. documents Mr Barford's advice to 'strip', *Camping* magazine took a particularly ambiguous approach towards naturism and gymnosophic practice. An Editorial titled 'Goodbye summer' in 1933 made the Club's position clearer;

> we have all been sunworshippers these past happy weeks and the full benefits accruing from the cult of sun-bathing, *though not always practised with discretion*, have been enjoyed because of our emancipation from sartorial tyranny (my emphasis).[137]

I place the emphasis here to highlight that although sun-bathing was considered to be a healthy and moral pursuit, the *total* removal of one's clothes was not. Indeed, in a later article the magazine stipulated that (should anyone have the wrong idea) the Club was in no way connected to organisations such as the National Sun and Air Association or Sun Camps Ltd.[138] To attract members, the Club had to stay within the bounds of respectability or, like naturists, they risked being shunned as immoral. Two notable examples of this conscious 'respectability' are the selective documentation of the activities of Hans Surén and Caleb Williams Saleeby mentioned in Chapters Five and Six.

Hans Surén features in several issues of *Camping* in the 1930s. He wrote one letter in 1931, praising the Camping Club and drawing comparisons with activity in Germany around the same time;

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[136] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[137] Papps, A. (October / November 1933) 'Goodbye summer', *Camping* XXIX (10) p. 216.
[138] Secretarial and Other Notes (October / November 1934) *Camping* XXX (10) p. 217.

> I do not think there exists in Germany a club similar to the Camping Club [...] in Germany, since the War, the endeavours to spend all leisure time in the open air have developed to an extraordinary extent [...] Nowadays, when the weather is fine, all the clubs go out into the open air. If you have the opportunity of visiting, on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in summertime, the lakes around Berlin, you would be surprised to see the life and activity on the shore of the lakes. At some places there are tents alongside one another for miles [...] You can see the same thing around our large towns. In England, on account of the better economic conditions and the greater wealth of the people, this movement to the open-air may take another form - motor camping and so on, but this is not so here, and one never sees in Germany the motor trailers which are so excellently built in England.[139]

Surén's letter was translated in full and he was respectfully described as the founder of a 'well-known gymnastic system', however, no mention of his fondness for naturism and, in particular, nudity during exercise, is made. Likewise, Caleb Williams Saleeby was described as an esteemed vice-president of the Club, and gave numerous lectures and after-dinner speeches to the camping fraternity on the benefits of sun and fresh air. For example, he spoke at the opening ceremony of the National Exhibition of Camping and Allied Sports in 1933; praising the Club for its 'world service', enabling people to spend twenty-four hours in the open air to obtain the maximum amount of sunlight.[140] Another lecture on 'Sunlight and Air, Food and Water' discussed Hippocrates and the clinics of Dr. Rollier in Leysin, while warning against smoke pollution from factories with graphic slides.[141] Yet, the Leysin clinics' advocacy of total nudity for the patients in order to gain maximum exposure to the sun is not mentioned. Even in 1939, an article reprinted from *Health and Efficiency* (February 1939) failed to mention nudity.

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[139] Anon, 'Home Office', *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[140] A. P. (June 1933) 'The National Exhibition of Camping', *Camping* XXIX (6).

Conclusion

The Camping and Caravanning Club has grown considerably since its foundation. What started as a small group of friends, acquaintances and dedicated volunteers has expanded into a multi-million pound operation which caters for a whole spectrum of campers both at home and abroad. In this chapter I focused on camping in the first half of the twentieth century, a period which witnessed the rise of the health and fitness movement and the growth of outdoor recreation. As a popular outdoor pursuit, camping both influenced and was influenced by this movement. Camping was regarded as the only pursuit that gave optimum exposure to the natural environment and the camper reaped the maximum health and spiritual benefits. Early campers built links with other campers across Europe whilst at the same time forming strong associations within their local district associations and with people whom they camped with on a regular basis. Camping was celebrated as a pursuit that enabled freedom from everyday constraints safe in the knowledge that there were others who shared this 'innate longing'. Following Anderson, the campers appear to have developed a sense of an imagined community, forming strong bonds through shared experience and common interests and beliefs.[142]

In the following chapters I draw upon the issues raised in this chapter to discuss the cultures of early campers in more depth. I consider the Camping Club's claim to be the leading authority on camping and related outdoor activity in Britain, issues of citizenship, morality and idealism, and the divisions this wrought between so-called 'campers' and 'non-campers'. I focus on the qualities of the camper, and the ways in which membership of the Club came to be regarded as a hallmark of good conduct. In

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[141] Hillhouse, C. (April 1938) *Camping* XXXIV (4) p. 90.
[142] Anderson, *op. cit.*

particular, I examine the way in which the Club sought to provide guidance in the ethics of better camping and how it aimed to help both the town and the country dweller to enjoy rural England. I also look at the moral geographies of the campsite and debates over appropriate behaviour in these spaces and discuss the idea of citizenship and attempt to show how the camping ethos fits in with the wider concerns prevalent at this time. In so doing, I illustrate the complex and plural ways campers interacted with the ideas and experiences of nature, and to draw out the embodied practices and sensualities that realised these ideas about bodies and nature.

Chapter Eight

Camping, campers and their reflections upon nature

> 'There's a circle wide and free
>
> As the girdle of the sea;
>
> There's a brotherhood of men
>
> Who have sought their earth again,
>
> For the taint is in their blood
>
> Of a thousand years ago
>
> Of the forest and the flood,
>
> Of the hatchets and the blow'.[1]

Introduction

Describing the adventures of camping in 1933 the Girl Guides Association expressed the belief that human beings had lost something of their 'heritage of the open air' through modern civilisation.[2] With this had gone the 'free gifts' of health, 'natural alertness', and an 'inborn understanding of the lives of birds and beasts and plants'. Fortunately, these gifts were congenital and lay dormant within every human being and could eventually be revived with time spent in contact with the natural environment. The 'school' of nature had

[1] Unattributed poem cited by L. H. C. (April 1928) 'Why do we camp?', *Camping* XXIV (4) p. 55.
[2] GGA (1933) *Campcraft for Girl Guides*. London: The Girl Guides Association.

the ability to develop mind, body and spirit and produce well-balanced, wholesome beings equipped with quickened perceptions, a love of adventure and a knowledge of the natural world. This outlook was common in the first half of the twentieth century and gained particular credence in the inter-war period. As noted in Chapter Seven, camping was seen as an ideal route for people to re-connect with nature and their 'essential' being.

Camping allowed humans to revert to their instinctive selves.[3] It was an entrance into a world where happiness did not depend on personal circumstances or wealth, but rather on the development of one's individual capacity to enjoy simple, healthy pleasures.[4] However, this capacity was not easy to define in words, nor could it be taught;

> it must be realised by your own inner consciousness and then it is something very real, capable of transforming your whole outlook upon life. It is to be found in a natural [...] love of the outdoor life. That love should lead you to contact more closely with Nature (sic), of which you yourself are a part and should be akin. When camping, you have unrivalled opportunities for observing Nature (sic) in her (sic) many moods and seasonal changes. These primal forces reveal the soul of Nature (sic) and should find a responsive echo in the soul of man (sic).[5]

In the opinion of Warren-Wren, it was 'little short of sacrilege' for one to be out of tune with one's natural surroundings.[6] All too often, however, these opportunities went

[3] Editorial (June 1939) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXV (6) p. 127; Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*. With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber; Editorial (March 1940) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXVI p. 21; Papps, A. (May 1936) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXII (5) p. 93.
[4] G.G.A., *op. cit.*
[5] Papps, A. (May 1933) 'Editorial: 'The spirit of camping', *Camping* XXIX (5) p. 97.
[6] Warren-Wren, S. C. (1952) *Camping With a Purpose: A Concept of Canvas Camps for Young People*. (Foreword by Donald S. Langridge, Chairman, The Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland). Kingswood: Andrew

unrealised. There were those who camped with a complete disregard for themselves and their environment and those who simply couldn't face camping at all.

Whilst the camping literature sustained a broad belief that there was an intuitive affinity with nature deep inside all humans, only the lightweight, or 'true' camper was thought to experience the most meaningful and rewarding relationship with nature. Campers formed a 'brotherhood of men' whose instinctive desires and latent nomadic tendencies bound them together in perpetuity.[7] The bonds that connected campers and their instinctual need for a more natural way of life in tune with the environment and their essential (usually labelled as primitive) being, set them apart from the rest of the population. Despite the blandishments of modern life, deep in the camper's heart beneath their 'conventional habits' and 'everyday business' in the busy world the 'longing for adventure' was effervescent.[8] In camping literature the image of the seasoned camper, the 'moss-back', who approached the 'unpredictable' natural environment with a cheerful dry wit and doggedly accepted any discomfort, was frequently constructed in opposition to the non-camper or novice for whom nature was often associated with danger or fear of the unknown. A consideration of these 'camping cultures' raises a number of questions regarding the ethos of camping in this period, the embodied experience of campers and, in turn, the ways in which nature was represented within their reflexive accounts.

In this chapter I concentrate on the campers themselves. I want to highlight the varied, sensual and experiential descriptions which are salient throughout the camping literature and interview material and, following Crouch, look at the embodiment of space through the

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George Elliot (Right Way Books) (p. 39).

[7] Seethe poem cited by L. H. C. (April 1928) *op. cit.*

[8] G.G.A., *op. cit.*, p. 9.

campers' multi-sensual encounters with the environments that enveloped them.[9] In addition, I look at the way in which camping was consistently referred to as a 'sport' by early pioneers. This raises complex issues regarding gender and the environment. For example, following Bale, sport has traditionally been viewed as 'anti-nature' and conceptualised by metaphors derived from the masculinised domain of science.[10] In contrast, the camping literature appears to place great value on the reconnection of humans and the natural environment, and the sensuous nature of camping experience. Camping was thought to be an ideal way of exposing people to the 'essentials' of life. This, in turn, had a bearing on the types of camping considered to be legitimate camping practice. I will also evaluate Wearing's work on gender relationships within the traditional sports environment.[11] For example, camping, despite Mrs Hillhouse's protestations, was widely regarded as a pursuit in which both men and women could participate, though much of the literature appears to have been penned by men. As an extension of this I consider popular culture and the construction of female campers as unfeminine and 'out of place'.

First, I document the detailed nature of the camper's experiences. Concentrating on aural experience, smell and touch I highlight that which Corbin describes as unquantifiable: the 'transient', 'scattered' and 'fragmented' experiences of camping that cannot be captured easily by pen or brush.[12] Following this, I discuss the different meanings these experiences had for non-campers and those unused to spending time in the natural environment. I look at the idealisation of the experienced camper and the characteristics required to embody this

[9] Crouch, D. (2001) 'Spatialities and the feeling of doing', *Social and Cultural Geography* 2 (1) pp. 61 – 75; Crouch, D. (2000) 'Embodiment/practice/knowledge', paper presented in the Enacting Geographies session at the *Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers*, University of Sussex.
[10] Bale, J. (1999) 'Parks and gardens: metaphors for the modern places of sport', *Leisure / Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*. London: Routledge pp. 46 – 58.
[11] Wearing, *op. cit.*
[12] Corbin, A. (1995) 'A history and anthropology of the senses', *Time, Desire and Horror: Towards a History of the Senses* (Translation by Jean Birrell). Cambridge: Polity pp. 181 – 195; Corbin, A. (1986) *The Foul and the Fragrant:*

ideal. I focus in particular, on the 'direct' experience of camping and the construction of the 'moss back' as an idealised rugged (and inherently masculine) hero. In the final part of the chapter, I look at 'the camper' in more detail. As noted in the introduction to Chapter Seven, camping (and more recently caravanning) in the country 'has produced popular attention and disdain'.[13] First I examine the ways in which campers sought to present themselves as 'ordinary' or as 'those who knew best' in order to cope with their own 'othering' in popular culture.[14] Second, I examine the idea of the natural environment as educational and attempt to conceptualise the 'well-balanced, wholesome being' it was thought to produce. I also discuss questions of power and mobility in regard to female campers.

Sensual experience

Many things I love. I love trees,

Scented beach, pine and oak;

Smell of wood fire acrid smoke;

Feel of lush grass on the legs;

Tumbling water and singing streams;

Joy of birds at dawn of day;

Rumbling wagon wending its way;

Cheering warmth of bright sunbeams;

Seas crashing on rocky coast;

Freshening tonic of winter rain;

Odour and the Social Imagination. London: Papermac.

[13] Crouch (1999) p. 63.

Earthy smell when it's fine again.

Things like these I love the most:
Scents, sounds not sights,
That e'en my eyes could not see
Compensations they'd be for me.[15]

In a recent chapter upon caravanning and allotment keeping, Crouch noted that the subjects engaged in space in an embodied way, reading, knowing and 'making sense of' the surrounding environments through sensual experience.[16] This embodied experience allowed caravanners and allotment keepers to confront 'new dimensions of space' and, as a result, the body and sensual feeling were made explicit through language in unexpected ways. He felt this suggested,

> an awareness of bodily participation and an embodied response to [a] particular space *and* practice, the body not alert according to particular regimes of regulation - although both have regimes of Clubs and landowners - but felt to be freely participated (original emphasis).[17]

Crouch noticed that modern-day campers and allotment-keepers encounter space in numerous subtle ways. Space was experienced as, 'a surrounding volume, [...] a multidimensional practice where the subject is alert in different degrees and ways to an

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[14] *Ibid.*
[15] M.M.C. (June - July 1946) 'Compensations', *Camping* XLII (4) p. 44.
[16] Crouch, D. (1999a) 'The intimacy and expansion of space', in Crouch, D. (ed) *Leisure / Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge.* London: Routledge pp. 257 – 276. See also Crouch, 'Spatialities', *op. cit.*
[17] Crouch, 'Intimacy', *op. cit.*, p. 265.

encounter made up of numerous fragments as a patina of multi-sensual body-space'.[18] Coming into such close contact with the elements and earth, subjects were provided with a different way of making sense of the world that transcended the simple 'bird's eye view' of the detached observer.[19] Inter-war camping cultures demonstrate a similarly holistic engagement with the world. Visual descriptions of the landscape, weather and bodies were an important part of camping literature and articles and book chapters were often illustrated with sketches, engravings and photographs.[20] The pedestrian camper didn't count his or her pleasure in the number of miles they put behind them, but rather in the interesting things they saw whilst tramping those miles. They considered their reward to be the opportunity to obtain a 'series of fascinating glimpses' at some of the 'innumerable pages in the wonderful book of Nature'.[21] It was this more encompassing engagement with the environment I consider here.

'Tumbling water and singing streams'

It was common for campers to give 'multi-sensual' descriptions of their experiences and not unusual for senses such as smell and hearing to be valued equally with, and sometimes above, vision. *Camping* editor Alex Papps wrote,

> it is the small things in Nature that contribute to her beauty quite as much as the big ones and you must walk and pause to observe them [...] What a beautiful word is ramble! It recalls from the chambers of memory the murmur of a stream

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] Note the similarity with visual recording techniques and 'detached' nature of geographical fieldwork texts.

> [...] fields flower-decked, scented hedge-rows, cool shades, the mystery of woods, the happy song of birds, ever-changing in a sky of blue, all drenched with golden sunshine! The true Nature lover will desire to spend every hour of his (sic) weekend or holiday in closest touch with his (sic) beloved countryside.[22]

The authors and respondents I've studied seemed to be actively aware of their embodied experience and their descriptions of sensual experience is exquisite and detailed. They saw 'clear, rustling mountain streams', heard 'trees moaning and hissing', 'thunder crashing overhead' until their eardrums sang with the reverberation; they heard 'roaring wind', and enthused at the 'vibrant guys which lashed about thunderously'.[23] The sound of rain on canvas whilst tucked up inside a tent, was a recurrent favourite amongst my interviewees: Stephanie Hillhouse described it as 'wonderful'. Tactile experience, such as walking barefoot through wet grass in the morning, the feel and touch of tree bark, and the notion of being 'in touch' with nature were also recurrent features of the literature. The problem with a caravan was that one lost contact with one's neighbours and also much of this intimate contact with the natural environment;

> that's what we found about tents, you could hear all that was going on ... you'd got the birds and the animals and things ... some of them were good and some {laughs} you had, you were more in contact with nature ... that sun shone through [the side of the tent]. (Rod Lowe, 27/07/00)

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[21] Mellor, L. (June 1932) 'Campers - look and listen!', *Camping* XXVIII (6) p. 128; Dalton, M. (August 1934) 'Letters to the Editor', *Camping* XXX (8) p. 179.
[22] Papps, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
[23] See Lyons, S. (May 1936) 'Pedestrian camping in Lakeland', *Camping* XXXII (5) p. 97; Cross, M. (December 1936) 'Storm in camp', *Camping* XXXII (11) p. 243; Burdon, J. (March 1937) 'A night on Snowdon', *Camping* XXXIII (3) p.

C. E. M. Joad specified five 'noble ways' of making contact with nature to satisfy peoples' instinctive need for country sights and sounds.[24] Camping was one of them. He wrote;

> every quarter of a mile the country has a new feel and a flavour of its own, and like the courses of a perfectly chosen meal, each feel and flavour enhances and is enhanced by what went before and comes after. It is by these feels and flavours and essences - it is obvious that I have no language to phrase what I am trying to convey - that the soul is impregnated.[25]

Experiencing such a variety of sensual stimuli was a great privilege. For example, one contributor to *Camping* noted that although,

> [y]ou have probably forgotten many a famous scene that you have travelled far to look upon [...] there is a little valley among the hills where you can still trace every curve of the stream and see the swirling current by the little rocks that strew its course, or you can stand on the bridge and watch the long weed wavering beneath the water. There is the [...] scent of some shy flower in some little nook that never withers through all the changing years [...] Who amongst campers does not know of the truth of this? Why should some scent bring back so vividly to the mind one of the super days which can be lived all over again? It is surely one of the blessings bestowed on campers that such exquisite happenings should be theirs.[26]

54; Anon (January 1938) 'The beauty of tree bark', *Camping* XXXIV (1) p. 12.
[24] Joad, *op. cit.*
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 54.
[26] Anon (February 1938) 'Untitled', *Camping* XXXIV (2) p. 25.

One columnist, who had rediscovered his bike after ten years, dreamed of times past remorsefully, '[t]he hammock was cosily somniferous, a gentle breeze wafted soothing melodies from the radio, the bees hummed drowsily in the sunshine and the distant hills were veiled in a light purple haze'.[27] However upon realising what he had lost, the columnist continued '[s]uddenly I had a revulsion of feeling; I was weary and sick at heart' for such evocative recollections could also be disturbing.

These descriptive representations of Nature were often very intimate and personal, and sensual experience such as smells and noises often acted as a trigger to the memory and an aid to reminisce.[28] For example, Arnold Stocks recollected; 'I caught a whiff of woodsmoke [there] is nothing that penetrates so quickly to the memory as a scent, and this woodsmoke has taken me back to last summer'.[29] Porteous asserts that the olfactory sense is particularly important in evoking memories of specific places. His conceptualisation of diverse 'smellscapes' helps illustrate how campers organise and mobilise their feelings about particular places and the ways in which smells are spatially ordered and place-related.[30] As discussed in Chapter Three, I do not wish to replicate the olfactory mapping popular in eighteenth and nineteenth century Paris and London, rather I wish to use the sensuous descriptions expressed by the campers themselves to highlight the ways in which they experienced, understood and negotiated the natural environment.

[27] Anon (January 1935) 'Rip van Winkle goes a-Camping', *Camping* XXXI (1) p. 8.
[28] Rodaway, P. (1994) *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*. London: Routledge; Porteous, J. D. (1985) 'Smellscape', *Progress in Human Geography* 9 pp. 356 – 377; Corbin, 'A history', *op. cit.*; Corbin, *Foul and the Fragrant, op. cit*
[29] Stocks, A. (July 1923) 'Woodsmoke', in *Camping* XIX (5) p. 66.

Alas, how many years have flown
Since first your silvery note I sounded [...]
And felt, like Icarus, the delight
Of suddenly acquiring flight.

The roads were peaceful then; no noise
More strident then your ring intruded, [...]
But the inventive brain of man, [...]
Is always making some new plan
To work commotion on our planet;
Especially it thinks we need
Devices for increasing speed.

So motors came, and all was turned
From peace to uproar in a twinkle;
The tempest blew, the waves were churned;
our modest and melodious tinkle,
Where hooters hoot and klaxons squall,
Can scarcely now be heard at all.

Lorries and motor-buses dash [...]
And charabancs about me crash, [...]
Amid the din it is absurd
To try to make your tinkle heard
Gently I'll pedal through the town
And down the flowering lanes and by-ways, [...]
And even sergeants of police
Shall smile upon my wheels of peace.

And children, looking close, will tell
From signs beneath my looks seraphic
That, Dante-like, I've been in hell-
The hell of England's post-war traffic;
And they will make it extra nice
For one returned to paradise.

Figure 8.1 'To a bicycle-bell' by Guy Boas. From Stanley (1937) pp. 143 – 144.

[30] Porteous, *op. cit.*

I would argue that the aural senses are also place related and can relate to particular environments. For example, in his ode 'To a bicycle-Bell' (Figure 8.1) Guy Boas compared the 'hooting', 'squalling', 'crashing' soundscape of post-war urban traffic with the 'melodious tinkle' of his bell as he cycled towards his silent paradise, the flowering lanes and by-ways of the countryside. Other campers also found sounds an acute way of distinguishing between the urban and the rural environment. One columnist wrote,

> [r]oar, grate, clatter! I am awakened from my reverie and planted back in the suburban park entrance and am now emerging again into the main road. The song of birds dies away, the park is left behind [...] people are pouring out of trams and 'buses and entering artificial structures, where there is not even a blade of grass.[31]

Although campers strove to find nature and peace in the countryside, the aural sense nevertheless could also remind one that 'civilisation' was never far away.[32] A. R. Ellis wrote,

> [t]he scent of pines in Delamere Forest [...] on the breeze that fans his brow, making him draw deep breaths, drinking in to the full the scented air. Somewhere close at hand a continuous babble and splash betrays the presence of his natural bathroom for the next three days: Maybe he feels his skin tingling at the thought of the exhilarating refreshment awaiting him on the morrow. In the distance a shrill whistle intrudes rudely upon the voices of Nature (sic) and three

[31] Weston, W. (March 1925) 'An invitation for Easter', *Camping* XXI (2) p. 29.
[32] Ellis, A. R. (May 1937) 'Camping at Easter: An old timer answers the call of the Great Out Doors', *Camping* XXXIII

> deep, long snorts, followed by a succession of little ones, which in turn give way to a clank-clank-clank remind him that civilisation still pulses and throbs somewhere in the blackness beyond his campfire.[33]

However, it is clear that the campers made sense of their environments through multi-sensory ways. I now want to extend this discussion on senses and sensuality to focus more closely on the campers' relationships with the environment. Throughout this discussion I illustrate the ways that campers prided themselves on their resistance to the forces of the natural environment whilst at the same time demonstrating a great affection and intimate respect for nature.

Camping, 'sport' and the vagaries of nature

In a description of walking G. M. Trevelyan remarked that; 'to know and to love the texture of rocks we should cling to them [...] no one knows how sun and water can make a steep bank of moss smell all ambrosia 'till he (sic) has dug foot, fingers, and face into it in earnest.[34] In this section I examine the traditional construction of sport as anti-nature and the way in which camping contradicts this assumption. Bale and Philo believe that geographical studies of sport have started to move towards a more welfare orientated and humanistic perspective.[35] This stands in contrast to most 'sports-geographic' writing which is mainly devoted to scientific recording and mapping, what Bale and Philo call the

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(5) p. 108.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[34] Trevelyan, G. M. (1930) 'Walking', *Clio, A Muse and Other Essays Literary and Pedestrian.* London: Longmans, Green and Co. pp. 56 - 81 (p. 74). For more information on the life and work of George Macauley Trevelyan see Cannadine, D. (1992) *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History.* London: Harper Collins.

[35] Bale, J. and Philo, C. (1998) 'Introduction: Henning Eichberg, space, identity and body culture', *Body Cultures: Essays*

'cartographic fetish'. In such studies the meaning of sport in place is neglected and oversimplified, and the subject of the study is fragmented and isolated from its broader themes and influences. John Bale not only problematises the landscapes of sport, but also the conceptualisation of contemporary sports as 'achievement orientated'.[36] Sports places are associated with the world of mathematics, science and 'record-breaking', measured into tightly controlled, artificially enclosed territories and segments which seek to 'neutralise the vagaries of nature'.[37] By contrast, the lightweight camper frequently described their activities as sport and although camping *can* be conceived of as an 'achievement orientated' sport, it is not possible to do this in a quantifiable sense. Rather, campers measure achievement in terms of personal strength, endurance and a sense of achievement during and after the event, particularly when conditions have been adverse.

The language of measurement and control is inadequate to describe the experiences of the camper: to quantify camping thus is to deny a multitude of experiential phenomena such as feelings, emotions, sensuality, spirituality and social interaction. Urry states that the 'emphasis on the visual reduces the body to surface and marginalises the sensuality of the body' and impoverishes the relationship of the body to its physical environment.[38] The emphasis on control and precision over-emphasises masculinist efforts to exert mastery, whether over the female body or over nature.[39] Urry states that in 'contrast it is claimed that a feminist consciousness less emphasises the dominant visual sense and seeks to integrate all of the senses in a more rounded consciousness not seeking to exert mastery

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on Sport, Space and Identity. Henning Eichberg. London: Routledge pp. 3 – 21.
[36] Bale, *op. cit.*
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] Urry, J. (1999) 'Sensing leisure spaces', in Crouch, D. (ed) *Leisure / Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*. London: Routledge pp. 34 - 45 (p. 40).
[39] *Ibid.*

over the "other'.[40] Bale also recognises this, remarking that traditional readings of the sports place draw on 'the "hard" masculinised metaphors from the world of science' and present an 'unambiguous view of sport as anti-nature, as places of dominance'.[41] Here, 'real play' and 'enjoyment', 'contact with air and water', 'improvisation' and 'spontaneity' all disappear. Bale prefers to use a 'softer' feminised metaphor in an attempt to emphasise the *ambiguity* of sports landscapes and the way in which they reflect the exercise of both dominance *and* affection on the part of sportsmen and women.[42] For example, though sportscapes are a form of power and domination, they are not necessarily the result of a hatred of nature. Rather they can be conceptualised as a desire to civilise it. I do not wish to continue Bale's discussion of sportscapes, however, I do wish to pick up on the interesting idea of dominance and affection.

'Open-air way unbelievers': non-campers and novices

Although the views of people who did not camp are not voiced directly in *Camping* magazine, many contributors frequently commented on other peoples' reactions to their pastime.[43] During a recruitment drive in the late 1930s, F. B. Shrubsall commented that he was often asked by what he called 'open-air way unbelievers' why he went camping; 'one of my town friends who believed in nothing but bricks and mortar habitations at all times [...] expressed the opinion that camping seemed to be mostly roughing it unnecessarily with unwelcome attentions by earwigs, spiders and other crawlybobs'.[44] Popular opinion held

[40] *Ibid.*
[41] Bale (1999) *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[42] Cosgrove and Domosh cited in *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[43] Anon (May 1939) 'As some other people see us', in *Camping* XXXV (5).
[44] Shrubsall, F. B. (April 1936) 'Why camping?', in *Camping* XXXII (4) p. 74.

that the camper was uncomfortable, plagued by insomnia, forced to eat unpalatable cuisine, and trapped in a continuous cycle of dish washing, wood chopping and hard 'grinding' work.[45] Similarly, A. R. Robins commented, 'when I mention camping. "Very nice", they say, "when conditions are favourable, but you cannot arrange the weather, and to have your habitation, clothing and bedding reduced to a damp, soggy state is so unpleasant that we would rather not risk it".[46]

The *supposed* discomfort of camping was a constant theme in the camping literature and the promise of increased intimacy with wild animals and creepy crawlies were the precise reasons why some people didn't go camping.[47] For example, one interviewee's parents did not approve when she started camping with her fiancée's family. She told me they,

> {laughs} thought it was the beginning of the end, not out of snobbery, nothing like that, but just, you know, the creepy crawlies and bugs and things, you know, that might attack their daughter and yet my brother he was, I mean, he was into the, you know, Scouts and all that sort of thing. (Mrs Lowe, 27/07/00)

For others it was the threat of dirt and poor standards of hygiene that prevented them from venturing into the outdoors. Joyce and Don Chapple remarked that people used to ask them where they washed believing that proximity to the local town and its public conveniences were the only ways to maintain cleanliness;

[45] Gordon, H. (1937) 'Camping', in *The Rambler's Companion to the Countryside for Ramblers, Cyclists and Motorists.* London: Chatto and Windus pp. 21 – 25.
[46] Robins, A. R. (April 1936) 'What if it rains?', in *Camping* XXXII (4) p. 74.
[47] Walker, S. H. (1949) *The Way to Camp.* London: Methuen.

> They think, the impression that you got was that you were scruffy, they couldn't see that we could wash and that [...] but this is one of the things that, er, the impressions that people used to get ... well, you know, it can't be clean, can't be healthy, you know, "how do you do your teeth" ... simple. (Don Chapple, 22/09/00)

Campers such as these show mild amusement at being thought 'eccentric' by relatives, friends and acquaintances. Discussing his first foray into camping, another correspondent described how, family friends had 'long since decided that we were all mad and awaited each post anxiously, firmly convinced that long before the end of [the] holiday they would be summoned to some hospital, where we should all be lying in the last stages of pneumonia or even worse'.[48]

Camping was a true test of one's constitution and ability to 'make do'. Another of my interviewees remembered that,

> [p]eople used to come out specially to visit us and couldn't believe, 'cause I had colleagues from the office that would say "oh we'll come and have a look at you" and, before they went home they'd say "oh can I go to your loo" and, er, one woman ... she was [...] game for anything really but she couldn't face [the toilet]... "I can't get over that hole, no way, I'll have to wait" "do you really do that every weekend", couldn't believe it {laughs} [...] and she was the type that would drive anything, she'd drive a lorry [...] but no, she couldn't have coped with camping at all, no er, you used to get looks of amazement that you got enjoyment out of living like that every weekend. (Joyce Taylor, 10/07/00)

Inclement weather also dissuaded non-campers from the outdoor life;

> The weather, it was absolutely diabolical [...] the rain was coming up through [the] ground sheet, and the grandparents came up, and the great-grandparents [...] Me mother-in-law had shoes with heels on, and they were going through [the ground sheet] so the water was seeping up, and she said "these kids are going to get pneumonia, let me take them back t' caravan with us", and I said "no, they're all right, they're stopping where they are" {smiles} but er, anyway, we survived that first weekend and that became our way of life ... every weekend ... 'till November, and for many years after that. (Joyce Taylor, 10/07/00)

For the non-camper Nature was associated with discomfort, risk and bad weather, and so pervasive was this assumption that a new form of camping developed to counter these critiques. During the 1930s the concept of 'camping coaches' was initially aimed squarely at the camping enthusiast rather than the general holiday-maker and great emphasis was placed on the attractions of outdoor life. However, as McRae notes, camping coaches were invariably sold to potential users by direct reference to the perceived drawbacks associated with traditional forms of camping; the implied threat of wet canvas often featured in one way or another. The original inspiration for 'camping coaches' came from author C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne who had observed a group of 'town lads' camping whilst out walking. He stated,

[48] 957 (January 1928) 'A tour down south', in *Camping* XXIV (1) pp. 9 – 10.

> [c]amping under canvas is a pleasant enough game if you know how. But the untutored ammeter (sic) has to go through a tough apprenticeship before he (or she) knows enough to dodge the unnecessary discomforts [...] I was thinking what a topping idea it would be to have a sound waterproof railway carriage as one's camping headquarters.[49]

Camping coach brochures listed the attractive advantages of a sound roof and walls, a dry floor, no trouble with expensive farmers or thirsty policemen full of strange bylaws or intruding cows. Nevertheless, for one breed of camper, the discomforts and challenges of camping were celebrated on the very essence of their faith.

The 'moss-back'

In Woodward's discussion of the relations between male soldiers and the environment evident in armed forces recruitment publicity, she emphasises the mutually constitutive relations of the body and the environment.[50] The soldier's masculinity is forged by the harsh environment, and he becomes defined by characteristics such as bravery, fearlessness, toughness, physical fitness and by the ability to disregard discomfort and pain. However, being this type of man is dependent on being outdoors and by participating in particular ways of being in space.[51] In this section, following Woodward, I wish to examine the ways in which the camper's body is similarly transformed through its encounters with the environment, and in turn how the campers' 'transcendence of the environment's effects on

[49] LNER, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
[50] Woodward, R. (1998) 'It's a man's life!': soldiers, masculinity and the countryside', in *Gender, Place and Culture* 5 (3) pp. 277 – 300.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 291.

the body', become constant themes within the camping literature.[52] Acknowledging Woodward's emphasis on the construction of masculinity, in subsequent sections of the chapter I discuss gender and the camping body. I consider, for example, the embodied masculinity of the 'moss-back' or experienced camper; the ways in which gendered assumptions about performance and 'ability to cope' were reinforced within the camping literature; and, the potential of the feminine body to transgress these boundaries and participate in the traditionally masculine sphere of camping.

Campers defended their pursuit vigorously claiming that discomfort was only a problem for the inexperienced or the amateur. The accomplished camper did not sleep on the ground in damp clothes and bedding, suffer from exhaustion due to disturbed nights on uncomfortable beds, or suffer from illness caused by irregular or badly-cooked meals.[53] One stated dismissively that,

> [s]uch people of course really do not understand camping [...] True, in camping, one hopes for fine weather as giving the more ideal conditions for the open-air life, but let nobody be discouraged from camping by the thought of rain and of what we shall do then.[54]

Alex Papps agreed stating, 'it is difficult to convince the uninitiated that a few showers, a high wind or the prospect of a storm need not deter the camper from leaving the shelter of his home and taking chances with the weather'.[55] The famous historian and walker G. M. Trevelyan wrote,

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[52] *Ibid.*
[53] Shepard cited in LNER, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[54] Robins, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[55] Papps, A. (August 1936) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXII (8) p. 163.

> [c]hange in weather should be made as welcome as change in scenery [...] I love the stillness of dawn, and of noon, and of evening, but I love no less the "winds austere and pure". The fight against fiercer wind and snowstorm is among the higher joys of walking, and produces in shortest time the state of ecstasy.[56]

Ronald Shepard, a member of the Camping Club agreed, '[t]here is no need to think that [a camping holiday is] synonymous with discomfort and hardship. A camping holiday can be infinitely more comfortable than a crowded boarding house or uncongenial apartments'.[57]

The fresh air, the sun, the quiet of the countryside, the company of a happy band of comrades were all good for one and camping thus became an elevation of the spirit. One camper wrote,

> I go camping because; - it enables me to spend my weekends wheresoever I may wish, in the country or by the seashore, untrammelled and unfettered [...] It enables me to study the beauties of countryside Nature - the flowers and the woodlands, the little animals and birds - more closely, more intimately. It enables me to enjoy to the full the great beauties of outdoor life - fresh air and peaceful surroundings [...] I find peace and rest and quietness and become happy, healthy, bronzed and fit.[58]

[56] Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
[57] Shepard cited in LNER, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[58] Shrubsall, *op. cit.*

These campers appeared to draw on a form of 'stoical self-sufficiency which not only endured, but often found satisfaction in adverse natural conditions'.[59] Another explained,

> [t]he delights of camping may seem very slight to the novice [but] to the 'moss-back'[60], they are never-ending. To spend days and nights in the open-air, with just a thin piece of fabric between you and the storms, the heat and the cold, is to experience a delightful freedom which no other form of holiday can give [...] camping is such a complete change from the ordinary life of the town-dweller that one never gets bored, not even in wet weather [...] He who has not had the rain beat on his bare skin has missed one of the glories of life. And a sun-kissed body is a body stroked by God.[61]

According to the literature then, the most privileged of this number were those with the ability to be a light-weight camper who could access the very essence of Nature. In this section I examine these 'moss-back's and the qualities that enabled them to gain a greater appreciation of the natural environment.

Much of the ethos of light-weight camping concerned one's strength of character and attitude towards the natural environment. The ability to brave the environment and extremes of weather in only slight discomfort was a particularly highly regarded quality. Those worthy of the title 'camper' were equipped with 'imagination and foresight' and were 'prepared for any eventuality', they accepted inclement weather as a 'challenge'

[59] Taylor, H. (1997) *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement.* Edinburgh: Keele University Press (p. 266).
[60] Someone who has camped for a number of years.
[61] Frost, A. W. (January 1928) 'Why go camping?', *Camping* XXIV (1) p. 7.

realising that such conditions were a test of resourcefulness and an excellent form of character training.[62] Skipness McDougal waxed lyrical;

> [t]he rays of the Autumn morning sun are making love to the hill-tops on the other side of the wondrously still valley [...] I am attuned to play my part in harmony with Nature's gracious mood [...] To kick a tuft would mean a speedy bath in the black mass. But care and perseverance carry you over. The swift-flowing river is reached. Nature makes no bridges. You are already wet-footed and a little more water in your boots can make but little difference to your comfort, so through you go up to the knees. The ground rises quickly and rough from the river-side, but you tackle it dead on [...] for the time being we forget that governments totter, empires fall, and autocrats lose their crowns [and] fall asleep to [the] music of the gurgling burn and monotone of [the] unceasing waterfall.[63]

One interviewee told me that,

> [t]he thing was in those days, of course, that we never worried about pants or shoes or anything, all the year round there's winter and summer, snow and everything, we always wore shorts. We didn't always have jackets, we had a big pullover because in the winter when we were coming home at night and it was perishing cold, we used to just stuff brown paper down our pullovers, you know. (Harold Lees, 28/07/00)

[62] G.G.A., *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[63] McDougal, S. (April 1920) 'Let's take a day', in *Camping* XVI (3) pp. 41 – 2.

His companion also remarked; 'oh we were soaked. I remember going over [...] we had to carry our bikes through snowdrifts and we all had sandals on, you know'.[64] The shared ethos was that you just 'accepted it' and 'lived round it', for camping taught independence and the assurance that one could cheerfully cope with anything nature could throw at you.[65] Joad outlined similar sentiments in *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country*;

> The feel of the air upon their skin and of the sun upon the face; the tautening of the muscles of the legs as we climb; the sting of the rain upon our cheeks, the mellow glow of an October afternoon as we walk beneath a row of elm trees by the riverside - those things are not of the body alone; they have their influence upon every side of our being.[66]

These sentiments are clearly expressed in the poem 'The Lone Star' (see Figure 8.2). This good-natured ode to the pitfalls of camping is a celebration of strength of character, perseverance and (some might say masochistic) fun that the sport entailed. Despite the chances of being plagued by faulty equipment, lost sites, ruined food, adverse weather conditions and a multitude of 'human' mistakes, nothing could mar the joy of sitting round an open fire with one's companions gazing at the night sky and planning future exploits.

One interviewee noticed the stark contrast between campers and non-campers when he joined up,

[64] Interview with Albert Payne (28/07/00).
[65] Interview with Rod Lowe (27/07/00); Interview with Joyce Taylor (10/07/00)
[66] Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

It was quite noticeable I think [...] which men [...] had never left home in their lives [...] it was pathetic, interesting, surprising, [...] all these young chaps about eighteen, nineteen, most of them were not volunteers er, they'd been called up and it was quite incredible. I mean some of them [...] {laughs} well er, they knew how to wash themselves I suppose but that was about all, you know, and they came from homes where everything was done for them and they hadn't a clue, and yet, you could tell straight away the ones who had been away from home on their own because they just got on with it. It really stood out a mile and, of course, people who'd been in the Club whilst camping, I suppose the same thing would have shown up. I mean, not so much there, but later on.[67]
(Pat Constance, 26/07/00)

Just as experiencing the minutiae of sensual stimuli lent one a new sense of perspective, meeting the challenges and hardships of camping with cheerfulness instilled a sense of proportion and sense of humour. The camper learnt to 'take the rough with the smooth', to 'develop initiative', and to be 'resourceful, alert and reliable' testing their skills and overcoming all difficulties.[68] Another interviewee stated that the weather, 'never put us off at all, we've camped in all types of weather, we've camped where you've had to try and open the door and crack it down to make it, to fold it back to get out'.[69] While Walker's *The Way to Camp* reminds us,

it is the knowledge that he has triumphed over difficulties that gives the camper his élan. The feeling that you have been up against nature in the rain, that wind

[67] Interview with Pat Constance (26/07/00).
[68] G.G.A., *op. cit.*
[69] Interview with Joyce and Don Chapple (22/09/00).

When your waterproof leaks, or your bicycle squeaks
Or the chain comes off with a run;
When your variable gear is remarkably queer,
You're only beginning the fun.

[Chorus] But it's milder tonight, through the stars shining bright,
As we round our camp fire sit:
And we all think the same, that it's camping's the game,
Quite certain of all sports it's IT.

When the sites don't exist, have been crossed off the list,
And you spin your yarn in the dark,
Get some curious pitch in a yard or a ditch,
You think it is only a lark.

With your blacking and jam all mixed up with the ham,
And the 'Meth' run into the 'Marm'.
And a bag of coffee mixed up with sugar and tea,
And no blooming food at the farm.

When you camp 'neath the trees in a strong N.E. breeze,
Your flysheet is torn all to rags,
And lets in rainwater which it didn't oughter,
Do you think the sport of it flags?

With a rip in your tyre, and you can't start a fire
As your matches are damp. You can't smoke.
And the guys are mislaid. Surely fortune's a jade!
For campers it's merely a joke.

When your pole break at joint, and the pricker's no point,
And 'Primus' itself is not here,
When your groundsheet has rot, and your quilt is forgot,
And the site is surely a mere.

When you're tripped by a rope or slip over the soap,
And down in the bucket you fall,
Or on hidden barbed wire have destroyed your attire,
You don't swear or worry at all.

Now you stockings are damp, but you can't light a lamp
For reasons I've given above
But we'll pitch on the moors and inaugurate tours,
And still go out camping for love

Figure 8.2 'The Lone Star' (May 1922). From *Camping* XVIII (3) p. 35.

and rain and rough trials have done their worst, but that you have stuck it out and refused to be beaten, gives camp life its finest flavour.[70]

Yet as a December 1936 Editorial in camping explained,

> [t]he ability to be cheerful, patient and resourceful under adverse conditions is, perhaps, largely a question of temperament. Unless a man or woman is blessed with the right disposition, whether he or she is likely ever to make a successful all-round camper or a helpful and reliable camp companion.[71]

Although all forms of camping were healthy and character-building, it was also important that a person was 'blessed' with the correct disposition, and possessed the suitable character to camp and appreciate all aspects of camp life. The 'moss-back' was celebrated as the 'ideal' camper, the result of meaningful and sustained human-environment interaction. 'His' strength of character was derived through direct experience of the natural environment and, in turn, was defined by transcendence of the its harsh realities. For the moss-back the discomforts of camping were simply part and parcel of the rich and embodied tapestry of nature.

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[70] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

The 'proper' camper

The character and constitution of 'the camper' was explored in numerous articles both within the Club magazine and in wider camping literature.[72] In 1923 A. W. Frost described four different camping types.[73] First, there was the 'Methodical Camper' who always arrived neat and tidy, was never in a hurry and was prepared for all eventualities, unfortunately this camper never had any adventures because they never did anything wrong. Second, came the 'Careless Camper' who was usually a novice, always forgot things and went round the site trying to borrow, and who, whilst gaining experience of getting into awkward corners had simultaneously developed a genius for getting out of them. Third, came the 'Luxurious Camper' who had everything and was not ashamed of it, however, they still had their place in the fraternity as they gave the Careless Camper someone to borrow from. Finally, there was the 'Wild Camper' who appeared dirty but was actually very clean and whom with the acquired knowledge of the civilised man (sic) endeavoured to get ever closer into communion with the spirit of Nature.

Though different in many ways these characters could all lay claim to the following distinguishing features: level-headedness, perseverance, patience, a good sense of humour, the ability to enjoy simple pleasures, resourcefulness, skilfullness, patience and above all the ability to live life to the full.[74] These qualities were encapsulated in a revised version of Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If...' by R. G. published in *Camping* (see Figure 8.3). In this poem 'the camper' approaches

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[71] Papps, A. (December 1936) 'Editorial', *Camping* XXXII (10) p. 214.
[72] See Anon (June 1937) 'A psychological study of the Real Camper', *Camping* XXXIII (6) p. 134.

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and wishing it on you;
If you can hold a pitch when cattle flout you
And eat your quilt and e'en your bucket, too;
If you can cook – and not be tired with cooking
When harried by a swarm of thirsty flies
And raise a smile once said to be good-looking
Or smoke-grimed face now washed by streaming eyes;

If you can sleep upon a bed of boulders;
If you can wake – and not wake all the camp:
And make yourself the joy of all beholders
At wet pack-ups by only murm'ring 'Damp'.
If you can find a joy in aimless walking
From morning stroll to misty moonlight hikes;
If you can stand around and do the talking
Whilst others titivate their motor-bikes.

If you can squeeze with half-a-dozen fellows
Into a tent that's only made for two.
And disregard a brother sardine's bellows
Because his face is underneath your shoe;
If you can coax a stove without a falter
To bring a pint of water to the boil
In time to beat that fellow –Wily Walter –
Who seems to put a spell on stove and oil;

If you can push a bike or sail a flivver,
Or walk, or ride, or even push a pram,
If you can face the wild without a quiver,
And gently tend the wasps that clog your jam;
If you can fill each summer-scented minute
With sixty seconds; (sic) worth of outdoor fun,
Yours is the Club and everything that's in it
And what is more, you'll be a CAMPER, son!

Figure 8.3 'If...' by R. G. From *Camping* ??.

[73] Frost, A. W. (June 1923) 'Camping types', in *Camping* XIX (4).

the natural environment and fellow campers with respect and compassion. The 'true' camper then, was not set back by the challenges that life brought, rather they would meet them steadfast and sure and learnt to appreciate them just as much as the beauties of nature they were privileged to encounter. This is also a good example of campers appropriating popular, but loaded cultures to their own ends.

To those who did not camp experienced and inexperienced campers looked very alike and the sight and sound of these 'campers' was subject to much debate in the press and camping literature. A distinct group constructed in opposition to 'the camper' was the confirmed 'townie'. Although most of the campers also resided in towns and had no desire to move to the country permanently, they did all they could to distinguish themselves from such 'trouble-makers'.[75] In describing the activities of this group Alexander Papps empathised,

> I can fully appreciate the sense of joy and freedom that comes to the town lad who finds himself turned loose amidst fields and woods and left perhaps to seek his own amusements, he may quite well think that breaking through hedges, climbing fences and chasing livestock, fine sport and doesn't matter. In this he is wrong.[76]

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[74] Anon, 'A psychological study', *op. cit.*
[75] Taylor, *op. cit.*
[76] Papps, A. (May 1920) 'How to use and abuse a camp site', in *Camping* XVI (4) p. 60.

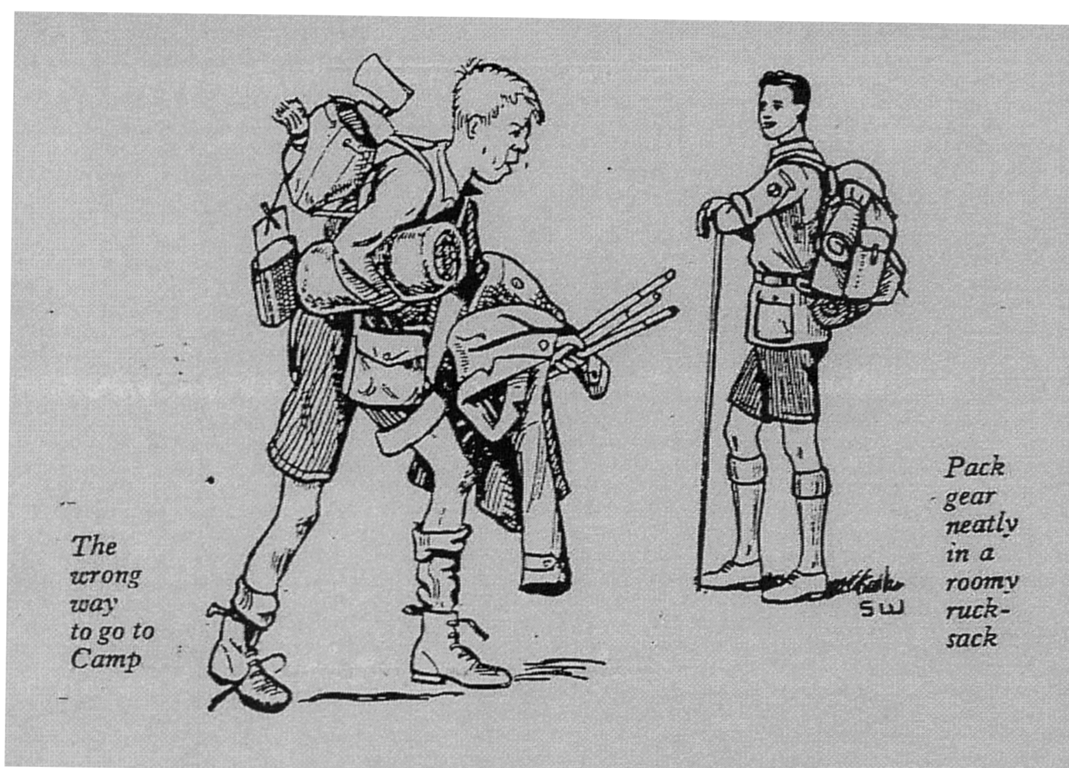

Figure 8.4 'The wrong way to go to camp'. From Walker (1949) p. 33.

Figure 8.4 from Walker's *The Way to Camp* shows the more immediate physical differences between the 'townie' and the 'camper' (more specifically, the affiliated camper), and is reminiscent of Baden-Powell's illustration of the urban man and the 'real man' in *Scouting For Boys* (1908). In *Scouting For Boys* the first class scout was by no means a superman, rather he had modest qualities; honourable, loyal, friendly, courteous, kind to animals, able to obey orders with a smile and thrifty with money.[77] In later years in *Rovering to Success* (1922) Baden-Powell claimed that urban living had made men 'soft and feckless beings'.[78] Much emphasis was placed on the individual self-discipline and improvement gained through training in the outdoors. According to Baden-Powell, only 'nature herself' (sic) could revive what he felt were the touchstones of English manliness,

[77] Warren, A. (1987) 'Popular manliness: Baden Powell, scouting and the development of manly character', in Mangan, J. and Walvin, J. (eds) *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800 – 1940*. Manchester: Manchester University Press pp. 199 – 219.
[78] *Ibid.*

'courage, endurance and self-reliance'.[79] In turn, manliness was connected to physical and mental health.[80] Note the bad camper's slouched and dishevelled appearance. Walker stated that '[m]any lads wear the shirt tails loose outside the shorts [this] is beautifully free and cool, but not very dignified'.[81] Toughness did not imply uncouth manners. Indeed, some people seemed to think that in camp everyone must 'rough it' and walk about unshaven, or with their hair uncombed, and with grimy knees and faces.[82] One of my interviewees mentioned something along similar lines, when he said,

> [w]ell it wasn't a matter of cheapness, it was a matter of being right. You couldn't, I mean there was a, I suppose there was a degree of, not exactly snobbishness, but a degree of who were the right people and who weren't, you know, you were either the proper lot who were doing things and riding thousands of miles or the scrawns, as they used to be called [...] with their cups and things hanging on their saddlebags and that sort of thing, or the people who bought meals in Youth Hostels. (Harold Lees, 28/07/00)

In comparison to the upstanding camper on his right the non-camper or 'townie' is unprepared, ill-equipped and unfit.

In October 1934 *The Times* was the site of a heated discussion regarding the clothes hikers (many of whom were pedestrian campers) wore when out in the countryside. The debate began with two letters, both of which made a plea for hikers to discard their drab grey flannel and potato or khaki drill in favour of brighter more appealing colours and

[79] Rutherford, J. (1997) 'Under an English heaven': Rupert Brooke and the search for an English Arcady', in *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire*. London: Lawrence and Wishart pp. 39 - 69 (p. 55).
[80] *Ibid.*
[81] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

fabrics.[83] Though these fabrics were cheaper than coloured materials, these correspondents remarked that hikers (and many bikers) were a 'dreary sight to ordinary eyes' and were more resemblent of the 'professional kind of tramp'.[84] One correspondent wondered if it was because they were embarrassed about their bodies or maybe that,

> the teaching of the C.P.R.E. and of kindred bodies has born in upon the hiker his true aesthetic duty to the amenities of the countryside. Not for him to affront, like a petrol station or a vulgar advertisement, the gentle beauties of wood and field [however] their drabness is all the more strange because at this moment of time the world has a great liking for colour.[85]

Flint remarked that a spectacle which should have been pleasant was often the reverse regarding,

> the spectacle of youths and maidens in [the] "hikers'" hideous uniform [...] many a lass is plain but not altogether shapeless [...] many a lad has skinny legs that would not be noticed if his upper half wore a dazzling pullover [...] If bogs have to be negotiated and undergrowth hacked through, and resulting splashes or rents would show up the more and make plain to observers how heroic the wearers had been!.[86]

Here, just as the tan became the ultimate visual proof of health and embodied vitality, the tears, thorns and dirt (through worthy activity rather than neglectful hygiene) were

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[82] *Ibid.*
[83] Anon (08/10/1934) 'Happier hues for hikers', *The Times* p. 15; Flint, W. R. (08/10/1934) 'Hikers' dress: plea for gayer garments / homely cheeks and skinny legs', *The Times* p. 15.
[84] Anon, 'Happier', p. 15.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

testament to the campers strength of character, will and embodied experience. Although, because the campers clothes were designed to *protect* the body, naturists would argue that the campers experience of nature was somewhat 'disconnected' and not as embodied as if they had been naked.

The views expressed above are not surprising. During the inter-war period clothes in general were becoming more colourful and clothing manufacturers, ever in search of new markets, had turned their speculative eyes on the growing multitudes of campers and hikers.[87] Though one of the cheapest recreational pursuits, camping did require equipment and facilities provided by a new leisure industry in the form of tents, rucksacks, clothes and boots. This heightened the contrasts between different social groups pursuing the sport.[88] It soon became common for men to 'knock about in' green or blue trousers, short sleeved, coloured polo-shirts and coloured shorts in lemon, green, burgundy and saxe.[89] Many of the designs were impractical for strenuous activity, and whilst cotton and drill were cool in the day they absorbed a lot of moisture.[90] Clothes made from synthetic fibres like 'Poplin' or the stronger 'Tobralco' were better for summer, and flannelette or winceyette for winter. Cellular-woven shirts became fashionable around 1933 for both sexes, their mesh of fine holes giving the skin the prescribed healthy ventilation.[91] Advances were also being made in the simplification of fastenings with the introduction of elastic and press-studs. Though the less well off often had to make their own clothes from any materials that were available to them; one of my interviewees remembered his mother running up several pairs of

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[86] Flint, 'Hikers', *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[87] Walker, *op. cit.*
[88] Lowerson, J. (1980) 'Battles for the countryside', in Gloversmith, F. (ed) *Class, Culture and Social Change: A New View of the 1930s*. Sussex: The Harvester Press pp. 258 – 280.
[89] Graves, R. and Hodge, A. (1950) *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain 1918 – 1939*. London: Faber and Faber.
[90] Walker, *op. cit.*
[91] Graves and Hodge, *op. cit.*

corduroy shorts for himself and his companions using off cuts from the velvet factory where his grandmother worked. The same respondent also recalled persuading a local cobbler to make cheap sandals using leather off-cuts from his workshop.

In general, both sexes took to wearing open-necked shirts and washable shorts with rucksacks.[92] However, as numbers increased the fashion amongst outdoor types for wearing increasingly more flamboyant and startling garments, particularly on Sundays, became a cause of concern and consternation amongst rural dwellers. A letter from one such person using the pseudonym 'Just Grey Flannel, Somewhere in Kent' stated,

> [m]y experience of hikers' dress is the opposite of Mr. R. Flint's. During the weekends detachments of hikers pass down our country lane. Mostly they are clad to resemble pirates, with coloured handkerchiefs tied around their necks. At other times the 'get up' is even more grotesque, and one wonders when the elephants and pie-bald horses of the circus will round the bend to follow the advance party of clowns [...] Personally I long to see more of grey flannel 'bags', 'shorts' or divided skirts. After all what could be neater than grey flannel.[93]

Nina Cohen agreed, remarking that although England truly was the 'land for hikers', why anyone should want to mar such wonderful countryside with long colourful 'processions' filled her with consternation.[94] However, other correspondents were somewhat more benevolent and drew attention to the plight of many hikers, bikers and campers and the intense monotony they endured in everyday life. Exon remarked,

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[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Just Grey Flannel, Somewhere in Kent (10/10/1934) 'Hikers' dress', *The Times* p. 15.

> [t]he office, the workshop are indeed necessary for our civilisation, but the tedium and dreariness of many lives spent therein is sad to contemplate [...] The overcrowded tram or train brings them back to drab houses in the gloom of a winter's evening [but they] have one small privilege. They are allowed a too-short holiday every year. It is obviously right that that holiday should be made as colourful and interesting as possible. We who are more fortunate, can seek such relaxation by foreign travel [...] They strive to add colour to their lives by strange dresses and eccentric behaviour [...] if their dress and demeanour raise in us a smile it should also be a smile of welcome and encouragement.[95]

One hiker who had tried to find a happy medium was a Ms. L. Coughlan.[96] Whilst she had tried to introduce a splash of colour into her club through her clothing, she found that on a practical level they did show the dirt more than khaki and it was still more important to look smart and attractive during whatever activity one wished to partake in. To compensate for this she had adopted a more military style outfit in royal blue which, she proudly added, had been much admired on a visit to Germany. This discussion raises several interesting questions regarding the objectification of the body, embodiment and labelling of certain bodies as 'out of place'. To understand the countryside as a leisure space it is also necessary to examine the way in which it is also a place within which gender relations may be reinforced or re-negotiated.[97] In the next section I consider the extent to which the countryside as a site for recreational camping can be seen as a 'masculinist place' in the

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[94] Cohen, N. (11/10/1934) 'Hikers' dress', *The Times* p. 15.
[95] Exon, W. (13/10/1934) 'Hikers' dress', *The Times* p. 13. See also Ackland, F. D. (16/10/1934) 'Hikers' dress', *The Times* p. 15.
[96] Coughlan, L. (27/10/1934) 'Hikers' dress', *The Times* p. 8.
[97] Bhatti, M. and Church, A. (2000) 'I never promised you a rose garden': gender, leisure and home-making', *Leisure Studies* 19 pp. 183 – 197.

sense that women were unable to enter it on their own terms.[98] For much of the twentieth century the countryside, just as the domestic garden, has been portrayed as a man's domain, a primary masculine source of relaxation and pleasure.[99] I therefore examine the extent to which discourses regarding dress and appropriate behaviour objectified female campers and labelled them as 'out of place' within the countryside environment. First I look at issues of clothing and mobility and then discuss camping as a potential source of empowerment for individual women.

'Sweating girls in shorts': female campers and mobility

As demonstrated by Figure 8.5, items of clothing such as shorts, vest tops, wellies and heavy boots were popular amongst both male and female outdoor enthusiasts. In the inter-war period, the open-air was packaged as 'a space of equality and freedom for women and men, offering a direct and democratic contact with landscape which did not respect conservative conventions of gender'.[100] Indeed, shorts were considered by some to be more dignified than skirts and, in allowing one to stride, sit, cycle and climb more easily, a valuable aid to equality between the sexes.[101] However, for others such masculine attire and the activity that these garments implied, transgressed the very essence of 'femininity'. If this wasn't enough, correspondent to *The Times* Nina Cohen remarked that bright colours only served to accentuate 'fat legs and broad hips'.[102] Joad remarked that women looked

[98] *Ibid.*
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] Matless, D. (1998) *Landscape and Englishness.* London: Reaktion (p. 80). On the emancipatory potential of women's choice of traditionally 'masculine' clothing in an urban context see Wilson, E. (1991) *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women.* London: Virago Press.
[101] The rise of cycling in the 1900s can be identified as a key activity both in the move towards female dress reform and increased mobility for women.
[102] Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

particularly out of place and he ranked 'sweating girls in shorts' that tended to 'enlarge' rather than 'enhance their charms' alongside bird blinding boys, 'bombinating cars' and raucous singing as modern, rural abominations.[103] Commenting on the female appropriation of 'shorts' as leisure wear Avis wrote,

> [w]hilst fully appreciating that clothes are a matter of personal taste, I sincerely hope that the aforementioned garment [i.e. skirts] will be the order of the day in our camps. But as opinions are hard to reconcile, I will give two other points of view:- (i) *Æsthetic* 'Shorts' are usually very unbecoming to most women, unless the latter are very slim and very young; also, the garment must be immaculate or it looks like discarded underwear. (ii) *Utility* A short skirt as now worn leaves nothing to be desired for camping, being useful and womanly.[104]

This raises the question that, in wearing shorts and participating in rigorous outdoor activities, was the female campers' body necessarily 'masculinised' in its transgression of traditional gender norms of apparel and behaviour.

Even though this blurring of boundaries between masculine / feminine, public / private was tacitly accepted by the majority the female camper could never enjoy the same amount of freedom from objectification and critique as her male counterpart. Though the development of fit healthy young women was viewed to be a valuable step away from the

[103] Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[104] Avis (March 1928) 'Shorts', *Camping* XXIV (3) p. 43.

Figure 8.5 Female campers clad in shorts filling water buckets at a tap. From the Camping and Caravanning Club Archive.

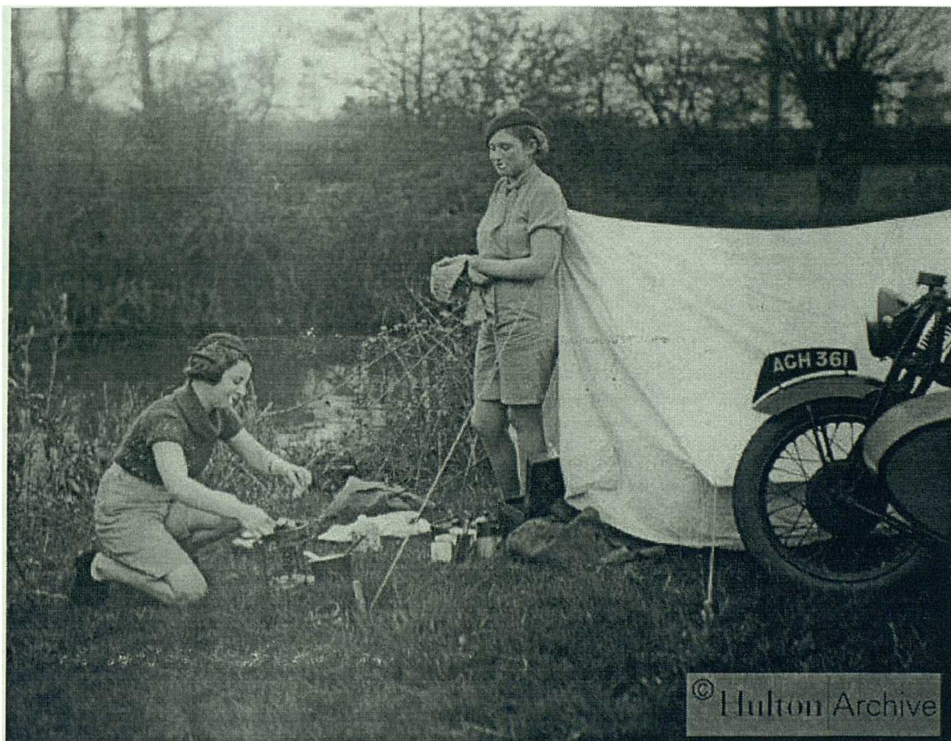

Figure 8.6 'Biking holiday' (May 1934). From The Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

constricting traditions both of dress and physique, however, it was not considered appropriate that some women had begun to 'outstrip' their male counterparts in tests of stamina and mental dexterity. Whilst women should also aim for physical fitness, as documented in Chapters Five and Six, the feminine ideal was very different from the idealised masculine physique. The feminine body was curvilinear, pliable, penetrable and therefore more suited to childbearing, nurture and the domestic sphere they still had to bear in mind and plan for domesticity and motherhood. In comparison, the male body was hard, muscular and more adapted to coping with the harsh realities of life in the open air. In his article on female tramps and hobos Cresswell discusses the ways in which a specific group of women transgress traditional gender boundaries in their mobility.[105] Their clothing in particular, is 'indicative' of mobility and this along with their presence outside the traditional female realm of domesticity produced a 'crisis of tension in anxious onlookers' as they tried to make sense of bodies which were 'out of place'.[106] The shorts and garish colours of the female hikers similarly marked them out as different not only in terms of dress, but also, signalled their mobility and movement within space generally viewed as masculine and threatened to destabilise traditional power relations. In his study of gender and rural childhood, Jones notes that 'when girls take up iconic outdoor childhood activities such as tree climbing, den building, scrambling through hedges, exploring and so on, they often become identified as quasi boys through the label tomboy'.[107] In order for girls to fully take part in the construction of the perfect country childhood they must *become*

[105] Cresswell, T. (1999) 'Embodiment, power and the politics of mobility: the case of female tramps and hobos', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 pp. 175 – 192.
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] Jones, O. (1999) 'Tomboy tales: the rural, nature and the gender of childhood', *Gender, Place and Culture* 6 (2) pp. 117 – 136 (p. 126).

nominal boys, yet even acquiring the status of tomboy is no guarantee of a girl acquiring all the freedom that boys 'naturally' possessed.[108]

Similar debates have emerged within the context of analyses of female travel writing during the nineteenth century. For some authors their mobility could be seen as a new, if ambivalent, freedom available to respectable middle-class women from imperial centres.[109] In travelling to colonial margins or national frontiers these women were able to avoid some of the constraints imposed upon them at home, however;

> [the] freedom that such mobility gave them was ambivalent, in so far as these women were usually from imperial centres and carried the privileges of home with them. In some senses, these privileges were experienced as constraints rather than freedoms, as women were forced to take "home" with them as they moved.[110]

One way in which these privileges were expressed was the general use of clothing typically worn in the restrictive environment of 'home', yet by dressing in Western feminine clothing the 'women typically retained a sense of propriety'.[111] In wearing shorts female campers did not retain the same links to the female domesticity of their everyday lives, they did not choose to evade the issue of their mobility. However, in a similar way to the female hobos discussed above, in appropriating masculine forms of dress and behaviour, female campers

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[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Cresswell, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 179.
[111] Blunt, A. and Rose, G. (1994) 'Introduction: women's colonial and postcolonial geographies', in Blunt, A. and Rose, G. (eds) *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies.* New York: Guilford Press pp. 1 - 25; Cresswell, *op. cit.*, p. 179. See also Blunt, A. (1994) *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa.* New York: Guilford Press.

were classified as outside the usual spaces and roles ascribed to women, but at the same time they did not fit into the masculinised world of the camper.[112]

Despite the focus of the camping literature on male experience and the inherently masculine characteristics embodied by the ideal camping body, in the majority of instances women only found an independent voice in one-off articles describing tours and short serials regarding clothes, how to pack without creasing and other 'female concerns'. In the text women appeared as wives, sisters and minority group participants whilst, adverts and illustrations such as Figure 8.4 which were used to supplement the text celebrated camping body in typically idealised masculine body. Yet, camping as a sport did enable women to challenge traditional gender roles and power relations. As demonstrated by Figure 8.6, camping was a pursuit with the potential to empower individual women and those who did camp gained an enormous sense of autonomy. Recent poststructuralist accounts of the gendered body have begun to stress the potential of bodies to transgress the categories that try to produce them.[113] Studies of women and their participation in sport have concluded that often, women do not realise their full potential and, by confining their actions, are subject to greater feelings of incapacity, frustration and self-consciousness than their male counterparts.[114] A woman's bodily movements are indicative of the 'feminine', not a natural condition but one that is socio-culturally constructed, a condition that delimits 'the typical situation of being a woman in a particular society - in the mobility of the body, the female is actually lived'.[115]

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[112] *Ibid.*, pp. 189 – 190.
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] Wearing, B. (1998) *Leisure and Feminist Theory*. London: Sage; Young, I. M. (1990) *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

In contemporary Western society the condition of being a woman includes the gradual development of an 'imaginary space' that 'surrounds the body and constructs the space of possible movement'.[116] However, Wearing states that, 'leisure is a site both for the construction of hegemonic masculinity and its reinforcement' but also 'a space where fissures in such hegemony occur, a place where traditional masculinity may be challenged and validity attributed to alternative forms of masculinities'.[117] She believes that sport is a leisure arena where women, by participating and seeking change, can both challenge and resist dominant male definitions and control of the female use of the body;

> feminist literature shows that going beyond previously defined boundaries for women's use of their bodies in leisure space, results in an increased sense of confidence and control, a femininity that is expansive rather than constrictive and an increase in personal power.[118]

One of my interviewees, Pat Constance, described early female campers thus;

> when the Club first started [...] the women who went camping were the sort of women who were well, like the sort you see riding bicycles in the old days. Unlike what some people seem to think ... they weren't people who couldn't afford to stay in hotels and the like, they were the sort of women who had had enough, shall we say. Strength of character or social position I suppose you would call it [..] to be able to say "oh I don't care what other people think", you know, "if they want to think that I'm unladylike, well that's their problem" [...] Because a lot of people did think this wasn't the done thing for well brought up

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[117] Wearing, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 112.

> ladies to do, to roll around on the ground in things like tents and all that, but these were pioneers. (26/07/00)[119]

Despite the fact that these (usually) upper class women had 'different expectations and constraints than those influencing middle [and working] class women, for whom the ideologies of domesticity and respectability were more prominent', camping enabled all women to leave the domestic sphere and enter a world that encouraged adventure, self-sufficiency, physical exertion, mental stimulation, freedom from convention, and innovation.[120] Women were certainly active within the Camping Club both as regular members and serving on various boards and committees. Following the comments of Pat Constance, early female campers such as Stephanie Hillhouse and her sisters were pioneers in the sense that they made it more acceptable for women (individually and in groups) to go camping without male company. Indeed, Stephanie Hillhouse was immensely proud of the fact that she had managed to camp with her sister into old age until knee trouble forced her to stop.[121]

Conclusion

British campers were renowned for their stoicism, a determination to have a good time no matter how wet, cold or demoralised they got.[122] However, to appreciate and love both the beauties *and* the harsh realities the natural environment had to offer one had to embody

[119] The idea of early female campers as 'pioneers' in a masculine sphere of activity bears a striking resemblance to debates about female travel writers in the nineteenth century.
[120] Guelke, J. K. and Morin, K. M. (2001) 'Gender, nature, empire: women naturalists in nineteenth century British travel literature', in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26 pp. 306 – 326 (p. 308). The Hillhouse family regularly took their maid camping.

certain characteristics. Unfortunately, the majority of the population were seen to be unwilling or incapable of realising such qualities within themselves. Ultimately such qualities were embodied by the 'moss-back', a status achieved only by a dedicated few (more often than not male). However, as the poems from this chapter demonstrate, it was human to make mistakes and it was recognised that many events and natural hazards were beyond the control of the camper, but with experience, knowledge and acquisition of the appropriate skills one could overcome any potential pitfalls or discomforts of camping. Once one had achieved this, then one could appreciate and enjoy the benefits of a life in the open-air in a morally responsible manner. It was therefore the campers' job to educate and provide guidance for the masses and to direct them away from what they believed to be unhealthy, immoral conditions in towns and cities. The need for this 'education' was great in order to counteract the 'dangers of civilisation'. Through individual endeavour the nation would be inhabited by citizens who were respectful to both the environment and fellow human beings. Despite the cross-fertilisation of ideas between movements by various individuals, the Club appears to have been very conscious of presentation with regards to its members, and representation in terms of distinguishing itself from 'undesirable groups' such as naturists.

This chapter has sought to understand inter-war camping through three key issues. First, I have argued that camping brought freedom from constraints such as the weather and the urban environment. Second, camping involved an intimacy with the environment, and third, one had to be a certain type to understand and value the experience. Much recent theorising of bodies and embodiment emphasises that bodies cannot be understood outside

[121] Interview with Stephanie Hillhouse, *op. cit.*
[122] Akhtar and Humphries, *op. cit.*

of their relationships to the spaces within which they are located. The camping narratives I have presented resonate with the notion of a reflexive or 'recursive' body-environment relationship as suggested by Butler and Parr, Crouch, Woodward and Longhurst.[123] For example, Crouch's analysis of modern day caravanning and allotment keeping notes that the subjects engaged in space in an embodied way - reading, knowing and making sense of their environment through sensual experience. The campers in this study gave very detailed multi-sensual descriptions of their environmental experience valuing the minutiae of nature as well as the huge vistas. Camping brought people into close contact with the natural environment and offered them a new perspective on the world. Through their detailed and articulate accounts of their experiences space becomes embodied and multi-dimensional, enveloping and surrounding them. Such an appreciation of the multi-sensual experience the natural environment had to offer was a common bond that united campers regardless of background or personal idiosyncrasies. It is such ideas of reflexive body-environment relations that characterised twentieth century campers, and an analysis of their narratives contributes to our understandings of embodied practice and identities in the modern world.

[123] Butler, R. and Parr, H. (1999) (eds) *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability.* London: Routledge; Crouch, *op. cit.*; Woodward, *op. cit.*; Longhurst, R. (1997) '(Dis)embodied geographies', *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (4) pp. 486 – 501.

Chapter Nine

Good camping: non-campers, legislation and attempts to police the anti-citizen

> Man's first knowledge of woodcraft was the fruit of hard necessity, for woodcraft is "the art of finding one's way in the wilderness, and getting along well by utilising Nature's storehouse". When we leave behind us the conventions of civilisation we are faced again with the same primitive necessities, and woodcraft, becomes, once more, the only key to living comfortably out of doors.[1]

Introduction

Historically, the creation of a more-or-less distinct rural space is perceived within British culture predominantly in terms of what is known as the 'rural idyll'.[2] The qualities of this idyll are well documented and are contextualised in terms of rural lushness, tranquillity and social stability. However, as a 'spatial code', the 'rural idyll is not solely an aid to perception but also serves to designate a way of understanding, operating within and producing that rural space'.[3] I have outlined previously the ways in which camping (and, later caravanning) was promoted within popular literature as a gateway to an idealised English countryside and an opportunity to sample a more sedate

[1] G.G.A. (1933) *Camp Craft For Girls*. London: The Girls Guides Association (p. 201).
[2] Halfacree, K. H. (1996) 'Out of place in the country: travellers and the "rural idyll"', *Antipode* 28 (1) pp. 42 – 72 (p. 51).

way of life away from the rigours of modern civilisation. Yet, the Camping Club did not simply encourage the British population to get more fresh air and exercise, it did so in order to develop health and strength of character and to direct the masses towards appropriate behaviour. In doing so, a particular *type* of person (and environment) was idealised. In March 1937 the Editor wrote,

> [w]e must be thankful that the Government has launched a national campaign for greater physical fitness. This in conjunction with the acquisition of playing fields for the nation's youth, should lead to an amelioration of conditions in the social life which all right thinking people deplore.[4]

In the same issue it was noted that the Club had approved the outlines of the Government scheme for improving national physique stating that persons of all ages should be given the opportunity to gain health whilst enjoying themselves.[5] In a move that can be assessed as an attempt to lobby the government in favour of camping as the ideal way of introducing the wider population to benefits of the open air, the Club sent several memos to the National Advisory Council for Physical Fitness and Recreation throughout the National Fitness Campaign in 1937. For example, in an article titled 'Physical Fitness' about the Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1937 one columnist wrote,

> [w]e campers know that camping as practised on club lines [...] produces a wonderful sense of physical fitness, and has an effect on the development of character as it has on the body [...] The full open-air life - a twenty four hour

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[3] Lefebvre cited in *ibid.*, p. 51.
[4] Papps, A. (March 1937) 'The psychology of camping', *Camping* XXXIII (3) p. 49.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

day in the open - which camping makes possible as no other sport does, gives health to people of all ages, and not only the young.[6]

In their imaginations, campers were not part of (or at least, were aware of the dangers of) degenerative urban life and as 'right thinking people' knew that the open-air and physical fitness were the only ways to improve and build the nation.

The campers were particularly concerned about those who did not share their outlook: those whose behaviour was widely considered to be 'polluting' or out of place in the country.[7] Whilst preservationists such as Joad and Cornish felt that litter in the countryside was symptomatic of the nation's 'behavioural problem', as we shall see in this chapter, campers busied themselves by distinguishing themselves from such a disgrace. This chapter looks at the attention campers, not unlike preservationists, gave to regulation and education regarding countryside leisure, to the establishment of rules of conduct and pleasure, and to the cultivation of a particular ethos of outdoor leisure.[8] In their opinion, the need for education was not necessarily restricted to urban youths, the ethos of camping and ideas surrounding 'best practice' deemed that rural youths also needed help to appreciate nature.[9] Following Joad, the campers really did attempt to 'train the citizens of the future in the art of right living'.[10] By instructing all people in the existing horrors and pointing them to the beauties of the past, it was hoped that a spiritual revival could be started.[11] Inevitably, this could only appear as the studied poses of an effete minority anxious to clamp down on hard-earned pleasures of ordinary

[6] Anon (May 1938) 'Physical Fitness', *Camping* XXXIV (5) p. 100. It could argued that, by living, eating and sleeping outdoors, campers were exposed to the benefits of nature round the clock.
[7] Matless, D. (1998) *Landscape and Englishness*. London: Reaktion.
[8] Matless, D. (1990a) 'The English outlook: A mapping of leisure, 1918 – 1939', in Alfrey, N. and Daniels, S. (eds) *Mapping the Landscape: Essays on Art and Cartography*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham, University Art Gallery and Castle Museum pp. 28 – 32.
[9] Warren-Wren, S. C. (1952) *Camping With a Purpose: A Concept of Canvas Camps for Young People*. (Foreword by Donald S. Langridge, Chairman, The Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland). Kingswood: Andrew George Elliot (Right Way Books).
[10] Joad cited in Matless, 'English outlook', *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[11] Lowerson, J. (1980) 'Battles for the countryside', Gloversmith, F. (ed) *Class, Culture and Social Change: A New*

people.[12] For example, it appeared to be general consensus amongst campers that girls and boys from the towns, when confronted with the freedom of camping, were apt to wild behaviour in the belief that the country was a place where one could romp and race to one's heart's content.[13] In considering the moral geographies of camping and outdoor leisure one must consider not only the cultures of the body and 'fitness' but also citizenship and the codes of conduct governing the right and wrong way of behaving in the countryside.[14]

This chapter begins by outlining the rise of so-called 'anti-camping' legislation within the inter-war period and the attempts to implement such strictures, particularly in the post-war period when fears of a mass exodus to the countryside once the pressures of war-time subsided were at their height. The Club fought strenuously against the essentialist nature of much legislation whereby Club campers were grouped alongside 'pleasure campers', 'day trippers' and the 'weekender' shacks which were thought to blight the countryside at popular destinations. In order to gain credence and establish a degree of political sway the Club established itself as a repository of knowledge, experience and expertise. The second half of this chapter looks at the ways in which this knowledge was disseminated through the camping literature and at the ways in which a proficiency in certain key skills and an understanding of 'best practice' became associated with Club camping. In positioning itself to represent and embody the epitome of camping practice the club not only sought to exclude other campers from this positive association, but also to defend its honour against damaging legislative restrictions. Towards the end of the chapter I look at the ways in which 'good camping'

View of the 1930s. Sussex: The Harvester Press pp. 258 – 280.

[12] Matless, *Landscape*, *op. cit.*; Lowerson, *op. cit.*

[13] Walker, S. H. (1949) *The Way to Camp*. London: Methuen.

[14] For an insight into wider debates on citizenship and geography see Matless, *op. cit.* and the special editions of *Political Geography* (1995) 14 (2) and the *Journal of Historical Geography* (1996) 22 (4).

was mobilised as a political strategy and used to lobby the Government on countryside access.

Anti-camping legislation

In 1952, Warren-Wren stated that the more civilised the world became, the more its inhabitants needed to concern themselves with regulations, controls and restrictions and with laws, bylaws and licences.[15] Yet the countryside — particularly in the campers' imagination — was often seen as a place to escape to, a separate place free from the constraints placed on human action in urban areas. In his study of contemporary caravanners, Crouch notes that participants frequently 'remarked on the attraction of being able to go "where you like, when you like".[16] However, he also remarks that such feelings were 'over-imaginative and informed by tradition, an ideal of camping and caravanning sustained in contemporary club magazines, of reaching the "outback" of countryside as escape'.[17] This can also be said of inter-war camping literature yet, the 'practical limitations' on movement and 'landowners restrictions' on pitching 'anywhere' became more and more significant from the 1930s onwards with the introduction of legislation designed to curtail such freedom.[18] As I demonstrate in this section, despite the countryside being imagined as a place of freedom and escape, it can also be a place where there is considerable conflict regarding its use.[19]

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[15] Warren-Wren, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[16] Crouch, D. (1999) 'The intimacy and expansion of space', in Crouch, D. (ed) *Leisure / Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge*. London: Routledge pp. 257 – 276 (p. 266).

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

[18] *Ibid.* Crouch states that for contemporary caravanners the desire for freedom is restricted to such an extent that it now practised simply through choosing which sites to visit on different weekends and going with people one chooses.

[19] Bhatti, M. and Church, A. (2000) 'I never promised you a rose garden": gender, leisure and home-making', *Leisure Studies* 19 pp. 183 – 197.

The 1920s and early 1930s saw the development of many spontaneous and unplanned temporary and moveable communities on free land, especially around Britain's coasts. Inevitably though, in a period when society was subjected to the organising and regulating gaze of the planner ever more often, such constructions were deemed problematic. For example, the small, inexpensive shacks built for weekend use were thought to constitute an eyesore. This kind of development was popular around the coast between Liverpool and into the Welsh hills and along the Sussex and Yorkshire coasts.[20] This phenomenon represented more than cheap housing and an urge for healthy retirement. The desire for an 'uncluttered', basic and supposedly traditional country retreat showed a nostalgia for a resurrected past, the discovery of yeoman roots and the search for a half-remembered countryside. Shanty towns of bungalows, converted railway carriages, redundant trams and pink roofed asbestos shacks spread rapidly. For example, the population of Peacehaven on the Sussex Downs rose from 400 to over 3,000 during 1920 - 1924.[21] In 1946 seventy-two per cent of Eccles caravans were being used as residences, and by 1950 it was estimated that fifty per cent of all caravans were occupied as permanent homes.[22] Even more upsetting to some planners than the threats of ribbon development and the suburbs were the one-off ventures and ambitions of the retired; the 'weekender' heightened the clash between urban and rural, the planned and the spontaneous, and the usually ordered and the visually undisciplined.[23] This was 'problem' camping.

In addition, contemporary debate also surged over whether tents and caravans were 'visually polluting', with particular attention paid to the 'caravan towns' that had emerged in the inter-war period. As social commentator Ray Gosling remarked;

[20] Lowerson, *op. cit.*
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 260.
[22] Akhtar, M. and Humphries, S. (2000) *Some Liked it Hot: The British on Holiday at Home and Abroad.* London: Virgin (p. 72).
[23] Lowerson, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

'[where] once sheep and cows grazed, now farmers milk the caravans'.[24] Turner felt strongly against this scourge of the countryside;

> In your issues of July 18 you give us the welcome news that Birling Gap may yet be saved. As we all gratefully know, the National Trust has done wonders in preserving the precious beauty of our countryside. But why, oh why, after such good work that makes it impossible for a bungalow town further to defile this lovely part of the coast, is it still permissible for a new horror to spring to birth? - that is the caravan town [...] just by the haven, the gem of the Downlands, is utterly ruined by this new fungus.[25]

However, Eider disagreed and replied,

> the loveliness of [the] Haven remains unspoilt by the limited number of caravans and tents allowed [there is] a certain beauty in the white and green tents and varied caravans. So much are we part of the landscape, that the sheep, unheeding come rushing down the slopes each morning to drink at the trough in the centre of the camp. Herons fish in the river undisturbed [...] Campers on the whole are lovers of nature and do nothing to harm the countryside.[26]

Yet, both sides agreed that some sort of distinction between the appropriate use and inconsiderate abuse of the countryside had to be established because, although 'picnicking in fine weather and on a pretty spot makes a delightful change for the town

[24] Anon (10/10/1936) 'To save the seaside', *The Times* p. 13; Gosling cited in Akhtar and Humpries, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[25] Turner, A. (25/07/1939) 'Caravan towns', *The Times* p. 13.
[26] Eider, D. G. (27/07/1939) 'Caravan towns', *The Times* p. 10.

dweller [...] it can become easily a public nuisance. Too often are campers classed with these *al fresco* parties'.[27]

In 1938 Roland Shepard stated that 'thoughtless camping' had caused so much prejudice against camping in general that contemporary legislation threatened to seriously to curtail the freedom campers enjoyed.[28] He implored all campers to remember, 'the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland is making constant efforts to prevent further restrictions of our freedom, and you can help the Club by practising good camping yourself and by urging others to do the same'.[29] Pat Constance agreed with this;

> since the very early days you get the people who want to go out into the country and camp and so on and you've got the other people who are against it, particularly the local authorities and landowners and people like that, so I think all the way through the club's view of it has been that if the people are seen to be behaving reasonably and not damaging the countryside and not upsetting all the cattle, they're camping sensibly and in a sort of respectable sort of way then it, er, sort of shoots down a lot of opposition. (26/07/00)

In general then, the self-styled guardians of 'correct' camping believed some form of legislation to be necessary and the Club urged farmers and other landowners not to allow unchecked development at the expense of 'true camping'. However, the rising popularity of outdoor cultures had prompted some national and local authorities to attempt to regulate and control these activities themselves.

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[27] Editorial (April - May 1945) 'Editorial', *Camping* XLI (3) p. 37.
[28] Cited in L N E R (1938) *Camping Holidays*. London: London and North Eastern Railway.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

The 'Moveable Dwellings Bill' was first introduced to the House of Commons by Lord Clifford of Chudleigh in 1908. Reappearing in 1909 and 1910, a White Paper was finally published in August of that year.[30] The camping lobby placed the blame for the rise of such 'anti-camping legislation' at the feet of non-Club campers who were thought to cause problems through bad conduct although, attention was also specifically focused on the 'caravan towns' which, as noted above, were prevalent during this period. However, contesting the bill on legislative grounds, the Camping Club's main criticism lay in the wording of the Bill. With no apparent consideration given to 'pleasure campers', virtually every clause within the Bill posed a potential threat to the sport. Though allowances were made for travelling showmen, Local Authorities were given the power to close campsites or introduce restrictions which could seriously interfere with the freedom of the camper.[31] Unless land used for camping was licensed by the Local Authority, owners who encouraged camping were guilty of a serious offence. In an attempt to thwart this ruling the Club urged all members to write to their local members of parliament asking them to support a motion of rejection by Lt. Commander Kenworthy M.P. who was acting in Club interests. The Club was also supported by the press and eventually the Bill was withdrawn.[32]

Another piece of national legislation which affected camping in this period was the 'Law of Property Act' (1925) which made camping on common ground more complicated. Although previously camping on common ground was prohibited it had been tolerated in certain areas. This new Act gave the public certain rights on Commons of the following classes: Metropolitan Commons, Commons in Boroughs or Urban Districts and Commons in Rural Districts.[33] However, this new law also restricted some

[30] Hazel Constance, per. com.
[31] Walker, *op. cit.*
[32] Hazel Constance, per. com.
[33] Walker, *op. cit.*

practices on rural Commons. For example, the public still had right of access for exercise and fresh air, but did not have the right to draw or drive carriages, carts, caravans, trucks or other vehicles on the land, or to camp or light fires.[34] Moreover, if the owners had applied to the Ministry of Agriculture for a Deed of Dedication, camping could be forbidden. The main problem that arose from this was that there was no clear way of knowing which commons were dedicated without lengthy research, however.[35]

Simultaneously, by the late 1920s and early 1930s, local authorities were beginning to express still more concerns about unregulated 'temporary' settlements and outdoor cultures. Again, the spectre of unregulated, permanent camps seems to have been driving the flurry of legislative initiatives that emerged in this period. By 1929, eleven private bills which contained clauses that could affect the interests of campers were up before Parliament, by 1930 the use of restrictive local bylaws had escalated and in 1932 there were a total of twenty-four Parliamentary Bills with clauses that could affect camping waiting to be considered. In the late 1920s Medical Health Officers levied pressure to make camp sites subject to license which would enable them to gain control over matters such as the water supply, sanitary arrangements, the removal of rubbish and the number of persons camping over a set period. The idea was to prevent camp site 'slums' developing as the number of campers and camp sites grew. In the same period, and informed by similar sentiments, many Local Authorities took advantage of 'Housing Bylaws' to prevent the erection of any moveable dwelling including tents and caravans. But inevitably, many campers saw their interests threatened by these moves. In response the Central Committee for Camping Legislation (hereafter CCCL) was established in June 1928 with representatives from the Club, the Scouts Association, the

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 176.
[35] Hazel Constance, per. comm.

Girl Guides and the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry along with the Club's Parliamentary Agent, Hugh Shayler.[36] The Committee maintained a careful watch to safeguard the interests of both the independent camper and the careful site owner.[37] It was a body designed to enable campers to form a united voice when communicating with local authorities and the Government whilst trying to maintain and extend existing facilities. However, a number of the Town Planning schemes with potential to affect camping activity were only advertised locally and the Club was always keen to recruit local representatives to watch for legislation in their areas.

As a result of these debates, and as a relative compromise between both sides, the first national measures for the control of camping came in the form of the 'Public Health Act' (1936). The Act empowered Local Authorities to license camp sites used for more than forty-two consecutive days, or sixty days in twelve consecutive months and to impose conditions on owners and users.[38] Campers had to use a licensed site or apply to the Local Authority themselves for a license to camp. The aims and objectives of this legislation were not clear to many at the time. In a review of the Club's Annual General Meeting in 1939, *The Times* documented that 'some local authorities felt too inexperienced to cope with the new duties thrust upon them, and others had shown that they scarcely appreciated the intention of the Act'.[39] But although long-term, unregulated camping was clearly targeted by these laws, the more transient, 'proper' campers of the Camping Club were nevertheless caught within its constraints too. Restrictions in certain areas were extremely rigorous including such rules as 'no tents within twenty feet of a hedge', 'no bread, milk or butter to be sold on site', 'only one moveable dwelling per acre' and 'two rubbish bins to be placed outside each tent'.

[36] *Ibid.*
[37] Anon (28/01/1935) 'The right to camp: Local Authorities and control', *The Times* p. 9.
[38] Walker, *op. cit.*
[39] Anon (16/01/1939) 'The camping year', *The Times* p. 15.

After a great deal of negotiation the Club managed to acquire a highly prized exemption certificate enabling it to run its own sites without a license from the Local Authority and members of the Club were allowed to camp on any site where camping was a 'sideline' rather than a business. The Act stated that,

> The Secretary of State may grant a certificate of exemption from the licensing requirements to any organisation if he is satisfied that camping sites which it owns or provides, or which are used by its members, are properly managed and kept in good sanitary condition and the moveable dwellings are not used by its members in a way which gives rise to any nuisance.[40]

Evidently, the Camping Club's conditional exemptions from the 1936 Act pivoted around notions of 'proper' management, sanitation and behaviour, and questions, and assurances, of good citizenship were doubtless the currency invoked here. However, it is also clear that, although under constant pressure from outside bodies, the club did manage to wield a certain amount of lobbying power in this period. I suggest this is probably because the club managed to maintain an image as a responsible, upright and wholesome organisation - despite its critics. Although under constant pressure from outside bodies it appears that the Club did wield a certain amount of lobbying power in this era. For example, the 'Water Undertakings Bill' (1939) included clauses which gave powers to companies to introduce bylaws which would control the use of land within their catchment areas. Companies could forbid activities such as camping and rambling and other clauses gave them the right to refuse to supply water to tents and

[40] Hazel Constance, per. comm.

caravans. However, opposition from the Club instigated amendments to the Bill in order to make it more acceptable to the camping fraternity.[41]

The only other organisations to be granted exemptions from the camping provisions in the 1936 Act were the Caravan Club, the Scouts Association and the Girl Guides. No further exemptions have been granted since. Holland had a similar system, whereby campers had to buy a 'camping passport' from the authorities though *NTKC* members were not exempt from this rule. The Camping Club's exemption is still in force today and could be taken away at any point. Pat Constance emphasised this:

> we've just got to all comply with the letter of the law and, you know, if anybody steps out of line they're not the ones who get the blame. They don't hold the exemption certificate, the Club does. It only needs somebody with a bit of influence over the right or the wrong place who wants to be awkward and we could all be in trouble. So just quieten down and carry on, and make sure you don't step out of line you see {laughs} but it's very difficult with the [Club] now being so big. It's very difficult to make everybody see this. Anyone who steps out of line can cause trouble for everybody. (26/07/00)

The measures taken under this Act were later used to inform other Acts of Parliament. For example, the 'Town and Country Planning Act' (1947) restricted the use of land for any purpose, except as a camp site, to not more than twenty-eight days in any calendar year. This Act and the 'Town and Country Planning Act' (1962) also permitted the use of land for the purpose of recreation or instruction by members of an organisation which possessed a certificate of exemption granted by the Secretary of State under Section 269

[41] *Ibid.*

of the Public Health Act. Thus, the spaces and sites where camping occurred were gradually incorporated into the regulatory structures of the modern state and, in theory at least, were policed by government ministries and planning authorities to ensure 'appropriate' use and behaviour.

Therefore, whilst the countryside was represented in camping literature as a place in which one could 'escape', free from the trials, tribulations and unhealthy atmosphere of everyday urban life, it appears that this was an idealisation based upon tradition and myth. The increase in 'anti-camping' legislation from the 1930s onwards highlights not only the conflict over land use prevalent during this period, but also the moral geographies that informed the concepts of good and bad camping. Although the Club worked to free campers from severe, and often inconsistent, regulation such as that outlined above, members agreed that some form of legislation was necessary in order to distinguish between the high standards of Club camping and the un-disciplined, anti-social land use of other or so-called 'non-campers'. World War Two provided a cultural catalyst and a political opportunity for the reforming-plans for reform nurtured in the 1920s and 1930s. The immediate post-war period was a time in which much legislation was undertaken to control behaviour within, and use of, the countryside. These included, amongst others, the New Towns Act (1946), the Agriculture Act (1947), the Town and Country Planning Act (1947), and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949) and the establishment of government bodies such as the Nature Conservancy, the National Health Service and the Welfare State.[42] Indeed, 'coastlines, villages, holiday camping, the birds of England, tube stations, national parks, rugs, rocks [were] embraced by an extended visual culture of geographical

[42] Matless, D. (1996) 'Visual culture and geographical citizenship: England in the 1940s', *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (4) pp. 424 – 439.

citizenship'.[43] However, this legislation addressed not only access to the countryside but also the 'suitability' of certain pursuits in relation to the conservation and preservation of the countryside environment and, in part, were deliberate attempts to police the 'anti-citizen' and the unregulated growth of campsites and temporary dwellings throughout Britain.[44] Amidst this wider context, the club struggled relatively successfully to preserve the conditions of its members in part, I argue, through its image as a moral, robust and disciplined organisation. Certainly, it managed to fend off the most serious threats of legislative hindrance to the pastime while sustaining camping as a sport with growing popularity throughout the inter-war period. However, one price for this relative health was continuing vigilance over the sport's standards, practices and moralities, and as a consequence, there was a clear sense that 'good camping' had to be reinforced incessantly in each new generation.

Good camping

To Joad and his contemporaries the urban dweller's bad behaviour and ungainly appearance could be explained by the adverse influences on the individual of the brutality, ugliness, and squalor that prevailed in the urban environment. However, the 'paternalistic' and 'condescending' social development intrinsic to Joad's philosophy, and indeed that of other preservationists, was concerned not simply with the cultivation of both the body and the mind but also an attempt to re-instil an appreciation of the beauty and value of natural environments. These social commentators worked with the assumption that 'citizenship' was latent and only needed awakening through adequate

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 436.
[44] *Ibid.*

and effective education.[45] In this section, I examine the way in which the camping literature aimed to educate non-campers and beginners, offering tips, advice, and specific guidelines on how to conduct oneself in the countryside and 'do-it-yourself' guides to making equipment. On a basic level, the lack of available commercialised equipment in the early days meant that individuals often had to develop particular skills such as tent-making and equipment repair. On another level, in order for less-experienced campers to stay safe and, in the light of anti-camping legislation, to prevent them from becoming a 'nuisance' to others, it was deemed necessary to construct a specific standard of camping to which all other forms could be compared. The development of personal skills and an understanding of camping logistics such as where, and how, to camp were considered to be key elements of 'good camping' practice. As rambling campaigner Tom Stephenson remarked; '[a] bulging rucksack [spoke] of inexperience rather than of a stout heart'.[46] As developing camping lore told it, as a person gained more and more experience of the outdoor life, the more straight forward aspects of camping such as planning eventually became habitual and any initial discomforts disappeared. Only then, for the first time, did one have a chance of feeling the joy of 'complete freedom' unrestricted by road, weather, time or place.[47] It is here that we start to find the sense of 'good camping'.

Camp life

In *Always a Little Further*, Alexander Borthwick stated that open-air pursuits such as camping, hiking and climbing often 'had a caste system which was based, not upon

[45] Matless, D. (1992b) 'Regional surveys and local knowledges: the geographical imagination in Britain, 1918 - 1939', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17 (4) pp. 464 – 480.
[46] Cited in Matless, 'The English outlook', *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[47] Gordon, H. (1937) 'Camping', *The Rambler's Companion to the Countryside for Ramblers, Cyclists and Motorists.* London: Chatto and Windus pp. 21 – 25.

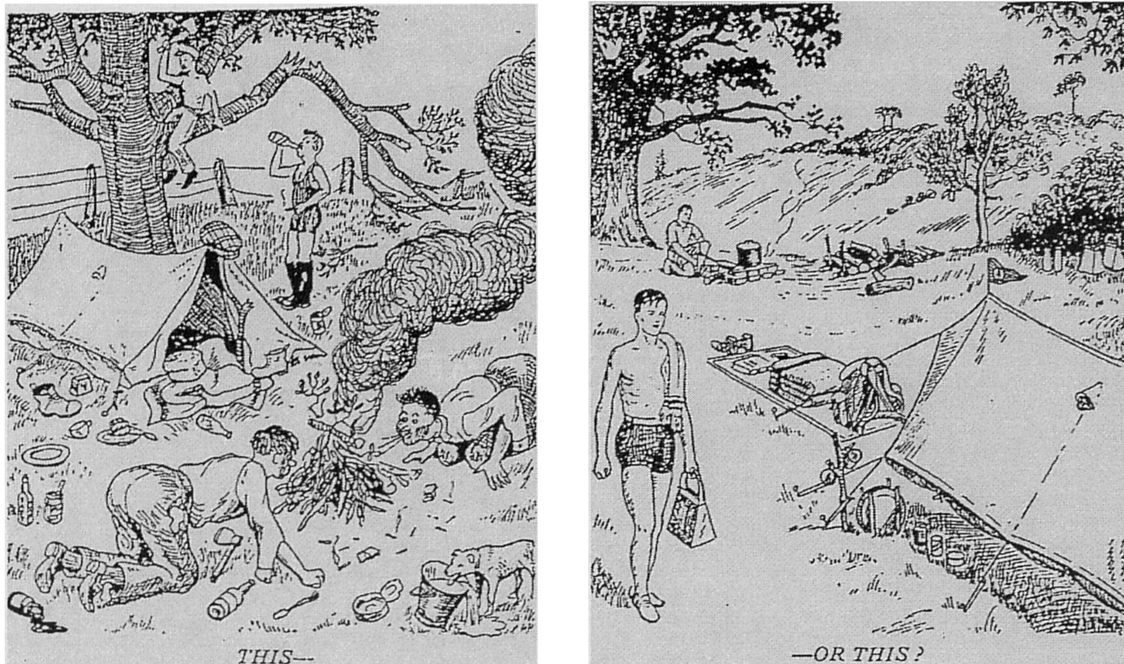

Figure 9.1 Illustration depicting the differences between a 'bad' campsite and a 'good' one. From Walker (1949) pp. 16 and 17.

rank, but on performance'.[48] Figure 9.1 is also from Walker's (1949) *The Way to Camp*, and is an excellent demonstration of inappropriate and appropriate behaviour within the countryside environment. There are many points to note. In the 'disorganised' campsite in the illustration on the left, the young men are guilty of 'bad axemanship' and not collecting dead wood; of camping under a dangerous tree and not using proper equipment; their tent is not erected properly; they've left food and drinking water unprotected while one appears to be drinking alcohol and smoking; their general appearance is dishevelled and dirty; they are using damp, green wood which smokes and is difficult to burn; they are allowing animals to run free around their campsite, and they have left discarded litter laying around the site. In the camping literature, litter was a common signifier of bad behaviour and attitude in camping cultures. This was also a major source of complaint for Joyce and Don Chapple. Talking about their first visit to a commercial site (i.e. non-Club) after joining the Club, the couple stated;

[48] Borthwick, A. (1983) *Always a Little Further: A Classic Tale of Camping, Hiking and Climbing in Scotland in the Thirties*. London: Diadem.

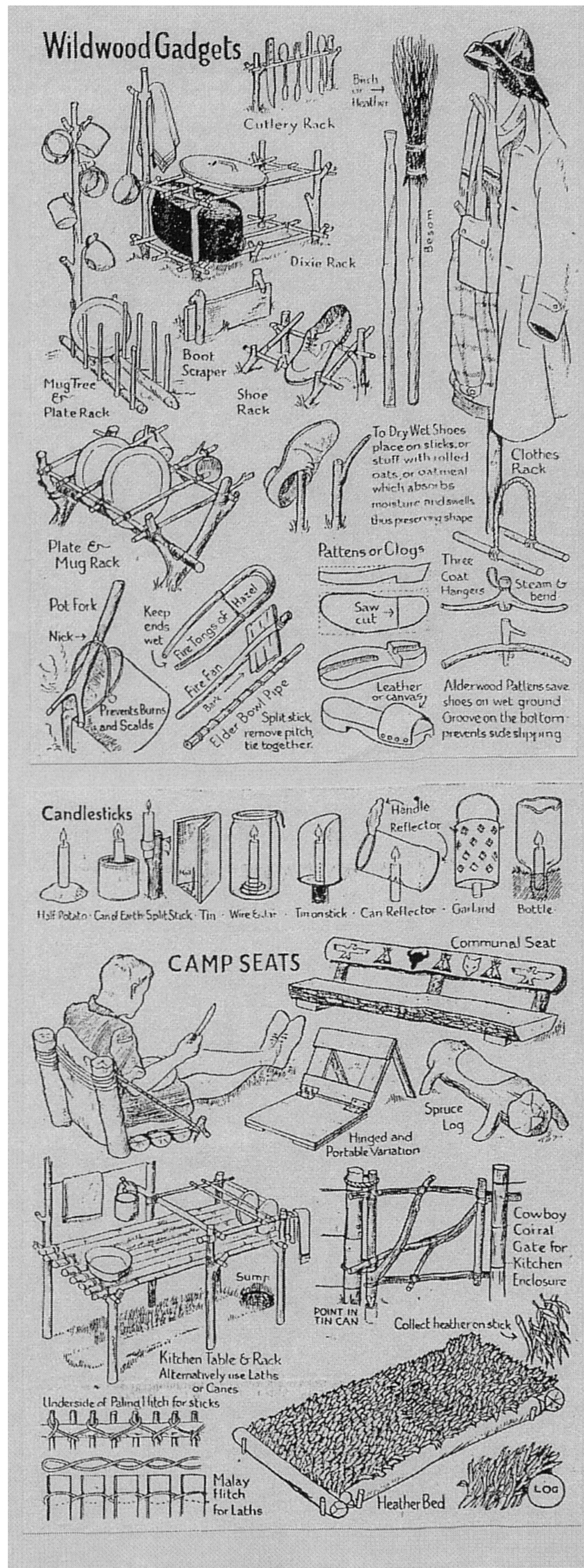

Figure 9.2 'Wildwood gadgets'. From Walker (1949) pp. 120 and 121.

JC: The people we spoke to [were very snooty], but you see they weren't campers. They were holiday campers, it's the same as the people who go to the big meets, the [National] Feast of Lanterns, the Goose Fair, *they're not campers*, they're entertainment campers, holiday campers, er you find

DC: You find there's always more rubbish when *people like that* leave

JC: The amount of rubbish on the field after a big meet

DC: You wonder why it is, you know, that at the weekend or a holiday site ... that you don't have any litter about and yet, you get one of these big meets, and it's, I get, it's people who don't camp regularly and they just

JC: The people who come to be entertained ... there's *two classes*

DC: It's always a problem, you don't get any litter with the Club at all, not on the weekend meets anyhow, or the holiday meets they run.[49]

In his introduction to LNER's *Camping Coaches* Cutcliffe Hyne took a firm stance against 'roughing it': one must '[l]ive neatly and decently [decline] to pig it; only bad campers do that'.[50] And a little more forcefully, he argued that to be untidy was to be

[49] Interview with Joyce and Don (22/09/00) (my emphasis).

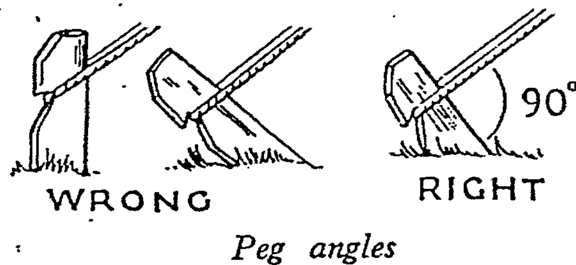

Figure 9.3 'Peg angles'. From Walker (1949) p. 50.

uncomfortable, and continued, one must sweep floors and burn rubbish for the 'litter lout' was a person who also 'ought to be cremated'.[51] One should always leave the campsite in the same condition as it was when one arrived and, in stark contrast to contemporary environmental policy, it was recommended that one should burn everything combustible, and that which was not should be buried. One should always ensure that all fires were extinguished before leaving.[52]

The 'disorganised' site stands in stark contrast to the orderly site on the right in Figure 9.1. Here everything has its place: the young men are robust, fit and healthy looking; they have the proper equipment and have used their 'woodcraft' skills to fashion handy implements like the ones displayed in Figure 9.2; their campfire is a safe distance from the tent, their provisions are stored safely in shady areas, and, as every good camper should know, their tent pegs are in the ground at a forty-five degree angle as demonstrated by Figure 9.3.

In a sense the camp-site could be seen as 'nature-under-control', an ordered space where everything was neatly in its place, a display of what the human-nature interaction should be and what it should look like. The illustration encourages the camper to take

[50] Cutcliffe Hyne in 'Introduction' to LNER, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Gordon, *op. cit.*

pride in his or her campsite, to respect their environment and to behave accordingly.[53] Such a commitment to order and conduct could sometimes be intimidating to new members and act as a barrier to their inclusion. One of my interviewees commented; 'when we were looking for a site it was funny because we kept seeing these lovely sites and we daren't go in, not with our little sort of white ridge tent, they all looked so posh and we daren't go in there'.[54] Matless states that a 'popular' geography reaches out to the citizen yet also excludes, promoting landscape as a public cultural space through rules of conduct which exclude certain members of the public; thus creating a moral geography.[55] The camping literature sustained the belief that with experience, a willingness to learn from others and a healthy respect for the countryside and its inhabitants, the benefits and wonders of camping were available to everyone who cared to share them. However, the moral geography of camping was reified through the creation of a code for campers which celebrated moral fortitude whilst excluding all those bodies and modes of behaviour deemed inappropriate. The Camping Club viewed itself as an all encompassing organisation with a diverse membership, camping was relatively inexpensive and therefore potentially open to all who wished to partake. However, within *Camping* there appears to be a deliberate attempt to cultivate a certain type of person, idealising particular characteristics above others - fitness, health, strength of character, appreciation of the environment.

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[53] Bhatti, M. and Church, A. (2001) 'Cultivating natures: homes and gardens in late modernity', *Sociology* 35 (2) pp. 365 – 383.
[54] Interview with Joyce and Don (22/09/00).
[55] Matless, *op. cit.*

Experience and knowledge: the Camping Club as a repository of information and expertise

There were many places to find advice and information on camping along the right lines, from packing rucksacks with adequate provisions as shown in Figure 9.4, to pitching a tent. This was one of the most important aspects of camping, and as noted in Chapter Eight the one that tended to deter non-campers, was the suitability of the campsite itself. Campers were advised to select a suitable site that was protected from adverse weather by a wall, a patch of trees or a hedge and, if possible, near the top of an incline.[56] One should not, however, pitch under trees; a few meters away was preferable to avoid falling branches during bad weather. The ground must be fairly level, dry and not boggy and, before setting to work, one should always obtain permission to camp from the landowner.[57] A small tent was the most satisfactory form of shelter for the experienced camper and beginner alike and could be carried on one's back or fitted to one's bicycle. The increase in motor-camping allowed for larger, heavier tents and associated paraphernalia, but ideally tents were light, waterproof and

[56] Gordon, *op. cit.*
[57] Walker, *op. cit.*

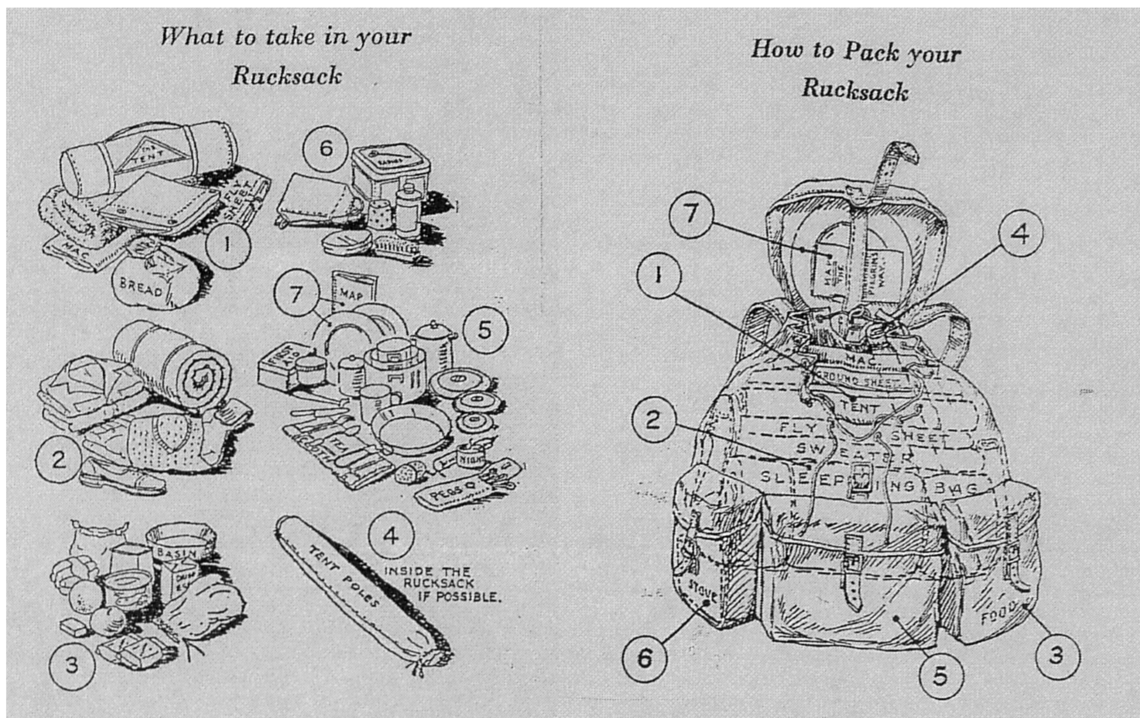

Figure 9.4 'What to take in your rucksack' and 'How to pack your rucksack'. From the Handbook of the Camping and Caravanning Club (1965) pp. 89 and 90.

capable of easy erection.[58] On questions of detail, the literature was sometimes contradictory. The 'bell tent' was highly recommended by Gordon as it was easy to pitch and provided a roomy shelter for three to six people depending on the room required. However, Walker disagreed stating that they were heavy and difficult to erect, never fitted rough ground, were badly ventilated and constantly needed the guy lines slackening and loosening.[59] Unusually, Gordon also did not advise that anyone made their own tent on the grounds that there was 'only a very remote possibility of it being satisfactory, and there [would] be little saving in cost'.[60] However, despite this complaint, one constant was an enduring faith in home-made equipment: held as a marker of 'correct' camping practice. For example, pre-made light-weight tents were very expensive and the camping literature was packed with all manner of kit descriptions and self-assembly diagrams for people to make their own equipment from

[58] Gordon, *op. cit.*
[59] *Ibid.* One of the research participants remembered holidaying in 1936 in a bell tent which could accommodate

clothes to sleeping bags, rucksacks and tents.[61] For example, as shown in Figure 9.5, Walker gave detailed step by step instructions on how to construct one's own rucksack and frame, and the Camping Club Handbook gave comprehensive instructions on tent making, providing intricately detailed patterns for small and large tents. Some people, such as Mr Lowe's father, took this a step further and, following a popular trend, made their own caravan.[62]

Figure 9.6 shows the most economical way to cut material for a single-pole light-weight tent which could be adapted according to individual preference.[63] The most popular material was Egyptian cotton (Sea-island cotton or balloon cloth) which was closely woven and weighed in at about three and a half ounces per square yard.[64] The more expensive silk tents, as used on Arctic expeditions, weighed about twelve ounces (complete) for a structure which measured 6' by 5' by 4' 6" (in comparison a cotton tent the same size would weigh around two and a half pounds). Weight - after price - was the most important consideration for lightweight campers and a full rucksack could weigh anything up to eight pounds.[65] Light-weight campers were notorious for 'cutting down' implements such as knives, forks, spoons and toothbrushes, and for drilling holes in virtually everything else in order to reduce weight and enable still more the mobility central to their ethos.

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twelve sleeping feet to pole! Interview with John Hayes.

[60] Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[61] Interview with Pat and Hazel (26/07/00).

[62] The safety of these 'vans was often disputed as they had a tendency to sway and sometimes turn over when travelling at speed.

[63] This was supplemented by a plan indicating where to join the pieces together and a scale drawing of the finished product.

[64] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Rot-proof canvas such as Willesden was introduced later.

[65] Interview with Pat and Hazel, *op. cit.*

Figure 9.5 'Making a frame ruc-sac' and 'Making the rucksack frame'. From Walker (1949) pp. 35 and 38.

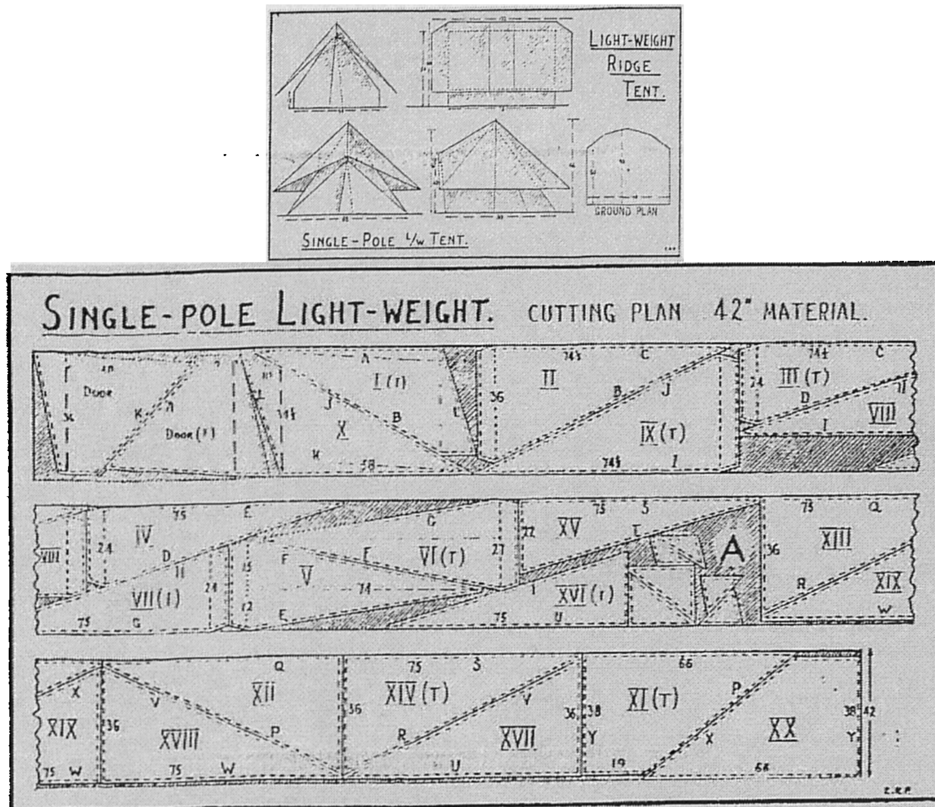

Figure 9.6 Tent pattern. From the Handbook of Camping and Caravanning p. 67.

The recommended colours for tents were generally green and brown as darker coloured tents were thought to be cooler than white tents and not as prone to dirt, glaring to the eyes or as attractive to insects. Though, as mentioned above, in the 1930s and up until the 1950s the materials needed to make a tent and other items of equipment were relatively hard to obtain and were often distributed in specialist outlets across the country. Mr Hillhouse remembered that his material came from Carlisle, his poles from Cheltenham, and his stove and copper cooking pots were from York, but despite the effort involved, acquiring the right equipment was a key element of practising camping 'properly'.[66] Furthermore, the care and treatment of equipment was also highly codified.

[66] Interview with Stephen Hillhouse (27/10/1953).

Protection from the cold and damp was essential and tents should be thoroughly aired on a daily basis and, depending on the weather, all contents should be turned out into the sun.[67] The camp should always be clean and tidy and, when not in use, all bedding should be rolled or neatly folded and personal possessions stored away. Guy ropes should be kept slack in wet weather to prevent snapping and straining of the material when drying out and tightened when windy. Novices Joyce and Don Chapple learnt this at their cost when their tent pole suddenly snapped;

> JC: I grabbed it quick [..] I was holding the top half of the pole to keep the tent off the bed and ...I {laughs} I was in hysterics
>
> DC: You see in modern times they're nylon guylines and it doesn't matter but in our days they were string or rope ... well rope, when it gets wet it just starts tightening [...] normally in the old days you used to have to go outside when it started raining and slacken them off [...] we'd dived in because it was pouring with rain and never thought about it
>
> JC: We were still new to camping then though ... I don't think we'd make that mistake now. (22/09/00)

Although a degree of trial and error always characterised some aspects of camping. In the early days, specialised light-weight sleeping bags were unknown and, to sleep in, a large pair of warm lightweight, blankets were recommended, folded thus;

> Lay your ground sheet out in the tent and spread the first blanket with one edge resting on the left-hand edge of the ground sheet - being double the size of the ground sheet, the width will, of course, lie right across the tent. Next

[67] Walker, *op. cit.*; Gordon, *op. cit.*

> lay some newspaper on the blanket above the ground sheet and spread your second blanket with its edge lying over the right-hand side of the ground sheet. Pull this blanket over double, lay a few sheets of newspaper on top, and double your first blanket in the same manner. Tuck the end in underneath, fasten with a large safety pin, and you have a comfortable draughtproof bed.[68]

Alternatively, one blanket could be sown into a rudimentary sleeping bag.[69] Again this was a process scattered with pitfalls for the inexperienced;

> I made a sleeping bag [...] and to find out how big a sleeping bag was, because I'd no idea, I'd never camped before {laughs} I laid on the floor at the side of the mat and I rolled and thought "well that's enough room for me to move" and so then I thought "well, I want double of that because Don'll want to move as well" {laughs}. So I made this sleeping bag and it must have been about {laughs} seven foot wide by the time I'd finished {laughs} ... it hung miles over the side {laughs}. (Joyce Chapple, 22/09/00)

Learning from the experience of camping veteran Holding, however, Stephen Hillhouse was able to make a 'bag to his own design 'with a hood like a monks and with legs with holes at the bottom so I could put my feet through so I could walk around in the grass with the legs tucked up round the knees away from the wet grass'.[70] He also noted that Mrs Horsefield had the ingenious idea of attaching strings to the corners of a down quilt which could then be tied to the pegs and prevented one's sleeping companion from stealing the bed clothes.

[68] Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[69] *Ibid.*

It must be noted, however, that one's sleeping companion could only be one's wife, husband or member of one's immediate family. In the very early days unmarried men and women were required to camp in exclusive areas of the site, usually with the 'married quarters' in-between.[71] This prevented any accusations of salacious behaviour, particularly, amongst young campers, and maintained the club's reputation for 'correct' and 'moral' behaviour. Similar concerns regarding the behaviour of un-married youth whilst out camping were also aired in Sweden where the introduction of statutory two-week holidays in 1938 had led to increasing numbers of working class tourists intoxicated with a new sense of freedom. Along the West coast, in particular, the inter-war period saw many people exchange their bicycles for motors.[72] Then, in the post war period, camp sites began to spring up everywhere and, according to the local authorities and residents, in far too 'uncontrolled forms'.[73] They warned that 'nomadized car families' made "holiday slums" when they flocked to popular areas'.[74] In Sweden the concept of 'wild camping' took on a whole new meaning, implying not just improvised sites but also 'uncontrollable' life on the margins of the tourist landscape where youths really were thought to be 'getting back to nature' in more ways than one. Whilst the British camping authorities were busy trying to incorporate the outdoor movement into wider discourses of citizenship and healthy living, this is an example of the way in which outdoor pursuits could create an alternative arena for youth outside and beyond the control of adult or mainstream society.[75] By contrast, a mark of the camping club's success in its drive to maintain a rather prim and proper reputation was its series of relatively 'wholesome' social initiatives.

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[70] Interview with Stephen Hillhouse, *op. cit.*
[71] Interview with Pat and Hazel, *op. cit.*
[72] Löfgren, O. (2001) *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing.* London: University of California Press.
[73] *Ibid.*
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 129.
[75] *Ibid.*

Figure 9.7 'Dancing campers' at Runnymede Camp (April 1933). From the Hulton Getty Picture Archive.

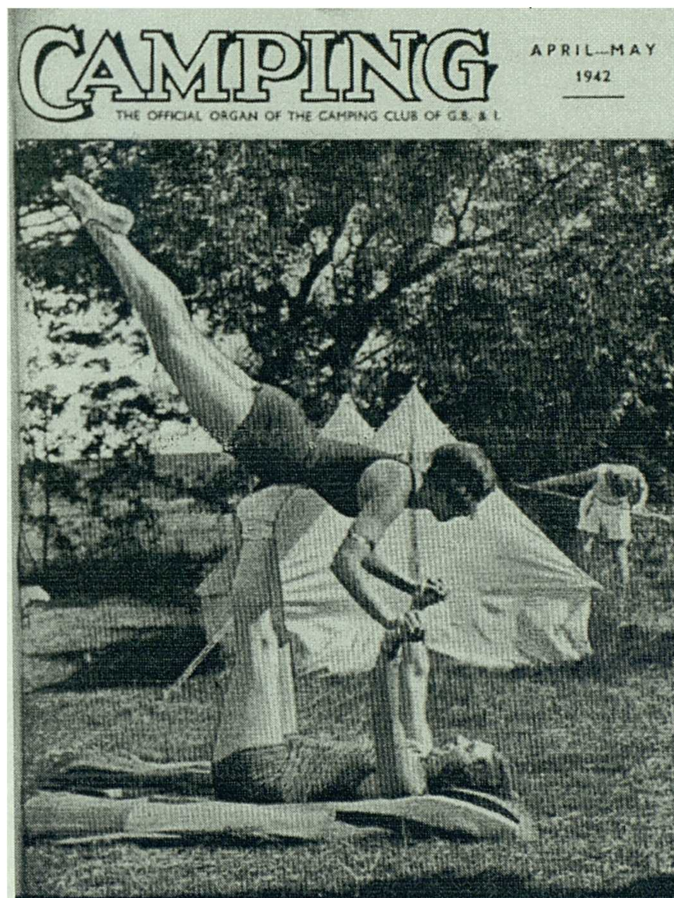

Figure 9.8 'Physical Fitness Exercises in Camp' by M. P. Lindsey. From *Camping* (April – May 1942), front cover.

In Britain, members of the Camping Club were encouraged to use their leisure time usefully whilst at camp. For example, activities such as dancing to loud music on the portable wireless as shown on the left in Figure 9.7 were discouraged, and physical exercises such as that in Figure 9.8 were introduced into many of the camps' programmes of activities. In this sense, the Camping Club saw itself as part of the much wider drive towards physical fitness and the members appear to be well informed and knowledgeable about other forms of open-air recreation.[76] Other wholesome activities included coffee making competitions, athletics, pancake races, stove lighting competitions, tug-of-war competitions, swimming, boating, fancy dress competitions, photography, singing and the annual celebration of events such as the Feast of Lanterns.[77] For example, reporting on a North Lancashire DA meet a correspondent in *Camping* documented that 'on the following morning we all went visiting until a few went for a walk of about five miles; [the] rest did gymnastic stunts, read, took photographs or went out on short excursions'.[78] Many of these traditions continue at weekend DA meets today, where they help to create an inclusive sense of community atmosphere, and at larger regional and national meets where DAs compete against each other with friendly rivalry.

It's not clear if there were any problems of improper camping or 'immoral' behaviour within the club, nor how these issues were identified, policed and dealt with. Nothing in the literature or archives of the period, and nothing in the responses of my interviewees suggests that enforcing the rules was ever a real issue. However, there are

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[76] For example, physical culture, Anon (March 1920) 'Untitled', *Camping* XVI (2) p. 30; the Alpine health resort of Bled (Vebels) in Yugoslavia, Anon (July 1930) 'Untitled', *Camping* XXVI (7) (n.p.a.); features on festivals such as the Festival of Youth as Wembley sponsored by The British Sports and Games Association, Anon (May 1937) 'Festival of Youth', *Camping* XXXIII (5) p. 110.

[77] LCNWDA, Annual Report for Year Ending 30/09/1949; LCNWDA, Annual Report for Year Ending 30/09/1953; LCNWDA, Annual Report for Year Ending 30/09/1957; Secretary's Report for LCNWDA (1958).

[78] Anon (May 1930) 'District Associations – North Lancashire', *Camping* XXVI (5) p. 79.

clues to some anxieties about the club's ability to reach out to new generations and inculcate in them the 'right' and 'correct' cultures of camping. In 1941 the club was forced to address the problem of 'uncontrolled' behaviour amongst youth formally when it founded the Youth Camping Association of Great Britain and Ireland (YCA). The main aims of this venture were to encourage young people to become self-reliant campers, robust in health, independent and adventurous with an ability to fight for their cause, through bringing them into close contact with Nature and open spaces. The Club wanted to see an end to the 'unhappy', 'ill-mannered', 'inconsiderate' and 'promiscuous' camping so evident before the war, conditions that, as outlined above, were seen to have threatened the pastime with 'burdensome restrictions'.[79] Perhaps too there was a sense that proactive measures were required to cement the arts of 'proper' camping in the nation's youth. The Association made a number of tents available to prospective and new members and provided suitable sites where youth could practice good camping and learn from experienced campers.[80] Unfortunately, the link between the YCA and the Camping Club was severed acrimoniously in 1951. Firstly, this was because many YCA members were not progressing on to full membership of the Club as originally agreed and, secondly, because the Club was heavily subsidising a venture for which they saw little or no returns.

In response, the Club formed a new youth section known as the 'Camping Club Youth' (CCY).[81] The skills one acquired as a CCY member were designed to prepare one for independent camping and could be drawn upon throughout later life;

[79] Editorial (June - July 1942) 'Editorial' *Camping* XXXVIII (4) p. 43.
[80] Cooke, D. (ed) (1946) *Youth Organisations of Great Britain* (Second Edition). London: Jordan and Sons. Subscription rates were set as follows: under 16's in special cases 1*s*, aged 16 to 22 2*s* 6*d*, over 22 5*s* per annum (p. 270).
[81] Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales District Association (13th October 1951). As noted in the introduction, the CCY are still going today and young campers (or 'Junior CCY') are required to pass their Youth Test before they are permitted to camp alone or attend International Youth Rallies. The

> they learnt first aid, orienteering, map reading ... and it stayed with 'em. They always had that sense of independence they could mix with anybody, they could cope for the'selves even when they became teenagers and we had to leave them at home sometimes because the eldest one always had to work Saturdays. By the time he was sixteen he couldn't come with us anymore, but he could always cope at home, we just left him the food and he just got on with it. (Joyce, 10/07/2000)

New youth members were educated in the 'art of right camping' and required to pass a test that covered everything from campcraft, Primus stove lighting, cooking, leading walks, map reading, use of a compass and first aid as the art of right camping was celebrated and passed on, it was hoped, to the next generation. Meanwhile, one small aspect of camping culture accrued increasing significance as a marker of this 'proper' camping status.

The Club pennon as the 'hallmark' of good camping

Another noticeable feature of illustrations in Figure 9.1 is Walker's use of symbolism. In the illustration on the right, the 'proper' campers fly a Club pennon (in this instance the Woodcraft Folk) at the top of their tent. Whilst Crouch notes that, at contemporary camps, 'flags may be placed on show outside a van [or tent] as a story of previous weekends [the] flags can provide very visible cultural capital and an expression of a desire to meet others and to share stories'.[82] Early pennons and, in particular, those depicting membership of the Camping Club, became the hallmark of

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test is commemorated with a pennon and certificate which successful members are encouraged to display when camping. Youth members also benefit from reduced membership fees.

[82] Crouch, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

good camping practice and appropriate behaviour within the countryside environment. This is not to imply that pennons were not a source of discussion or a catalyst for memories, to the contrary, several of my interviewees mentioned that pennons were always a good way of meeting new people, stimulating conversations and encouraging friendly rivalry and admiration amongst strangers. However, as a symbol for campers and non-campers the pennon was imbued with certain ideological meanings. For example, in a distinct twist, the definitive symbol of working class life, the flat cap, is slung like a discarded flag from the ridgepole of the tent on the left. It symbolises all that is degenerate and, maybe more significantly, removed from natural rhythms and influence; by contrast, the Camping Club campers fly their pennons proudly.

At one level, the Camping Club recognised that members could be recruited by active canvassing at campsites and by word of mouth. Members were encouraged to be proud of their pastime and to wear badges and fly pennons from their tents to identify themselves. Figure 9.9 is a good example of the kind of pennon that the camper would tie to their guy ropes or hang about their tent; pennons often displayed a particular club or DA affiliation or would be given to members to commemorate larger meets.[83] To be a member of the Club was regarded as a 'hallmark of good conduct'.[84] However, in addition to publicising the Club the pennon and insignia, implied a certain standard of camping. Indeed,

> a camper outside the Club may be anybody, and can be nobody in particular, governed by no special ideals; therefore by meeting campers who fly the club pennon, you can 'bet your bottom dollar' they are people you should meet, who are banded together with the one grand ideal - to do all that is best

[83] This pennon was the winning design from a competition held by the Lancashire and Cheshire DA (formerly Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales DA) in 1955. The prize was two guineas and each entrant had to design a pennon symbolic of the two counties.

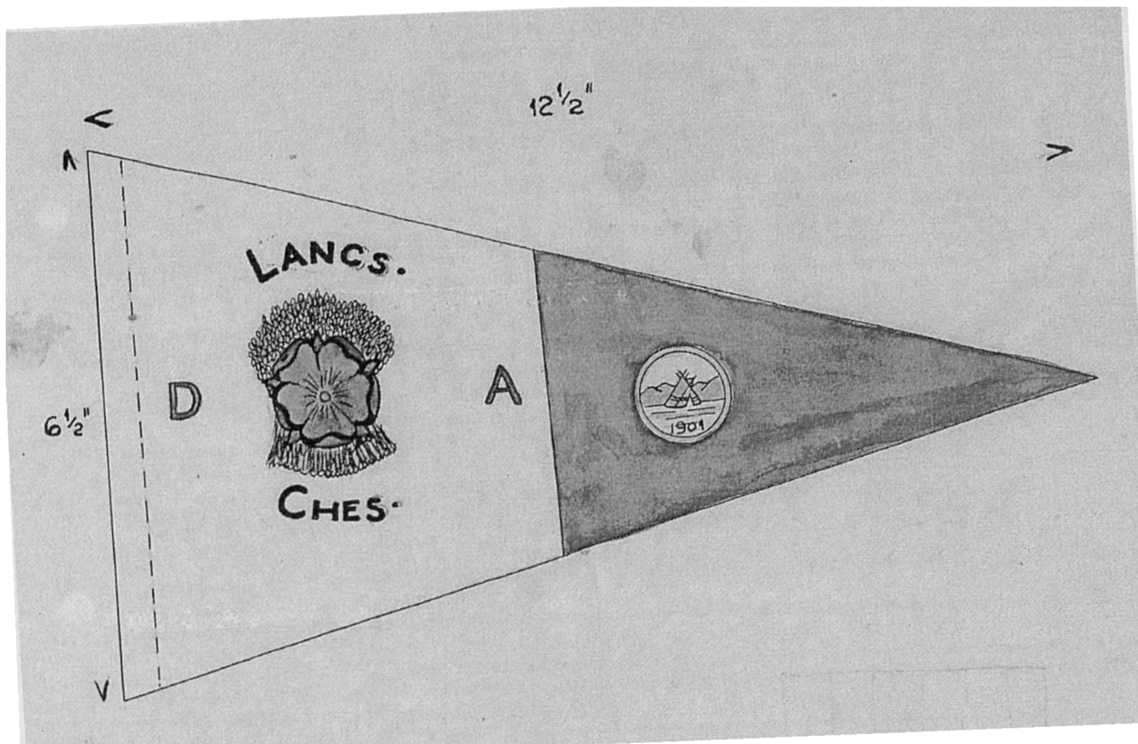

Figure 9.9 The Lancashire and Cheshire District Association pennon. From the Lancashire and Cheshire District Association Archive.

> in camping by adhering to the Club's wise, efficient, and simple rules, and who we hope are an example to outsiders and the community at large.[85]

Thus, to fly the pennon indicated you were a member of the club and, consequently, embodied all the good practice the club represented. The Club saw itself as the standard against which all other forms of camping must be judged. In helping the town and country dweller to enjoy rural England the Club sought to provide 'guidance in the ethics of better camping'.[86]

In response to the increasingly stringent cluster of laws legislation that appeared in the late 1920s and early 1930s in which camping came under wider attack as a deviant

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[84] Anon (22/10/1934) 'The simple life: Camping Club's good year', *The Times* p. 21.
[85] Tours Secretary's Notes (February 1927) *Camping* XXIII (2) p. 18.
[86] Anon, 'The simple life', *op. cit.*, p. 21.

THE CODE FOR CAMPERS

1. **CAMP SITES.** Camp on private land in preference to waste land and do not forget to ask permission. Be careful to conform to any regulations of the site-owner and of the local authority.
2. **FIRES.** Do not light any wood fires without permission, or break down hedges or trees for firewood. Avoid lighting fires or throwing down lighted matches or cigarette ends near dry grass or bushes, taking special care in the neighbourhood of forests and plantations. Be very careful in the use of stoves.
3. **REFUSE—DO NOT LEAVE LITTER ANYWHERE.** If no receptacle is provided take your rubbish home.
4. **SANITATION.** The utmost care should be taken in matters of sanitation, and campers must conform to the practice laid down in The Camping Club Year Book. (See below.) The Club's position as the national organisation for camping and caravanning renders correct sanitary methods a duty as well as a necessity. It is essential that the individual member should carry out this duty in such a way as to set a high standard for all campers. The camper who commits a sanitary nuisance not only fails in his duty but risks punishment for the site-owner and even prohibition from letting the land for further camping.
   Any member proved guilty of this offence will be expelled from the Club.
5. **COUNTRY COURTESY.** Use courtesy in all your dealings with local people, whose livelihood may be prejudiced by misuse of your privileges. When walking through pasture lands or cultivated fields, leave gates, etc. as you find them and take care not to damage crops, wild flowers or woodlands. When camping seek privacy yourself and respect the privacy of others. Do not sing or play instruments to the annoyance of residents. Study the reasons why country ways are often different from those of the town, and remember always your conduct may affect the reception of those campers who follow you.

REGULAR CAMP SITES. The individual camper should politely urge that site-owners who provide sanitary arrangements should keep these clean, healthy and tidy and should report to the Club any accommodation which is unsatisfactory or insufficient for the number of persons using the site. Headquarters will then take the necessary steps.

OCCASIONAL CAMP SITES. When the ground is used only occasionally for camping and the site is not developed commercially, the individual camper is responsible for cleanly conditions. Either the owner's latrine must be used or the camper must provide a latrine in a suitable position.

THE shelter of a hedge or wall which may offer a safe pitch for some lightweight camper is NOT a suitable position.

Private latrines are generally best placed on the northern or eastern side of a camping field and well away from a wall or hedge. Many sites have been fouled by thoughtlessness or selfish indifference to the comfort of those who may follow. The site-owners' permission and advice about position should be obtained.

MINIMUM PRECAUTIONS. The camper should borrow a spade or carry a trowel and dig a shallow hole—where possible about 8 inches deep—where no inconvenience can be caused to a subsequent camper. There should be a screen or trees, bushes or suitable material. There must be enough loose earth to cover completely the excreta and protect it from flies. Before the site is left the hole must be filled in and the turf carefully replaced. A covering of stone is insufficient and insanitary.

FIXED CAMP. Any camper using a fixed centre for a week or more must provide a latrine properly screened. If a camper is to remain several days on a site the hole should be about a foot deep. A suitable width is 6 to 8 inches with a length of 12 to 18 inches. Loose earth and a trowel or stick should be kept inside the erected screen. Proper toilet paper, flat if carried, rolled if covered, and kept in position, should be used. Other paper is untidy and unhygienic.

LIQUID WASTE. It is considered as important to dispose of liquid waste as to burn or bury solid rubbish. A grease pit should have a cover of grass, bracken or the like which will catch the solid matter and which can be burnt. A chemical should be sprinkled on the pit to discourage insects.

Figure 9.10 'The Code for Campers'. From the Handbook of Camping and Caravanning (1965) p. 149

G	ive due courtesy and the proper fee to the owner of the ground
O	pen gates, but shut them behind you to prevent cattle straying
O	ffend nobody by unnecessary noise or by noise late at night
D	on't annoy local residents or other visitors
C	amp joyously, but remember those who follow you
A	sk permission before you pitch a tent or light a fire
M	ake proper sanitary arrangements and keep them clean
P	ut all rubbish in the proper place and not in hedges or ditches
I	mprove the site by cleaning up and do not spoil it by litter
N	ever leave anything behind but a good impression
G	o on your way with a clear conscience

Figure 9.11 Adapted version of the Code for Campers featured in LNER (1938).

stain on the countryside, the Camping Club took action to demonstrate the efficiency and legitimacy of their own organisation. In December 1932, a 'Code for Campers', or set of rules outlining the way in which a camper should behave, was prepared and members were required to sign it on joining (Figure 9.10).[87] Crucially, one clause stipulated that the Council could refuse to renew individual memberships without reason, presumably a penalty against those transgressing Club rules (although, as I mention later, no disciplinary committee ever sat in this period). This code set the standard to which everyone should be encouraged to conform regarding campsites, campfires, refuse, sanitation, gates, footpaths, flowers and general country courtesy.[88] As shown in Figure 9.11, this was later adapted by London and North Eastern Railways (LNER). It is important to note that most Camping Club members did not object to the imposition of strict codes of behaviour. Campers took them to heart in the firm belief

[87] The National Parks Commission published their *Country Code* in 1951.

that rules were crucial in order to protect their pastime from adverse legislation and public ridicule. Joyce Taylor remembered;

> one of the main ones was to keep dogs on leads in camp because otherwise it'd have been chaotic and erm ... sanitation was another big thing because we weren't going on sites with all mod cons, we were on farmers' fields. So you had to teach your children not to leave farm gates open, not to leave any litter about, not to disturb any of the animals, and erm, we never had any problems like that. (10/07/2000)

The ethics of 'good camping' were not only embodied by the campers themselves, but also were mapped out on the camp 'site'. As the most widely used facilities, registered sites were also thought to reflect upon the Club and a council meeting report in 1933 documented the proposal to eliminate sites of 'an unsuitable character' from Club lists. To maintain these standards, from 1934 approved sites were given signs to display their status.[89]

It is interesting to note that several of the members I interviewed are now worried that these standards are being eroded by contemporary camping practices. For example, they critique the Club's approach to the failures of etiquette by non-members, but in times of increasing competition from various other clubs the old codes cannot be enforced;

> I think the standards of the Club now and especially the Club sites have gone down ... because they ... don't want to drive away the non-members. [...] They want to encourage the non-members to use the sites so they're

[88] Anon (January 1933) 'Code For Campers', *Camping* XXIX (1) p. 18.

prepared to tolerate, I mean ... you get a non-member, they don't know the twenty foot rule and go and bung their caravan next to you. They don't know the rule about dogs so immediately they open the car door, and the dog jumps out, you know, and wees on your awning, and that's your awning ruined, and all of these things, because they're allowing the non-members who don't know the standards of caravanning ... and also, because they aren't insisting on the standards, their own membership is starting to lose sight of the standards that they should be camping to. (Arnold Parkinson, 13/09/00)

Another interviewee remarked that increasingly, the Club sites were 'always full of strangers, you know, what we call non-campers {laughs}'.[90] Again, this shows an underlying worry that the Club's embodied status as *the* only valid repository of experience, knowledge and expertise was increasingly becoming more diluted. Indeed for some, this malaise is endemic as the Club is being infiltrated at the highest level;

> The Club now seem to use a lot of wardens who have not come up through the Camping Club or even been campers. In fact, at one time the Director General had never caravanned. [...] He might be [...] good commercially, but if he's never camped or caravanned he doesn't know what the camping and caravan people want, and I think if you look around the Headquarters, I think you'll find this is the situation. The majority of them are *not camping and caravan people*. (Arnold, 13/09/00)

Both these quotes demonstrate that today there is a general feeling that the Club is being infiltrated by 'non-camping' types or inexperienced campers at the highest level. As a

[89] See Anon (October / November 1933) 'Council Meeting', *Camping* XXIX (10) pp. 226 – 227; Editorial (September 1934) 'The need for propaganda', *Camping* XXX (9) p. 189.
[90] Interview with Joyce and Don, *op. cit.*

result, some members fear that the very standards implemented by the Club are weakening, and echoing the concerns of 'Lone Star' in 1934, that 'true' campers are being sidelined in favour of once a year 'holidaymakers' and the commercialised 'camping' experience.[91] I discuss these contemporary voices because they demonstrate just how strong and persistent is the lingering sense of what the Camping Club is essentially *about.* The frequent mention of the nature of 'camping people' is testimony to the strength of the Camping Club's collective ethos and identity in the inter-war and pot-war period I've been discussing here. By extension, this focussed and coherent emphasis upon the right and proper ways to camp and behave in the countryside - this sense of 'good citizenship' through good camping practice - must have been a powerful argument that was mobilised when the club was forced to defend its interests as a lobby and organisation in these years.

Post-war reconstruction

Although it falls beyond my general remit in this thesis, a brief consideration of post-World War Two camping debates reveals that these same concerns and priorities discussed above were re-worked once more as the central element of camping practice and, subsequently, of camping cultures and identities. In 1945 questions of manners, etiquette and good camping remained paramount. That year, an Editorial of *Camping* stated that, although the Disciplinary Committee had never been called upon, in this regard of all the post-war problems facing the Club there was none more important or more urgent than that of finding the best solution to the problem of bad camping.[92] To

[91] See Chapter Seven.
[92] Memorandum to Regional Councils and Committees of District Associations, Sections and Sites, on procedure to be followed if and when necessary for disciplinary action against Club members arises (as decided by the National Council on April 18th 1953, Min. 984 signed by H. W. Pegler, Secretary).

this end, a new disciplinary code was devised. The Club was permitted to expel members for breaches of camping conduct or for conduct detrimental or inimicable to the reputation of the Club, however, the ultimate decision rested with the National Council. In cases of gross misconduct within the cognisance of responsible officials, the Committee were advised to suspend the member forthwith. In most camping offences the offender had to be given the chance to 'fall into line' and only through continued defiance should the matter be brought to the Disciplinary Committee. These disciplinary matters and the increased threat of bad camping were driven by fears regarding the post-war prospects of the Club and closely reflected the concerns of planners and preservationists mentioned above.[93] There is no evidence in the literature to show that the Disciplinary Committee ever met and there may be several reasons for this. The threat of humiliation and eviction may have been enough to keep people in their place, however, one could also suggest that by encouraging campers to police themselves the boundaries of self-selection discouraged those who preferred more raucous forms of leisure.

It was thought by Joad and his contemporaries that those returning from war would want to build themselves little houses all over the face of England and others would inevitably seek to access the countryside, to hike and camp, enabled by increased rail travel, petrol engines and paid holidays.[94] Anthony Thorburn divided this rush into five generic groups. The 'regular campers' whose enthusiasm for their sport would not have dimmed over five years of war and the men and women who were sick to death of crowded conditions and other war restrictions. The people who would 'take to tents' in the absence of adequate housing facilities, those who were looking for a cheap holiday

[93] See Editorial (March 1944) 'Conference on post-war camping and the Club's policy towards it', *Camping* XL (2) pp. 15 - 19; Thorburn, A. (March 1945) 'Further outlook – very fair', *Camping* XLI (2) p. 18.
[94] Joad, C. E. M. (1946) *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Country.* With illustrations by Thomas Derrick. London: Faber and Faber pp. 19 – 20.

and, lastly, those people who had lived in the country in tents and caravans during the war period owing to the Blitz.[95] Yet for the camping lobby this predicted growth of camping was a mixed blessing fraught as it was with the spectre of bad camping practice. Warren-Wren noted that previous rapid increases in camping had resulted in camping of second or third-rate standards. For Thorburn, the 'economisers', for example, demonstrated their woeful camping etiquette by, '[pining] for the electric light switch and grumble at small inconveniences instead of trying to overcome them'.[96] However, Joad argued that the right attitude to, and use of, the country would not come about by chance or nature, any more than the right attitude to anything that was good and lovely; it was made better by training, teaching and the effects from the environment upon the body.[97] Evidently, as the camping fraternity considered the post-war world, they found continued solace in the belief that good citizenship would emerge from camping properly amidst the natural environment.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that campers and, in particular, those affiliated to the Camping Club distinguished themselves from non-campers and novices, not just through their appearance, but also, through a moral geography of camping that employed specific codes of conduct and the possession of specialised skills. The Camping Club believed that camping practised along Club lines had the potential to play a part in the physical and moral regeneration of the nation; camping in general developed one's strength of character, physical health and instilled in one a great appreciation of, and respect for, the natural environment. Yet, in common with

[95] Thorburn, *op. cit.*
[96] Thorburn, *op. cit.*, p. 18

naturists, campers occupied a paradoxical position in the eyes of the establishment and the general public. Despite agreeing with much of the legislation designed to curb irresponsible camping (in the belief that a certain degree of freedom was possible as long as one respected certain limits), Club campers found themselves in a constant battle to distance themselves from the 'bad' camping that contemporary legislation was designed to abolish. However, it is important to acknowledge that camping activity was regulated on a number of levels, and that the moral geographies of camping were to a certain extent decreed by the campers themselves.

According to the camping literature, freedom came through knowledge, nobody was perfect but with education and experience of certain skills camping became a safer and more enjoyable experience. It is unlikely that many campers would have needed to use woodcraft skills to the same extent as the Scouts, however, such activities involved a sense of working 'in harmony' with the natural environment and implied the restoration of knowledge which was once lost and forgotten. The moral geography of camping saturated not only behaviour within and ability to withstand the rigours of the natural environment, but also the specifics of campsite layout, personal conduct when on-site, and the individual camper's attire and possessions. In a move which on the surface appeared to promote the interests and development of the individual but which also served to counter negative public perceptions, the Club was constructed as the key representative of good camping practice, a position which gave it a certain amount of power to challenge legislation. The Club pennon became the symbol of knowledge, experience and proficiency, the display of which marked one out as a member of the Club and a representative of everything the Club stood for. It was Club policy to maintain and promote the highest standards possible and reserved the right to expel any member or affiliated site that did not live up to these standards.

[97] Joad, *op. cit.*, p. 22. See the training given to members of the CCY.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

The rise of the British outdoor movement occurred at a time when concerns regarding 'the body', health and morality were at their height. These concerns were initially stimulated by the shocking physical condition of Boer War recruits, but during the 1920s and 1930s fears of individual and national degeneration were further compounded by increased economic competition, political uncertainty and a proliferation of damning independent studies into health and social welfare. Specific connections were made between the impact of the environment on the body and, in particular, the links between the urban environment and degeneracy. Within the discourse of the open-air movement modern urban, industrial society was consistently represented as a malevolent force partly, if not wholly, responsible for the physical, mental and moral degeneration of the contemporary population. Drawing upon the work of health reformers, it was widely believed that much had been lost as well as gained through the evolution of contemporary civilisation. In the Western world human beings had gradually become removed from the influences of the natural environment and were therefore subject to partial physical and spiritual development. Alongside the development of air and sunlight therapies, open-air schools, physical exercise regimes, modernist architecture and increased opportunities for spare time and travel, stress was placed on the growing body of research which highlighted the benefits of open spaces and the health giving properties of light and air. Nature was promoted as a restorative agent which, if harnessed appropriately, could help regenerate the individual and national body.

My investigation has highlighted several key recurring themes woven through the discourses of naturists and campers; escape from the urban environment, the sensuous nature of human-environment experiences, citizenship and the moral geographies of outdoor cultures. In Chapters Four and Seven, I discussed the influences on and rise of naturism and camping within British outdoor culture. In tune with other outdoor movements, naturists and campers sought to counter the effects of urbanised life and called for a return to harmony in mind and body, a feat which both groups stressed could only be achieved by re-establishing the links between humans and nature. In alignment with future phenomenological philosophical debates concerning the alienation of humans from nature, naturists, campers and other outdoor enthusiasts felt that only through the unification of mind and body could human civilisation be realigned towards a more positive and fulfilling aspect. For example, the camping literature placed great emphasis on reconnection with the natural world, exposure to the so-called 'essentials' of life and an appreciation of 'simple things'. Camping enabled the individual to escape from the constraints, abstraction and boredom of urban life, and to gain a sense of satisfaction from individual endeavour. Yet, although both sets of literature often described their movement as a 'fresh start', a new beginning free from the traditions and pernicious morality of contemporary civilisation, it is more productive to view this transformation as a 're-evaluation', or reassessment of societal values and traditions. For example, naturist philosophy did not prescribe a rejection of civilisation *per se*, rather the naturist way of life suggested an 'alternative direction', one which utilised the most productive parts of civilisation and the natural world to create a harmonious whole.

In Chapter Three I discussed the need to consider the rich, ambiguous and diverse nature of human experience in any cultural-geographical analysis of outdoor cultures.

Working with key principles of humanistic geography and phenomenology and more recent debates on the body I aimed to construct an embodied approach sensitive to the vagaries of human experience. Phenomenological theory was useful in its critique of positivistic science, however, Husserl's quest to reduce human experience to an essential 'essence' was more problematic. Throughout the thesis I have demonstrated the varied ways in which naturists and campers (and non-campers) approached and experienced the natural environment. I have argued against reductionism and highlighted the importance of specificity and difference in gaining a more enriched and embodied understanding of human experience and sense of place.

Chapter Five combined explicit examples from naturist literature and personal narratives in order to highlight the great embodied sensitivity towards the natural environment within naturist accounts. Naturism was considered to be a dynamic, embodied, reflexive, and multi-sensual encounter through which one experienced a heightened awareness of one's body within space, its movement through space, and the action of the environment upon the body. In this sense, I argue that it would be impossible to conduct a study of naturism or camping which was not sensitive to the fleeting and dynamic nature of much human experience, everyday lived experience and emotion (even negative ones) as they are all valuable ways of knowing. Of course, naturism being the practice in which both sexes go naked in the natural environment, is problematic because it raises further issues of display and vulnerability. Both are traditionally associated with the female realm and it was therefore, necessary for naturist practitioners to draw upon alternative discourses which situated the male as an extension of a natural order.

Chapter Eight showed that when camping one not only achieved a more intimate understanding of the natural world and its attendant fluctuations and flows, one was also brought closer to the body itself. Studying the rich and highly personalised discourses produced by the camping fraternity (which Tuan would consider too densely textured for any reasonable analytical evaluation) enables a more expansive and inclusive understanding of the ways in which the senses and emotions impacted upon the everyday experience of the camper. The camper was forced to confront the materiality of the body, for example, the dilemma of how to dispose of waste (from unwanted food and discarded packaging to urine and excrement), the experience of debilitating cold and stiffness, the need to dress blisters and stem the flow of blood from cuts and grazes, and the experience of being labelled as different, 'Other', etc. Yet this embodied sense of self also enabled the campers to make value judgements about the type of person(s) who participated in the sport of camping. Chapter Eight also demonstrated the ways in which camping cultures developed a particular moral geography which elevated the seasoned, experienced camper and the highlighted the need to embody certain characteristics before a person could gain a true appreciation of the natural environment.

Phenomenological philosophy requires the suspension of an individual's preconceptions (both 'common sense' and those acquired through nurture) about objects before one can truly encounter the essence of experience. The case studies highlighted the problematic nature of such a precondition by showing that human experience is mediated, directed, and evaluated by a wealth of social, cultural and historical parameters. In both the naturist and camping literatures, participants' experience shaped and was shaped by wider discourses of morality, health and self. Amidst fears of misguided recreation, attention was focused not only on appropriate behaviour and land use, but also on the bodies of the recreationalists themselves creating distinct moral

geographies. For example, preservationist philosophy deemed enthusiasm to be a valuable human trait that was to be encouraged, whilst at the same time promoting the need for education and guidance for the masses in the pursuit of good citizenship. Outdoor recreation was beneficial so long as it was conducted in an atmosphere of morally responsible order and temperate control. Whilst naturists and campers fulfilled the goals of physical fitness, environmental awareness they occupied a relatively marginal status within the outdoor movement. Chapter Nine demonstrates that, to a certain extent, the camping literature echoed the preservationists' calls for regulation and education through the camping code and assurances that membership of the national organisation was a guarantee of good camping practice. Yet, this must be considered in relation to anti-camping legislation and popular critique. In Chapter Four, I also outlined the moral condemnation and ridicule commonly directed at naturism despite its close affiliation with outdoor philosophy. As a result of the ambiguity of nudity within Western culture naturists continued to occupy a marginal position both within wider society and in relation to other outdoor movements such as the Camping Club. Chapter Six further demonstrated the liminal position of naturism and the challenges it posed not only to traditional modes of representation but also the ways in which it could potentially be used to destabilise gender and class dynamics. Yet, despite promoting naturism as a morally educative practice that instilled a more balanced outlook on life, encouraged strength of character, fostered citizenship and required great discipline, the secrecy and complex codes within naturist society suggests that these wider social attitudes and ambiguities surrounding nudity not only restrained naturist activity but were to some extent internalised by naturists themselves.

Chapters Two, Four and Seven also highlight the differential role of cross-cultural exchange in the development of out-of-doors philosophy and movements in this period.

British naturist practice and ideology were greatly influenced by philosophies developed extensively in Germany and, to a lesser (but nevertheless significant) degree in France and America in the first three decades of the twentieth century. This information was transmitted during official and recreational exchange visits made by British individuals/groups to Germany, by individual émigrés such as Parmelee, through photography and film, and circulated by word-of-mouth in fledgling British naturist and physical culture organisations. The latter process may explain the lack of specifically British textual material currently available to the researcher of naturist culture and I suggest that discussion networks and communication between enthusiasts played a key role in the propagation of naturist ideology in Britain. It is important therefore, not to underestimate the significance of literature such as Surén's *Man and Sunlight*, published first in Germany and later re-printed in Britain, and its impact on the dissemination of naturist philosophy and practice within Britain. However, the blatant re-touching and occasional omission of images within these texts highlights the differences between the visual cultures of naturism in Britain and Germany, and suggests that imported ideologies were subject to contestation and adaptation. In contrast, it appears that ideas surrounding camping practice and philosophy were founded very much within a British context and there appears to have been little, if any, developmental influence from continental Europe. Whilst there is little evidence to demonstrate the processes of cross-cultural exchange between the Camping Club and other international camping organisations in the Clubs foundation years, members would have undoubtedly have attempted to promote the ethos of 'good camping' and morally responsible self-conduct within the natural environment during recreational visits to other countries and other philanthropic ventures.

The potential for future research into the embodied and sensual nature of human – environment relationships is great. Suggested areas for development arising from this research include the connections and differences between open-air and indoor exercise and the extent to which exercise in natural environment is more healthy, beneficial and spiritually uplifting than in a traditional enclosed gym environment; the ways in which participants experience the environment whilst exercising; if certain forms of exercise are considered to be more suitable than others; and the extent to which exercising in unfamiliar environments changes personal attitudes towards of preconceptions about certain environments. Alternatively one might consider the impact of clothing technology and the influence of consumption on environmental experience, for example, the extent to which technical design features such as 'breathe-ability', 'rain-proofing' and 'wind-stopper' fabrics mediate, limit, enhance or simply change embodied experience and the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The thesis has demonstrated not only the validity of studying sensitive material and topics traditionally considered to be 'unworthy' of serious academic research, such as naturism and the more mundane world of campers, but also the way in which contextual, engaged and embodied research allows us to gain fresh insights into the complexity of human experience.

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Appendix 1

Number of interviewees	Date	Location
Naturists		
1 (Mark Nisbet[*])	03/2000	Goole
6 (2 male, 4 female all aged 45+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire[$]
5 (3 male, 2 female, aged 35+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
2 (1 male, 1 female, aged 45+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
2 (1 male, 1 female, aged 50+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
2 (1 male, 1 female, aged 60+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
2 (1 male, 1 female, aged 60+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
1 (male, aged 60+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
1 (male, aged 60+)	02/07/2000	NE Lincolnshire
1 (male, aged 50+)	09/07/2000	West Yorkshire
2 (1 male, 1 female aged 50+)	09/07/2000	West Yorkshire
10 (7 females, 3 males all aged 40+)	09/07/2000	West Yorkshire
2 (1 male, 1 female, aged 70+)	09/07/2000	West Yorkshire
1 (Mr R. Wright)	14/07/2000	London
2 (1 male, 1 female aged 50+)	31/07/2000	London
2 (1 male, 1 female, aged 60+)	04/08/2000	Hull
6 (2 male, 4 female, aged 50+)	06/08/2000	Lincolnshire
1 (female)	06/08/2000	Telephone interview
1 (Mr J. Walker)	12/10/2000	Manchester
2 (1 male, 1 female aged 70+)	03/01/2001	Somerset
Campers		
1 (Mrs J. Taylor)	10/07/2000	Newhey
2 (Mr D. Chapple, Mrs J. Chapple)	22/07/2000	Grimsby
1 (Mr P. Constance)	26/07/2000	Washingborough
1 (Mrs H. Constance)	26/07/2000	Washingborough

[*] NB: Names are only given when explicit permission to do so was granted by the interviewee.

2 (Mr R. Lowe and partner)	27/07/2000	Littleborough
2 (Mr A. Payne, Mr H. Lees)	28/07/2000	Lancaster
1 (Miss S. Hillhouse)	08/2000	Telephone interview
1 (Mr Parkinson)	13/09/2000	York
1 (male, aged 55+)	04/08/2000	Hull
2 (male, 1 female, aged 60+)	07/08/2000	Hull
2 (1 male, 1 female aged 55+)	3/09/2000	Rochdale
2 (1 male, 1 female aged 60+)	08/01/2001	Wiltshire

[5] Interviews conducted individually at the same location are counted as separate entries.

Appendix 2

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
FACULTY OF SCIENCE & THE ENVIRONMENT

HULL HU6 7RX • UNITED KINGDOM
DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE TELEPHONE 01482 465385
FACSIMILE: NATIONAL 01482 466340 INTERNATIONAL +44 1482 466340

E-MAIL: N.J.MORRIS@GEO.HULL.AC.UK
TEL: 01482 466332

[Date]

[Address]

Dear XXXX,

I am writing to you in the hope that you may be able to help. I obtained your contact details from XXXX.

I am a second year postgraduate research student undertaking a Ph.D. in the Geography Department at the University of Hull. In brief, my research is concerned with developing an understanding of how human beings interact with the natural environment, in particular, their 'sensory' experience of nature. Along with lightweight campers, I am particularly interested in the experiences of naturists and their descriptions of being naked in the natural environment. To date, my research has focused primarily on the descriptive writings and photographic illustrations by individuals from the late 1920s to the late 1950s. I was helped enormously in the early stages of my research by [the Camping and Caravanning Club's archivist XXXX who has allowed me extensive access to the archival and back issues of the Club magazine / CCBN's General Secretary XXXX who allowed me access to back issues of *British Naturism*].

In order to build upon this, I am hoping to conduct a series of 'one-off' interviews between July and December 2000 (though this could feasibly run over into early 2001). The purpose of which would be to obtain at first hand the thoughts and feelings of individuals towards [camping / naturism] and the natural environment, and to elucidate illustrative examples of [camping / naturist] experience. I would be particularly interested in talking to people who may have recollections from the period between 1920 – 1960. However, this is not an exclusive request. I would like to hear from anyone who may feel they can contribute to my research. The interviews would last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and be conducted at a mutually agreed location.

I wonder if you would know of any individuals who may be interested in assisting me, or if it would be possible to pass details of this request to XXXX members or possible interested parties within XXXX. If you have any questions or queries about my research you can contact me on the number above, or my academic supervisor, Dr David Atkinson, at the University of Hull (Tel. XXXX / e-mail XXXX). Either of us would be happy to discuss matters further.

Thank-you very much for your time, I trust that my requests will not prove too great an inconvenience.

Yours sincerely,

Nina Morris
[Membership number]

Appendix 3

Letters were sent to:

Central Council of British Naturism

General Secretary

Public Relations Officer

Research and Liasion Officer

Archivist

Editor of *British Naturism*

Regional Councillor for the Yorkshire Region

Regional Councillor for the North West Region

Regional Councillor for the Midland Region

Members Representatives:

- Yorkshire Region (including North Humberside, North and South Yorkshire)
- West Yorkshire Region
- Midlands Region (including Derby, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and South Humberside)

3 clubs in West Yorkshire

2 clubs in Yorkshire

2 clubs in Lancashire

1 club in South Yorkshire

1 club in Lincolnshire

Editor of *H & E* (formerly *Health and Efficiency*)

Camping and Caravanning Club of Great Britain and Ireland

Chairman

Immediate Past-Chairman (passed to Director General)

Director of Administration

Archivist

Editor of *Camping and Caravanning*

President of the North West Region

President of the Yorkshire Region

Chairman of the North West Region

Chairman of the Yorkshire Region

Secretary for the North West Region

Secretary for the Yorkshire Region

National Council Representative for the North West Region

National Council Representative for the Yorkshire Region

Secretary for the Association of Lightweight Campers

Secretary for the Mountain Activity Section

Secretary for the North West Region Trailer Tent Group

Secretary for the Yorkshire Region Trailer Tent Group

District Association (D. A.) Secretaries (North West Region):

- Lancashire and Cheshire D. A.
- Central Lancashire D. A.
- North East Cheshire D. A.
- North East Lancashire D. A.
- North Lancashire D. A.
- Roch Valley D. A. (now disbanded)
- South Lancashire D. A.

District Association (D. A.) Secretaries (Yorkshire Region):

- Central Yorkshire D. A.
- Danum D. A.
- East Yorkshire D. A.
- Huddersfield D. A.
- Leeds D. A.
- Lindum D. A.
- Sheffield D. A.
- Spen Valley D. A.
- Yorkshire D. A.
- Yorkshire D. A.
- Derwent D. A.

Appendix 4

'Sunbathing in the park' by George Formby. GFS (2000).

Don't think I'm walking all round the world.
I've got the sunbathe craze.
I first do my back and when that's nicely fried
Then I turn round and I do t'other side.
A girl said today as I laid on the green
I was the sweetest worm she'd ever seen.

When I'm sunbathing in the park every morning till the sun goes down
From the tip of my nose to my ten little toes, all so nice and brown
All day I'm burnt at the stake just like Joan of Arc.
"That's not freckles" people shout, "it's measles breaking out"
When I'm sunbathing in the park.

I'm sunbathing in the park every morning till the sun goes down
From the tip of my nose to my ten little toes, all so nice and brown
All day I'm burnt at the stake just like Joan of Arc,
I get sunburnt nice and strong all round mi old om pong
When I'm sunbathing in the park.

I fry and frizzle and frizzle all day like a poached egg on toast
When the sun shines through my little short vest
It's so hot it scorches my family crest.
One day last week I got caught on the hop
A tramp on mi chest started grilling a chop.

When I'm sunbathing in the park every morning till the sun goes down
From the tip of my nose to my ten little toes, all so nice and brown
All day I'm burnt at the stake just like Joan of Arc,
I get sunburnt and scorched and tanned all round my no-man's land
When I'm sunbathing in the park.

All day I'm burnt at the stake just like Joan of Arc.
And the birds from every tree leave their visiting cards on me
When I'm sunbathing in the park.