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Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English
Countryside, 1930-1960

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PhD
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January 2013

Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature.....

University of Sussex

Sian Edwards, PhD

Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English Countryside, 1930-1960

Summary

This thesis explores the significance and meaning of the countryside within mid-twentieth century youth movements. Whilst modern youth movements have been the subject of considerable historical research, there has been little attention to the rural context within which so many of them operated. Moreover, few historians have explored youth movements into the post-Second World War period. This thesis therefore makes an original contribution both in terms of its periodisation and focus. It draws on a rich seam of archival and printed sources focusing in particular upon the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements, the Woodcraft Folk and the Young Farmer's Club movement.

The thesis examines the ways in which the countryside was employed as a space within which 'good citizenship' could be developed. Mid-century youth movements identified the 'problem' of modern youth as a predominantly urban and working class issue. They held that the countryside offered an effective antidote to these problems: being a 'good citizen' within this context necessitated a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with the rural sphere. Avenues to good citizenship could be found through an enthusiasm for outdoor recreation, the stewardship of the countryside and work on the land. Models of good citizenship were intrinsically gendered. Girls were trained for their domestic role within the home, although this was a specifically rural form of domesticity.

Chapter One explores the shifting relationship between the urban public and the countryside in the mid-century and argues that the popularity of outdoor recreation developed understandings of citizenship that were directly linked to the English countryside. For youth this country-conscious citizenship could be developed in three spheres: leisure, work and the home. Chapter Two examines the approach of youth movements to youthful leisure across the mid-century and, using concern for the juvenile delinquent as a case study, argues that through physical and mental improvement the countryside could prevent misbehaviour. Parallel to this youth movements instilled an understanding of 'good' countryside manners and encouraged members to protect the countryside from the onslaught of urban pleasure-seekers. Chapter Three explores the importance of agricultural work in meanings of 'good citizenry' arguing that for both urban and rural boys proficiency in farming, particularly in wartime, was considered an important service to the nation. Chapter Four investigates how the sphere of the home remained central to understandings of 'good citizenship' for girls and suggests that the distinct nature of rural domesticity should be considered here. It also considers the place of youth movements within the gendered lifecycle, understandings of female deviance and issues of agency in leisure provision for girls in the mid-century.

This thesis argues that, fundamentally, the mid-century period should be seen as one of continuity in the training of youth movements. The central role of the countryside in categorisations of 'good citizenry' supports recent understandings of a rural national identity in the mid-century. Furthermore, approaches to youth were clearly divided in terms of both class and gender. While concerns over the working classes did shift at this time understandings of innate working class deviance remained. Moreover, the persistence of gendered understandings of citizenship and the emphasis on domesticity for girls suggests that gender remained central to experiences of youth movements in the mid twentieth-century.

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Abbreviations

BSA	Boy Scouts Association
CPRE	Council for the Preservation of Rural England
CTC	Cyclists Touring Club
GGA	Girl Guide Association
G.I.S	Guide International Service
M-OA	Mass Observation Archive
M-O	Mass Observation
NCU	National Cyclists' Union
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NFWI	National Federation of Women's Institutes
NYFC	National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs
YFC	Young Farmers' Club
YHA	Youth Hostel Association

Introduction

On 16th June 1958 the 7th Dunstable Company of the Girl Guide Association, following a roll call and inspection, set out on a group excursion to the local downs. When they arrived they began activities including stalking, the practice of observing the land and tracking wild animals, and map reading, and did so with enthusiasm. Until, that is, they met with the “interference” of some Teddy Boys who were also frequenting the area.¹ Here, the experience of the 7th Dunstable Company, detailed in the clubs contemporaneous logbook, reveals an interesting contention in the relationship between youth and the countryside in the late 1950s. The growth of ‘youth’ as a social category in the mid-twentieth century, resulting from shifts in patterns of education, work and leisure, has been well documented by historians. Studies however, often pay little or no attention to the centrality of the countryside in experiences of young people at this time.² Be that through experiences of rural youth, or of the use of the countryside by urbanites. This project was borne out of this realisation, that rural experiences of leisure have often been ignored or sidelined in favour of the urban. This is true in spite of the fact that, despite changing leisure patterns across the mid-century, the countryside remained a central feature of popular recreation. The extent of this has not yet been significantly acknowledged in the wider context of young people’s leisure experiences in the mid-twentieth century.

This study develops our understanding of youth and leisure in this period in two ways; firstly, by focusing on the structured and organised leisure provided by youth movements in the mid-century and secondly, by exploring the centrality of the countryside within them. Through a study of organisational publications alongside contemporary materials, it reveals a number of continuities in the training provided by youth movements at this time and the continued importance of the rural within this. In so doing, it uncovers a complex relationship between young people and the countryside in the mid-century and questions our predominantly urban understanding of youth in this period.

¹ Girl Guide Logbook, 7th Dunstable Company, 16th June 1958, ST2/S4/BZ, Girl Guide Association (hereafter GGA), London.

² It should be noted that Selina Todd has written an important article on young women in interwar rural England. Selina Todd (2004), ‘Young Women, Work and Family in Inter-war Rural England’, *The Agricultural History Review*, **52** (1), 83-98.

Youth in the Mid-Century

It is an accepted truism amongst historians that the period from 1930 onwards witnessed distinctive and monumental shifts in the lives of adolescents in Britain. As such, the mid-century has been characterised as one in which young people ‘came of age’.³ This shift can most clearly be identified with the post-war ‘youthquake’ and the emergence of the ‘teenager’ in the 1950s. In 1958 the Ministry of Education brought together sociologists, youth leaders and other interested parties to consider and investigate the state of the Youth Service in England and Wales. The committee, which included the likes of social investigator Pearl Jephcott, Woodcraft leader Leslie Paul and academic Richard Hoggart, were appointed to study the changing world of post-war youth. In the subsequent report, widely referred to as the Albemarle report, the committee declared, “All times are times of change, but some change more quickly than others. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that in some periods the sense of change is particularly strong. Today is such a period.”⁴ Here then the committee supports the idea that the decade was a time of upheaval for young people.

This idea was rooted in socio-economic shifts of the time in which both labour patterns and consumption trends were symptomatic of the newly built welfare state. Young people, particularly those who were male and working class, were well placed to take advantage of both legislative and economic shifts. Full employment and a demand for labour in ‘light’ unskilled production industries,^{meant} that many working class youths could earn a considerable wage which they could spend on a growing consumer driven leisure industry, focused towards the newly defined ‘teenager’.⁵ This financial independence meant that for adolescents opportunities for leisure and

³ For a discussion of youth in this period see John Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770-Present*. Expanded Student Edition. (New York Academic Press: New York, 1981); Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1998); David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970: from Ivory Tower to Global Movement – a New History* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2008); Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-war Years* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2012); Kenneth Leech, *Youthquake: the Growth of Counter Culture through Two Decades* (Sheldon Press: London, 1973); Jon Savage, *Teenage: the Creation of Youth 1875-1945* (Pimlico: London, 2008); John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Gill and Macmillan: Dublin, 1986 & Selina Todd (2006), ‘Flappers and Factory Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain’, *History Compass*, 4 (4), 715-730.

⁴ Ministry of Education. *The Youth Service in England and Wales* (HMSO: London, 1960), Cmd. 929, p.13.

⁵ A trend identified by Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.22.

consumption were wider than they had been previously. As a result contemporaries, such as Mark Abrams, identified the emergence of a distinctly new breed of ‘teenage consumer’, with economic independence and hedonistic consumption patterns distinctive from their predecessors.⁶

Legislative shifts also saw the compression of the adolescent lifecycle and the intensification of the ‘teenage’ experience. The 1944 Butler Education Act extended the educational horizons of young people by the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 and extending the period in which young people were reliant on parental support. Military service, introduced for all males at the age of 18 in 1947, meant that the period from school leaving (15), to call-up (18), became somewhat of a period of interregnum between childhood and adulthood, splintering the male life cycle. As the Albemarle report suggested, the prospect of National Service came “down like a shutter between the mind of the adolescent and his adult future.”⁷ For girls a similar effect was felt by the declining age of first marriage. In the period from 1931 to 1935, 21 girls in every 1,000 in England and Wales were first married between the ages of 16 to 19 and by 1956 to 1960 this had risen to 72.7 girls.⁸ This meant young women were beginning their adult roles as wives and mothers earlier than they had previously. Both shifts served to create, what Osgerby termed, a “generational consciousness” amongst post-war youth.⁹

These changes were not witnessed in historical isolation however, as recent historiography has suggested, many shifts associated with the ‘youth explosion’ of the post war period were in existence before the war.¹⁰ Foreshadowing what was to come,

⁶ Mark Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer* (London Press Exchange: London, 1959). Abrams’ findings have been critiqued by the likes of Osgerby and Fowler. See Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, pp.24-26 & David Fowler, ‘Teenager Consumers? Young Wage-earners and Leisure in Manchester, 1919-1939’ in Andrew Davies and Steven Fielding (eds), *Workers’ Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford 1880-1939*. (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1992).

⁷ Ministry of Education. *Youth Service*, p.59.

⁸ Taken from a Table of First Marriage Rates by Sex and Age, 1901-95, England and Wales in A. H. Halsey & Josephine Webb (eds), *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends* (Macmillan: Hampshire, 2000), p.56.

⁹ Osgerby makes this comment regarding the impact of national service on young men but it can arguably be used in context of the female situation as well. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.21.

¹⁰ See David Fowler, *The First Teenagers. The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (The Woburn Press: London, 1995). Although Todd has critiqued Fowler’s use of the term ‘teenager’ to describe interwar youth see: Selina Todd (2007), ‘Breadwinners and Dependents: Working Class Young People in England, 1918-1955’, *International Review of Social History*, 52 (1), p.58. Also see Chapter 2 in Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*.

the interwar period saw the beginnings of a changing relationship between young people and the spheres of work and leisure, which was only to intensify as years progressed. A degree of financial independence in the interwar period meant that youths had the funds to experience and take advantage of leisure opportunities at this time. Furthermore, young people were targeted by radio, magazines and fashion companies, which marked the growing recognition of the power of young people in their role as consumers. Certain leisure activities also attracted the attention of young people, with the cinema and the dancehall in particular attracting large numbers of predominantly working class adolescents. Therefore, the prominence of such leisure activities at this time, particularly the dancehall, as Davies argues, can be seen as symbolic of “a new freedom among working class youths during the 1920s.”¹¹ Together these shifts, Springhall suggests, were part of a wider institutionalisation of the period of youth as a lifecycle stage in the twentieth century with the expansion of educational, legislative, employment and cultural ‘benchmarks’ through which youth could be identified as a distinct social category.¹²

The recognition of the distinctiveness of adolescence also saw a growing concern towards young people and as such the twentieth century saw a clear departure in approaches to youth. The identification of adolescence as a time of mental and emotional development by psychologist Stanley Hall in 1904 gave way to the idea that the period of youth was a time in which young people were both vulnerable and problematic. This coupled with, what Gillis has termed, the ‘democratisation’ of the youth experience, meaning the extension of the middle class ‘norm’ of adolescence to the working classes, saw contemporaries increasingly identifying a ‘problem of youth’ throughout this period.¹³ The tendency for adolescence to be a period of, what Hall termed, ‘storm and stress’, was particularly worrying in the case of the working classes who were believed to be especially vulnerable. The juvenile delinquent was the epitome of such concerns and will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The acknowledgement that adolescents required moral guidance and training to combat problematic behaviour saw the expansion of youth organisations which aimed

¹¹ Andrew Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working Class Culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939* (Open University Press: Buckingham, 1992), p.89.

¹² Springhall, *Coming of Age*, pp.27-28.

¹³ Gillis, *Youth and History*, pp.133-134.

to do just this. Youth movements including the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, the Woodcraft Folk and the Young Farmers' Clubs (YFC), played a central role in this preparation and training for citizenship, or so they themselves believed. By providing educational, rational and rewarding recreation, these movements hoped to inculcate their members into an order of good citizenry and, in so doing, erase problematic behaviour. In 1939 these movements were brought together under the creation of the Youth Service by the Board of Education, in the hopes of centralising youth training. By drawing together voluntary organisations, along with education authorities and state organisations catered toward young people, the service aimed to protect and encompass of all young people aged 14-21.¹⁴ But the Youth Service was not without problems and by 1959 the Albemarle committee found that that the service was underfunded, lacked leadership and was in need of expansion. Until these problems were addressed, it concluded, it could not effectively tackle the “puzzling” and “shocking”¹⁵ behaviour of post-war youth and adequately prepare them for future duties of citizenship. These youth movements saw relatively high, although fluctuating, levels of membership across this period and a study of the training provided by them becomes as central to our perception of twentieth century youth as the ‘milk bar’ is to our image of the post-war ‘teenager’. It is to previous historical understandings of youth in the mid-century that this thesis will now turn.

Historiography

Histories of youth in the mid-twentieth century are prolific to say the least and for the purpose of this thesis, they will be surmised within a discussion of two key themes. Firstly class and secondly, gender. Studies of the working class in the mid-century have often emphasised the improvement in living conditions experienced by the majority of working class people, as a consequence of the creation of the welfare state.¹⁶ Many of these discussions surrounding post-war affluence have played

¹⁴ For a discussion of the Youth Service in England and Wales see Bernard Davies, *From Voluntarism to Welfare State: History of the Youth Service in England Volume 1 1939-1979* (National Youth Agency: Leicester, 1999); Mica Nava, ‘Youth Service Provision, Social Order and the Question of Girls’ in Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava (eds) *Gender and Generation* (Macmillan: London, 1984); Penny Tinkler (1994), ‘An All-Round Education. The Board of Education’s Policy for the Leisure-Time Training of Girls, 1939-50’, *History of Education*, **23** (4), 385-403; Chapter 10 in Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.1.

¹⁶ For discussions of the working class affluence in this period see Peter Hennessy, *Having It So Good:*

themselves out in considerations of leisure, with increased opportunities for recreation being symbolic of an improvement in life style. Initially, narratives of youth in this period had suggested that young people were the main beneficiaries of this post-war affluence and pointed to the emergence of young people as a homogeneous social group, in which generational difference replaced class difference. Young people with disposable income to spend and countless leisure opportunities on which to spend it became the epitome of a society in which class difference had been erased. This Whiggish narrative is one that has been highly scrutinised. The 1930s, often seen as a period of unemployment and depression, has been reconsidered as a period of prosperity for many of the working classes.¹⁷ Similarly, the post-war period has been reconsidered, with historians emphasising the persistence of restrictions of poverty at this time.¹⁸ Furthermore, cultural researchers focusing on youth have often pointed to the continued significance of class and of class identity in the sub-cultural youth groups of the 1950s.¹⁹ Class has therefore become central to our understanding of youth in the mid-century particularly in terms of leisure. As Tinkler found in her exploration of girls across the period from 1920-1950, class remained significant in

Britain in the Fifties (Penguin: London, 2006); Mike Savage and Andrew Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class* (Routledge: London, 1994); John Benson, *The Working Class in Britain 1850-1939* (Longman: Essex, 1989); Andrew August, *The British Working Class 1832-1940* (Pearson: Harlow, 2007); Arthur Marwick, *Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France and the USA since 1930*, Second Edition (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1990); Eric Hopkins, *The Rise and Decline of the English Working Classes 1918-1990* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London, 1991).

¹⁷ See Martin Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (Bodley Head: London, 2008).

¹⁸ See Selina Todd (2008), 'Affluence, Class and Crown Street: Reinvestigating the Post-War Working Class', *Contemporary British History*, **22** (4), 501-518; Ben Jones, *The Working Class in Mid Twentieth Century-England: Community, Identity and Social Memory* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2012); Mike Savage (2008), 'Contesting Affluence. An Introduction', *Contemporary British History*, **22** (4), 445-455; Bourke has highlighted the continued prominence of historical constructions of class in understandings of self identity in the mid-century. Joanna Bourke. *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960. Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (Routledge: London, 2002). Discussions of class identity can also be found in Stephen Brooke (2001), 'Gender and Working Class Identity in Britain during the 1950s', *Journal of Social History*, **34** (4), 773-795. For the continued importance of social class across this period see Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1998).

¹⁹ Stuart Hall & Tony Jefferson (eds) *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*. (HarperCollins Academic: London, 1975); Graham Murdock & Robin McCron. 'Youth and Class: The Career of a Confusion' in Geoff Mungham & Geoff Pearson (eds) *Working Class Youth Culture* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd: London, 1976); John Clarke & Tony Jefferson, 'Working Class Youth Cultures' in Geoff Mungham & Geoff Pearson (eds) *Working Class Youth Culture* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1976); Dick Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (Methuen: London, 2002. Originally published 1979); Paul Rock & Stanley Cohen, 'The Teddy Boy' in Vernon Bogdanor & Robert Skidelsky, *The Age of Affluence: 1951-1964* (Macmillan: London, 1970).

experiences of girlhood.²⁰

The importance of class has also surfaced in historical discussions of youth movements. From the 1960s onwards there has existed a growing historical interest in youth movements. Springhall locates this shift within the cultural climate of the 1960s and the mounting student protests that were taking place, which led to an increased interest in the way that young people, had been organised and mobilised in the past.²¹ It was against this background that Wilkinson produced his comprehensive discussion of youth movements in the early twentieth century.²² Within this growing interest in youth movements, discussions of class have often been central. Historians of the Boy Scouts, in particular, have concerned themselves with debates surrounding social control and militarism. Springhill, for example, has placed the movement firmly within discussions of youth and social control, arguing that in the early years members of the Scouts, for the most part made up of lower middle and upper working class children, were being trained in the skills they needed to easily assimilate into the 'urban order'. With an ideology which inspired upward social mobility, membership of the Scouts was therefore a way in which members could better themselves and this they did through a middle class and public school ethos.²³ The emphasis of early Scouts on military training, identified by Springhall and Rosenthal, underlines the importance of the movement in developing middle class values of masculinity through preparation for their role as soldiers.

In contrast, revisionist historians including Warren, Dedman and Pryke, have argued that the period after the First World War saw a decline in the imperial sentiment of the movement and a growing internationalism, resulting in an emphasis on 'citizen' training.²⁴ However, despite such debates, discussions of Scouting have often

²⁰ Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood: Popular Magazines for Girls Growing up in England, 1920-1950* (Taylor Francis: London, 1995), p.1.

²¹ John Springhall (1971), 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, **16** (2), p.125.

²² Paul Wilkinson (1969), 'English Youth Movements, 1908-30', *Journal of Contemporary History*, **4** (2), 3-23.

²³ John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (Croom Helm: London, 1977), p.121.

²⁴ Martin Dedman (1993), 'Baden-Powell, Militarism, and the 'Invisible' Contributors' to the Boy Scout Scheme, 1904-1920', *Twentieth Century British History*, **4** (3), 201-223; Sam Pryke (1998), 'The Popularity of Nationalism in the Early British Boy Scout Movement', *Social History*, **23** (3), 309-324; Allen Warren (1986), 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and Citizen

assumed that the movements were in one way or another attempting to ‘control’ working class youth. Revisions of this argument, however, have taken place. Drawing upon a variety of sources, from logbooks to diaries, historians have begun to question the extent to which the movements acted as a mechanism for social control.

Suggesting that throughout the period, different levels of agency were at play with Scouting, providing the opportunity for youth to forge their own class identities and many did so with enthusiasm. As Summers concludes, although we can place the movements within understandings of militarism and social control, if we do so exclusively, we “fail to understand an important experience in a great many young lives of the period.”²⁵ Personal meanings of membership have recently become a popular strand of Scouting studies.²⁶

Through an exploration of selected youth movements across the mid-twentieth century this thesis contributes to historiographical discussions on class and youth in two ways. Firstly, it explores the training provided by these movements across the period and identifies the centrality of class within it. In so doing it highlights shifting understandings of the predominantly middle class youth movements towards the working class experience in this period, contributing to discussions surrounding the growing affluence at this time. Secondly, this thesis will contribute to debates surrounding social control, by highlighting the tendency for movements to agonise over the ‘problem of youth’ in this period and the central role of youth movements in tackling this. This problem was considered to be a distinctly working class one and as such, the role of youth movements in ‘saving’ the working classes will be addressed.

Historians have also explored understandings of mid-century youth through the lens of gender. In both the historiographical and popular memory of mid-century youth,

Training in Great Britain, 1900-1920’, *The English Historical Review*, **101** (399), 376-398. Replies to Warren’s article from Springhall and Summers in the *English Historical Review* are useful in understanding the nuances of the militarism vs. citizenship debate: see John Springhall (1987), ‘Debate: Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the future?’, *English Historical Review*, **102** (405), 934-942 and Anne Summers (1987), ‘Scouts, Guides and VADs: A Note in Reply to Allen Warren’, *The English Historical Review*, **102** (405), 943-947. For Warren’s reply to these criticisms see Allen Warren (1987), ‘Baden-Powell: A Final Comment’, *The English Historical Review*, **102** (405), 948-950.

²⁵ Anne Summers (1987), ‘Scouts, Guides and VADs: A Note in Reply to Allen Warren’, *The English Historical Review*, **102** (405), p.943.

²⁶ See Tammy Proctor (1998), ‘(Uni)Forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in Britain, 1908-39’, *History Workshop Journal*, **Spring** (45), 103-134.

girls have been somewhat missing from stories of youthful experience, particularly the more masculine youth subcultures of the 1950s. The first to critically discuss this omission were feminist cultural theorists in the 1990s who, after noting the omission of girls from the sub-cultural theory of their peers, set out to highlight the activities of females within subcultural activity. The most significant understanding of the gendered nature of youth culture has come from McRobbie who explained that the predominantly masculine narrative of youth was a result of the gendered ownership of cultural space in the post-war period.²⁷ While teenage boys in the 1950s took ownership of the public sphere, the street and the milk bar, girls, by comparison, created a space for leisure and consumption within the private sphere, the home and in particular the bedroom. These were not sites of compliance but places of subcultural resistance.²⁸

This notion is one that has been challenged by historians, who see girls participating in many public arenas from the pub to the dancehall. As Osgerby writes, they “have rarely been excluded altogether. Instead of simply sitting in their bedrooms since 1945 ... teenage girls have actively participated in numerous public arenas.”²⁹ Nonetheless, historians concerned with women’s leisure have found that girls would often face more restrictions on their leisure time, in comparison to boys.³⁰ Notions of appropriate behaviour alongside expectations that girls would assist in the running of the home often limited the amount of time and opportunities girls had for leisure in comparison to the relatively ‘free’ time of boys of the same age. As such, as Tinkler notes, experiences, meanings and definitions of girlhood throughout the first half of the twentieth century were distinct from boyhood.³¹

The importance of gender has also come into focus in the historiography of youth movements. Historians, including Dyhouse and Latham, have noted the distinctly gendered socialisation of youth organisations.³² Discussion of gender within the

²⁷ Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen* (Macmillan Press: London, 1991), p.14.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.57.

³⁰ For constraints on girl’s leisure time see: Claire Langhamer, *Women’s Leisure in England 1920-60* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2000), pp.88-99.

³¹ Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood*, p.1.

³² Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1981) & Emma Latham (2000), ‘The Liverpool Boys’ Association and the Liverpool

Scout and Guide movements was initially limited, with the participation of girls usually ending up as a footnote in the grand narrative of Scouting history.³³ It wasn't until the 1990s that a number of historians begun to take notice of the Guide movement and works by Warren, Voeltz and later by Proctor, began to elucidate the experience of girls.³⁴ A number of these have highlighted the importance of domesticity in the Girl Guides and the central role of the home in understandings of citizenship for girls, particularly within the context of empire. Others have discussed how Guiding played an important role in providing acceptable spaces of which girls could take ownership.³⁵ The idea of cultural space and its relationship to sub-cultural activity, championed by McRobbie, has therefore important resonances for our understanding of Guiding and gendered leisure practices in the twentieth-century.

This thesis will contribute to discussions of gender and youth by focusing on the gendered training provided by youth movements at this time. It will explore the dominance of the home in constructions of 'good' citizenship for young girls in this period and investigate how understandings of 'youthful' adventure form part of a dominant masculine understanding of youth. This thesis will also explore the centrality of sexual promiscuity in understandings of female deviance within these movements. In doing so it contributes to the historiography of young girls, which has highlighted the centrality of domesticity in experiences of youth in the twentieth century. Of course discussions of class and gender can never truly be seen in isolation and a growing field of historiographical research acknowledges this complexity, particularly in relation to leisure experiences. Davies, for example, has examined the multi faceted complexities of experiences of working class leisure in the interwar period and argues that while poverty had an important impact on the leisure

Union of Youth Clubs: Youth Organizations and Gender, 1940–70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, **35** (3), 423-437.

³³ For example, Springhall discussed girls only as an appendix to his work on youth movements. Despite the fact, that he himself acknowledges, that in the 1960s an estimated 60% of British women had been Girl Guides at some point in their lives. Springhall. *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.131.

³⁴ Richard A. Voeltz (1992), 'The Antidote to' Khaki Fever'? The Expansion of the British Girl Guides during the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, **27** (4), 627-638 & Allen Warren, "'Mothers for the Empire' The Girl Guides Association in Britain, 1909-1939' in J. A. Mangan (ed.) *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1990).

³⁵ Tammy Proctor, 'Gender, Generation, and the Politics of Guiding and Scouting in Interwar Britain' (PhD diss, Rutgers University, 1995).

experiences, this was further mitigated by gendered experience and family structure.³⁶

Fundamentally, this thesis is also contributing to a general field of historiography surrounding the mid-twentieth century. The period from 1930-1960 has often been categorised as one of enormous change, both in terms of class and gender, with the war often being seen as a turning point in terms of these.³⁷ This thesis explores this period through the eyes of youth movements themselves. The effect of the war will be considered, alongside shifts in approaches to youth across the period.

The Importance of the Rural

We have seen then, how the historiography of youth and of youth movements have conceptualised experience in terms of predominantly two categories, class and gender. This thesis informs these discussions, by suggesting that essentially mid-twentieth century youth movements' approach to young people reveals important continuities. It makes a departure from existing historiography, however, in its central focus: the importance of the rural in understandings of mid-century youth. This is important, as, while young people have received a large amount of attention from historians, many historical conceptions of youth are strictly urban. There are identifiable reasons for this. Firstly, the growth of a distinctive youth culture across this period developed from shifts in employment, the growth of clerical jobs and rising wages for example, which were particularly beneficial to urban youth. Those living in rural areas, by contrast, saw less dramatic improvements in opportunities and were often reliant on local transport to access jobs, which were central to youthful affluence. Similarly, the growth of commercial leisure pursuits, for example the cinema, did not reach rural villages to the extent that they did the city. This suggests that the hallmarks of mid-century youth are in many ways urban constructs. Therefore, for the historian keen to explore rural experiences of youthful leisure, the account of the chance meeting between the 7th Dunstable Company and a gang of Teddy Boys at the beginning of

³⁶ Davies, *Leisure*.

³⁷ Arthur Marwick, *Britain in the Century of Total War: War, Peace and Social Change 1900-1967* (Bodley Head: London, 1968). For the impact of the war on youth see: Bill Osgerby, 'From the Roaring Twenties to the Swinging Sixties: Continuity and Change in British Youth Culture, 1929-59' in Brian Brivanti & Harriet Jones (ed.) *What Difference Did the War Make?* (Leicester University Press: Leicester, 1993).

this introduction is quite revealing: the figure of the ‘Teddy’ here symbolising the hedonistic, urban behavioural patterns of post-war youth, directly contrasted, in this account, with the image of the dutiful, environmentally conscious and rural based Girl Guide. There are a number of dichotomies at play here, be that boy/girl, middle class/working class and, most importantly for this thesis, the urban/rural.

The differences identified here are significant. While the metropolitan experience of the Teddy Boy was a reality for relatively few boys at this time, there were, in 1958 alone, over 1 million Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. Both of these movements placed the countryside at the heart of their ideologies.³⁸ The sheer numbers of members at this time suggests then that many young people at this time were seeking pleasure in the countryside and taking part in adult controlled leisure experiences. Rural and urban identities were not automatically incompatible of course. ‘Teddies’ could be Boy Scouts and vice versa. However, within youth movements at this time, an overt distinction was often drawn between the urban ‘problem’ youth and the rural ‘good’ citizen. It is clear that historians’ reliance upon an urban construction of ‘youth’ needs challenging if we are to fully understand the complex nature of youthful experience across the mid-twentieth century.

Furthermore, historians have often dismissed the centrality of the countryside within youth movements as being part of a wider popular imperialist imperative, rather than considering in more depth the implications of the rural-centred citizenship extolled by them. In contrast, Warren points to the importance of “the cult of the out-of-doors, the centrality of the activity and symbolism of the camp and the reaction against the pressures and alienation of the urban environment”³⁹ within the Scouting movement. He argues that:

this should cause the reader of *Scouting for Boys* no surprise
since the bulk of its contents are devoted, not to imperial
symbolism or patriotic instruction, but to the world of the wild

³⁸ Leech suggests that Teddies at their peak only represented a ‘fringe group’ of youth. Leech, *Youthquake*, p.5 Figures for Scouting movements taken from organisational census of both the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. See appendix one.

³⁹ Allen Warren, ‘Citizens of the Empire: Baden-Powell, Scouts and Guides and an Imperial Ideal, 1900-40’ in John M. Mackenzie (ed.) *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1986), p.252.

and how it might be enjoyed and used. It was therefore the camp, not the Empire, which remained for both Scouts and Guides the most enduring symbol and metaphor of their ideals in the sphere of training for the young.⁴⁰

This statement is vital to the argument of this thesis. While previous studies have highlighted the importance of empire, this thesis explores the centrality of the countryside to understandings of ‘good’ citizenship. The thesis therefore, makes an intervention within the historiography of these movements, by focusing on the role of the English countryside within them. All four of the movements considered here believed their training and activities to be of the utmost importance in generating ‘good’ citizenship. The English countryside was fundamental to that training; the rural sphere provided the basis for the physical and spiritual development of all members. But precisely how did the landscape inform these movements and did the importance of landscape remain across the period particularly as empire declined? How did the movements map their gendered ideologies onto the landscape and in what manner did they use the countryside as a tool for the training of youth? Fundamentally, this thesis suggests that the centrality of the countryside in youth training in the period from 1930-1960, a time in which the British Empire saw significant decline, reveals increasing concern about ‘modernity’. It is to conceptualisations of modernity that we will now turn.

Meanings of Modernity

In 1959 the Albemarle report determined that “The ‘problems of youth’ are deeply rooted in the soil of a disturbed modern world.”⁴¹ Throughout the mid-twentieth century, discourses surrounding problematic youth often involved a discussion of the impact of modernity. In July 1936 the Guide organisation asked itself in a response to a recent drop in members, “Is Anything Wrong? Does Guiding Appeal to the Modern Girl?”⁴² Twenty years later the Boy Scout Publication, *The Scouter*, presented the topic “The Place of Scouting in a Modern Society.”⁴³ The idea of modernity was

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.2.

⁴² *The Guider*, July 1936, p.267.

⁴³ *The Scouter*, January 1956, p.8.

therefore central to the discussion of youth within these movements at this time. But what did this term mean and how did they define it?

‘Modern’ is a term which is often bandied about without consideration or reflection. As such the abstract idea of ‘modernity’ conjures up diverse images. Architecture, art, film, beauty and fitness are just a few of an array of elements that have often been ascribed the elusive term. A number of academics, at first sociologists and more recently historians, have discussed the negotiations and experiences of twentieth century modernity resulting in a number of debates, which are central to our understanding of modernity within these movements.⁴⁴ A number of these discussions will be reflected upon here.

The first is Berman’s understanding of the twentieth century as witnessing a form of ‘popular’ modernity or ‘modernism in the streets’.⁴⁵ There is certainly evidence to suggest that youth movements drew on an understanding of ‘mass modernity’. By this I suggest that these movements believed technological innovation and social development to be reaching the majority of the population, affecting their behaviour and ultimately creating a modern society. This was part of a wider understanding of modernity as being a ‘transformation in experience’ and part of a discourse of progress and betterment surrounding meanings of ‘modernity’.⁴⁶ As such the post-war period represented somewhat of an epoch of modernity for these movements, who saw shifts in education, health care, family life and the creation of the welfare state as being symbolic of a modern society. The ‘universal’ nature of such shifts suggested that modern living was community driven and a liberal process, in which all were equal. Equality then, or at least perceived equality, is linked with post-war

⁴⁴ For a discussion of modernity see: Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New Edition. (Verso: London, 2010). David Gilbert, David Matless and Brian Short (eds) *Geographies of British Modernity* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2003); Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism between the Wars* (Routledge: London, 1991). Mica Nava and Alan O’Shea, *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity* (Routledge: London, 1996); Martin Daunt and Bernhard Rieger, *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Berg: Oxford, 2001); Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds) *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (Rivers Oram Press: London, 1999).

⁴⁵ Berman. *All that is Solid Melts into Air*, pp.164-171.

⁴⁶ Ben Jones and Rebecca Searle (2013), ‘Humphrey Jennings, the Left and the Experience of Modernity in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain’, *History Workshop Journal*, 75 (1), p.191; Alan O’Shea, ‘English Subjects of Modernity’ in Mica Nava and Alan O’Shea, *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity* (Routledge: London, 1996), p.16.

understandings of modernity. Youth were the ultimate beneficiaries of these shifts and were conceptualised as being inherently modern. As Osgerby has shown, young people, particularly in the post-war period, encapsulated and became almost symbolic of societal shifts that had followed the war.⁴⁷ Perceptions of change were however, as Gillis has shown, not always positive and ‘modern’ youth drew much attention from contemporaries within these movements, who voiced concern over the effect of modern shifts upon young people.⁴⁸ This concern was sparked particularly by the inclusion of the working classes in aspects of modernity, including mass entertainment, post-war affluence and the affect that ‘modern’ shifts were having upon their behaviour.

Secondly, a discussion of modernity within youth movements supports the assertion that the post-war period in particular witnessed the growth of ‘self-conscious’ modernity.⁴⁹ While O’Shea has recognised this self-awareness in the consumer culture of the 1950s, this thesis identifies a conscious understanding of youth movements regarding the ‘modern’ world around them.⁵⁰ This is seen in comments describing post-war society as an “atomic”⁵¹ or “chromium-plated age”⁵² and consistent references to the rapidly changing lives of young people.

⁴⁷ Osgerby. *Youth in Britain*, p.1.

⁴⁸ Gillis asserts that modernisation is not always equated with progress. Gillis, *Youth and History*, p.xii.

⁴⁹ Raymond Williams recognised a ‘self referential’ modernity in the post-war period. Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters, ‘Introduction’ in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds) *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964* (Rivers Oram Press: London, 1999), p.10.

⁵⁰ O’Shea. ‘English Subjects’, p.29.

⁵¹ *The Guider*, April 1959, p.108.

⁵² *The Scouter*, January 1960, p. 5.


Figure 2.0: “Grandmama, Mother and Me” Poem from a 1959 issue of *The Guider*⁵³

Grandmama, Mother and Me

GRANNIE loved waltzing (what a naughty girl!)
Mother the charleston, which was thought bizarre.
I like the cha-cha-cha.

Grannie had Nannie and a Governess,
Mother's an old girl of St. Octipus,
I failed the 11 plus.


Grannie wore bloomers, on her bicycle.
Ma a divided skirt, when in her teens.
But I wear jeans.



Pelissier was Grannie's favourite man.
Mother loved Jack Buchanan in her fashion.
Tommy's my passion.

Grannie wore puffs of other people's hair,
And Mother's hair was cropped, short as a man's.
I like pony tails.

Grannie sang ballads to an upright grand.
Mother, they say, wore out the H.M.V.
T.V. for me.




Grannie had three domestics (and a boy).
Mother (and she's a daily) only one.
I've none.

Grandmama married at the age of twenty.
Mother at twenty-three.
Eighteen for me!

ELIZABETH HARTLEY

Illustrated by Jennetta Vise



Ideas of ‘the modern’ were always categorised in relation to the permanent ‘other’, that of tradition. The above poem illustrates this nicely, with past experiences of youth being drawn upon to support an understanding of a distinctly modern experience of youth in 1960. Specifically it draws upon ‘modern’ post-war shifts including changes in education, “I failed the 11 plus”, early marriage, “Eighteen for me”, and mass commercial leisure “Tommy [Steele] for me”. In doing so it contrasts past experiences with the present to demonstrate the distinctiveness of youth in 1959. As Nava and O’Shea write “Within modernity, there is no escape from historicisation; in fact, it is only within modernity that tradition is invented, and that the past is an essential tool for addressing the new.”⁵⁴

Thirdly, understandings of modernity and the opposition between tradition and the ‘modern’ within the context of the mid-twentieth century must also be seen in a socio-

⁵³ *The Guider*, April 1959, p.105.

⁵⁴ Mica Nava and Alan O’Shea, ‘Introduction’ in Mica Nava and Alan O’Shea (eds) *Modern Times: reflections on a century of English modernity* (Routledge: London, 1996), pp.3-4.

geographic context. Modernity becomes imposed upon two spheres, the urban and the rural, with the latter seemingly preserving historical ideas, values and morals and the former being a site of constant change and flux. Historians studying understandings of Englishness and national identity have long acknowledged this spatial understanding of modernity. A study of the centrality of the rural idyll in the mid-century will be looked at in more detail in the following chapter of this thesis. Bound up in discussions of the rural within these youth movements was an inherent nostalgia regarding the historical place of the countryside within the nation. Further to this, the rural was portrayed as being innately and organically beneficial to ‘modern’ youth, as it provided an antidote to an urban problem. Importantly, ‘modern’ youth were often characterised as urban, for the sheer fact that the modern influences particularly of leisure, which were so vital in the creation of a distinct youth identity in the post-war period, were not as available to those living in rural villages.

This geographical juxtaposition has been somewhat dispersed in recent years by a wave of historical research which draws a link between ideas of tradition and modernity within the twentieth century countryside. The acknowledgement of the complexity of the interwar outdoor movement, which has often been used as evidence to support the popularity of ‘anti-modernity’ at this time, is one strand of this understanding, with historians suggesting that the outdoor movement, while drawing on historical notions of the rural, also created a complex notion of rural modernity. A key advocate of this argument is Matless, who suggests that the enthusiasm for the outdoors in the mid-twentieth century and the growing preservation movement which grew from this were innately modern, drawing upon the aesthetically modern ideas of order and design, as part of a modern redesigning of the rural landscape.⁵⁵ Trentmann, on the other hand, has identified the diverse nature of the anti-modernism at the core of the movement and the ambivalence of the understandings of modernity that underpinned this.⁵⁶

Another angle of study has drawn attention to images and representations of the rural in the mid-twentieth century. Potts, for example, has highlighted the ‘modern’ nature

⁵⁵ David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (Reaktion Books: London, 1998), p.62.

⁵⁶ Frank Trentmann (1994), ‘Civilisation and its Discontents: English Neo-romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth-Century Western Culture’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, **29** (4), 583-625.

of rural imagery and suggests that while images of the rural conjured up nostalgic reflections for some, in other ways images of the countryside also drew upon understandings of a rural modernity with a focus on order, neatness and light.⁵⁷ A recent focus on the political use of the countryside has also led to a rethinking of the 'traditional' (suggesting conservative) rural sphere. Studies have sought to bring to the fore the growing identification of liberal politics with the countryside and understandings of community. The recognition of rights within the countryside, particularly rights to access for all, suggests an increasingly 'modern' and progressive understanding of citizenship and ownership. Therefore, there has been a recent growing historical understanding of the countryside in the mid twentieth century, as conceptually straddling the line of both traditional and modern.

Here then, an understanding of the complex nature of geographical modernity suggests much about youth movements and their constructions of 'modern youth'. The countryside was utilised by these movements as a traditional, but in many ways contemporary, solution to the problems of modern youth. Simply put, the role of the rural within these youth movements was not wholly 'traditional'. While they certainly did not situate themselves within 'the modern' sphere, neither did they represent themselves as being the torchbearers of tradition. Aspects of the training provided by the clubs, particularly surrounding fitness, but also technology, cannot be removed from the 'modern' context from which they generated. The movements envisaged themselves as being the vanguard of a new generation of young people. We see this in the forward thinking, future driven training provided by the clubs in which an acceptance and enthusiasm of future roles within the nation was key. Ideas of betterment and improvement were central here, with the movements placing understandings of self-development within the sphere of the country. While the idea of modernity was somewhat demonised then, the notion of the 'future' was anything but. This distinction between modernity and 'the future' is one that has been made by Matless, who notes the positioning of the countryside, in particular in the planner preservationist movement, as a symbol of a "better future".⁵⁸ This can clearly be seen when looking at conceptualisations of young people within youth organisations.

⁵⁷ Alex Potts, 'Constable Country Between the Wars' in Raphael Samuel (ed.) *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*; V.3, *National Fictions* (Routledge: London, 1988), p.175.

⁵⁸ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.16.

Ultimately, young people presented a dichotomy for youth leaders. On the one hand they were representatives of a promising future as ‘good’ citizens; while on the other, youth could represent a deviant ‘modern’ present. As Osgerby succinctly writes:

Social and political responses to youth, therefore, were never entirely negative. Throughout the post-war period a recurring duality saw young people both vilified as the most deplorable evidence of cultural bankruptcy and almost simultaneously, celebrated as the exciting precursor to a prosperous future.⁵⁹

Within youth movements this distinction was clear, on the one hand young people represented the ills of modern society while, on the other, with the correct training, they could become the ‘good’ citizens of tomorrow. The idea of ‘good’ citizenship is one that was regularly used by these movements and it is on this that this thesis will now focus.

Understandings of Citizenship

The growing recognition of ‘youth’ as a separate and independent group in society, and particularly the emergence of the ‘teenager’ post-war, revealed an increasing need for the training and instruction of young people in their duties and role as future citizens of the nation. The symbolic idea of the figure of the ‘good’ citizen is one that pervades youth movements in the mid-twentieth century. Through the provision of leisure and training, these movements hoped to develop an awareness of the importance of understanding citizenship and acting in accordance with modes of ‘good’ citizenship. There has been much discussion on citizenship, both sociological and historical. It is an ambiguous and much debated term, a detailed discussion of which will not be drawn upon at this moment.⁶⁰ Instead I will focus on how youth movements themselves defined ‘good’ citizenship and two key historiographical approaches to citizenship, which this thesis will follow.

⁵⁹ Osgerby. *Youth in Britain*, p.14.

⁶⁰ See: Keith Faulks, *Citizenship in Modern Britain* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1998) & Michael Freeden, ‘Civil Society and the Good Citizen: Competing Conceptions of Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Britain’ in Jose Harris (ed.) *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003).

Within these movements ‘good’ citizenship could be upheld in two ways, firstly, by exhibiting desired behaviour in the present and secondly, through an understanding and acceptance of their future roles in society. As such the preparation provided for the spheres of leisure, work and home was the first step in the creation of the future ‘good’ citizens of society. Ideas of duty and service to the nation were important here, particularly in the Scouting movements, which depicted actions of service, be it to the community, or indeed to the land, as being central to negotiations of ‘good’ citizenship. This was internalised by members themselves. As a member of the Marylebone Rangers Company wrote in April 1930:

There are many societies trying to lift high the ideal of citizenship, among them the great organisation of Scouts and Guides. They give a resumé of our duty and privilege as citizen in that one magic word which binds us altogether, “Service.”⁶¹

This relationship between citizenship and national duty has been identified by a number of historians focusing on citizenship. Rose has discussed the ideal of self-sacrifice, which was bound up with ideas of citizenship within the national community across Britain in the Second World War.⁶² While Weight and Beech have highlighted the relationship between citizenship and national identity, suggesting that across this period:

It was generally accepted that the nation could not survive without its people adhering to certain codes of conduct and receiving in return certain rights. Equally, those codes of conduct were seen to be meaningless unless they pertained to a commonly agreed idea of what the nation was: its unique customs, traditions, mores and overall culture.⁶³

⁶¹ *The Guide*, 5 April 1930, p.1571.

⁶² Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003).

⁶³ Richard Weight & Abigail Beach, ‘Introduction’ in Richard Weight & Abigail Beach (eds) *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (I.B. Taurus: London, 1998), p.1.

However, while the importance of the nation to understandings of citizenship was apparent across the mid-twentieth century, the movements did experience a shift in understandings of 'nation'. In the 1930s the Scouting movements' training for citizenship was often intertwined with the centrality of empire, particularly at the start of the 1930s. As a Ranger from the 1st Maida Vale Company wrote in April 1930, with regards to citizenship:

Such an organisation we have in the Scout and Guide Movement whose underlying principle is the fostering of the virtues of citizenship among the future men and women of the race. Love of country without insularity, mutual help and yet independence, the ability to act quickly in cases of emergency are principles which the movement seeks to instil. They are concepts on which the empire was founded and upon which it will be maintained.⁶⁴

Here then a member of the movement explicitly linked ideas of citizenship with the maintenance of the British Empire. As the period progressed however, the focus on Empire declined. This is a general trend recognised by Beaven in his study of male leisure and citizenship that recognises that while the interwar period saw ideas of 'good' citizenship centred on debates surrounding national efficiency, by wartime this had shifted to discussions about social cohesion.⁶⁵ In terms of the Scouting movements, the increasing international aspect of the movement and the growing international membership, along with the subsequent loss of colonies in the post-war period, meant that understandings of British citizenship, while still directly centred upon the nation, became more explicitly developed around the sphere of the English countryside. This was certainly also true for the Young Farmers' Clubs, which being predominantly rural by nature, situated meanings of good citizenship around proficiency in the agricultural sphere.

Ideas of duty and service were central to these youth movements and their understanding of 'good' citizenship, but alongside this was another aspect of

⁶⁴ *The Guide*, 12 April 1930, p.1602.

⁶⁵ Brad Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2005), pp.6-9.

citizenship, centred upon rhetoric of rights. This was part of a wider social trend at this time, which saw the liberalisation of citizenship and shifting understandings of the relationship between citizen and state.⁶⁶ The movements understood that there was a negotiation between the citizen and the state, which required a knowledge and understanding of both rights and duties. This attitude was solidified in the post-war period, with the introduction of the welfare state and an understanding of the universality of its reach, but in youth movements it can be pinpointed before then. In the 1930s the Guide movement, in preparation for obtaining the 'Citizenship' badge, provided information to its members on the state and the provision of education, including information on scholarships and evening classes, along with information on unemployment exchanges.⁶⁷ There was an acknowledgement here that these members should be aware of what was open to them and what should be provided by the state. Similarly, the YFCs, although more politically fluid than the Scouting movements, also kept its members up-to-date on shifts and opportunities in agricultural education.

This rhetoric of rights was also highly visible in the Woodcraft Folk, whose aim was to make its members aware of the rights and struggle of the working classes in the hope of inspiring a 'new world order'. In 1943 the left-wing movement declared:

The Folk can still be a fine auxiliary weapon for political and economic emancipation through the social training of children; still the ideal training ground for the future fighters of freedom; still one of the best practical experiments in communal living and education ever developed.”⁶⁸

Here then the movement, in their training of “fighters for freedom”, separated themselves from the likes of the Scouts. While the Scouts were training youth for their position as citizens of the nation, the Woodcraft were encouraging a critical thinking and revolutionary attitude amongst the young working classes. Here then we see how meanings of citizenship within the movements were varied and illusive, for the most

⁶⁶ Keith Faulks has suggested that “modern notions of citizenship are tied to the development of the liberal state”. Keith Faulks, *Citizenship* (Routledge: London, 2000), p.21.

⁶⁷ *The Guide*, 30 April 1932, p.50 & *The Guide*, 27 February 1932, p.1422.

⁶⁸ *Report of the National Folk Council 1943*, Youth Movement Archive (hereafter YMA)/ Woodcraft Folk (hereafter WF)/4, London School of Economics (hereafter LSE), Holborn, p.12

part setting up a distinctive idea of citizenship which involved a dual understanding of duties and rights.

Ideas of duties and rights were, however, strictly defined by gender, with both the Scouting movements and the YFCs propagating ideas of ‘good’ citizenship that were distinctly gendered. The public / private divide, so often identified by historians, can once again be pinpointed here, with the role of girls within the movement often being linked to the home. This is a trend that Tebbutt has recently identified in her study of interwar masculinities. She writes that meanings of ‘good’ citizenship for boys were often designed around understandings of ‘service’ and in juxtaposition to feminine forms of service.⁶⁹

Alongside understandings of citizenship within youth movements themselves, this study also situates itself within two current historiographical approaches to citizenship. Firstly, it follows a growing school of study, which links an understanding of citizenship to the sphere of leisure. Throughout history ideas of citizenship have often been played out in the leisure sphere, and the relationship between citizenship and leisure is therefore a complex one. Time and again contemporary commentators focused on leisure as a place where people could enhance or, in some cases, diminish their citizenship and where meanings and ideas of citizenship could be contested. Tinkler writes that from 1930 to 1950: “Embraced within liberal discourses on citizenship, commentators either implicitly or explicitly focused on the individual’s use of leisure as a crucial site within which citizenship could, and should, be expressed and developed.”⁷⁰ This relationship became particularly salient in the twentieth century, when changes in leisure patterns saw the rise of mass leisure and the recognition that leisure, defined in relation to paid work, should be available to all.⁷¹ This shift saw a torrent of concern from social observers concerned with the ‘leisure problem’ and anxious over the effect of mass leisure upon the working classes. As Beaven notes, ‘bad’ leisure practices were seen as a critical problem in the development of ‘good’ citizenship.⁷² By the same token, if used wisely, leisure time

⁶⁹ Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p.27.

⁷⁰ Penny Tinkler (2003), ‘Cause for Concern: Young Women and Leisure, 1930-1950’, *Women’s History Review*, 12 (2), p.238.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.235.

⁷² Beaven, *Leisure*, p.215.

could enhance a person, build character and prepare them for their roles as citizens of the nation.⁷³ This thought Grant has highlighted in the period from 1951. He argues that cultural emphasis on affluence and the home led to ‘spare time’ becoming crucial in debates over citizenship and civil defence in the post-war period, having a fundamental effect on the relationship between citizen and the state.⁷⁴

There was also a socio-geographic dichotomy at play in understandings of leisure and citizenship at this time. As Matless argues, the growing popularity of open air leisure and the pervasiveness of the countryside in ideas of Englishness following the First World War saw the growth of the idea of a ‘landscaped citizenship’.⁷⁵ This ideal appeared as outdoor leisure became desirable and part of an “art of right living”,⁷⁶ whereby good citizenship could emerge through ‘cultures of landscape’, three in particular, the intellectual, the spiritual and the physical.⁷⁷ He argues “In short, an essential part of belonging to the nation was to take pleasure in the environment. In the 1940s, taking pleasure in England, whether through leisurely walking or concentrated field study could be a route to good citizenship.”⁷⁸ The youth movements which are the subject of this thesis followed this ideal engaging with the spiritual, intellectual and physical ‘cultures of landscape’ as a route to the betterment of the nation’s youth. All four worked within the dominant theory that a healthy, active leisure life could teach young people desirable qualities and train them for their responsibilities as future citizens of the nation. Leisure organisations for youth were considered the most appropriate way through which young people could learn and develop their role as citizens.⁷⁹ The movements examined in this thesis became instrumental in shaping the leisure pursuits of their members and, in so doing, improving their citizenship through providing access to the land.

⁷³ Tinkler, ‘Cause for Concern’, p.238.

⁷⁴ Matthew Grant (2011), ‘Civil Defence Gives Meaning to Your Leisure’: Citizenship, Participation, and Cultural Change in Cold War Recruitment Propaganda, 1949–54’, *Twentieth Century British History*, **22** (1), 52–78.

⁷⁵ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.62.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ David Matless (1997), ‘Moral Geographies of English Landscape’, *Landscape Research*, **22** (2), p.142.

⁷⁸ David Matless, ‘Taking Pleasure in England: Landscape and Citizenship in the 1940s’ in Richard Weight & Abigail Beach (eds) *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930–1960* (I.B. Taurus: London, 1998), p.182.

⁷⁹ Penny Tinkler (1995), ‘Sexuality and Citizenship: The State and Girls’ Leisure Provision in England, 1939–45’, *Women’s History Review*, **4** (2), p.195.

This thesis situates its argument within these two concurrent strands of thinking concerning twentieth century citizenship, by suggesting that meanings of ‘good’ citizenship in youth movements were implicitly linked with an outdoor ethos. The youth movements, which are the subject of this thesis, worked within the dominant theory that a healthy, active leisure life could teach young people desirable qualities and train them for their responsibilities as future citizens of the nation. This emphasis on the rural reflects the persistence of the countryside in understandings of national identity at this time but also reveals a continued preoccupation with the idea of modernity. With the countryside believed to be central to combating problems of youth, which were believed to be inherently modern. Moreover, members of these organisations were encouraged to protect the countryside from the onset from aspects of bad ‘modernity’, in essence protecting and serving the nation as the Scouts had once done for empire. Within these movements then, the countryside therefore, was not painted as the traditional antithesis of the modern, as some may believe, but instead as canvas on which the future ‘good’ citizens of the nation could be created.

Sources and Approach

Through an examination of four key movements, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, the Woodcraft Folk and the Young Farmers’ Club movement, this thesis explores the central position of the rural in understandings of ‘good’ citizenship for young people across the mid-twentieth century. The decision to focus solely on these four was taken for the following reasons. The Scouts and the Guides (occasionally in this thesis referred to as the ‘Scouting movements’ or the ‘Baden-Powell movements’), were the most popular youth movements in this period, attracting consistently larger membership numbers than any other youth movement. This popularity provides an important stronghold when studying received notions of citizenship at this time. The YFC, on the other hand, provides a rural perspective (although not wholly), while the Woodcraft is a good example of a movement, which was outside the mainstream of public thought, being left-wing and somewhat radical.

Both movements, the YFCs and the Woodcraft, it should be noted, have been the subjects of very few historical studies, with, of the two, the Woodcraft receiving the most attention with a number of studies on its left-wing agenda. For example, Morris

has researched the origins of the movement and its evolution from smaller leftist youth groups, to the relatively popular movement the Woodcraft became.⁸⁰ Prynne and Leslie have also paid attention to the movement's political affiliations with both socialism and the Labour party; while Palser has explored the radicalism of the Woodcraft in the latter period of the twentieth century.⁸¹ Such interest often originates from those historians working on the history of the political left in twentieth century Britain and understandably so. The Woodcraft was certainly an important, albeit at times unsuccessful, force for the politicisation of working class young people in this period. In comparison, the historical attention given to Young Farmers Clubs is practically non-existent. Thompson has made mention of the organisation in her work on interwar rural education but other than that, official histories make up the bulk of the work that has been undertaken on the subject.⁸²

The scarcity of literature on both these movements can be understood as being a direct result of their role as organisations on the fringe of youth training, both in terms of membership numbers and in terms of the training they provided. The predominantly rural YFCs have often been ignored as a result of the urban-centred focus of experiences of youth. But, both movements position on the fringe also resulted from their overtly ideological and political stance. The YFCs, although not wedded to one political party, were highly focused on the political fortunes (or indeed misfortunes) of agriculture; while the Woodcraft were, in no uncertain terms, calling for a radical overhaul of the classed based structure of British society.

Historians have debated the radical nature of the Woodcraft movement. Most recently, Palser has challenged Davis' claim that the radicalism within the Woodcraft Folk

⁸⁰ Brian Morris (1970), 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, **5** (2), 183-194. Also see Springhall's chapter on the Woodcraft Folk 'Green Jerkins and Back to Nature' in Springhall. *Youth & Clare Griffith's section on the Woodcraft* in Clare Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside: The Politics of Rural Britain 1918-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.97-100.

⁸¹ David Prynne (1983), 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement 1925-70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, **18** (1), 79-95; Bruce Leslie (1984), 'Creating a Socialist Scout Movement: The Woodcraft Folk, 1924-42', *History of Education*, **13** (4), 299-311 & Palser, 'Learn by Doing'. See also: Mary Davis, *Fashioning a New World: a History of the Woodcraft Folk* (Holyoake Books: Loughborough, 2000).

⁸² Lynne Thompson, 'Agricultural Education in the Interwar Years' in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Lynne Thompson (eds) *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Boydell: Suffolk, 2006); Lynne Thompson (1999), 'The Promotion of Agricultural Education for Adults: The Lancashire Federation of Women's Institutes, 1919-45', *Rural History*, **10**(2), 217-234.

declined following the Second World War.⁸³ Indeed, despite claims of those in the organisation to the contrary, the political basis of the movement is undeniable. The content of a 1953 questionnaire sent out to members of the movements reflects this ideological basis. Questions included ‘Why should we support the co-operative movement?’, ‘Why should I join a Trade Union when I start work?’ and ‘What is meant by Socialism?’ reveal the focus of the movement on the political education of its members.⁸⁴ Beyond this the movement and its members were politically active across the mid-century, campaigning for peace, taking in Spanish Basque refugees, assisting conscientious objectors and campaigning for nuclear disarmament.⁸⁵ This left-wing affiliation culminated in the 1970s when the organisation was the target of a ‘Red Scare’ by the Conservative Party, during which, *The Guardian* claimed The Conservative party was ‘seeing Reds under the trees’.⁸⁶ This affiliation, Springhall suggests, meant that membership of the movement remained low, until the political ‘tolerance’ of the 1970s. He writes, “50 years ago their progressive doctrines only served to discourage many parents”⁸⁷.

This means that they are not often seen as being particularly useful in understanding the mainstream experience of young people and of youth training in the twentieth century and as such, historians have tended to focus on the statistically more popular Scouting movements. This is not to say that the Scout movements were apolitical, far from it in fact, but that, significantly, they positioned themselves as being beyond this. Certainly, their policies, training and activities were shaped by a political understanding of the world around them but importantly, this was presented as being part of a distinctive Scouting ideology which was separate although on the whole not entirely different, to mainstream political thought. As such the Scouting movements could attract a larger amount of members and have therefore been the subject of more extensive historical studies.

⁸³ Rich Palser (2004), ‘Learn by Doing, Teach by Being: the Children of 1968 and the Woodcraft Folk’, *Socialist History*, **26**, p.2.

⁸⁴ Woodcraft Questionnaire 1953, YMA (Youth Movement Archive)/WF/18/L, London School of Economics (LSE), Holborn.

⁸⁵ Woodcraft Folk Statement in Response to Smear Campaign, 1975, pp.1-2. Article accessed online via Woodcraft Heritage on 24/04/2010, http://heritage.woodcraft.org.uk/page.php?fhref=fh_059_01&page=001.

⁸⁶ ‘Little Red Riding Hoods’, *The Guardian*. Article accessed online via Woodcraft Heritage on 24/04/2010, http://heritage.woodcraft.org.uk/page.php?fhref=fh_059_01&page=001.

⁸⁷ Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, p.117.

The ‘fringe’ nature of both the YFCs and the Woodcraft has meant that for the most part, up until recently, the training provided by these organisations has been explored separately, if at all, to those more popular and mainstream movements.

This thesis will address this problem by making use of sources relating to both movements to explore the role of the countryside in the citizen training they provided and the similarities and differences between these organisations and the popular Scouting movements. It will assert that, although there are a number of significant differences between them, there are, nonetheless, significant overarching similarities, which should be explored. A study of the mainstream alongside the fringe can therefore help to complete a well-rounded image of the training provided by youth movements in the twentieth century.

In terms of periodisation, this thesis focuses on the thirty year period from 1930-1960 for a number of reasons. The period is distinct in terms of the growing presence of youth at this time, which allows for an investigation into responses to the growing visibility of young people from youth movements themselves. In terms of the youth movements, this period also provides an interesting basis for study due to the consistently high numbers of members. This periodisation has further importance as the historiography of youth movements is often limited to the period from 1909-1939, with very little being written on the movements following the Second World War.⁸⁸

This thesis negotiates a difficulty between identifications and definitions of youth. Historians have often defined youth as being marked by the age of school-leaving to the age of marriage. In terms of youth movements, however, definitions of youth are complex. The movements each had different age ranges and varying degrees of success of attracting members within them. As such definition of ‘youth’ could range from childhood to early adulthood. Due to the focus of this thesis on ‘problems of youth’, it will focus heavily on young men and women who were aged from 14 to 25. Shifting understandings of the youth life cycle across this period, including the extension of education, the fall in average age of marriage and the implementation of

⁸⁸ Sarah Mills (2011) ‘Be Prepared: Communism and the Politics of Scouting in 1950s Britain’, *Contemporary British History*, **25**(3), 429-450; Jim Gledhill (2013), ‘White Heat, Guide Blue: The Girl Guide Movement in the 1960s’, *Contemporary History*, **27** (1), pp.65-84 & Palser, ‘Learn by Doing’

national service, affected conceptions of youth at this time. However, despite these shifts, movements consistently offered opportunities for involvement beyond these stages. As such, 'youth' is somewhat of a fluid term when discussing youth movements.

If defining the term youth is difficult, then defining class is similarly complex. Historians have often categorised class through occupational categories, with manual occupations being indicative of working class position and professional being indicative of middle class. The youth movements of this thesis rarely ever categorised class specifically in this manner. In the Scouts and the Guides, when class difference was drawn upon it was often through descriptive measures. Discussions of appearance and living conditions were common, with working class members being described as being physically deficient and unkempt. Education was also drawn upon to categorise members, with working class youth being described as those 'comprehensive' youth. This method of description appeared more in the post-war period. Finally, class difference was often brought out in discussions of behaviour, with working class youth being categorised as troublesome but also naturally adventurous and suited to activities of Scouting. Paradoxically, it was those youth that that were considered to 'need' and 'enjoy' Scouting activities, which were the ones, the movement found most difficult to attract. This is a fundamental paradox when discussing class in the movements. The organisations focused much time considering working class youth, despite the fact that the movements across the period remained primarily middle class. Definitions of class within the Woodcraft were clearer, however, being a movement that was catering to the children of 'working masses' and aimed to foster class-consciousness. In comparison, explicit discussions of class within the YFC movement were rare, with the assumption that all members were training for their role as Farmers or indeed Farmers' wives; implications of this will be discussed further in this thesis.

Another justification that needs to be made is for the focus of this thesis upon England. This was a conscious decision due to the position of the English countryside within national identity across the mid-twentieth century. As Chapter One will show, the southern countryside of England was often called upon to represent the nation. This specifically English conception of the rural is dominant in discussions of the

countryside at this time and as such this thesis focuses specifically on this regional image. Furthermore, in hoping to explore experiences of rural youth through an investigation of the YFCs, this thesis specifically looks at English farming, as practices of agriculture in both Wales and Scotland were significantly different.

This thesis is by no means a history of these movements and does not intend to be. Official histories are comprehensive in charting the individual shifts that occurred in each movement and the effect that this had on the organisations and their members.⁸⁹ While a number of historians have focused on each individual movement as a source of analysis and criticism, with a lot of attention being focused towards the Scouting movements in recent years, this thesis takes a different approach. The argument of this thesis is fundamentally based on the published organisational sources of the four key movements. These include books, magazines, annual reports and instructional material. Primarily though, it is based on a painstakingly thorough examination of the movements' magazines across the period from 1930 to 1960. These include Boy Scout magazines *The Scout* and *The Scouter*; the Girl Guide publications *The Guide* and *The Guider*; the YFC magazine *The Young Farmer* and The Woodcraft publications *The Herald of the Folk*, *The Pioneer of the Folk* and *The Helper*. For the Scouting and YFC material this thesis draws upon a reading of each issue of these magazines from January 1930 until December 1960 (although the *Young Farmer* did not publish during wartime). This 'long study' manner of reading these publications allowed for a close analysis of change over time and a clear understanding of the way the movements operated. There are of course pitfalls with this system as with all research. Such reading did not allow for a 'deeper' analysis of the written page or the layout for example. Moreover, evidence could have been missed in the methodical manner of reading that was applied. Another issue with this process is revealed when the Woodcraft publications are discussed. The Woodcraft magazines are somewhat sporadic across the period from 1930-1960 and so my reading of the Woodcraft training had to rely on other sources more heavily than the other movements.

⁸⁹ For example see: Henry Collis, Rex Hazelwood & Fred Hurill, *B-P's Scouts* (Collins: London. 1951); E.E Reynolds, *The Scout Movement* (Oxford University Press: London. 1950); Rose Kerr, *The Story of the Girl Guides*. Revised edition. (Girl Guide Association: London, 1954) & National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs, *50 Not Out: A History of Young Farmers in England & Wales* (National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs: Kenilworth, 1971).

The use of magazines as a historical source has been discussed most commonly in the context of the growing popularity of women's magazines across the mid-twentieth century, or in contrast to this as a study of masculinity and imperialism in boys' papers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁹⁰ The former highlighting the recognition of the spending power of girls across the period while the latter unpacking representations of masculinity. A study of organisational magazines marks somewhat of a departure from this however, with the nature and purpose of the magazines being ultimately focused on 'training' and therefore often more overtly instructional than wider publications for both boys and girls at this time.

The magazines of the Scouts and Guides had two clear purposes; firstly to instruct and secondly to entertain. This was important as the movement, being on such a large scale, needed to be able to spread information to all those enrolled, whether rural or urban, in a company or a lone member. The magazines therefore included hints, tips, and instructions on different areas of Scouting including how to gain badges, the best ways to camp and how to enjoy the countryside. There were, however, two kinds of magazine publications and the difference is worth noting. *The Guide* and *The Scout* were magazines aimed at the slightly younger age bracket from around 11-15, with occasional pages for Rangers and Rovers. They included large numbers of fiction stories, as well as tips on gaining badges, hints on camping and general Scouting information. *The Scouter* and *The Guider* were aimed at the older members, often Guiders or Scouters who ran their own companies and these provided more information, hints and tips on Scouting, as well as instructing on how to deal with Scouts and Guides and how to help them get the best out of the experience. These kinds of publication, for obvious reasons, provided more instructive articles on the purposes and aims behind the movement and were therefore particularly useful for the purposes of this thesis. As Dyhouse shows the literature produced by these movements can provide "useful insights into middle-class attitudes to the socialisation

⁹⁰ See Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood*; Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (Pandora: London, 1987); Majorie Ferguson, *Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity* (Heinemann: Exeter, 1983); Ros Ballaster, Margaret Beetham, Elizabeth Frazer & Sandra Hebron, *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity and the Women's Magazine* (Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 1991); Cynthia White, *Women's Magazines 1693-1968* (Michael Joseph: London, 1970); Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2003).

of working-class girls”.⁹¹

The Scouting publications were also published to entertain members. Often taking the format of popular magazines, they included stories, games, competitions and activities. This was a method of attracting but also maintaining members. The movements were presented to youth as being ‘constructive leisure’ and therefore the maintenance of entertainment was imperative. This does not mean that such features are useless to the research of this thesis; in fact quite the opposite, with the stories and games often reinforcing underlying understandings of ‘good’ citizenship. Therefore, these sources are just as useful in uncovering the meanings of the training provided.

In contrast to the Scouting publications the *Young Farmer* was published as an instructive source but also to keep members updated with the successes of the movement. The magazine therefore included regular reports on the successes of club farms and club stock. The magazine also instructed members on farming practices and shifts in agricultural processes. Alongside this, it did include a range of topics for entertainment but these were ultimately gendered. For example, girls were given tips on cookery and dressmaking, whereas by contrast boys were less likely to receive separate items for leisure. Here there seemed to be the underlying assumption that boys ultimately took pleasure from work on the land and therefore did not require separate entertainment sections. This can best be seen in the regular reading recommendations, which recommend books on the subject of farming. Finally, *The Herald of the Folk* was the most overtly instructive and had little else in the way of entertainment. Much of the magazine was preoccupied with discussions over class struggle and the need for political involvement and learning amongst the working classes. Discussions of activities and entertainment were therefore quite rare within these publications. Here then we see a difference in the purposes of these publications, with the Woodcraft seeing its magazine as a way of spreading Woodcraft ideology amongst members. The Woodcraft magazines are also problematic because there is a tendency for hidden authorship, which makes ‘identifying the voice’ of an author extremely difficult. This also means that at times the magazines become contradictory; this is the case with the other magazines as well, but more so with the Woodcraft, as

⁹¹ Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up*, p.104.

there was a tendency to use organisational nicknames.

There are also a few overarching considerations to be made regarding these magazines. In terms of accessibility and popularity, these magazines tended to be priced reasonably so that members could afford to purchase them.⁹² However, the popularity of the magazines was a worry across the period, with periodic concerns about low circulation. This of course is relative to the movements themselves, with low circulation in the Scouts being relatively high compared to the smaller movements of the YFC and Woodcraft.

The magazines then, despite differences in content and purpose, provide detailed representations to the historian, surrounding understandings of citizenship within the movements. Importantly, the Letters to the Editor feature, which can be found in the majority of these publications, also provides an insight into the negotiations between the movements and their members. Here we see when actions of the organisations are contested and indeed when demands from members spark changes within the movement. The magazines provide instruction for readers, while at the same time allowing for a considerable amount of input from the members themselves, through the letters to editor page, competition pages, advice pages and stories. This approach therefore allows for an exploration of the movements training, while also uncovering the responses received to such training.

The use of these magazines is central to my methodology. The approach I have taken is not to examine these movements ‘from below’, as some historians have done: it does not look at the experiences of those who joined the organisations. On the other hand it does not utilise the approach of those historians who look at the movements from ‘above’ either, seeing the movements as reflective of the aspirations of key figures, Baden Powell for example. Instead a kind of ‘above and to the side’ approach exploring how the actions, policies and training of the movements reflect wider social concerns, is employed. Using the magazines is important to this approach, as they provide us with interesting insight into the relationship between the movements and

⁹²Evidence from the Mass Observation Archive shows that copies of *The Scout* and *The Guide* were available in Fulham public library in 1940. Mass Observation Archive (hereafter M-OA). File Report (hereafter FR) 96, ‘Children’s Reading at Fulham Library’, 8/5/1940, p.4.

their members.

Of course alongside these magazines, the thesis uses a selection of other materials to support its findings, including contemporaneous publications, the magazine of the Youth Hostel Association (YHA), *The Rucksack* and the later *Youth Hosteller* and a selection of newspapers including *The Daily Mirror*, *The Times*, *The Manchester Guardian* and *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, as well as Royal Commissions, the Mass-Observation archive and unpublished organisational sources such as logbooks and questionnaire replies. The variety of sources here allows for an overarching understanding of relationship between youth and the rural sphere across this period.

It should be noted that while this thesis makes use of YHA material it does not engage with the movement as a case study. The YHA, formed in 1930 under the presidency of G.M. Trevelyan, was tremendously influential in the interwar period in getting young, working class people into the countryside for leisure. Its aim, which remained throughout the period, was “To help all, but especially Young People, to a greater knowledge, care and love of the countryside”⁹³ and the organisation did so by providing cheap and safe accommodation for its members, in essence providing an access to the countryside for all. Members were expected to follow YHA rules and restrictions and a failure to do so could be met with the removal of membership. It was a popular movement that saw increasing membership until the end of the 1940s after which membership slowly dropped and stagnated. Its membership was strongest in the north of England and continued to be so across the period.⁹⁴ Historians have often drawn upon the YHA in discussions of the growth of the outdoor movement in the 1930s and the rise of working class participation in such leisure activities. In particular, Matless has drawn upon the movement and argued that the YHA were creating ‘good’ citizens within the paradigm of countryside behaviour.⁹⁵ The movement is therefore useful to this thesis in terms of an exploration of the role of the

⁹³ *Youth Hostel Association Handbook 1936*, Y430001, Records of the Youth Hostel Association (hereafter YHA), Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham, p.10.

⁹⁴ John Lowerson, ‘Battles for the Countryside’ in Frank Gloversmith (ed.) *Class, Culture and Social Change: A New View of the 1930s* (Harvester Press: Brighton, 1980), p.271.

⁹⁵ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*; Hayden Lorimer has also looked at the role of the YHA in developing national citizenship in Scotland. Hayden Lorimer (1997), ‘Happy Hostelling in the Highlands’: Nationhood, Citizenship and the Inter-War Youth Movement’, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, **113** (1), 42-50.

countryside in understandings of youthful ‘good’ citizenship. This thesis, however, explicitly focuses on movements that supplied ‘training’ for its members, through regular activities, meetings and publications. Therefore, while this thesis occasionally draws upon examples from the YHA to support its findings, it does not focus on its role in the socialisation of young people at this time.

Another important point for consideration is the use of the Mass-Observation Archive (M-OA) throughout this thesis. The organisation, which was formed in 1936 by Tom Harrison, Charles Madge and Humphrey Jennings, aimed to discover as much about the people of Britain as possible and create an ‘anthropology of ourselves’.⁹⁶ This thesis draws upon some of the social investigative research undertaken by Mass-Observation (M-O) across the period, as a method through which to support findings. The organisation utilised a number of research methods. The two most utilised in this thesis are directive replies and investigations. M-O regularly sent out ‘directives’ to a volunteer panel of ‘respondents’. This panel was predominantly female and middle class. The directives would include a number of set questions, which were carefully worded, and respondents were free to choose to answer or leave whichever they chose. There was not a set reply length and as such, respondents could choose to write as little or as much as they wanted. These replies were then read and consolidated by M-O, which would then create what was termed a ‘File Report’, which summarised the responses to the directive. M-O would also draw information from its ‘Mass-Observers’, who would investigate society by observing its goings on. For example, a Mass-Observer may note the dress, behaviour, speech, eating habits and so on of those around him. The observer may also interview and question those around him. These observations were then drawn together in a report. This thesis will draw upon these two different M-O research techniques. Of course M-O is a source that is not without its limitations or complications and these will be assessed throughout the thesis in relevant places.

M-O is both an interesting and useful source for the purposes of this study. First and

⁹⁶ For a discussion of Mass Observation see: Nick Hubble, *Mass-Observation and Everyday Life: Culture, History and Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2006); Tony Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass-Observation, ‘Race’ and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2004); Tom Jeffrey, *Mass Observation: a Short History* (Mass-Observation Archive: Brighton, 1999); Penny Summerfield (1985), ‘Mass-Observation: Social Research or Social Movement’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, **20** (3), 439-452.

foremost for its interest in young people and in leisure practices. The organisation, over the years, paid a significant amount of attention to the wider significance and meaning of leisure in the lives of many. For example, during a consideration over the popular dance craze, the ‘Lambeth Walk’ in 1940, Charles Madge and Tom Harrison concluded that:

if we can get at the reason for the fashion, and see it in it’s setting, it may help us to understand the way in which the mass is tending. We may learn something about the future of democracy if we take a closer look at the Lambeth Walk.⁹⁷

Leisure then was, as indeed it was for youth organisations, a way of understanding the state and future of society.

Similarly, M-O is invaluable to this project as a result of its interesting focus (or indeed lack of focus on) the rural sphere. It has previously been thought that M-O has very little content for the rural historian. This is in many ways true. Apart from a small amount of select research there is very little focus on the rural living within the organisation. This can be understood as being a bi-product of the predominantly middle-class urban bias of the movement. Nonetheless, what the organisation does provide is an access to urban public opinion towards the countryside at this time. With the organisation asking questions of their urban contributors on topics such as evacuation and the state of post-war agriculture. As an archive then, M-O processed and collated public attitudes towards the countryside and then presented these opinions via File Reports.

Youth movements certainly worked within a similar dynamic being both inwards and outward looking. This dynamic can be seen, quite overtly, in the organisations’ magazines, which were both a means of disseminating received knowledge and practice and shaping such practice as a receptacle of opinions and ideas from the members themselves. Similar to M-O then, youth organisations were instrumental in shaping received notions of citizenship and the place of the countryside within this,

⁹⁷ Charles Madge & Tom Harrison, *Britain by Mass-Observation* (Cresset Library: London, 1986), p.140.

while synonymously, gathering input from members themselves.

In addition to its use of M-O and magazines this study will also draw from a range of popular sources including advertisements and literature, both fiction and non-fiction. In doing so, it will explore, the predominant and popular image of the countryside utilised within these mediums and reflect on the ways in which the image of the landscape was central to the popular identification with the countryside at this time. This is extremely important. Across the mid-century, the ideal of the English countryside became inseparable to the image of the landscape as increasingly available images of the landscape came to shape wider public perceptions of the rural sphere. This played itself out in many forms; through the evocative descriptions of Mass Observers, the use of the image of rural life in advertisements and the almost mystical descriptions of camp life in organisational literature. The use of additional popular sources therefore highlights the wider popular discourse within which the training of youth movements sits and the importance of the image of the English countryside within this. Of course this image was a complex one and shall be the focus of further discussion in the coming chapter.

Argument and Structure

This thesis explores the central role of the countryside in understandings of ‘good’ citizenship within youth movements of the mid-twentieth century. It contends that the rise in the popularity of countryside recreation at this time helped shape meanings of citizenship, which were directly centred on a relationship with the countryside. Young people in particular were seen as benefiting from access to the countryside; an education into the ways of which could elevate their citizenship and mould them for their future roles as adult citizens of the nation.

In so doing it builds upon an already comprehensive field of study regarding experiences of youthful leisure in the mid-twentieth century. Its intervention however develops out of two specific areas of study. Firstly, through an inclusion of the rural in our understanding of the leisure experiences of young people and secondly, by evidencing the continuation of formal spheres of leisure for adolescents across the mid-twentieth century. In doing so, this thesis will intervene in a number of historical

debates, ranging from discussions of mid-twentieth century work patterns to shifting understandings of the 'home'. Fundamentally, this thesis argues that the mid-twentieth century saw an overarching continuity in the approaches of youth movements to the 'problem of youth', with the English countryside maintaining a symbolic role in understandings of 'good' citizenship.

The overarching 'concern' for the working classes at this time played itself out in discussions of the leisure, work and home lives of 'modern' youth who were continually considered as being almost innately deviant. This discourse, does however, reveal some discontinuities in approaches to youth at this time. The tendency for the more traditional Boy Scouts and Girl Guides to reinforce the traditional narrative of working class history, particularly in the mid-twentieth century, as being one of progress and development is important. While 'problems' of youth in the 1930s were directly centred on experiences of poverty, by contrast in the 1950s concerns for youth became focused on self-indulgence and the shifting relationships within the working class home. Therefore, a study of youth movements suggests that although class remained the single most important determinant in 'problems of youth', such movements noted the changing experience of working class living across the mid-twentieth century.

If, for these youth movements, shifts in working class life represented progress (at least in conditions of living), by contrast understandings of gender, both masculinities and femininities, suggest an overarching continuity in gender roles across the mid-twentieth century. Across the period the centrality of domesticity, restrictions on leisure and discourses surrounding female deviance, suggest that ultimately interactions between domesticity and femininity remained central to understandings of gender roles and indeed to the leisure time training of girls. This tendency went beyond divides of class, with movements suggesting that the role of housewife and mother was central to the 'good' citizenship of *all* girls, but most importantly for this study, beyond divides of region as well. A study of the role of girls within the Young Farmers' Clubs suggests this, with the importance of the role of girls within the home, albeit in the distinctly rural home, maintaining ideological strength at this time.

Lastly, this thesis develops our existing understanding of the relationship between

landscape and national identity in the mid-twentieth century. It suggests that the persistence of the central role of the English countryside in understandings of national duty and particularly in meanings of ‘good’ citizenship for young people, points to the continued importance of the landscape in understandings of national identity at this time. Furthermore, it argues that the growing identification of ‘good’ citizenry and the countryside, particularly for young people at this time, reflected an increasing uneasiness with ‘modern’ living. ‘Modern’ problems of youth, categorised as urban, could be cured through outdoor recreation, a enthusiasm for which could create ‘good’ citizens. By contrast however young people were expected to protect the land from threats of modernity, be that litter or the declining position of agriculture. Discussions of modernity were therefore central in creating the ‘good’ citizen.

Chapter One explores the shifting relationship between the countryside and the public, particularly the urban public, across the period. It suggests that the popularity of these youth organisations must be placed within the context of the growing popularity of the countryside as a space for leisure across the mid-twentieth century. It shows that conceptions of citizenship within these movements were part of much wider debates about rights to access and obligations of appropriate countryside conduct, which culminated in the creation of public parks and introduction of the Countryside Code in the 1950s.

Chapter Two pinpoints the significance of leisure to our understanding of the role of the rural in the creation of the ‘good’ citizen. It argues that youth movements utilised the English countryside to combat the figure of the juvenile delinquent and in so doing reinforced the idea that embracing outdoor leisure was fundamental to notions of ‘good’ citizenship, due to the positive impact countryside recreations could have on the behaviour and fitness of young people. Furthermore, as ‘good’ citizens, members were also expected to monitor the behaviour of both themselves and others within the countryside and in doing so actively counteract the damaging effect of urban pleasure seekers on the land. This chapter therefore shows how young people could improve their status as citizens, by adjusting their leisure practices.

Chapters Three and Four look to the future and at the spheres in which young people were expected to have a prominent role when they reached adulthood. Chapter Three

looks at the sphere of work and argues that across the period of 1930-1960 the movements encouraged good citizenship through the performance of agricultural work on the land, particularly in wartime. Chapter Four on the other hand turns to the sphere of the home and argues that, while in many ways female members of the movements were encouraged to see their place in society being wider than that of the home, fundamentally the home remained principal to the understanding of 'good' citizenship for girls across this period. However, meanings and conceptions of the home were not homogeneous within these movements, far from it, with the experiences of housewifery being essentially different in the rural sphere and conceptualised as so by the YFC movement.

Fundamentally, this thesis suggests that by studying the centrality of the rural in the training provided by youth movements across the mid-twentieth century, the historian can pinpoint a number of continuities in approaches to youth in the mid-century. Although the period witnessed significant shifts in the lives of the working classes, particularly with the impact of the welfare state in the post-war period, in actuality, within youth movements, there existed an overarching continuity, with problematic youth being positioned as being predominately working class. The centrality of gendered ideologies of 'good' citizenship within these youth movements also remained with girls being consistently trained for their role in the home.

Chapter One

The Landscape and the ‘Good’ Citizen

In 1941, during the midst of war, the social investigative organisation M-O asked its volunteer panel of questionnaire respondents “What does Britain Mean to you?”¹ For the rural historian the answers received elucidate the central role of the countryside in understandings of Englishness and national identity in the mid-twentieth century. When questioned, the respondents were very clear about their feelings towards Britain. It was a forced, synthetic state, impersonal and unauthentic. M-O concluded that for many respondents “Britain, in cases where it means something other than England, is the impersonal name for the union of four countries, England and three foreigners”² and rarely anything more emotive. By contrast the thought of England evoked a more enthused response and it was the idea of the countryside that was central to this. Respondents regularly recalled images of idyllic rural scenes in an attempt to describe what England meant to them. As one man wrote “England ... means Devonshire chess-board fields and red cliffs - the country back of the Sussex downs, and above all the little village of Salcombe in South Devon which is the most beautiful place I know.”³ While another, this time a city dweller, described a typical English scene that was for him, despite his urban roots, dominantly rural in nature. He replied; “The pleasant English scene, then, I record first. The leafy lanes of Warwickshire and Worcestershire, the peacefulness of the Cotswold country, the hills and mountains of the Lake District”.⁴

These responses are among a number, which paint a picture of a national consciousness that was intrinsically connected with the landscape of the English countryside.⁵ They support the findings of a growing school of rural history that has identified the importance of the countryside in the creation of a rural national identity

¹ M-OA, FR 878, 20/9/41, ‘What does Britain Mean to you?’

² Ibid, p.1.

³ Ibid, pp.5-6.

⁴ Ibid, p.6.

⁵ In fact M-O found that the land or the countryside was the most frequently mentioned subject when respondents were asked about their feeling about Britain. Town scenes came seventh in this list. M-OA, FR 904, 8/10/41, Article for ‘World Review’, ‘What Britain Means to Me’, p.9.

in the twentieth century.⁶ Lowenthal, in particular, suggests that the period saw the intertwining of idyllic images of the rural sphere, such as the one's evoked by the Mass Observers above, and notions of Englishness.⁷ This is supported by Howkins who asserts "the ideology of England and of Englishness is to a remarkable degree rural. Most importantly, a large part of the English ideal is rural".⁸ Paradoxically however, while the rural maintained an almost timeless presence in the hearts and minds of the nation, in reality the mid-twentieth century saw an important shift in the relationship between the countryside and the people; with the 'decline' of agriculture, the rise of outdoor recreations and the development of discourses of citizenship rooted in understandings of the relationship between the individual and the countryside. This chapter will explore the shifting relationship between the English countryside and the public across the mid-twentieth century. It will then argue that it was within this context that youth movements grew and ultimately developed understandings of 'good' citizenship centred on the countryside.

The Rural vs. the Urban

Historians have long acknowledged the central role of 'the rural' in contemporary understandings of Englishness and reflections on national identity. This attachment to the countryside was not simply a development of the twentieth century. A growing fondness of, and identification with, the rural sphere had long been an aspect of national pride and nostalgia. As Wiener has shown, the conceptualisation of England as being quintessentially rural grew roots in the mid-nineteenth century as rapid industrialisation polarised and romanticised the difference between town and country living. The growth of manufacturing towns decreased the country's dependence on agriculture and served to undermine the importance of the rural community in society. This led some to lament over the lost "rural civilisation"⁹ and take on what Marsh has

⁶ For discussion of the landscape and national identity see chapter 6 'Geographies of the Nation' in Rose, *Which People's War?*; Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England' in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds), *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (Croom Helm: London, 1986); Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* & chapter 9 in Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (Pimlico: London, 1992).

⁷ David Lowenthal (1991), 'British National Identity and the English Landscape', *Rural History*, 2 (2), 205-230.

⁸ Howkins, 'Discovery', p.62-88.

⁹ Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Penguin Books: London, 1981), p.47.

called a ‘back to the land’ philosophy.¹⁰ Romanticised notions of the countryside, however, intensified in the twentieth century when the growth of ‘modern’ living, through social change and technological innovation, impacted the lives of those living in both urban and rural areas. In this context the rural idyll came to represent a moral opposition to ‘the modern’ with contemporaries calling upon the historical permanence of the countryside to recall past morals and virtues which were being compromised by modern living. In 1933 J.B. Priestley, in his discussion of his journey around England, wrote:

I believe most of my pleasure in looking at the countryside comes from its more vague associations. Clamping the past on to the present, turning history and art into an exact topography, makes no appeal to me; I do not care where the battle was fought or the queen slept, nor out of what window the poet looked; but a landscape rich in these vague associations – some of them without a name – gives me a deep pleasure.¹¹

Here Priestley calls upon a romantic conception of the rural past in an attempt to understand his innate love of the countryside. This tendency was prevalent to the extent that by the 1930s a sense of English identity had emerged which was established around the rural sphere, making it so that, in a country where four-fifths of the population lived in urban areas, most people were ‘of the country’ even if they were not from the country itself.¹²

This rural / modern dichotomy is of course complex. Nonetheless, it is one that was important in the foregrounding of the ‘rural idyll’ in English national consciousness in the mid-twentieth century. This tendency was not historically permanent, however, but shifted in manner across the period. During the First World War, as Fussell argues, pastoral images were evoked by wartime authors as being symbolic of a “model world”.¹³ Following the war, as Wild suggests, the historical nature of the English

¹⁰ Jan Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England, from 1880 to 1914* (Quartet: London, 1982).

¹¹ J.B. Priestley, *English Journey* (Madarin: London, 1994. Original work published 1934), p.22.

¹² Simon Miller (1995), ‘Urban dreams and Rural Reality: Land and Landscape in English Culture, 1920-45’, *Rural History*, 6 (1), p.94.

¹³ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1977), p.233.

village was utilised by government and media to counter social unsettlement being symbolic of pre-war beliefs and values. The onset of the Second World War and the consequent emphasis on agricultural production only served to reinforce the importance of the rural in the hearts and minds of the nation. To the extent that, by the end of the war, Rose argues, the rural had been consolidated in the consciousness of the British public with images of the countryside often used to represent the “true nation”.¹⁴ These sentiments led the way in the post-war period in both public and private debates concerning reconstruction and the agricultural sphere, as Howkins has shown in his study of M-O.¹⁵ It is clear then that the rural remained, across this period, central to the English identity and understandings of nationhood.

This idyll, however, could only be evoked in direct opposition to constructions of the urban. Particularly in the 1930s when growing negative connotations of working class urban life led some to romanticise about rural living. The growth of unemployment in the 1930s, alongside the persistence of urban poverty in some areas, meant that the image of ‘the city’ became increasingly connected with the negative aspects of urban living. These connotations can be drawn from George Orwell’s *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), particularly in the following extract in which he describes his urban lodgings in an industrialised town which were dirty, unhygienic and depressing:

The place was beginning to depress me. It was not only the dirt, the smells, and the vile food, but the feeling of stagnant meaningless decay, of having got down into some subterranean place where people go creeping round and round, just like black beetles, in an endless muddle of slovened jobs and mean grievances.¹⁶

Juxtapositions between and the virtues of country living and the gloominess of city life were also evident in the M-O responses of 1941, with which this chapter started. For many of the M-O respondents, the gloriousness of the countryside existed in

¹⁴ Rose, *Which People’s War?* p.203.

¹⁵ Alun Howkins. (1998) ‘A Country at War: Mass Observation and Rural England, 1939-1945’, *Rural History*, 9 (1), p.81.

¹⁶ George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Penguin Classics: London, 2001. Original work published 1937), p.14.

comparison to the urban 'other'. The organisation concluded from its findings that "Above all England is memories; of homes and people, countryside and slum"¹⁷ and went to on surmise that:

it can safely be said that the nostalgia which people feel for the countryside of Britain combined with the uncomfortable thought of dirty cities and 'horrible roads plastered with advertisements' are closely parallel to the horrible feeling that Britain is a home in which all is not well.¹⁸

Of course this geographical distinction is generalised. Rural areas also experienced abject poverty, similarly not all of the urban working classes lived in these conditions and most importantly experiences were extremely regionalised.¹⁹ As Todd identified in the 1930s in the Midlands and the southeast of England, a division appeared between areas of urban prosperity and rural poverty.²⁰ Nonetheless, it is clear that the downtrodden image of the urban was extremely poignant in maintaining public identification with the rural sphere.

Moreover, the countryside invoked by the M-O respondents was quite often regionally specific with images of the tamed, rolling countryside of southern England, for example, the Sussex Downs or Devonshire being repeatedly mentioned. This reflects the tendency for a regional projection of national identity, with southern Englishness being dominant, discussed by Matless.²¹ In contrast, as Russell suggests, representations of the north of England have often been characterised as distinctly urban, despite the mixture of urban and rural identities in the north.²² Therefore when

¹⁷ M-OA, FR 878, p.1.

¹⁸ Ibid, p.6-7.

¹⁹ A study by Rowntree and Kendall in 1913, using 42 case studies, highlighted the malnourishment and financial difficulty experienced by the rural labourer. B. Seebohm Rowntree & May Kendall, *How the Labourer Lives: A Study of the Rural Labour Problem* (Thomas Nelson and Sons: London, 1913). Also see Gazeley's section on rural poverty. Ian Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain, 1900-1965* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2003), pp.49-55.

²⁰ Todd, 'Young Women, Work and Family in Inter-war Rural England', p.89.

²¹ Matless has also suggested that there is a more complicated east/west divide at play too. Matless. *Landscape and Englishness*. p.17.

²² Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2004), p.8. See also Helen M. Jewell, *The North-Divide: The Origins of Northern Consciousness in England* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1994) & Alan R. Baker & Mark Billange (eds), *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Imagined and Material* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2004.)

M-O concluded that above all memories of England were of “countryside and slum”²³ we see a socio-geographical understanding of England at play; the southern countryside compared to the northern city. If the countryside was regularly located as a southern image then the image of the ‘slum’ on the other hand was often portrayed as northern. Although central London represented for many the archetype of metropolitan life, images of urban working class life, particularly of poverty and slum conditions were regularly located as being northern. This regional division is, of course, not an exact representation of life in England at this time. As Jones has recently shown in his study of the working classes in the mid-twentieth century, despite the lived experience of poverty and slum conditions in the south, it was often the northern working class communities, which received attention and focus from contemporaries.²⁴ The representation of England gathered from the 1941 M-O responses, therefore, reinforces the recent findings of historians who have explored the complexity of region and identity in the twentieth century.

There was then a popular identification with, and understanding of, the English countryside across the mid-twentieth century which was intricately bound up with representations of the urban, be that through worries over modernity, or through a contrast of lifestyles. This is important, as the juxtaposition between the two spheres remained prominent, at a time when the distinctiveness of the rural sphere was seen as being erased and the relationship between the countryside and the urban public was undergoing a fundamental change. It is to these shifts that this chapter now turns.

The Decline of Agriculture

In 1941 one respondent replied to the previously discussed M-O survey on meanings of Britain as follows:

Britain simply doesn't count. Britain is an artificial, man-made absurdity... But I love England, her fields, her woods, her homes, her Wordsworth. I love her soil and some of her cities. I love her rain and her sunshine (when I can get it) that's all mine and I'm

²³ M-OA, FR 878, p.1.

²⁴ Jones. *The Working Class*, pp. 10-11.

proud of it. "England" means home.²⁵

The depiction of England in this quotation is clearly of rural England, while cities are mentioned it is the land, which remains principal to the respondent's understanding of meanings of home. The mention of the 'soil' here reveals the relationship between agriculture and the romanticism of the rural. Indeed agriculture had long played a central part in the mysticism of the rural idyll. In Stanley Baldwin's infamous 1924 address to the Royal Society of St George it was the agricultural nature of English villages that drew much of his admiration. He declared:

To me, England is the country and the country is England ... the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill.²⁶

An admiration which went beyond political rhetoric and echoed across the period through other avenues, including advertising; for example, advertisements for Players cigarettes in the 1950s used the romanticised view of agriculture to extol the benefits of purchasing their brand. One in particular, depicted a female farm-worker taking a break from harvesting with Players cigarettes. While another, portrays a couple picking fruit from the orchard, enjoying Players as they do so.

²⁵ M-OA, FR 878, p.3.

²⁶ Stanley Baldwin, *On England and Other Addresses* (Phillip Allan & Co Ltd: London, 1926), pp.6-7

Figure 1.1: A female tractor driver enjoying a break with Players Cigarettes.
1952.²⁷



Whatever the pleasure

Player's complete it



*Player's
Please*

[NOC 77344]

• PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES & TOBACCO

²⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*. 19 February 1952, p.10.

Figure 1.2: A couple picking apples while enjoying Players. 1952.²⁸



Whatever the pleasure

Player's complete it



*Player's
Please*

[Anco 7958]

PLAYER'S-NAVY CUT CIGARETTES & TOBACCO

²⁸ *The Manchester Guardian*. 30 September 1952, p.12.

This was, by far, not the only image of the countryside that was utilised in this way but nonetheless does show the idealisation of agriculture in particular, using the healthy connotations of agricultural life to increase the product's popularity. This is not to say that other images did not also hold sway in public imagination, but that the ideal of agricultural life was a strong one. The persistence of this image in national culture was paradoxical to say the least. While agriculture was a persistent feature of national belonging, in reality the rural sphere was witnessing a large amount of change, with the decline of the importance of the agricultural sphere and in the numbers of men working on the land alongside increasing mechanisation.

The twentieth century has often been characterised as a period of agricultural decline. With historians such as Mingay arguing that industrialisation diminished the importance of agriculture and the prominence of the agricultural community in England.²⁹ Certainly the mid-twentieth century saw significant change in the process of working on the land and a decline in the agricultural population. In Britain from 1921 to 1981, the number of men and women who made a living from agriculture fell from over 900,000, to slightly over 300,000.³⁰ This signifies the shift to a countryside that was no longer focused on agriculture, to the extent that a large number of people living in the countryside by the end of the century rarely made a living from the land.

Recently however, those who have begun to seek a more complex understanding of the changing position of the rural sphere in twentieth century English life have challenged this belief. A key part of this revisionist interpretation is the move away from seeing agriculture as the most important and determining factor in rural life, a belief which until recently has led to other aspects of rural society being ignored.³¹ As Burchardt asserts the "the countryside is frequently more or less equated with agriculture. Farming is seen as the most important dimension of the countryside, and the terms 'rural' and 'agricultural' are often used almost synonymously."³² This acknowledgement is important as it addresses the duality that underpins twentieth

²⁹ G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The Vanishing Countryman*, (Routledge: London. 1989), p. 1.

³⁰ Alun Howkins, 'Qualifying the Evidence: Perceptions of Rural Change in Britain in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century' in David Gilbert, Brian Short & David Matless (eds), *Geographies of British modernity: Space and Society in the Twentieth Century* (Blackwell: Oxford. 2003), p.97.

³¹ For a discussion of the nuances of this shift in historiography see: Jeremy Burchardt (2007), 'Agricultural History, Rural History or Countryside History?', *Historical Journal*, **50** (2), 465-481.

³² Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost: Rural Idyll and Social Change in England since 1800* (I. B. Tauris: London. 2002), p.1.

century rural life. At a time when the importance of agricultural production was declining, the countryside gained importance in a society that increasingly looked to the rural sphere as a place of leisure and consumption. Rural historians have now come to the consensus that rather than a history of decline the history of twentieth century rural England can be seen as principally one of change; whilst some areas of the countryside fell into decay others flourished as a result of a growing interest in rural life. As Rose succinctly puts it "The countryside in twentieth century Britain was both central and peripheral to the nation"³³; with the countryside becoming less important as a means of production but more important in the minds and hearts of the English people as a place for leisure.

The 'People's Playground'

The pervasiveness of the rural idyll amongst the urban public should be seen in the context of the rising popularity of outdoor leisure pursuits at this time. In the interwar period rising real incomes and shorter working hours, meant that most people had more money and more time to spend it.³⁴ At the same time, a growing ease of access to, and identification with, the countryside for urban people meant that the growth of the outdoor leisure movement was fast paced. Many people were enticed to the countryside by the rural myth, which encouraged the belief that the countryside offered a healthier and more rewarding existence to that in towns. Portrayed as an 'antidote' to the ills of the city, the benefits of country life attracted many townspeople who wished to 'escape'. As one urban M-O respondent made clear: "Britain is a pleasant place to live in. Many of its cities and towns depress me, but they are easy to escape! There is so much variety, so many chances of finding something fresh".³⁵ The belief in the innate healing qualities of the countryside together with the emphasis on national fitness in the late 1930s, through which government propaganda encouraged physical fitness as a duty of citizenship, led to countryside recreation being

³³ Rose. *Which People's War?*, p.198.

³⁴For information on the emerging leisure society of the interwar period see: Robert Snape & Helen Pussard (2011), 'Theorisations of leisure in inter-war Britain', *Leisure Studies*, 32 (1), pp.1-18. John Clarke & Chas Critcher, *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985). John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-1945*, (Penguin: London, 1990); Stephen G. Jones, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure, 1918-1939* (Routledge: London, 1986).

³⁵ M-OA, FR 878, p.6.

increasingly attractive to the population of Britain.³⁶ This resulted in the growth in the numbers of organisations and people, who forged an identity within the open-air movement.

The popularity of leisure pursuits such as rambling, hiking, cycling and picnicking soared in the interwar period, as an increasing number of urban people became impelled to ‘discover’ the countryside, and therefore a piece of their national heritage, for themselves. The growth of the popularity of outdoor leisure activities following the First World War was simply staggering as groups of ramblers, families of picnickers and lone hikers and cyclists became regular features of the English countryside. Activities such as cycling and rambling enjoyed a surge of popularity at this time, the latter attracting some 500,000 walkers each year and with sales figures for bicycles alone reaching 1.61 million in 1935.³⁷

This was not new; a growing appreciation for the outdoors had been visible since the end of the nineteenth century. The upper and middle echelons of society had been embracing the countryside as a site of leisure since well before the First World War.³⁸ What was distinctive about the popularity of outdoor leisure pursuits in the interwar period, however, was the increase in working class participation.³⁹ In this sense the interwar era provided a strengthened and more egalitarian outdoor movement than what had come before. As Lowerson argues, “The idea that rural England was primarily an urban playspace was not new in the 1930s”,⁴⁰ what had changed however, as Howkins asserts, was that pursuits such as rambling and cycling were no longer confined to the middle classes.⁴¹ This development was facilitated by a number of shifts, particularly the rising incomes and shorter working hours experienced in some

³⁶ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010). Also see chapter 2 in Matless. *Landscape and Englishness*.

³⁷ Figure for walkers taken from contemporary sources. Alun Howkins (2007), “What Is the Countryside For?’ Agriculture, Leisure and the English Countryside 1900-2000’, *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, **14** (2), p.174; figures for bicycles sales found in Jones, *Workers at Play*, p.64.

³⁸ Howkins, ‘What Is the Countryside For?’ p.169.

³⁹ This is a trend which has been identified by a number of historians. See Lowerson: ‘Battles for the Countryside’, p.258; Howkins, ‘What Is the Countryside For?’; Helen Walker, ‘The Outdoor Movement in England and Wales, 1900-1939’, (PhD diss, University of Sussex, 1988) & Chapter 4 in Michael Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape* (Routledge: London, 1994).

⁴⁰ Lowerson, ‘Battles for the Countryside’, p.258.

⁴¹ Howkins, ‘What Is the Countryside For?’ p.173.

areas of work in the interwar period. Many working class people therefore, now had an increased amount of leisure time and more money to spend on it. Technological innovation in the form of the motorcar and the bus also created an ease of access to the country for town dwellers, unlike ever before.

There are of course class differences to be identified here. While motor-car ownership saw massive growth in the interwar period, with the number of cars on British roads rising from 109,000 in 1919 to 2 million in 1939, the sheer expense and novelty of car ownership meant that it was only liberalising for a certain few.⁴² Evidence of this, Matless cites, can be seen in the regionally patchy figures of car ownership across England. Prosperous southerners could often more easily afford the expenses of owning a car, in comparison to those people living in the harder hit more northern parts of England; figures for 1927 show that 5.8 people per 1,000 were owners of a car in Durham, compared to the 23 per 1,000 in Cambridgeshire.⁴³ This meant that in the interwar period the motorcar had very little effect on the working class patterns of leisure in the countryside. This is supported by the fact that, even in the post-war period, the number of households across Britain with cars was relatively low. In 1951 86% of households were without a car and this had dropped slightly by 1960 to 71%.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the possibility that a white-collar middle class worker could, in 1930, buy a new car on hire purchase for around £100 was significant, particularly for its impact on the countryside leisure industry which catered to the growing popularity of ‘country drives’ and the large numbers of middle class day trippers ‘discovering’ the rolling hills of the south through the comfort of their car windows.⁴⁵ Consequently, the car was one of the most influential elements in helping the growth of middle class exploration and picnicking in the countryside.⁴⁶

By contrast it was advancements in rail and bus services that transformed working

⁴² Trevor Wild, *Village England: A Social History of the Countryside*, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2004), p.120.

⁴³ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, pp.63-64.

⁴⁴ Taken from a ‘Table of Household Car ownership in Great Britain, 1951-96’ in Halsey & Webb, *British Social Trends*, p.449.

⁴⁵ Alun Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900*, (Routledge: London, 2003), p.104. Wild discusses the popularity of the ‘discovery of England’. Wild, *Village England*, p.121.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the car at the start of the twentieth century see: Sean O’Connell, *The Car and British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1998).

class involvement in outdoor recreations. For example, railway networks, such as Southern Railway, provided cheap deals for working class ramblers such as “Go-as-you-please”⁴⁷ tickets that allowed them to make a return journey from a different train station than their outward journey; as well as organising popular ramblers’ excursions throughout the 1930s.⁴⁸ Offers such as these, along with improved bus services were, as Moore-Colyer asserts, influential in “placing the ordinary man on a mobile footing relative to the more opulent car owner”⁴⁹ and therefore in opening the countryside to the working classes.

Working class participation in countryside leisure pursuits, including rambling and cycling, was also made possible through the growth of a number of organisations that catered to the needs of the working class enthusiast. The YHA, the Ramblers Association (set up in 1935 but preceded by the National Council of Rambling Federation of 1931), the Cyclists Touring Club (1878), the Co-operative Holidays Association (1893) and the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland (formed under a different name in the early 1900s and changed in 1919 under the presidency of Sir Robert Baden-Powell), all gained popularity in the 1930s amongst the backdrop of the rising interest in outdoor activities and in turn enabled large numbers of the working class to explore the countryside.⁵⁰ Such groups’ planned excursions, provided cheap accommodation and organised concessions for members, as well as defending the right of way of the public.⁵¹ Specific figures for each individual organisation are hard to find, but it is a general consensus amongst historians that the 1930s witnessed a general rise in membership amongst such groups.⁵² Take the YHA as an example, which recorded a membership of 79,821 in 1938 having accumulated over 70,000 members in the space of 7 years.⁵³ Another example of the growing popularity of

⁴⁷ Beverley Cole & Tony Hillman, *South for Sunshine: Southern Railway Publicity and Posters, 1923 to 1947* (Middlesex: Capital Transport Books, 1999), p.23.

⁴⁸ Lowerson cites the example of a midnight excursion across Sussex in 1932 which attracted 16,000 people and required 4 extra trains and states that groups of 800 were typical at such events for the rest of the 1930s. Lowerson, ‘Battles for the Countryside’, p.269.

⁴⁹ R. J. Moore-Colyer (1999), ‘From Great Wen to Toad Hall: Aspects of the Urban-Rural Divide in Inter-War Britain’, *Rural History* **10** (1), 114.

⁵⁰ For a detailed discussion of the formation of these movements see: David Prynne (1976), ‘The Clarion Clubs, Rambling and the Holiday Associations in Britain since the 1890s’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, **11** (2/3), 65-77.

⁵¹ Walker has given a detailed discussion of these movements and their actions in her thesis. Walker, ‘The Outdoor Movement’.

⁵² See: Howkins, ‘What Is the Countryside For?’ & Lowerson, ‘Battles for the Countryside’.

⁵³ Figures taken from Youth Hostel Annual Reports across the period. See appendix.

outdoor recreations amongst the working classes is the growth of the Cyclists Touring Club (CTC) and another cycling organisation the National Cyclists Union (NCU), which had attracted 60,000 members by 1938.⁵⁴ These movements were therefore highly important in facilitating a mass participation in an increasingly popular outdoor culture, gathering momentum and national attention in the interwar period. Furthermore, as Howkins notes, the numbers of men and women who participated in outdoor pursuits outside the framework of official organisations, going on independent rambling and cycling excursions is impossible to calculate.⁵⁵ Therefore, while outdoor recreation had existed before the First World War, never had it been so 'visible' in national culture, or existed on such a large scale as a 'mass' movement.

This had a striking effect on urban public identification with the countryside. Nineteenth century romanticism surrounding the rural had been confined to those urbanites that had access to the countryside namely the upper classes and cultural 'elite'.⁵⁶ The twentieth century saw the opening of the countryside to other classes and as a result the scope of people who had experience of, and therefore could identify, with the rural sphere widened. No longer, was the rural a mystical intangible notion of the past but a physical presence in many people's lives. With this in mind the responses of the M-O respondents become clear. M-O, and by extension the replies to the aforementioned survey, was a predominantly middle class organisation with largely urban roots.⁵⁷ With this being the case the observers' impressions of and identification with the countryside reflect the changing relationship of the countryside and the English people. For example, the city dweller who recalled the Cotswolds and the Lake District was drawing upon the leisure focused countryside of the mid-twentieth century. It stands to reason, therefore, that the image of the English countryside which was evoked by the respondents, and by in large the general public as well, was often quite an exclusive one being that of the southern commercial countryside. This can be partly attributed to the fact that it was, for the most part, the areas of the English countryside in the south of England which most benefited from the growth in outdoor leisure industries at this time, with conditions being less harsh

⁵⁴ Howkins, 'What Is the Countryside For?', p.173.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.169.

⁵⁶ Walker, 'The Outdoor Movement', p.6.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of M-O and class see James Hinton (2008), "The 'Class' Complex': Mass-Observation and Cultural Distinction in Pre-War Britain', *Past and Present*, 199(1), 207-236.

and therefore more accessible to the inexperienced urban walker. Of course this is a generalisation: some rural areas of the north, such as the peak district, were to become somewhat symbolic of the countryside across this period.⁵⁸ Despite this, it is clear that the image of arable farmland and the controlled landscape of the south was often linked with the rural idyll.

Following the Second World War societal shifts saw a changing pattern of leisure in the countryside. An intensification of pre-war trends saw car ownership increase, particularly in the 1950s (albeit slowly), which made day trips and weekend breaks to the countryside more accessible than they had been before.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the shortening of the working week and a continued increase in household average income meant that more people could take advantage of this.⁶⁰ As a result a wide variety of rural leisure activities gained popularity at this time from the continued popularity of rambling and cycling to bird watching and rock climbing.⁶¹ There was also the rise of car-centred, family orientated leisure such as country drives, picnicking, and touring historic country estates. The popularity of family centred leisure also saw the growth in popularity of holiday camps following the war. Camps were family friendly, fun and most importantly kept to the fitness ethos that had made outdoor recreation so appealing. Drawing from the growing numbers of the working classes who were relatively well-off, holiday camps such as Butlins were attracting around half a million visitors by 1947.⁶²

However, while the popularity of countryside recreation continued to grow, post-war shifts saw the increasing decline in the membership and popularity of outdoor associations. The CTC, for example, saw its membership decrease from 35,000 in 1951 to 22,000 in 1967.⁶³ Arguably this was a result of the increased independence of urban enthusiasts who, as Walker has shown, with improvements in hostel provision, growing access to private vehicles and improved map reading skills, were no longer

⁵⁸ Tebbutt has explored the gendered symbolism of rambling in Derbyshire. Melanie Tebbutt (2006), 'Rambling and Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Dark Peak, 1880s -1920s', *The Historical Journal*, **49** (4), pp.1125-1153.

⁵⁹ Howkins, 'What Is the Countryside For?' p.177.

⁶⁰ Burchardt, *Paradise lost*, p.178.

⁶¹ Ibid, pp.11-12.

⁶² Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.253.

⁶³ Howkins, 'What Is the Countryside For?' p.177.

reliant on movements such as the CTC to help them enter and navigate their way around the countryside. Moreover, the emergence of increasingly varied leisure opportunities post-war amongst the working classes also contributed to the decline in membership.⁶⁴ The YHA on the other hand saw continued high levels of popularity at this time despite fluctuations in members, peaking in 1952 with 197,826 members.⁶⁵ The YHA, a less structured movement, maintained popularity for this reason. Being a cheap method of accommodation for those wishing to explore the countryside and providing a possibility for family membership meant that the organisation attracted members in the family orientated leisure environment of the 1950s.⁶⁶ Therefore, while countryside recreation remained as integral to the leisure of the urban public as it had been before the war, despite the anomaly of the YHA, traditional interwar recreations or at least membership of official clubs had weakened. This is trend Howkins has identified as continuing into the later part of the twentieth century.⁶⁷

Access and Protection

We have seen how the relationship between the countryside and the English people was in transition in the mid-twentieth century with more and more urbanites visiting rural areas for purposes of leisure. The shift away from production and towards the use of the countryside as a space of leisure had a deep impact on the relationship between the countryside and the public. Importantly, this shift brought to the fore issues over authority and use, with questions of whom and what the countryside was for becoming increasingly pressing as more and more urban people lay claim to the countryside as a site of leisure.

In August 1942 the government published the Scott report following the Royal Commission into land utilisation in rural areas. The question at hand was simple. How could the government best protect rural communities and amenities and how should the countryside be reconstructed after the war? The report was carried out by a number of key figures in agricultural life including chairman Sir Leslie Frederic Scott, member and executive of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, vice

⁶⁴ Walker. 'The Outdoor Movement', p.142.

⁶⁵ See appendix.

⁶⁶ Family membership introduced in 1958. *The Youth Hosteller*, April 1958, p.1.

⁶⁷ Howkins, 'What Is the Countryside For?', p.178.

chairman Laurence Dudley Stamp and Lady Gertrude Mary Denman, well known for her roles in the Women's Institutes, as Director of the Women's Land Army and as head of the women's branch of the Ministry of Agriculture. When read it paints a pretty dismal picture of the state of the land in 1940s England and Wales. It outlines the drift of young workers away from agriculture, forced out by low wages and poor living conditions, shortages in housing, a lack of sufficient schooling and the decline of village life and community.

The report also describes the threat of urban influence over the countryside including the growing sprawl of suburbia and the damage caused by an ever-growing number of urban pleasure seekers. The committee was fully aware of the shift, which had occurred over the first half of the century, with the importance of leisure overtaking that of agriculture. If this trend was to continue, it asked, how best should the problem of leisure be tackled? This 'problem of leisure' had two aspects. Firstly, how to prevent the anti-social, landscape damaging behaviour of urban picnickers and secondly, how to settle this problem while facilitating access for all? The report envisioned the countryside as a vital part of creating a better post-war world, but for it to be so, such questions needed to be answered.⁶⁸ These were not issues that had sprung up in wartime, but ones that had been fermenting since the end of the First World War and even before then. As Taylor argues in his history of the outdoor movement, the popularity of outdoor recreations had grown not exclusively out of the romanticism of the rural idyll but out of the longstanding tradition of the rhetoric of rights.⁶⁹

The interwar influx of pleasure seeking urbanites into the countryside had therefore served to intensify existing conflicts between town and country. Chiefly the problem of disrespectful and selfish behaviour on behalf of day-trippers was the cause of much anger and annoyance. Regular instances of trespassing, littering and flower-picking led to allegations of the misuse and destruction of the countryside from visitors who either did not care, or were unaware of the consequences of their actions. This kind of

⁶⁸ The report states that "It is our firm belief that a vital incentive to the war effort is the presentation of a clear picture of a better world which lies ahead and which, if plans are drawn up and the essential preparations made in advance, can be achieved after this struggle is over." Ministry of Agriculture. *Report of the Commission on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas* (HMSO: London, 1942), Cmd. 6378, p.vi.

⁶⁹ Harvey Taylor, *A Claim to the Countryside* (Keele University Press: **Edinburgh**, 1997), p. 4.

behaviour was detailed in the Scott report, the committee wrote that:

From the countryman's point of view the townsman often exhibits a regrettable lack of manners ... he frequently does not understand country ways or needs; he tramples down the crops; he leaves gates open; or he lets his dog roam over sheep-grazing country. Quite unconsciously he even destroys the very beauty he comes to seek by carrying home armfuls of wild flowers and scattering litter over the land.⁷⁰

This had long been an issue throughout the interwar period, which was close to the heart of contemporary commentators who spoke vehemently on the topic of the spoliation of the countryside. In 1928 Clough Williams Ellis, an influential figure in the National Parks movement, wrote emotionally on the topic of the destruction of the countryside. He declared, "In the late war we were invited to fight to preserve England. We believed, we fought ... We saved our country that we might ourselves destroy it."⁷¹ Echoing his apocalyptic tone Sheila Kaye-Smith, a novelist concerned with rural issues, commented nearly ten years later, "The countryside has been opened to all, both for Sunday recreation and for the healthy and peaceful spending of life's last leisure. But how much of it will be there to benefit the next generation?"⁷²

But who were these destructors and how did contemporaries hope to curb their impact? This is an important distinction. As Jeans asserts arguments over the countryside were "bound up with claims to cultural authority over its value and purpose",⁷³ who and what the countryside was for. Firstly and arguably most importantly, the people who were showing such lack of manners and courtesy were in the majority of cases urban, or at least represented as being urban. Arguments over the preservation of the countryside have, therefore, been read as battles between the urban and rural, the city and countryside. As Matless illustrates, the 'anti-citizen' by nature was characterized geographically as an urbanite and more frequently a 'cockney', disregarding the fact

⁷⁰ Ministry of Agriculture, *Land Utilisation*, p.31.

⁷¹ Clough Williams-Ellis, *England and the Octopus* (Golden Gragon: Portmeirion, 1975. Original work published 1928), p.20.

⁷² Sheila Kaye-Smith, 'Laughter in the South East' in Clough-Williams Ellis, *Britain and the Beast* (J.M.Dent & Sons ltd: London, 1937), p.34.

⁷³ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.62.

that many visitors were from other areas. He writes that here:

A social and anti-social geography comes into play, with bad conduct presumed to emanate from the interior of the city. Behaviour appropriate to a particular urban habitat is out of place in the English rural landscape. The anti-citizen is labelled 'Cockney' regardless of his or her precise sound-of-Bow-Bells geographical origin.⁷⁴

There are also representations of class at play here, with the damage to the countryside being largely considered to be the responsibility of the 'uneducated' working classes; who from the interwar period onwards, could enter the countryside relatively cheaply. This caused a backlash from middle to upper class conservationists and 'resident trippers' who were interested in protecting the countryside for the select few. As Howkins asserts it was those who wished to guard the tranquillity and traditions of the countryside, who so vehemently opposed the arrival of the 'townies'.⁷⁵ The preservation of the countryside was therefore particularly a class issue and the conflicts that emerged rooted in class difference. The countryside, previously the preserve of the elite, was now open to all and this caused disgruntlement from those who disliked the effect that the working classes were having on the land.⁷⁶

Symbolic of this class distinction was the membership of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE), an organisation formed in 1926 with the aim of protecting the countryside from outside threats. Membership was drawn from academics, prominent public figures and the rural elite, who were all keen to preserve the countryside and protect it from the looming figure of the mass public.⁷⁷ This class image was a particularly potent one. A *Times* cartoon from 1934 depicted an urban

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp.67-68.

⁷⁵ Howkins, 'What Is the Countryside For?', p.172.

⁷⁶ An argument supported by D.N. Jeans who argues that "The idealised countryside, hitherto the recreational and aesthetic preserve of the gentry and the middle class, was now being invaded by the urban masses. The countryside conservation movement was a class resistance." D. N. Jeans (1990), 'Planning and the Myth of the English Countryside in the Interwar Period', *Rural History* 1 (2), p.259.

⁷⁷ Moore-Colyer, 'Great Wen to Toad Hall', p.113.

family leaving behind litter after a picnic and when the daughter goes to clear it up the mother warns “What are you doing picking up that paper. It’s only toffs as picks it up”.⁷⁸ As Jeans asserts, litter was considered to be the calling card of the urban working class in comparison to “proper people, who walk, ride, hunt and shoot in the countryside, leaving no litter beyond the odd cartridge case”.⁷⁹ The vehement concern of conservationists did not, therefore, represent the majority view of countryside residents but that of a select few attempting to protect the countryside from working class influence. Nowhere is this more evident than in the ‘battles’ between urban ramblers and landowners over the ‘right to roam’ in the interwar period as tensions over rights to land grew. At this time, fury over the fact that Ramblers were denied access to open moorland in the north of England resulted in a number of ‘mass trespasses’ taking place in an attempt to contest the issues over rights of way.⁸⁰ One of the best known examples of this was the ‘mass trespasses’ in the Pennines at the beginning of the 1930s, which had been organised by the working class ramblers’ associations.⁸¹

However, while landowners were concerned with trespassing and keen to block the large numbers of urban walkers exploring their land, those living in rural areas on the other hand could benefit handsomely from the outdoor movement. Farmers could benefit financially by catering to visitors through cafés and tearooms or by providing lodging and meals for ramblers and cyclists.⁸² Importantly, many new trades and jobs opened up as villages had to cope with the large numbers of tourists who would visit. For example, tearooms and souvenir shops emerged around the south of England, whilst petrol stations, garages and repair shops were built to tend to the many vehicles that would pass through the land.⁸³ Howkins writes: “these ‘trippers’ were at worst a source of mild irritation or envy, at best a chance to make an honest shilling”.⁸⁴ Even the Scott report surmised: “Some have said that a judicious mixture of town and country in this way has been a good means of revivifying rural life and bringing back

⁷⁸ This example is used by Jeans in Jeans, ‘Planning’, p.259.

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp.259-60.

⁸⁰ Howkins, ‘What Is the Countryside For?’ p.174.

⁸¹ Howkins, *Death of Rural England*, p.107.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Wild, *Village England*, p.120.

⁸⁴ Howkins, *Death of Rural England*, p.107.

prosperity to the countryside.”⁸⁵ Such advancements served to highlight worries over rural decline and the advance of modernity. As rural living had always been conceptually opposed to modern urban living the advent of ‘modern’ aspects such as souvenir shops and tearooms in rural areas signified the decline of traditional rural culture.

But the tide of urban pleasure seekers could not be turned and the issue became not how to halt the influx of visitors, but how to guard the land from its ‘destructors’. As the Scott committee concluded in 1942:

It had also become obvious that the townsman’s demands on the country were no mere passing fashion, and that from now on he is likely to claim his place there and demand that he should be given all reasonable facilities for the enjoyment of what, after all, is the heritage of all.⁸⁶

The basis of the post-war attitude to access and protection of the countryside therefore followed the principle surmised in 1942, which stated: “The principle that the countryside is the heritage of all involves the corollary that there must be facility of access for all.”⁸⁷ This was not just a result of the Scott report however, but a culmination of factors. As Griffiths has shown, the Labour party had consistently supported access for all to the countryside in the interwar period.⁸⁸ But in post-war period the shadow of the recent ‘people’s war’ it became difficult for anyone to argue that the countryside should continue to be restricted in such a way as it had been. Support for National Parks came from the post-war government, as Howkins argues:

The notion of the ‘people’s war’ became an impetus not only for social and welfare reform but also for a wholesale transformation of social and cultural life on more egalitarian lines – in this the countryside, as the ‘people’s playground’ had

⁸⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, *Land Utilisation*, p.31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p.27.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.57.

⁸⁸ Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, p.309.

an important part.⁸⁹

The National Parks and Access to Countryside Act came into being in 1949. When the M.P Lewis Silkin introduced the second reading of the Bill he asserted, “This is not just a Bill. It is a people’s charter – a people’s charter for the open air.”⁹⁰ From 1951 to 1956 ten National Parks were named in Britain which meant that these areas were now areas of national importance and subject to protection but also visitation from all those who so wished.⁹¹

Despite enthusiasm for the Bill, however, particularly from the CPRE, the issue of access and guardianship was a particularly troublesome for contemporary commentators. A number were critical of the movement towards National Parks in the post war period, as they believed it would only further intensify the problem, following Ellis’ assertion in 1928 that “The national trust is England’s executor”.⁹² Despite critique, the creation of National Parks in the post-war period was part of the wider nationalisation of the protection of rural areas. Alongside this was the introduction of the Country Code in 1951, produced by the National Parks Commission it aimed to outline several simple rules of behaviour that, if followed, would prevent the destruction of the countryside and improve relations between town and country. The simple code of conduct was as follows:

Guard against all risk of fire
 Fasten all gates
 Keep dogs under proper control
 Keep to the paths across farm land
 Avoid damaging fences, hedges and walls
 Leave no litter
 Safeguard water supplies
 Protect wild life, wild plants and trees
 Go carefully on country roads

⁸⁹ Howkins, *Death of Rural England*, p. 176.

⁹⁰ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.250.

⁹¹ Ian D Whyte, *Landscape and History* (Reaktion: London. 2002), p.192.

⁹² Williams-Ellis, *England and the Octopus*, p.108.

Respect the life of the countryside.⁹³

The code, therefore, clearly condemned the acts of carelessness so often exhibited by urban visitors and was advertised all over the country, including on trains and in factory canteens. Every single citizen living in Britain was expected to treat the countryside with the levels of respect set out in the code, with the preservation and protection of the countryside becoming central to ideas of citizenship on a national scale. At the same time the rise of the *Keep Britain Tidy* campaign cemented the idea that litter was a national problem and that it was the duty of the citizen to keep the country safe and free of litter. Preservation of the countryside therefore, moved from being an issue that concerned a particular social stratum in the interwar period, to being one that was of national importance and the duty of every single citizen. By providing access to all, through National Parks, the government made it possible to then pass the duty of looking after the countryside to the general public. Within this context developed a meaning of public citizenship, which Matless has termed ‘landscaped citizenship’, an ideal that at its core held the epitome of good citizenship as someone who maintained a good relationship to the countryside and the people within it. He argues that: “While landscaped citizenship is set up as potentially open to all and nationally inclusive, it depends for its self-definition on a vulgar other, an anti-citizen whose conduct, if not open to re-education, makes exclusion necessary.”⁹⁴ The ‘good’ citizen therefore was placed in opposition to the anti citizen and exhibited care and thoughtfulness in their countryside conduct.

Throughout the period from 1930 to 1960 then, tensions of class and regional conflicts played themselves out in the rural sphere. Such conflicts arose as large numbers of people from the towns entered the country for leisure. Successive governments faced a paradoxical situation, with calls for the protection and preservation of the countryside at the same time as calls for access for all. Following the suggestions of the Scott report behaviour in the countryside became nationalised to a degree it had never been before. The creation of National Parks in 1949 and the production of the Country Code in 1951 codified a new kind of citizenship, which

⁹³ The National Parks Commission. *The Country Code: For Visitors to the Countryside* (HMSO: London, 1951).

⁹⁴ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.62.

officially labelled the countryside as the responsibility of all. It was within this discourse of citizenship that youth movements developed their training and education for their members and it is to these movements that this thesis will now turn.

The Growth of Youth Movements

So far we have seen how the mid-twentieth century saw a renegotiation of the relationship between the majority of the nation and the English landscape. Through identification with the rural, a rise in outdoor leisure and increasing conflicts between town and country, the countryside came to the fore of public consciousness in an unavoidable manner. Young people were especially drawn to outdoor activities and by far one of the most notable features at this time was the large numbers of Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Woodcraft Folk and Young Farmers present on the land. Whether they were camping, cycling, hiking or swimming, with their Patrols, with their friends or on their own, in wartime or in peacetime, they were a regular feature of the English landscape throughout the thirty years from 1930 to 1960. To truly gain a perspective on the role of the countryside within these movements, we must first look at each of their backgrounds, aims and composition.

Born out of anxieties over Britain's moral, physical and military weakness the Boy Scout movement was founded in 1908 by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, a veteran of the South African War Siege of Mafeking, and aimed to provide constructive recreation for boys and prepare them for future citizenship.⁹⁵ Baden-Powell outlined his plan for the movement in *Scouting for Boys* (1908) and warned that influences such as gambling, alcohol, intellectualism and a preoccupation with women were leading to the degeneration of the British male. The Scouting regime tackled the negative effects of such influences including indifference, self-indulgence and physical deficiency through a system of training in both character and physical health.⁹⁶ Under the motto 'Be Prepared' Scouting targeted these problems with a programme consisting of a range of outdoor activities and camp craft and through this aimed to instil typical 'masculine' virtues in young boys including a 'pioneering' spirit, bravery,

⁹⁵ Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (Collins: London, 1986), p.3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.5.

resourcefulness and obedience as well as a patriotic attitude.

As a member of the movement boys were also required to follow a number of rules, which were called the 'Scout Law' and swear allegiance to the movement by reciting the Scout oath. Scouting ideology promoted positivity, loyalty, truthfulness, politeness and thrift, which were aspects of 'character' that were considered highly important to becoming a 'good' citizen. These attributes were historicised by Baden-Powell in *Scouting for Boys* as being the attributes learned from the "real men"⁹⁷ of days past. He wrote; "The History of the Empire has been made by British adventurers and explorers, the Scouts of the nation, for hundreds of years past up to the present time."⁹⁸ Drawing upon the romantic heroism of past figures, crusaders and adventurers such as the Knights of King Arthur or John Smith, Baden-Powell directly linked the protection and expansion of the Empire with the masculine attributes above.

The concept of service and duty to the British Empire was of utmost importance to the movement and these characteristics were seen as important in not only strengthening the standard of British manhood, but in protecting the British Empire from a number of threats. He wrote in *Scouting for Boys* that:

Every boy ought to learn how to shoot and to obey orders; else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman, and merely gets killed like a squealing rabbit, being unable to defend himself."⁹⁹

It was therefore down to the young boys of Britain to prepare to face the threats ahead of them and Scouting, he believed, was the best way to do so. The book and the movement in general were therefore somewhat a response to the national anxieties over masculinity and empire at the start of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁰

Baden-Powell also saw an important role for girls, albeit a very distinct and separate

⁹⁷ Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford. 2005. Original Work Published 1908), p.13.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.13.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.11.

¹⁰⁰ Elleke Boehmer, 'Introduction' in Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys* (Oxford University Press, Oxford. 2005. Original Work Published 1908), p.xii.

role to the one he envisioned for boys. While the Scouts were to be the vanguard in the attack against an increasingly weakening society and a youth army laying in wait to defend the country, girls, were to fulfil the motherly and nurturing role of caretaker and homemaker. Baden-Powell, in his handbook, drew on the legacies of famous nurses and missionaries such as Florence Nightingale, to prove that girls had an important but different role in the future of the British Empire.¹⁰¹ However, despite this recognition, Baden-Powell did not immediately create a sister movement or include girls in Scouting activities. The Girl Guides were only formed a couple of years after the Scouts, the impetus for which came from girls themselves who wanted the opportunity to belong to the movement and enjoy the same activities as boys.¹⁰² After the publication of *Scouting for Boys* it is estimated by early Guide histories that around 2,000 girls registered as Scouts using only their initials in their application to mask their gender.¹⁰³ Baden-Powell could not ignore this demand especially following the famous incident at the Crystal Palace official rally in 1909, when a number of girls joined in wearing shorts and labelling themselves as ‘Girl Scouts’.¹⁰⁴ As a response the Scouting movement “opened its tents to girls”¹⁰⁵ a year later in 1910 with the official formation of the Girl Guides under the leadership of Agnes Baden-Powell (later Olave Baden-Powell) and its official handbook, *The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls Can Help Build the Empire*, was published in 1912.

Meanings of ‘good’ citizenship within the movement were directly gendered with the handbook defining a distinctly feminised form of Scouting. Despite participating in similar activities the end aim of the movements were to cultivate and inculcate specific feminised and masculine traits. In 1912 edition the Girl Guide Handbook warned against girls trying to act and play like boys. It declared: -

An imitation diamond is not as good as a real diamond; an
imitation fur coat is nothing like as good as a real fur. Girls will
do no good by imitating boys. Do not be a bad imitation. It is far

¹⁰¹ Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p.14.

¹⁰² Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p.110.

¹⁰³ Tammy Proctor, *On my Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (American Philosophical Society: Philadelphia, 2002), p.21.

¹⁰⁴ Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, p.110.

¹⁰⁵ Tammy Proctor, ‘Gender, Generation, and the Politics of Interwar Guiding and Scouting in Interwar Britain’ (PhD diss, Rutgers University, 1995), p.237.

finer to be a real girl, such as no boy can be. One loves a girl who is sweet and tender, and who can gently soothe when wearied with pain. Some girls like to do Scouting, but Scouting for girls is not the same as for boys. The chief difference in the training of the two courses of instruction is that Scouting for boys makes for MANLINESS, but the training for Guides makes for WOMANLINESS, and enables girls the better to help in the battle of life.¹⁰⁶

Here the role of girls is clear - they were to be the nurturing and gentle comrades of men.¹⁰⁷ Interestingly the use of the term 'battle' in this quote suggests that while Guiding was taking the training provided by Scouting away from the military landscape, the skills learnt would be useful for a girl in preparing for the struggles of the future. These 'struggles' were depicted as being of similar importance to those boys will face but different. This difference is evidenced in some of the changes made by the Guide movement to Scouting tradition. For example, some merit badges were changed to reflect these ideas including the 'Missoner' badge for Scouts that became the 'Sick Nurse' for Girls, while others with distinctly domestic purposes were added such as the 'Laundry' badge.¹⁰⁸ The names of patrols also indicate the gendered difference between the two movements, with names for Guide patrols being chosen because of their feminine connotations, flowers were popular, for example 'roses', 'cornflowers' and 'lillies-of-the-valley'.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, girls were also subject to restrictive and feminine uniforms, prohibited from marching with Scouts and were, in some case, prohibited from camping outdoors.¹¹⁰ This displeased many Guides who disliked the restrictions that ideas surrounding appropriate femininity placed on their Scouting experience. It was particularly disappointing for some girls who joined the movement in hopes of becoming a 'Girl Scout' and experiencing the adventure and excitement Scouting offered to boys. As one 'Girl Scout' recounted "One can still remember the feeling of anti-climax, of being let-down, almost insulted. Who wanted

¹⁰⁶ Agnes Baden-Powell & Robert Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides or How Girls can Help Build the Empire* (The Girl Guides Association: London. 1993. Original Work Published 1912), p.22.

¹⁰⁷ This is an argument supported by Warren in Warren, 'Mothers for the Empire', p.96.

¹⁰⁸ Proctor, 'Gender, Generation', p.26.

¹⁰⁹ Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up*, p.111.

¹¹⁰ Proctor, 'Gender, Generation', p.26.

to be womanly at our age?”¹¹¹

The title of the Girl Guide handbook clearly outlines the reasoning behind this ‘feminine’ form of Scouting. While the improvement of boys was essential for the defence of the Empire, girls, on the other hand, were to be depended upon to propagate the future citizens of the Empire.¹¹² It was this imperial ideology, which saw the strict separation of boys and girls within the Scouting movement and the emphasis on the role of girls as future wives, and mothers. The Guide handbook declared that:

It is in your power to make or to spoil the British nation. ... As women have the bringing up and teaching of the little ones, they wield a great power. As citizens, you can help make every child into a good citizen. You can also help to keep up the moral standard of the nation.¹¹³

Notions of service and of ‘good’ citizenship in the early Baden-Powell movements were, therefore, highly gendered. Despite this the movements did follow a similar structure to the extent that large sections of the Guide handbook had been directly lifted from *Scouting for Boys*.¹¹⁴

The Scouting movements attracted boys and girls of all ages from 10-15 with younger branches the Cubs and the Brownies being formed at the start of the First World War and elder branches catering for those older than 15 formed just after the war. As such from the interwar period onwards the movement included members from the ages of 7 to 18+. Members were encouraged to progress to the next level when they were ready, creating a kind of Scouting lifecycle depending not just on age but

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.21.

¹¹² This imperial ideology has been explored by Davin in Anna Davin (1978), ‘Imperialism and Motherhood’, *History Workshop*, **5**, 9-65. Also Warren in Warren. ‘Mothers for the Empire’ & by Smith in Michelle Smith (2006), ‘Be(ing) Prepared: Girl Guides, Colonial Life, and National Strength’, *Limina*, **12** (1), 52-62.

¹¹³ Agnes Baden-Powell & Robert Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides*, p.413.

¹¹⁴ Smith, ‘Be(ing) Prepared’. Furthermore if one compares the Guide laws to that of the Scouts and the oaths taken by both groups there is evidence of a number of similarities in the basic foundations of the movement.

on character progression and indicated by a shift in uniform.¹¹⁵

Under the motto 'Be Prepared', the movements embraced outdoor life as a way of teaching young people their role and duties as future citizens. They did this through regular patrol meetings, rallies and camping trips where they would educate boys and girls in different technical skills. Proficiency badges could be earned if one excelled in a certain area and when considered ready members were encouraged to go for their Second and then later on their First Class test, which assessed how skilled they were and how much they had retained from their experience. Passing these tests then meant that one could become Patrol Leader and further progression could be explored in adulthood by taking on roles of further leadership through becoming Scouters or Guiders. The Scouting system, therefore, encouraged self-improvement and upward mobility through a series of tests and rewards. The movements also encouraged members to elevate their 'citizenship' through participating in a 'good turn', which simply entailed an unselfish action or thought to help or lend a hand to a member of the national or local community (whether they wanted it or not).

After its initial genesis before the First World War, the movements saw a number of organisational changes across the mid-twentieth century. In the 1930s one of the most prominent of these was the growing internationalism of the movements, with a growth in membership and cooperation around the globe. This burgeoning internationalism saw the move away from traditional military leanings in the Scout movement and a turn away from overt discussions of Empire. The Girl Guides too, expanded in such a manner, as a result of increasing technologies such as the radio, which allowed Guides to communicate with one another. This Alexander argues fostered an "interwar imperial internationalism" which encouraged cooperation and sisterly goodwill amongst girls on an international setting.¹¹⁶ Following the death of Baden-Powell in 1941 the movements also saw organisational reconstruction and changes to uniform, the handbook and a number of tests and certificates. Despite such shifts it can be asserted that, for the most part, the organisations maintained many of the practices

¹¹⁵ Proctor, 'Gender, Generation', p.118.

¹¹⁶ Kristine Alexander, 'The Girl Guide Movement and Imperial Internationalism during the 1920s and 1930s', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 2 (1), p.38.

originated at the genesis of the movements.¹¹⁷

If the Girl Guides were an offshoot of the 'Girl Scout' movement, the Woodcraft Folk (or the Federation of Co-operative Woodcraft Fellowship), could be labelled the 'Labour Scouts',¹¹⁸ a name given previously to its ideological predecessor the Kibbo Kift. The Folk followed similar organisational and practical structures as the Baden-Powell movements, although the movement differed hugely in ideology, its motto being "Be Strong! Live Kindly! Love the sun and follow the trail."¹¹⁹ The Woodcraft was a socialist movement formed in 1925 by a nineteen year-old Leslie Paul, which aimed to supply working class youth with access to the improving leisure of the countryside where they could escape the confines of industrial society and learn about the ways of socialism.

In 1930 the *Herald of the Folk* declared that the movement "believed that it was possible to organise society so that everyone had his just share of the necessities and the pleasures of life. There was the desire to see everyone enjoying "life in a garden".¹²⁰ Encompassing many of the activities of the Scouts including camping, hiking and skills tests the movement emphasised Woodcraft above all as the most important aspect of the regime and sought to influence children so that a new generation might arise "with eyes to see the sun".¹²¹ It took a particularly romantic view on Native American culture, with many tribal stories, ceremonies and exercises celebrating the tribal and primitive lifestyle.¹²² Originally aimed at those who were in their early teens to their mid-twenties, it became particularly popular within the 10-15 age bracket. This group, labelled the 'Pioneers', made up the majority of the Woodcrafts' membership, while the 'Elfin' (aged 10 or under) and the 'Kinfolk' or 'Hardihoods' (for members over 16) were less popular.¹²³

There were many differences between the Baden-Powell movements and the

¹¹⁷ This is a point Gledhill acknowledged in his discussion of the Guides in the 1960s. Gledhill, 'White Heat'.

¹¹⁸ Leslie, 'Socialist', p.301.

¹¹⁹ *The Woodcraft Folk Handbook of Folk Law & Constitution 1936*, YMA/WF/91, p.12

¹²⁰ *Herald of the Folk*, August 1930, p.3.

¹²¹ *Herald of the Folk*, August 1930, p.3.

¹²² Leslie, 'Socialist', p.303.

¹²³ *Ibid*, p.303.

Woodcraft, both ideological and organisational. One of the most notable of these was the co-educational nature of the Woodcraft which was, at the time, one of the few youth groups to practice mixed sex activities. As historian Leslie points out, the co-educational nature of the movement was never discussed, or called upon, by those in the movement, it was simply considered to be the first small steps towards the Woodcrafts' commitment to social change.¹²⁴ Therefore, while gender was a divisive aspect in experiences of Scouting, it was less so within the Woodcraft. The movements also differed greatly in ideology. The leaders of the Woodcraft believed that the Scouts were simply trying to conserve the old order of society by training working class youth in the ways that the middle class founders of the movement believed they should behave. The Woodcraft was, on the other hand, "the cultural and educational expression of the working masses".¹²⁵ A quote from a 1930 issue of the monthly Woodcraft magazine *The Herald of the Folk* illustrates the view that the movement was recruiting youth in an ideological battle against the forces of the conventional order (the Scouts). The author wrote that:

Soon the cleavage will become sharp: there will be two great educational organisations – the Scouts on the one hand, standing for Imperialism and the old order of life, and on the other – the Folk, the cultural avant guard of the new world that science offers us.¹²⁶

The movement also disagreed with, what they saw as, the highly imperial and militaristic tendencies of the early Boy Scout movement and, being pacifist in nature, was highly critical of this. In 1942 a report by the Woodcraft on the prospects for post-war camping accused the Scout movement of training young people to be the mindless instruments of the government. In outlining the main organisations which explore the countryside the council reported: "The Scouts, etc. whose camping ideas were to produce healthy youngsters to be used without question by the government for any purpose it wished, including, of course, the most obvious one of cannon

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.302.

¹²⁵ In the same publication the movement declared that Scouts were "simply bulwarks of the old order of things". *Herald of the Folk*, July 1930, p. 5.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

fodder.”¹²⁷ A quote from an earlier issue of *The Herald of the Folk* in 1930 outlined the key grievances the Woodcraft had with the Scouting movement. Talking of the Scouts the author wrote:

This body claims to be the “national” movement, but its definite policy has alienated large sections of the community. It prides itself on its war-work; it has been exploited by folk of the dominating “conservator” classes and it is thoroughly unsympathetic with democratic and “modernist” thought; it is allied to the official Churches; and it taboos the very idea of co-education.¹²⁸

While an article from a separate 1930 issue declared “we are rebels while the Scouts are constitutionalists.”¹²⁹ Here then we see a consciousness of modernity within the Woodcraft. Following the thought that modernism was connected to liberalism they saw their democratic ideals in opposition to the ‘traditional’ Boy Scouts.

The different movements did utilise similar methods however, particularly through the philosophy of ‘learning by doing’. Both promoted highly physical programmes and attempted to educate young people in their future roles as ‘good’ citizens of the nation through this activity. The Woodcraft movement was highly impressed by Scouting’s ability to capture the imagination of British youth and adopted a similar regime.¹³⁰ As Leslie Paul wrote in 1930:

The whole of the work of the Folk has this ‘active’ orientation. They believe that sitting children down and talking to them is only a secondary part of education; real education comes from activity – play – making things – dramatic work – dancing and

¹²⁷ *Report of the National Council of the Woodcraft Folk on Camping in the Post-War World 1942*, YMA/WF/13, p.1

¹²⁸ *Herald of the Folk*, February 1931, p. 2.

¹²⁹ *Herald of the Folk*, October 1930, pp.3-4

¹³⁰ Leslie A. Paul. *The Woodcraft Folk: A New Orientation to Cooperative Education*, p.1. Accessed online via Woodcraft Heritage on 24/04/2010, http://heritage.woodcraft.org.uk/doc.php?fhref=yma_wf_004_10.

singing and dressing up – learning to look after one’self in the open – these are the real education.¹³¹

In so doing the Woodcraft was initiating young working class people into a growing culture that situated left-wing politics within the countryside.¹³² There was, therefore, an understanding that young people required education alongside formal schooling to prepare them for the future. Understandings of what form future roles would take differed however, in this case, as a result of political stance.

By contrast the Young Farmers’ Club movement were, while politically motivated, less overt and tribal than the Woodcraft. The role of political thought within the movement often reflected the tendency of the wider agricultural community to support the party who best met the interests of the agricultural community. The YFC movement was the only movement out of the four, which are the subject of this thesis, that explicitly catered to a rural audience. Under the motto “Good Farmers, Good Countrymen, Good Citizens” this co-educational organisation aimed to stimulate a vocational interest in agriculture and encourage ‘good’ rural citizenship by encouraging a keen interest in agricultural life and an active involvement within the rural community.

The first Young Farmers’ Club opened in 1922 in Hemyock, Devon, and the movement grew across the 1920s, developed by the Ministry of Agriculture until 1929, when responsibility for the clubs was passed to the National Council for Social Services.¹³³ In 1932 the National Federation of Young Farmers’ Clubs was formed and from then on the movement saw slow but steady growth with the number of clubs increasing from 100 in 1932 to 412 in 1939.¹³⁴ The clubs, in theory, accepted membership from anyone aged between 10-25, regardless of occupation, social class or agricultural background, although this had not always been the case, with the keeping of livestock being a condition of membership in the 1920s.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Ibid, p.3.

¹³² Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, pp.97-100.

¹³³ Marion Shaw, *Cold Comfort Times: Women Writers in the Interwar Period* in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Lynne Thompson (eds), *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?*, (Boydell: Suffolk, 2006).

¹³⁴ For figures for the whole period see appendix.

¹³⁵ G.P. Hirsch. *Young Farmers’ Clubs: a Report on a Survey of their History, Organisation and*

At a time of increasing agricultural migration the movement aimed to encourage young people to stay and take up an agricultural career by instilling in its members the importance of their future role on the land through a programme of educational activities. Alongside this, the movement aimed to also train future farmers in increasingly specialised and scientific forms of farming. Of course these clubs were not the only avenue of agricultural education for young people; membership could be pursued alongside an apprenticeship scheme or national diploma, but it was an important one nonetheless. Additionally, membership was not restricted to those who aimed to take up a career in farming and members could simply participate as a hobby in leisure time.

Membership

Table 1.1: Membership of Youth Movements 1932-1959.¹³⁶

Year	YHA	Boy Scouts	Girl Guides	Woodcraft Folk	YFC		
					Club	NFYFC	No. of Clubs
1932	16914	477423	61681	1014	-	1500	100
1936	59768	445411	547116	3490	-		-
1939	83418	-	-	5134	-		412
1942	78382	-	-	-	-	21000	490
1946	166039	466986	454703	3089	-	65500	1282
1949	208425	473216	420825	-	-	66400	1350
1952	197826	490786	464318	2873	46600	60000	1402
1956	192745	532388	514264	2815	53961	68441	1580
1959	195140	571402	566694	2494	48936	61742	1467

So far then this chapter has outlined a brief history of each of the movements that will be the focus of this thesis but before moving on the membership of the movements is

Activities, with Recommendations for their Future Development (National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs: London, 1952), p.27.

¹³⁶ Figures for the Guides, Scouts and YFC courtesy of the movements themselves. YHA and Woodcraft figures taken from contemporary sources. For a full list of membership see appendix.

worth some consideration. All four movements were subject to fluctuating membership rates across this period. In the 1930s membership were generally high, with the YFCs and the Woodcraft seeing a steady rise in membership across the period. This suggests that popularity increased as the outdoor movement continued to take hold. By contrast however, while the Baden-Powell movements maintained dominance in terms of numbers, they saw a dramatic fall in membership in the period from 1934 to 1937. By 1938 the Scouts had recovered from this, being only 254 members behind its 1934 figure at 533,130. The Guides, on the other hand, were still dramatically behind their early 1930s membership having 72,447 members less than in 1934. This is significant, both Scouting and Guiding histories have emphasised the growth in membership in the interwar period, but a closer look at the period from 1934 to 1937 suggests that the popularity of both movements was actually in decline, although this for the Boy Scouts had been recovered by the introduction of war in 1939.¹³⁷ Despite this however, in terms of members the Baden-Powell movements were unsurpassed by any other youth organisation in this period and as such Proctor's suggestion that "In many ways the Scouts and the Guides defined youth in interwar Britain"¹³⁸ was correct.

The onset of war saw a significant decline in membership in nearly all the movements' due to restrictions of wartime, particularly on camping. In the first year of war Woodcraft membership dropped by over 50% and the Scouts and Guides also saw a decline from their pre-war figures. In contrast the YFC prospered with the onset of war. While actual club membership is difficult to obtain the numbers of clubs and membership for the National Federation grew steadily in the first years of war and continued to do so afterwards. For example, the numbers of YFCs rose from 412 in 1939 to 1,234 in 1945 (a rise of 300%). This was a result of the seminal importance of agricultural work in the war effort, the encouragement of young people to 'lend a hand on the land' and of course the influx of those from urban areas into the countryside via evacuation and the land army, which increased the numbers of people who were available to join the movement and highlighted the importance of the agricultural training provided. The other movements too, saw a rise of membership in

¹³⁷ David Fowler has looked at the 'leakage' problem in the 1930s. See his section on the Boy Scouts in Fowler. *The First Teenagers*, pp. 144-153.

¹³⁸ Proctor. 'Gender, Generation', p.3.

the later years of war. This increase in membership for these movements at various points in the war can be understood as rooted in ideas of ‘service’ and symptomatic of the encouragement of youth to join in with the war effort. The Woodcraft are somewhat of an exception to this and will be discussed in Chapter 3.

In general the immediate post-war period saw the steady rise of membership within these movements with some notable exceptions. The Guide movement saw a decline in numbers after the war up until 1949 but from then on figures continued to grow up until 1960 but even at its post-war peak Guide membership could never fully recapture the numbers of the interwar period and particularly its peak of 1933. The Scouts on the other hand, apart from a distinct drop in 1947 (most likely an effect of the introduction of conscription) and a few anomalies, for the most part saw continual growth across the post-war period reaching its peak in 1960. The popularity of the Guides in comparison to the Scouts has often been noted by historians, however, the post-war period provides an anomaly in this case when across the 1950s the Scouts maintained higher membership than the Guides. This, I would suggest, is a direct result of gendered practices of leisure and will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis. The popularity of the Baden-Powell movements at this time can be seen in comparison with the continually low membership figures of the Woodcraft across the post-war period. This suggests that while in the interwar period the Woodcraft saw relative popularity in the political climate of the period a shift towards relative affluence in the post-war period saw a decline in popularity. On the other hand YFCs membership saw growing membership and peaked in 1955 at 55,100 club members. Following this both the club membership and federation membership saw gradual decline. This decline can be put down to the easier availability of transport and leisure, as well as the declining numbers of people working in agriculture.

Of course such figures are troublesome, being patchy and unrepresentative of the more detailed nuances of region, age and gender. Membership was indeed regionally specific. The Scouting movements attracted members from across England but were most popular in urban areas, the Young Farmers’ Clubs members mainly came from a rural background from the south east of England and the Woodcraft was more popular

in the urban areas of southern England.¹³⁹ Despite this the figures do reveal interesting trends. For example, that on the eve of the cultural explosion of the 1960s the ‘traditional’ Boy Scout movement had attracted more members than ever. This suggests something about our interpretation of the youthful experience of leisure – particularly in the post-war period. Furthermore, the failure of the Girl Guides to attract membership numbers to match its peak in the 1930s suggests that across the period, the popularity of organised youth movements amongst girls was weaker than amongst boys and that restriction on female leisure continued across this period. Finally overall these figures suggest something interesting regarding the declining popularity of organised outdoor recreations at this time. While historians have noted this, if one looks at youth movements, we see a continued popularity of movements centred in the countryside. Of course there are issues of lifecycle stage here, as we will see later the movements were often more popular with younger members and found difficulty attracting a ‘teen’ audience. Nonetheless this popularity still suggests an identification with and enthusiasm for the rural sphere.

There is also an interesting distinction to be made between the class compositions of these movements, which were varied. Historians, particularly Springhall, initially considered membership of the Baden-Powell movements to be principally middle class.¹⁴⁰ In recent years this opinion has been challenged. Most notably by Proctor who, through a detail study of the statistics and records of three varied counties in England, unveiled the cross class membership of the organisation, which attracted both working and middle class members, although predominantly from the latter.¹⁴¹ This was certainly a view encouraged by the movements themselves with the fourth Scout law being “A Scout is a friend to all, and a brother to every other Scout, no matter to what social class the other belongs.”¹⁴² As the Guide movement reported in 1948:

You struggle on to a crowded Edinburgh tram-car. Almost lost
in the crush is a small Guide. She is undersized, underfed,
overtired. Her uniform is bedraggled, her hair is unacquainted

¹³⁹ Proctor, ‘Gender, Generation’, p.83; Hirsch, *Young Farmers’ Clubs*, p.29; Springhall, *Youth*, p.116.

¹⁴⁰ Springhall, ‘Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism’, p.138.

¹⁴¹ Proctor, ‘Gender, Generation’, p.102.

¹⁴² Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p.45.

with a hairbrush. A glance at her patrol emblem tells you she's in the Nightingales. Also in the crush is an older girl in school uniform; well-groomed, well-cared for, obviously belonging to a very different world. She's interested in the Guide; she's saying something to her. By good luck you catch a scrap of the conversation. As the wan little face flushes with pleasure, you hear, 'I'm in the Nightingales too!' To the outside world, a meaningless scrap of children's chatter. To the two girls, it's nothing less than an ideal realised, a dream come true, 'A Guide is a friend to all and a sister to every other Guide'. Strangers to each other, moving in two different worlds, but because Guides, then sisters.¹⁴³

Here then, we see the intention of cross class interaction that underpinned the movement and also the physical indicators of class discussed previously. How far this was the case however is questionable. While the popularity of the movements amongst middle class members has been documented, a study of the movements' publications also reveals a conflict between 'school' clubs (largely middle class) and ordinary groups. The extent to which cross-class harmony was achieved within the movement can therefore be questioned, with group activities being divisive in terms of experience.

Similarly, the YFCs membership also considered itself to be attractive to all those who were interested in the workings of the farm. However, generally speaking the majority of members were usually the sons or daughters of farmers. A 1944 survey of 27 counties found that 49% of Y.F.C members were the sons or daughters of farmers while only 20% were the sons and daughters of farm workers.¹⁴⁴ This suggests that membership was largely middle class. In comparison the Woodcraft actively encouraged membership from the working classes, although the movement attracted membership largely from the upper working classes. Its programmes and activities

¹⁴³ *The Guider*, April 1948, p.70

¹⁴⁴ Hirsch, *Young Farmers' Clubs*, p.106. Social commentator H.C. Bracey commented in 1959 that the Young Farmers' Clubs did not 'represent a cross-section of the young people of rural England'. H.C. Bracey, *English Rural Life: Village Activities, Organisations and Institutions* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1959), p.231.

specifically catered to provide cheap and easy access for those young people with limited means. Here then we see a group of movements that attracted members from both the middle and working classes.

Therefore we have seen how the movements differed in aim, membership and popularity across the period but a consideration should be made as to the similarities between them. Two are notable and one will be discussed further. Firstly, a strand of internationalism ran through the majority of these movements with the Scouting organisations, the YFCs and the Woodcraft encouraging their members to take part in an international community. Secondly, all four placed significant emphasis on the landscape as a place of renewal, particularly for young people. It is this second similarity to which this thesis will turn, in arguing that a study of youth movements across the mid-twentieth century reveals a consistent understanding of citizenship which was linked to the rural sphere, resulting from the continued national identification with the countryside and urban association with the land. In youth movements of the mid-twentieth century this ‘mythical’ presence of the English countryside was overt. Evident in their rhetoric, training and publications was the idea that the landscape was the ideal background on which to teach young people their duties as members of the nation and instruct them in ‘good’ citizenship and this was continuous across the thirty year period from 1930 to 1960. As such the countryside was portrayed as a place that could combat the ills of urban modernity and produce a generation of young people who were prepared to protect the landscape from an encroaching metropolitan force. Therefore, while the English countryside resonated in the hearts and minds of the urban public at this time as a place of historical permanence, these movements saw the countryside as a battleground. A landscape on which the fight for the soul of ‘modern’ youth could be fought and ultimately won; parallel to this there was another fight to be won, that between the countryside and of an encroaching urban modernity, a battle in which youth could play a vital role.

Conclusion

This chapter has asserted that across the mid-twentieth century the English countryside continued to play a central role in understandings of Englishness, as a site of historical and moral permanence. Alongside this, however, the rural sphere saw a

large amount of change. For this study the most important of these was the shifting relationship between the public and countryside. The growth of the outdoor leisure industry allowed access to, and an identification with, the countryside, which many had not had the opportunity to have before. This reinforced the role of the countryside in the hearts and minds of the nation. At the same time however, the shifting purpose of the countryside led to an increased concern over modern encroachments on the land and the decline of agriculture. The destruction of the countryside and the loss of authentic rural culture led some to lament the effect of modernity upon the land. This had a significant impact on discourses of citizenship at this time, a strand of which became heavily centred on countryside activity and behaviour. Similarly discussion on the use and ownership of the countryside led to a growing rhetoric of rights. This set up an understanding of ‘good’ citizenship that was centred on a mutually respectful relationship between the public and the land. While people were expected to respect the countryside and follow specific rules regarding their conduct, there was also a mounting belief that the countryside was the heritage of all and that, as such, the government should facilitate access for all.

It was within this context that youth movements developed, placing their training, activities and sense of citizenship against the backdrop of this rhetoric. Consequently, despite differences in class make-up, purpose and in activities, all of these movements directly encouraged an understanding of ‘good’ citizenship, which was intricately centred upon a mutually respectful relationship with the countryside. This thesis will explore this relationship looking at the training provided by these movements and the role of the countryside within it. It will do so by studying the training provided for three spheres of adolescent life in the mid-twentieth century, those of leisure, work and the home.

Chapter Two

Leisure and the ‘Good’ Citizen

In 1959 the writer Alan Sillitoe told the tale of Colin, a teenage boy sent to borstal for delinquent behaviour, who is encouraged to participate in long distance running by the institution’s officers. He does so unenthusiastically, only to find that long distance running in the countryside provides him with a release of tension and a sense of freedom. The curative and calming influence of the countryside and physical exercise can be seen in the extract below, in which the protagonist describes the effects of long distance running. He tells the reader:

I go my rounds in a dream, turning at lane or footpath corners
without knowing I’m turning, leaping brooks without knowing
they’re there, and shouting good morning to the early cow-
milker without seeing him. It’s a treat being a long-distance
runner, out in the world by yourself with not a soul to make
you bad-tempered or tell you what to do or that there’s a shop
to break and enter a bit back from the next street.¹

This extract quite clearly, with its evocative description of country scenes and criminal urban behaviour, reveals the strong assumptions regarding urban / rural living, which were at play in discussions of the juvenile delinquent in mid-twentieth century England. It does this by highlighting two popular strands of thought at this time. Firstly, that the delinquent was specifically an urban problem, secondly, that the countryside could, if utilised properly, provide an antidote to this problem. This chapter will explore the role of the countryside in youth movements in the mid-century through the impact it was believed that outdoor recreations could have upon the behaviour of young people, particularly juvenile delinquents. Countryside leisure was viewed as being extremely beneficial in tackling the problem of modern youth, fundamentally because it was seen as being an effective antidote to shifts experienced by the urban working classes across the period.

¹ Alan Sillitoe, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (Panther Books: London, 1985. Originally Published 1959), p.11.

Moreover while the outdoors could have a positive spiritual and physical effect on the young, youth movements also utilised their training as a way to combat 'bad' leisure practices and eradicate instances of littering and trespassing, which, as we have seen, was a concern for contemporaries in this period. The 'good' citizen therefore, had a dual nature when it came to leisure. Firstly, he/she was expected to shun modern 'urban' leisure pursuits for those of the rural, considered to be morally and physically superior and secondly, he/she was expected to serve a duty as protectors of the country, by exhibiting 'good' countryside conduct and educating others in such ways.

The 'Problem of Leisure'

Sociologist Stanley Parker wrote in 1975 that for many social commentators, the 'problem of leisure' was often a 'problem with other people's leisure'.² With this comment, he was highlighting the tendency for contemporaries to focus their interest, concern and, at times, bile, towards the consumption and leisure patterns of those around them, as a potential cause of social disruption. This identification of leisure as a social problem has a long history, one that has been well documented by historians. As the likes of Bailey and Parratt have shown, in a variety of different ways, the shifts in leisure patterns across the nineteenth century drew concern from some contemporaries, who turned to 'rational' forms of leisure in an attempt to 'civilise the worker'.³

The twentieth century saw a similar preoccupation with practices of leisure and a large amount of public discussion on the subject, particularly in the context of the interwar period, when post-war shifts led to arguably more 'democratised' leisure opportunities.⁴ Benefitting from the growth of new industries and the availability of white collar clerical jobs, as well as shortened working hours, sections of the working classes found that they now had more time and money to focus on leisure pursuits. Working class people could therefore take advantage of the changing technological

² Stanley Parker (1975), 'The Sociology of Leisure: Progress and Problems', *British Journal of Sociology*, **26** (1), p.94.

³ Peter Bailey (1977), 'A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures: The Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure', *Victorian Studies*, **21**(1), 7-28 & Catriona Parratt. (1999), 'Making Leisure Work Women's Rational Recreation in Late Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Sport History*, **26** (3), 471-487.

⁴ Snape & Pussard, 'Theorisations', p.2.

landscape of leisure at this time and could take part, on an increasingly regular basis, in popular ‘mass’ pursuits, including gambling, cinema going and visiting dancehalls. These shifts, as Snape and Pussard acknowledge, were both feared and welcomed by contemporaries, who identified the growing prominence of leisure in society, as both a signifier of the development of a modern egalitarian society on the one hand and as an agent of its destruction on the other.⁵ This concern was particularly focused toward the working classes, who were considered to be easily subverted and could be potentially morally denigrated, by mass leisure forms such as the above. As such, leisure grew increasingly important in discourses of citizenship at this time, where contemporaries, often steeped in assumptions of gender and class, were quick to denounce certain forms of leisure as conducive of ‘bad’ citizenship.

Young people were believed to be particularly vulnerable to such influences, being in a natural state of transition and adjustment. That, along with the fact that the majority were outside the education system by the age of 14 in the period before 1944, meant that some saw the need for guidance and education in the face of the seemingly endless and corruptible leisure activities of the modern world.⁶ Through providing the young working classes with constructive leisure, youth movements hoped to develop good citizenship. As an article in *The Guider* declared in 1934:

I believe that it is through recreation, through the re-creating of their leisure time, that we can best help our Guides to face this world of rush and speed, of fleeting and fictitious pleasures, and very often of false values... if we can train our girls to make good use of their leisure time, and give them interests that will last them solidly and steadily all their lives then we will be doing something towards helping and preparing them to face a difficult and discontented world.⁷

Concern over the leisure of young people only intensified following the Second World War, with the growth of a leisure market specifically geared towards the newly

⁵ Snape & Pussard, ‘Theorisations’, p.2.

⁶ Tinkler, *Cause for Concern*, p.240.

⁷ *The Guider*, January 1934, p.23.

termed 'teenager'. In the 1950s, the threat of an increasingly modernised leisure landscape loomed large over the youth movements and a concern that Scouting and Woodcraft activities would no longer fit into the lifestyles of the 'modern' teenager was clear; Oswald Bell, Director of the Cambridge Institute of Education, asked in 1960, "Do knots or shorties or woggles mean anything in the chromium-plated age?"⁸ The worry being, that with youth at the forefront of modern 'shifts' in work, leisure and consumption, these movements could not attract, or indeed more pressingly, hold on to members. This fear can most clearly be seen when looking at the discussion of 'leakage', meaning the continual loss of members, at this time. The matter of 'leakage' had been a problem in both the Guides and Scouts throughout the interwar period, with membership being in flux throughout the 1930s. However, this problem became more acute in the post-war period, when Guides, especially those who were working class and over the age of 15, left the movements on a regular basis. As *The Guider* reported in July 1955, on the loss of girls from secondary modern schools, "We must accept and face the fact that we fail to attract and hold many of these girls – yet they are without doubt the ones who most need an auxiliary educational force."⁹ *The Scouter* too reported a loss of older members, despite the fact that numbers consistently grew from 1950 to 1960, reaching its highest membership within the thirty year period that this thesis covers. On a local level, both organisations also record a loss in members, often from the older levels of the company.¹⁰

⁸ *The Scouter*, January 1960, p.5.

⁹ *The Guider*, July 1955, p.213.

¹⁰ A single south-east Scout troop recorded in 1956 that over the previous three years the troop had lost over 28 boys, *The Scouter*, June 1956, p.141. While the log books of the 7th Dunstable Company recorded regular losses from 1955 onwards. Guide Log Books, 7th Dunstable Company, 1955-1960, ST2/S4/BZ, GGA.

Table 2.1: Members of the Guide and Scout movement aged 15+ from 1950-1960.¹¹

	Scouts and Guides		
	No. of members by age and gender		
Year	Girls	Boys	
	15-21	15+	18+
1950	15863	57360	14898
1951	15302	61011	14485
1952	14800	59690	14089
1953	14020	58101	13547
1954	13538	59277	13733
1955	11847	57486	13431
1956	11298	52199	9015
1957	10752	53202	8878
1958	10726	55282	8069
1959	11730	57832	8069
1960	12124	61452	8381

Of course, the loss of older members is explainable, when looked at within the context of shifting patterns in the experiences of youth at this time. The tendency towards early marriage, an expansion of educational opportunities and for boys the inevitability of national service, meant that membership, in movements such as these, was often short lived. Furthermore, the structured leisure of the Scouting movements was less attractive to ‘modern’ youth. As Bell asked in 1959:

Why is it failing? There are a number of possible answers. One may well be that its myth is out-of-date – the story, the packaging if you like, that sold in 1910 may no longer be an asset but a liability. What once attracted may now repel. The ideology of Mafeking may have lost a little of its glamour in an atomic age ... We need to bring the wrapping up to date while we keep the essence unaltered.¹²

¹¹ Girls 15-21 include both Cadets and Rangers, boys 15+ includes Rovers and Senior Scouts. Does not include those in leadership roles such as Guiders and Scouters. Guide figures taken from the Girl Guide Census made available by the GGA. Scout figures provided by the Boy Scout Association (hereafter BSA), Essex.

¹² *The Guider*, April 1959, p.108.

Traditional Scouting was therefore believed to be less attractive when compared to the opportunities of urban leisure. For example, it was recorded by the 7th Dunstable Company on 27th October 1958 that, “We learnt tonight that Maureen Pollard has left the Co; having become interested in a local skiffle group.”¹³

Here we can see an increasing juxtaposition, between the ‘modern’ practices of the urban teen and the increasingly traditional image of the dutiful members of the Scouting regimes. This juxtaposition can also be identified in the conflicts that arose in the Scout movements over the wearing of shorts at this time. Scouts were considered old-fashioned in their uniform and were often teased about wearing shorts in all weathers. The practice of wearing shorts year round, one Norfolk man went so far as to suggest to *The Scouter* in 1956, was the reason behind the large numbers of older members leaving the movement. He also suggested that many were intimidated by the criticism from those young people who had adopted fashion as a form of self-expression, such as the Teddy Boys.¹⁴ The *Daily Mirror* reported in 1960 that Scouts across the country were regularly subjected to abuse from youths wearing a “distinguishable uniform of knee-length jackets”. It reported that:

Not surprisingly, therefore, the Scouts are finding it harder to keep their oath to be "a friend to all" when they hear the catcalls of "goofs," "squares" and "cissies" — not to mention quips like: "Do me a good turn will ya, get dressed!"¹⁵

The Scouter received much correspondence on this topic. A letter to the editor of *The Scouter* from February 1951 declared that:

In this area, where the sign of manhood is “long-’uns” at the age of twelve, preferably with the Spiv tie, padded shoulders and convenient street-corner on which to meet “the lads”, it still calls for a great deal of moral courage to don shorts and run the

¹³ GGA, Girl Guide Log Book. 7th Dunstable Company, ST2/S4/BZ , 27 October 1958.

¹⁴ *The Scouter*, February 1956, p.44.

¹⁵ *The Daily Mirror*, 29 September 1960, p.12.

gauntlet on the way to a troop meeting.¹⁶

This fast became an issue in the movement with an on-going debate throughout the 1950s on the wearing of shorts. Finally, after nearly a decade, the organisation put the Scout uniform to a vote. The decision between shorts or trousers was one which the *Daily Mirror* declared could have led to “one of the most fundamental changes in the movement since it started in this country fifty years ago.”¹⁷ The Woodcraft Folk also faced the same problem. The report of the enquiry committee, charged in 1949 with investigating the lack of progress in the movement since the end of the Second World War, recommending that a change of costume to allow long trousers to be worn by all those over 16 would likely increase membership.¹⁸ The wearing of shorts, then, is one example of the conflict within these movements between organisational tradition and ‘modernity’.

Here and in other contexts, the Teddy Boys appeared as antagonists towards the youth movements. Against the face of the growing urban youth culture of the Teddy Boys and the rock n’ roll behaviour and lifestyle with which they were associated, Scouts, and in particular Scout leaders, seemed outdated in the ways that they were approaching youth. The juxtaposition between members and the urban ‘teenager’ at this time was one that was internalised within these movements, who clearly saw ‘modern’ youth as being increasingly problematic. The ‘teenagers’, being the product of a modern society, needed modern spaces to assert themselves and it was clear that the structured countryside leisure did not attract the same amount of enthusiasm it once had. Therefore, faced with the exponentially growing leisure opportunities at this time, contemporaries found themselves faced with an increasingly growing ‘problem of leisure’. The young working classes were a particular worry, being doubly vulnerable, and concern over the figure of the juvenile delinquent rose across the period. Many contemporaries saw this ‘new freedom’ as worrying, as the leisure choices of young people, vulnerable and easily led astray, could manifest themselves in delinquent behaviour. This chapter shall now focus this discussion on the figure of the juvenile delinquent and how this problem was often located within the wider

¹⁶ *The Scouter*, February 1951, p.52.

¹⁷ *The Daily Mirror*, 29 September 1960, p.12.

¹⁸ *Report of the Enquiry Committee into Lack of Progress Following the War*, August 1949, YMA/WF/216, p.5.

problem of modern leisure at this time.

The Juvenile Delinquent

In 1934, an article from *The Scouter* declared that, “It has so often been stated, by people both inside and outside the movement, “Scouting is the finest antidote to juvenile crime that was ever invented.”¹⁹ Nearly 25 years later, *The Guider* published a speech by Sir Oswald Bell, in which he stated that it was the delinquents “the Teddies, both boy and girl. These – the failures, the frustrated, the apathetic, the unhappy – these are the ones who need us most sorely.”²⁰ The juvenile delinquent attracted intense attention and criticism across the mid-century, as contemporaries debated the root cause of his behaviour, argued over his punishment, and discussed preventive measures for the future. This concern for the delinquent across the period is clear from all manner of sources. In 1949 H.D. Willcock reported for Mass Observation that:

Delinquency and youth, then are one of the main focuses of attention today. They are being statistically, psychologically, journalistically, by magistrates, magistrates’ clerks, welfare workers, club leaders, clergy; written about by anyone and everyone in every sort of medium from learned journal to women’s magazine, textbook to penguin book.²¹

It is clear that the figure of the juvenile delinquent was a pressing issue for many across the entire period and this fierce concern was not without precedent, as most historians are now in agreement that numbers of juvenile delinquents, defined as a young person under the age of 21 found guilty of an indictable offence, were indeed steadily on the rise across the mid-twentieth century. As the table below exhibits, across the twenty year period from 1938-1958, numbers of male offenders from the ages of 14 to 21 more than doubled.

¹⁹ *The Scouter*, December 1934, p.403.

²⁰ *The Guider*, April 1959, p.100.

²¹ H.D. Willcock, *Report on Juvenile Delinquency (Mass Observation)* (The Falcon Press: London, 1949), p.22.

Table 2.2: No. of males aged 8 – 21 found guilty of an indictable offence.²²

Age Group	No. of male found guilty of indictable offences by age group	No. of male offenders per 100,000 of the population by age group
8 and under 14		
1938	14724	798
1958	26050	1176
14 and under 17		
1938	11645	1131
1958	21628	2274
17 and under 21		
1938	10131	767
1958	21322	1974

Of course these figures should not be accepted at face value: criminal statistics are notoriously unreliable and increases in convictions could be down to a number of factors. As Springhall has shown, changes in the definition of ‘delinquency’ across the period, as well as shifts in police practice, legislation and perception of crime, means that figures are difficult to interpret.²³ Moreover, studies of youthful experience by those such as Tebbutt and Todd and Young, have recently contested the dominant narrative of youthful delinquency and generational disharmony. Tebbutt through an exploration of the day to day, ‘humdrum’ experiences of boyhood in the interwar period and Todd and Young by arguing, through a study of the post-war teenager, that the literature on delinquency and moral panic ignores the intergenerational support and encouragement in working class families.²⁴ These studies suggest that, while there was a preoccupation with juvenile crime at this time, lived experience was often more complex.

Nonetheless, while lived experience may be multi faceted, it is clear that there was a

²² Home Office, *Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1960. Statistics Relating to Crime and Criminal Proceedings for the Year 1960*. (HMSO: London, 1961), Cmd 1437, xlv.

²³ Springhall, *Coming of Age*. p.189.

²⁴ Tebbutt, *Being Boys*; Selina Todd & Hilary Young (2012), ‘Baby-Boomers to ‘Beanstalkers’: Making the Modern Teenager in Post-War Britain’, *Cultural and Social History*, 9 (3), 451-467.

perception at this time that juvenile crime was on the rise with the amount of publications on the delinquent, reports of juvenile crime in the press, (not always negative reports) and discussions of the problem by social commentators, including those with prominent positions in these youth movements, suggesting that the perception that the delinquent was a social problem at this time was prevalent. As Rock and Cohen noted the Teddy Boy “seems to stalk like some atavistic monster through much of the otherwise prosaic newspaper reporting of the fifties.”²⁵

Nor was the rise in juvenile crime and the focus on delinquency a specifically twentieth century ‘modern’ trend. While traditional sociological studies have focused on post-Second World War juvenile delinquency and particularly sub cultural groups such as the ‘Teddy Boys’, historians have argued that the delinquent appeared, in various forms, well before the advent of the Second World War. Studies by those such as Pearson, Gillis and Davies have highlighted the large numbers of juvenile gangs, who cultivated a culture of petty crime, thievery and fighting and were a concern to officials in the late nineteenth century.²⁶ Fluctuating rates of juvenile crime in the interwar period have also been evidenced by those such as Davies to point to the existence of the problem of juvenile delinquency before the war.²⁷ Arguably therefore, the existence of sub-cultural groups in the post-war period may have served to increase the visibility of pre-existing behaviour with press attention creating moral panics around figures such as the Teddy Boys, and later the Mods and Rockers.²⁸ Nonetheless, the general assertion can be made that the mid-twentieth century saw an intensification of the problem of juvenile delinquency, whether real or imagined, and as a result the delinquent became solidly entrenched in discourses of youth and citizenship and particularly in the rhetoric of youth movements at this time.²⁹

²⁵ Rock and Cohen, ‘Teddy Boy’, p.289.

²⁶ Geoffrey Pearson, *Hooligan; a History of Respectable Fears* (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1983); John Gillis (1975), ‘The Evolution of Juvenile Delinquency in England 1890-1914’, *Past & Present*, **67** (1), 96-126 & Andrew Davies (1998), ‘Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford’, *Journal of Social History*, **32** (2), 349-369.

²⁷ Andrew Davies (1998), ‘Street gangs, crime and policing in Glasgow during the 1930s: The case of the beehive boys’, *Social History*, **23** (3), 251-267.

²⁸ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils & Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Paladin: Herts, 1973).

²⁹ Kate Bradley has shown how the press were constantly occupied with juvenile crime throughout the period from 1940-1969. Kate Bradley (2012), ‘Juvenile Delinquency and the Public Sphere: Exploring Local and National Discourses in England, C.1940-1969’, *Social History* **37** (1), 26.

The distinctiveness of mid-century delinquency was the central role of leisure in understandings of the root causes of troublesome behaviour. From the interwar period onwards, many identified the increasing popularity of mass leisure pursuits as a worrying and possibly dangerous force in society; a sign of a supposed cultural 'levelling down', the demise of individualism, and of a generation who were passive and unconstructive which manifested itself in the delinquent behaviour of young people. Whereas previously, as Hendrick has shown, discussion of the problem of juvenile crime had centred on crime as a result of the working class employment patterns, boy labour and 'blind alley jobs', by contrast, what emerged across this period was the identification of the problem of 'modern' youth and their 'modern' leisure patterns.³⁰ One only has to look at the reactions to the 'Rock around the Clock' riots of the 1950s to see the symbolic importance of leisure in understandings of delinquency and worries over modern youth at this time.³¹ Therefore, what distinguishes the delinquent of this period from his predecessors is that the juvenile delinquent was not by definition simply a young person who had been found guilty of a crime. The term itself conjured images of a generation, their leisure patterns, behaviour and morals. As Muncie argues, in reference to the behaviour of the Teddy Boys, "Notions of delinquency and 'the teenager' converged. When the adult world wanted order in the cinemas, coffee bars and streets, the Teds responded by jiving in the aisles, razoring cinema seats and attacking 'intruders' in their 'territories'."³²

In this context, conditions of leisure were vital in understanding the delinquent child. As Tom Harrison observed in a report for M-O in 1949, while the delinquent was an issue, he was seen as part of a much wider youth 'problem'. He stated:

I do not wish to over-generalise. But it seems to me clear that Juvenile Delinquency is only part of a much deeper problem – the problem of uninspired and unadjusted youth. Kicking the bucket around or the endless intoxication of the slot machine in an Oxford street arcade, reflects something just as grave as breaking a window or pinching a watch. We have to deal with

³⁰ Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class, and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* Clarendon University Press: Oxford, 1990).

³¹ Such as 'Wreck n' Rollers at it Again'. *The Times*. 13 November 1956, p.12.

³² John Muncie, *Youth and Crime*, Third Edition (Sage: London, 2009), p.196.

the one *ad hoc*, but we also have to deal with the other. It is indeed the key to the whole future of our way of life and the surviving health of our society.³³

The problem of youth, he asserts, was therefore a problem of leisure. The two were not mutually exclusive, but it was thought by some contemporaries that boredom and the dissatisfaction with urban leisure pursuits, as well as a persistent street culture, was partly the reason why some adolescents turned to crime. Using the case study of the cinema in the mid-twentieth century we can see evidence of these fears, but can also pin point the concerns over urban working class life that were behind them. This chapter will now look at the cinema, fears over misbehaviour as a result, and the class tensions that were at play in discussions of the cinema and delinquency across the period.

The Cinema

The popularity of the cinema rose to unprecedented heights in the interwar period, with cinema admissions growing from 903 million in 1934 to 1,027 million in 1940.³⁴ The relatively cheap cost of admittance meant that the cinema experience was open to many and the growing monopoly of the 'big three' 'picture palace' chains, the Odeon, Associated British Cinemas (ABC) and Gaumont-British, arguably homogenised the film going experience, with a large proportion of the cinema going public watching the same films across the country.³⁵ Understandably then, cinema going became one of the popular choices for the young working classes, who would often take advantage of their increasing independence to frequent 'the pictures'.³⁶ This was a trend that continued throughout the war and into the post-war period, until the gradual decline of the popularity of the cinema in the mid-1950s. A study by M-O confirms this observation, when in 1947 the organisation reported that, when asked what they spent their money on, 59% of youth surveyed in London mentioned cinema-going, shows

³³ Willcock, *Juvenile Delinquency*, p.12

³⁴ Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain, 1930-1939* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1984), pp.11-12.

³⁵ Beaven, *Leisure*, p.187.

³⁶ For further discussion on cinema-going, class and 'taste' see, Robert James (2011), 'Popular Film-going in Britain in the early 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, **46** (2), 271-287.

and amusements.³⁷

The link between cinema-going and delinquent behaviour was one that was identified in the 1930s, following the rise in working class participation. The popularity of cinema going amongst the young working classes drew much attention from contemporaries, such as those members of the Birmingham Cinema Enquiry, fearful of the influence films were having upon them and upon the process of their 'socialisation'.³⁸ Youth movements followed this thinking, voicing concerns that the cinema with images of danger, adventure, glamour and excess, provided a noxious arena through which working class youth could be incited into delinquent behaviour.³⁹

Much of this concern stemmed from a preoccupation with the manifestations and temptations of working class living, which saw dramatic change across the mid-twentieth century. Categorisations of the juvenile delinquent are important here, with the figure of the delinquent often been painted as urban, working class and above all, male. In 1940, sociologist Herman Mannheim found, in his study of 606 borstal boys discharged from 1922-1936, that half had come from London or other large cities and nearly all were working class and this was the same observation of the World Health Organisation in 1961, in their study of cross country trends in juvenile delinquency.⁴⁰ As such, many contemporaries across this period saw the delinquent as being symptomatic of patterns of urban, working class life. A closer look at the concern which youth movements held about the cinema and popular leisure more widely reveals interesting tensions at play regarding delinquent youth, urban living and, as this chapter will later contend, the role of the English landscape in tackling this problem.

In the 1930s, concern over cinema going within the Baden-Powell movements was underscored directly by concerns over working class poverty and slum conditions. In his study of York in 1936, Seebohm Rowntree found that 31.1% of working class

³⁷ M-OA, FR 2473, 'Juvenile Delinquency', 1947, p.34.

³⁸ Beaven, *Leisure*, pp.187-188.

³⁹ Wider concern over working class cinema-going in this period has been identified by James in Robert James, *Popular Culture and Working Class Taste in Britain 1930-39: A round of cheap diversions?* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2010).

⁴⁰ Referenced in Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p.180; T.C.N. Gibbens, *Trends in Juvenile Delinquency* (World Health Organisation: Geneva, 1961), p.14.

households were living on insufficient income to enable them to live an acceptable standard of living.⁴¹ Such conditions were considered to be breeding grounds for juvenile delinquents, with the possibility that material deprivation, feelings of worthlessness and a hunger to break free from a monotonous existence, could all manifest themselves in criminal behaviour. As the Albemarle report concluded in its retrospective look on causes of criminal behaviour in 1960, the correlation between crime and poverty was, in times of hardship, believed to be a strong one, because “The poorest and most socially deprived elements of a population were always those who had most to gain and least to lose from active crime.”⁴²

Contemporaries therefore worried over the effect of the cinema on those working classes who lived in conditions such as those identified by Rowntree. The cinema could be enjoyed by those who were living in conditions of poverty, given that seats were cheap, with the possibility of getting a ticket for 6d in the 1930s, meaning that attendance patterns were not as restricted by poverty as other forms of leisure.⁴³ The large numbers of unemployed men who frequented the cinema at this time, Beaven suggests, evidences this point.⁴⁴ On the other hand, Davies has suggested that those living in primary poverty would often have little access to forms of leisure, such as the cinema.⁴⁵ Despite this, there was a clear notion that the cinema was being utilised as a form of escapism for the working classes, particularly those living in hardship, as it was away from the drudgery and boredom of everyday existence.⁴⁶ As social commentator Cyril Burt wrote of the cinema in his study of the Juvenile Delinquent in 1925:

quite apart from the definite presentation of wrongdoing, the social dramas and the pictures of high life, with a force as subtle as it is cumulative, stir the curiosity, heat the imagination, and work upon the fantasises of boys and girls of every age. They provide models and material for all-engrossing day-dreams, and

⁴¹ B. Seebomh Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress* (Longmans, Green & Co Ltd: London, 1941), p.456.

⁴² Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.17.

⁴³ Of course the type and standard of cinemas visited did vary. Beaven, *Leisure*, p.192.

⁴⁴ Beaven, *Leisure*, pp.191-192.

⁴⁵ Davies, *Leisure*, p.45.

⁴⁶ This is not to say that working class everyday life was boring and full of drudgery but that this was an image cultivated by some.

create a yearning for a life of gaiety- a craze for fun, frolic, and adventure, for personal admiration and for extravagant self-display – to a degree that is usually unwholesome and almost invariably unwise.⁴⁷

Although Burt, in the same publication, did later refute this position and, as Beaven demonstrates, contemporary researchers on numerous occasions failed to find a relationship between the cinema and rising juvenile crime.⁴⁸ Despite this, those concerned with the leisure pursuits of youth, particularly those who were concerned with the ‘enforced’ leisure of the unemployed, were often preoccupied with the cinema as a venue for this.⁴⁹

Concern regarding the cinema within the Scouting movement was often centred upon the effect it would have on slum children. This discussion drew on two concerns; the working class males’ desire for adventure and the use of leisure as a form of escapism. The lack of ‘adventure’ in young boys’ lives was regarded as a principal factor in the creation of the juvenile delinquent.⁵⁰ In 1933, a member of the Scout movement wrote in *The Scouter* that:

It may be immoral of me, but I cannot help feeling pleased when I read every day of fresh crimes of violence. Motor robberies, smash and grabs, bag snatching, cat burglar, etc. It is not because I think that women swanking in £500 fur coats and thousand pound necklaces deserve to lose them, but because it shows that the spirit of adventure, which so many critics say is dead, is still very much alive among the lads of today.⁵¹

Of course, the view expressed here is not that of the majority. One would find it hard to comprehend that a movement, which so vehemently upheld notions of chivalrous

⁴⁷ Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent* (University of London: London, 1925. Originally published 1925), p.149.

⁴⁸ Beaven, *Leisure*, p.190.

⁴⁹ Andrzej Olechnowicz (2005), ‘Unemployed workers, ‘enforced leisure’ and education for ‘the right use of leisure’ in Britain in the 1930s’, *Labour History Review*, **70** (1). pp. 27-52.

⁵⁰ Beaven, *Leisure*, p.190.

⁵¹ *The Scouter*, January 1933, p.2.

conduct, would condone such behaviour. Despite this, this quote does exhibit the seemingly ‘innate’ need for adventure in understandings of boyhood and how, if this was not addressed, it could lead to criminal behaviour. However, it was worried that while the cinema could provide short term excitement, this was fleeting and would only incite further agitation. As *The Guide* reported in 1935 referring to the popularity of cinema-going among the young:

at times the lure of the pictures where you can have a plush seat and imagine you are the heroine for a whole hour at least, for sixpence or so, must tempt anyone to give up the exhausting business of searching for the real thing. ... if you want adventure the only way to satisfy your ambitions is to experience it⁵².

Acts of delinquency could also be a result of an attempt to emulate the behaviour and styles on screen. As Tebbutt has shown, the interwar period saw shifts in the behaviour and dress of young people to mirror that of their onscreen idols. For example, girls were noted as often ‘lifting one leg’ when they kissed a partner, as in the movies; while boys would emulate the smoking styles seen in gangster films.⁵³ Such acts of emulation, it was feared, could translate themselves into criminal behaviour, be it through copying the criminal behaviour seen on screen, or for girls mimicking the ‘glamorous’, and in some cases sexually promiscuous, behaviour of their onscreen idols. Here we see a gendered understanding of deviance at play. A discussion of the gendered nature of delinquency in this period will take place in Chapter 4, however, it is worth noting here that delinquent behaviour, crime, violence and social disruption, were often attributed to be particularly masculine forms of rebellion, while a search for ‘glamour’ and promiscuity have been noted as feminine forms of deviance.

There clearly was the opinion then, in the Baden-Powell movements in particular, that cinema going could not satisfy the need for excitement which young people had. This was seen as being particularly damaging for those living in undesirable

⁵² *The Guide*, 20 July 1935, p. 429.

⁵³ Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, pp.129-130.

conditions, a ‘drab’ existence lending itself to criminal behaviour. Conversely however, worries voiced towards the growth of cinema going were also structured around another shift in working class living in the 1930s that of self indulgence and excess. Increased incomes and leisure opportunities for the young following the First World War led some contemporaries to identify a ‘culture of want and take’. That is to say, young people were growing up with an entitlement to leisure and the belief that it was not to be earned but was instead a privilege. As Pugh points out:

On the whole interwar society was less concerned about youthful rowdyism and criminality than about the propensity for self indulgence ... The 1920s and 1930s presented the younger generation, for the first time, with the opportunity to turn the pursuit of leisure into a major object of life⁵⁴.

Here then, concerns over the delinquent represent the janus-faced experience of the working class in the 1930s, with concerns over the impact of poverty alongside worries over self-indulgence.

Concern over the consumption patterns of young people intensified following the Second World War. At this time, it was feared that youthful self-indulgence was leading to ‘bad’ behaviour. While Pugh asserts that, in the interwar period, concern towards criminality was separate to that over self-indulgence; by contrast the post-war period saw the intertwining of the two. As Sir Basil Henriques, chairman of the East London Juvenile Court declared at an English County commissioner’s conference in 1955:

One of the most frequent offences is breaking into the modern child’s money-box (which is the gas meter or the electric light meter). I ask them why they did it. ‘To go to the pictures.’ Then I ask, ‘Wouldn’t your mother give you the money?’ and I get this terrifying answer: ‘Yes, she would have given me the money, but she wasn’t in.’ That is to say, children are learning that they

⁵⁴ Pugh, *We Danced All Night*, p.203.

can gratify a desire as soon as they have that desire ... they are getting for themselves this new philosophy of 'I see, I want, I take.'⁵⁵

Therefore, the culture of 'want and take' could result in unruly behaviour, including theft. This was exaggerated in the post-war period when the emergence of the hedonistic, consumer driven 'Teddy Boys' further confirmed the connection between consumption, leisure and youthful identity.

Worries over mass leisure in the 1950s including, but not limited to, the cinema, and what Richard Hoggart termed a "candy-floss world"⁵⁶ were also directly linked to the belief that there existed a process of class 'levelling'. That is, that the shifts which occurred following the Second World War: the creation of the welfare state, the rise in real earnings and full employment which followed, and a mass consumer culture, had joined together to erode class difference, particularly amongst young people. This image of 'classlessness' was to a large extent mythical, as many historians and sociologists have demonstrated, but nevertheless was a worry that pervaded youth movements.⁵⁷ Some contemporaries saw the popularity of mass leisure as being symbolic of a generation of drones, who lacked confidence, opinion and a sense of identity. The decline of a specifically working class 'character' was making people passive and unresponsive. As an article from *The Scouter* discussed in 1958, the popularity of the television and more widely, the social shifts which had occurred post war, revealed the decline of a distinctive working class.

And now the "telly" has come to reinforce the process of levelling the old working class – in spite of its poverty and miseries – it had folklore, a sense of "belonging", something we call "character". The new product lives in nice little houses,

⁵⁵ *The Guider*, March 1955, p. 83.

⁵⁶ Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (ChattoWindus: London, 1984. Originally published 1954), p.157.

⁵⁷ Muggleton has summarised the key shifts in discussions of class and youth in both sociological and ethnographic studies. David Muggleton (2005), 'From Classlessness to Clubculture: A Genealogy of Post-War British Youth Cultural Analysis', *Young*, 13 (2), 205-212. Osgerby outlines the class tensions of post-war youth culture in his 1992 article on youth and consumption. Bill Osgerby (1992) 'Well, it's Saturday night an' I just got paid': Youth, Consumerism and Hegemony in Post-War Britain, *Contemporary Record*, 6 (2), 287-305.

takes the same papers; listens to the same programmes, dresses in mass-produced shirts; works in mass production factories. You see, the kind of man the new mass media (press, radio, television) must reach, is about as passive a creature as they can continue to make him.”⁵⁸

While a different issue of *The Scouter* reported in that same year: “The Teddy Boy – Isn’t he striving to be noticed in this man made world which daily destroys the place and potentialities of the individual.”⁵⁹

Concern over the passivity of the working classes had long been a worry for some movements, particularly those on the left. For the Woodcraft Folk, the popularity of the cinema symbolised a growing apathy towards politics, citizenship and society. As *The Pioneer of the Folk* reported in 1935, “Shut up in the cities, working on machine-tending or clerking, surrounded by amusements like greyhound racing and the talkie films, we must easily be in danger of becoming cut off entirely from the world beyond.”⁶⁰ A number of contemporaries on the left in the 1930s worried that an imbalance between work and leisure in the working class lifestyle was leading to a decline in what was considered ‘good’ citizenship. For these commentators, Beaven and Griffiths argue, definitions of ‘good’ citizenship for the working classes, were directly linked to their engagement in civic processes and political activity⁶¹. They comment that:

mass commercial leisure was also considered to have had a malign influence on the dissemination of ‘good citizenship’... For these contemporary researchers the new picture palaces engendered apathy within the working class and a dislocation from their immediate socio-economic environment. ... The implications were clear ... a considerable number of working class males were lulled into apathy, to consumed with the world

⁵⁸ *The Scouter*, May 1958, p.118.

⁵⁹ *The Scouter*, July 1958, p.185.

⁶⁰ *The Pioneer of the Folk*, February 1935, p. 3.

⁶¹ Brad Beaven and John Griffiths (2008), ‘Creating the Exemplary Citizen: The Changing Notion of Citizenship in Britain 1870–1939’, *Contemporary British History*, **22** (2), p.214.

of film fantasy to embrace their democratic duties as British citizens.⁶²

As Davies suggests, the cinema was considered by some to be an ‘opiate of the masses’, numbing them to their social plight and in the context of youth movements failing to prepare them for their future roles as citizens.⁶³ In 1936 *The Guider* announced, “Youth must be taught to think vividly and freshly on our social problems. Neither in the schools (nor in the cinema) is he so taught to-day.”⁶⁴ The consideration of the Woodcraft Folk regarding the effects of mass leisure on the young was in some ways eerily prophetic. The continued decline of members following the war suggests this. With membership being drawn from politically conscious, upper working class, families it stands to reason that the inability to attract members at this time suggests a decline of class-consciousness amongst the young working classes.

A focus on concerns surrounding the cinema in the period from 1930 to 1960 reveals shifting concern towards the working classes at this time. Having so far established that the juvenile delinquent, being within the parameters of ‘the problem of leisure’, was considered be a result of shifts in urban working class life, I will now explore how youth movements envisaged the solution to this problem in the countryside, believing the English countryside to be the perfect setting in which to counteract the negative influences of urban life and leisure.

The Countryside: an antidote to an urban problem

In 1935 the YHA magazine, *The Rucksack*, wrote of a generation restricted by urban spaces and imprisoned by urban life. The following quote highlights the concern over working class life and leisure discussed previously in this chapter but, more importantly, demonstrates the freeing effect of the countryside for those who embrace it. More than a description, it is a declaration of the intent of these movements to create a generation who live by the physical and moral codes that access to the

⁶² Ibid, p.217.

⁶³ Davies. *Leisure*, p.278.

⁶⁴ *The Guider*, December 1936, p.461.

country provides them with, and the passionate way in which some believed in this philosophy. It declared:

Young men and girls scarcely free of the school desk, are pressed by the hard struggle for existence into work in office and factory, amongst letters and figures, wheels and rollers. Regulations for sitting and standing; always the same calculations, gestures and manipulations, day in, day out. The smallness of the room at home in ill-lit tenements, where a thousand men live and die like numbers; small space too in factories and department stores. This hunger for space and all produces in young people an unappeasable longing for distant places. With some unfortunately it only goes as far as the all-night cabaret, the nearest public-house, the circus and the six-day races. Like age-born birds they no longer dare to take the flight into the open, although in former times they or their parents had their home there hurrying from the chase of work to pleasure and back again to the yoke of work, their life flutters by ... And when the other, town-encaged "coffeehouse" youth replies and dies out, this one will live on from generation to generation. To travel on foot through the countryside is to live.⁶⁵

Reminiscent of the policies of enthusiasts of nineteenth century rational recreation, these movements embraced the landscape of the English countryside as a site of physical and mental refreshment for young urbanites. Through a constructive use of their leisure time, they hoped to reverse the damaging effects of urban life on young people's character, particularly of urban leisure pursuits.

The countryside was the most natural setting for this constructive leisure, and seen by many as a particularly nurturing way to spend one's leisure time. Youth movements worked within the dominant theory that a healthy, active leisure life could teach young people desirable qualities and train them for their responsibilities as future citizens of

⁶⁵ *The Rucksack*, March 1935, p.3.

the nation, thereby warding off delinquent behaviour. A regular programme consisting of trips into the heart of the countryside, physical activity and camp craft, as well as instruction on social skills was intended to keep delinquent behaviour at bay by actively counteracting the shifts in modern living that had led to the rise in juvenile crime. Therefore, discourses of citizenship within these movements often centred on the individual's relationship with the countryside. In the quote from *The Rucksack* above, the author declared, "To travel on foot through the countryside is to live."⁶⁶ All of the movements discussed in this thesis followed this mantra in one way or another, most often by emphasising the importance of walking, rambling and hiking in the open air, as a way of 'exploring' the countryside and escaping the city. This chapter will now explore this relationship by unpicking the role of the countryside in tackling the 'problem of leisure', and the way each of the movements asserted their own agendas upon outdoor activities. I will explore the key activities of these movements; camping; tracking; rambling; and nature study, and exhibit how through these activities it was hoped the effects of the shifts in working class life discussed above could be combated.

Firstly, nature study and the appreciation of 'beauty' were of key importance in combating the negative effects of slum life. Members were regularly encouraged to observe the beauty of the countryside in meticulous detail, from the types of wood around them to the birds in the trees and the flowers in the soil. Guides, for example, in working towards their 'Naturalist' badge were expected to memorise species of tree, animal, insect and plant that habituated a certain area of countryside.⁶⁷ This was the most basic of the Scouting principles and was encouraged from an early age. In January 1931, *The Guider* suggested to its readers that they encourage Brownies from the country to send twigs and tree fruits to town Brownies, who in the winter months were often relegated to the clubhouse for activities.

The study of the 'beauty' of the countryside, through activities such as 'Beauty Quests', was believed to be particularly beneficial for urban members, as it could counteract the damaging impact of urban conditions, which had been presenting itself

⁶⁶ *The Rucksack*, March 1935, p.3

⁶⁷ The 'Naturalist' badge which included monitoring an area of natural beauty for three months and noting the changes which occurred, as well as memorising the many species of tree, animal, insect and plant which occurs in that area. *The Guide*, 30 May 1952, p.257.

in the form of unruly and apathetic behaviour by young people. As Leslie Paul observed in 1938, it was for this reason that the Scouting movements retained large numbers of members in the interwar period. By providing children with an access to nature and ‘beauty’ denied to them by an increasingly fragile urban existence. He wrote, “Scouting captured the imagination of children who, in drab cities, were hungry for some brightness and romance.”⁶⁸ The use of the word ‘hungry’ here suggests that the ‘brightness and romance’ of the countryside was not something that young people wanted but something they *needed* and indeed craved; the insinuation being that there existed an innate desire for country living in the English character, which living in city tenements could not address. This stems from the cultural tendency discussed in the previous chapter, to identify with the rural life and landscape. Even in the 1960 extract from Sillitoe’s short story used to introduce this chapter, we see this innate belonging to the countryside. Colin has grown up in the city, yet when he is running he leaps brooks and turns corners, as if he belonged in the countryside, almost a part of it. This innate symbiosis with nature is confirmed by an article from a 1931 issue of *The Guider* which states that: “Every child craves beauty, and if it can find it in nature it will never again be starved in mind or lonely in heart.”⁶⁹ Trips to the countryside could therefore fill a void for urban children who, if deprived of access, could turn to delinquent or unwholesome solutions to satisfy this craving.

At the same time the belief that youth were neglecting, albeit unconsciously, the nurturing aspects of the countryside in favour of urban leisure pursuits, appeared. Concern that young people were becoming so blinded by modern, urban, man-made living that they were failing to stop and recognise the landscape around them highlighted the importance of nature study in these groups. As an article from the *Manchester Guardian* described in 1952:

Boys will miss the most obvious features of the countryside but any connection with urban life (the passing of the motor-car the scrap-iron dump) is immediately noticed which opportunities for delinquency (the overhanging fruit tree) are assessed almost

⁶⁸ Leslie Paul, *The Republic of Children*, YMA/WF/357, p.23.

⁶⁹ *The Guider*, April 1930, p.14.

unconsciously.⁷⁰

Here then, the inability of ‘wide boys’, as the article refers to them, to acknowledge and appreciate the countryside around them is directly linked with the possibility of delinquent behaviour. The teaching of nature study in these movements was therefore directly a response to worries over the shifting relationship of young people to the countryside and the effect that the absence of ‘nurturing’ leisure could have upon youth. As Rosenthal argues in relation to the Scouting movement:

Denying the possibilities of character growth to be found in the cities, they looked to the country as the source of all ethical instruction. The pleasures of outdoor living – real, to be sure – were suddenly invested with an almost mystical capacity to shape character in desirable ways.⁷¹

This mysticism can be pinpointed in a number of the youth movements of this thesis, who all in some way or another placed the improvement and strengthening of the character of their members within the landscape of the English countryside. As an article in *The Herald of the Folk* declared in 1930: “Spring has sent her messenger – even to the depths of the city – to beckon us out, out into the open to start life anew.”⁷²

The second aspect of these movements considered to be useful in tackling the problem of youth, was participation in activities such as stalking, tracking and hiking. Pursuits such as these were directly linked with adventure and fun and were believed to satiate young people’s desire for the excitement and adventure presented to them on screen. Countryside recreation and specifically the kinds of activities provided by Scouting programmes were believed to be particularly effective in tackling this as it provided adventure in a healthy and productive setting. A 1958 article from *The Scouter* recalled the reasons behind the popularity of the movement. The author wrote: “The boys loved it because the boy loves fun and fighting and mischief and

⁷⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 June 1952, p.5.

⁷¹ Rosenthal, *The Character Factory*, p. 141.

⁷² *The Herald of the Folk*, April 1930, p.1.

noise.”⁷³

This connection between the country landscape and adventure was a pronounced one across the thirty year period of this thesis with children’s authors, most famously Enid Blyton, situating stories of mystery, danger and excitement within the countryside. Blyton’s *The Famous Five* series, produced between the years of 1942 to 1962, did just this. Readership figures for this series are difficult to come by. However, literary historians often recall the fact that the books have been reprinted many times since their initial publication, suggesting popularity.⁷⁴ Popularity however does not automatically suggest diverse readership. The books, in many ways, reflected the middle class position of Blyton and are therefore useful in providing a comparison to the Scouting movements, as they too reflect middle class understandings of ‘adventure’ and youth. The Famous Five protagonists’ siblings, Julian, Dick, and Anne and cousin George (Georgina) got into all sorts of adventures while exploring different arenas, many of which were rural, met strange characters, solved ghostly mysteries, apprehended criminals and, on more than one occasion, fell into danger. The landscape of the countryside was a central part of this, as Bunce has shown, with the countryside setting reflecting notions of the rural idyll.⁷⁵ This is a similar theme in both Guide and Scout fiction of the period, which regularly mirrored the storylines and focus of the adventure-driven narratives of the Blyton series. In Scouting fiction, however, it is the skills learnt through Scouting activities, which facilitated the adventure. For example in the 1931 short story ‘Even to an Escaped Convict’, protagonist Felicity (Felix) uses the tracking skills learnt in the Guides to follow and apprehend an escaped convict (who later turns out to be innocent). Here then Felix’s experiences of adventure are a direct result of her Guiding experience.⁷⁶

Youthful leisure was therefore framed within discourses of adventure and period and the countryside was deeply inherent in this. This was of course a gendered notion. While ideas of adventure were prominent in both the Guide and Scout movements, ‘adventure’ in the physical sense was often portrayed as being a masculine trait.

⁷³ *The Scouter*, May 1958, p.118.

⁷⁴ For example; David Rudd, *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children’s Literature* (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2000).

⁷⁵ Bunce, *The Countryside Ideal*, p.67.

⁷⁶ ‘Even To An Escaped Convict’ by Beryl Netherclift. *The Guide*. 22 August 1931, pp.542-546.

Seemingly it was for this reason that the physical aspects of camp – tree climbing, rope swinging and rock climbing for example – were usually a more prominent aspect of a Scout camp in comparison to that of the Guides. By this I mean, while these activities certainly took place in both, it was in the Scouts that members were encouraged to push physical boundaries and put their ‘adventuring’ physique to the test. As a 1941 issue of *The Scouter* encouraged:

Again, when you’re at camp don’t postpone a hike just because the weather is bad ... Unless you or your Scouts have trampled miles and miles in stormy weather, you haven’t lived together really fully ... There is something in a man’s make-up that urges him to see over the next ridge and to reach the highest view. This is a spiritual urge and satisfies the trinity in man.⁷⁷

If the idea of adventure is clear here, then the gendered nature of this idea is overwhelming. To push the boundaries of training, exploration and indeed fitness, this article suggests, was a masculine trait and one that the Scout regimen addressed. A similar notion of boyhood can be identified in *The Famous Five* series. The male characters Julian and Dick being keen to explore and invite adventure, by contrast Anne was more likely to shun activities for everyday chores. An extract from *Five go off to Camp* (1948) evidences this nicely:

Inside the tent it was very hot. Anne decided to put the food they had brought under the bottom of the big gorse bush. It would be cooler there. She was soon busy about her little jobs. The boys went down to see if Mr Luffy was back but he wasn’t. ‘Anne! We are going to bathe in the stream!’ they called. ‘We feel hot and dirty. Are you coming? George is coming too’ ‘No, I won’t come,’ Anne called back. ‘I’ve got lots of things to do.’

The boys grinned at one another. Anne did so enjoy ‘playing house’. So they left her to it, and went to the stream, from which

⁷⁷ *The Scouter*, November 1941, p.170.

yells and howls and shrieks soon came.⁷⁸

Here we see the clear separation of public and private spheres within the context of the campsite. Anne welcomes staying inside the tent, to prepare the food and go about 'her little jobs'; suggesting that Anne has appropriated the feminine domestic chores as her own, while the boys frolic at the stream. This reflects, firstly the gendered nature of leisure time in general (which will be discussed in relation to the leisure time of girls in Chapter Four) but also the gendered nature of 'adventure', with the character of Anne less excited about the possibilities of the stream than her brothers. By contrast George (a shortened form of Georgina) enjoys such activities and does so regularly, to the dismay of her elder cousin Julian. For example, a short while after the visit described in the extract above, George is chastised by Julian when she wants to join an expedition to search out 'spook' trains, who forces her to stay behind with Anne. When she argues with him he declares, "This is my adventure and Dick's – and perhaps Jock's. Not yours or Anne's"⁷⁹. This confirms the masculine appropriation of the idea of 'adventure'. In another edition to the series, *Five on a Hike Together* (1951) a similar episode is repeated when, after finding that a farmhouse may not have enough beds to sleep all four cousins for the night, George and Anne excitedly suggest sleeping in a barn along with the boys. The exchange that follows is quite revealing.

'I'd like to sleep in a barn too,' said Anne. 'I'd love to. Let's not ask for a bedroom, let's all sleep in a barn- on straw or hay or something.'

'No,' said Julian. 'You girls will have to be in the house. It gets cold at night, and we've brought no rugs. We boys will be all right with our macs over us. I'm not letting you two girls do that.'

'It's *stupid* being a girl! Said George, for about the millionth time in her life. 'Always having to be careful when boys can do as they like! I'm going to sleep in a barn, anyway. I don't care what you say, Ju!'

⁷⁸ Enid Blyton, *Five go off to Camp* (Knight Books: Kent, 1986. Originally published 1948), p.76.

⁷⁹ Blyton, *Five go off to Camp*, p.116.

‘Oh yes you do,’ said Julian. ‘You know quite well that if ever you go against the orders of the chief – that’s me, my girl, in case you didn’t know it – you won’t come out with us again. You may look like a boy and behave like a boy, but you’re a girl all the same. And like it or not, girls have got to be taken care of.’⁸⁰

Sleeping outdoors was therefore an act considered too ‘adventurous’ for girls who, weren’t as tough as boys and could not cope with the conditions. In this extract the girls craved the experience and excitement of sleeping in a barn, but as girls were not allowed to do so.⁸¹

This tension was alleviated in some ways by the Guiding movement, as Proctor has shown, by creating a space for girls where they could stretch gender boundaries.⁸²

Proctor writes:

These movements created a unique space for youth, which allowed boys and girls to stretch gender and generational boundaries. Girls enjoyed a certain freedom in dress and behaviour, which hitherto had been inaccessible. They could test their new found independence in a safe, supervised arena. Boys could mould their own domestic spaces in tents and around campfires, away from female influences.⁸³

Camp also provided the opportunity for both boys and girls to engage in activities previously considered too feminine or masculine for them. Girls were allowed to experience a considerable amount of ‘adventure’ in camp, for example cooking on an open fire, climbing trees and playing games. On the other hand, boys were able to

⁸⁰ Enid Blyton, *Five on a Hike Together* (Hodder and Stoughton Ltd: London, 1997. Original work published 1951), pp.29-30.

⁸¹ Enid Blyton’s sexism within the Famous Five books has been noted by a number of scholars see for example, Liesel Coetzee (2011), ‘Empowering girls? The portrayal of Anne and George in Enid Blyton’s Famous Five series’, *English Academy Review: Southern African Journal of English Studies*, **28** (1), 85-98 & David Rudd. (1995), ‘Five Have a Gender-ful time: Blyton, Sexism, and the Infamous Five’, *Children’s Literature in Education*, **26** (3), 185-196.

⁸² Proctor, ‘Gender, Generation’, p.45.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.45.

learn to cook and clean and engaged in activities previously considered too feminine such as singing.⁸⁴ Of course there were limitations to this. One only has to look at the focus on domestic skills in the Guides, as will be done later, to pinpoint a clear agenda of ‘feminine’ training.

Alongside this, ideas about cleanliness often dominated the feminine experience of camping. In 1935, Guides were reminded that “We always appear tidily at meal-times – with sleeves rolled down and no pinafores ... We never go out in the rain without coats or mackintoshes, and hats ...”⁸⁵ To this end then, the spontaneity and adventure seeking nature of the Scouting philosophy, was in some ways hampered by an emphasis on feminine behaviour. Here we see a movement that attempted to straddle both worlds. In the one hand providing the adventure and excitement its members craved, on the other tempered by dominant societal notions of both femininity and masculinity. As Proctor asserts, the movement straddled a difficult position between attracting the interest of young people themselves but also support from their parents. As a socially acceptable leisure form, the Baden-Powell movements saw popularity throughout the interwar period, because they could do just this. They positioned themselves as simultaneously ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, adventurous but well ordered, patriotic but international and in doing so pleased members, as well as the established order.⁸⁶ As Proctor observes, “Seeking to bill themselves to the young as “modern” and chic, the movements espoused a message of adventure and opportunity, while institutionalizing protection of the older conservative ethos on which the movements had been founded”.⁸⁷ This fits in nicely with Light’s ‘conservative modernity’ of the interwar period, with the Guides marking a new, modern and acceptable form of leisure for girls, allowing them to, in some ways, subvert gender roles while on the other hand preserving the hegemonic ideology of the role of women in society.⁸⁸

This duality can be seen clearly in the 1931 Guide short story, ‘She Didn’t Like the Guides’, in which protagonist Ruth Tucker struggles to convince her aunt to let her

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.159.

⁸⁵ *The Guider*, July 1935, p.287.

⁸⁶ Proctor, *On my Honour*, p.3.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p.3.

⁸⁸ Light, *Forever England*.

join the Guides, as she believed them to be too masculine. In the extract below, the characters are discussing the Guides and the skills they teach.

“Come along and have your tea!” Interrupted her Aunt.

“I never saw such a girl for chatter! No doubt the school is all right,” she went on, “but I should like it better if they taught a few *useful* things!”

Ruth’s vivid face clouded a little. The she said quickly:

“Oh, but Auntie, they *do* teach useful things! In the Guides you learn –“

“To go tramping about the countryside like a pack of boys!” interrupted her Aunt again. “I know all about *them*! I have seen them gallivanting along the dusty roads dressed up like a lot of guys–“

“Oh Auntie!” protested Ruth.

“Like a lot of guys,” repeated her Aunt, inexorably. “And I hear that they actually sleep out in the fields *all night*!”⁸⁹

The argument continued;

“And I hope you won’t start pestering me to let you join those silly guys,” went on her Aunt.

“‘Guides’! Auntie,” protested Ruth, still smiling.

“They are all the same,” declared the old lady. “It’s all a pack of nonsense. Girls never wanted to have such ridiculous goings-on in my young days. I don’t know what the world is coming to, that I don’t!”⁹⁰

Here we see shifting reflections of modernity, with the Guides in this extract representing ‘modern’ practices of youthful leisure in comparison to the aunt’s ‘young days’. Following this exchange, Ruth and her local Guide troop set out to prove to her Aunt that Guides could be ‘useful’. In doing so they perform a number of household

⁸⁹ ‘She Didn’t Like the Guides’ by May Sullivan. *The Guide*. 16 May 1931, p.98.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

chores, building a pig-sty and herding three pigs at the request of Auntie, and it is the completion of these tasks which convinces her that Guides are worthwhile. Here then, the exploration of the countryside is characterised as a masculine trait, and it is through the more domesticated activities that these girls prove their worth. The movement's attraction to girls on the one hand and its 'usefulness' towards preparation for traditional roles on the other, was a balance that the Guides intended to strike. The countryside was for many considered to be a masculine arena for adventurous activity. As the above research has shown, the Guides attempted to appropriate this space by providing acceptable forms of adventure for girls. This is clear in the plethora of Guide fiction across the period, which regularly included Guides who, often unknowingly, enter into an adventurous trek across the rural landscape. These were often, however, unusual for the characters in the stories, who had only ever read about adventure in books.

Ideas of adventure in these two movements were also directly shaped around notions of class. While Scouting philosophy contained, as many historians of the movements have identified, distinctly middle class ideals surrounding behaviour and morals, interestingly, it was the idea of 'going without' which so often appeared in discussion of adventure and of the camping experience. Concern appeared in the 1930s over the practice of camping and the worry that some members were too reliant on expensive equipment and accessories. This it was believed would damage the standard of camping and of the Scouts themselves, as they would not learn thrift, self-sacrifice or selflessness encouraged through basic camping.

This concern can be seen in the Guide and Scout movements of the 1930s. The organisations, whilst championing the virtues of thrift and restraint, voiced concern over the behaviour of some members, who were becoming 'genteel'. For many in the Scouts there was the belief that "The modern Boy Scout was becoming a "gentleman camper"⁹¹, relying too much upon expensive equipment and on shops for food, with things such as "A tin opener more essential to him than a knife".⁹² There were also worries that the Scouting ideal was being diluted and that convenience was replacing the hardness and veracity of Scout training which, as we have seen, was one of the

⁹¹ *The Scouter*, July 1933, p.269.

⁹² *Ibid.*

key concepts behind notions of boyhood at this time. An article from a 1930 issue of *The Guider* demonstrates this. In a discussion of some of the problems, which arise at camp, a regular contributor for the magazine mentions a type of girl who refuses to 'rough it' and who spreads disaffection in camp. She wrote:

There are firstly, contagious ideas, which may poison the happiness of a camp. In an otherwise jolly crowd of Guides there may be some from a town company who are best described as, "genteel little ladies." They express their superiority by sniffing at the food, announcing that at home they have such and such; and pine loudly for fish paste, tinned peaches, and ice cornets. If a deaf ear is turned, they may infect children who were enjoying healthy plain food. I found it best to laugh at them, and let them starve for a day or so; very soon the worst offender volunteered that, after all, camp food was "really quite decent, considering the difficulties."⁹³

A similar, albeit fictional, situation was reported in a 1933 short story series in *The Scout* entitled 'The Millionaire Scout'. The story centres around Tuggy Evans and his Scout troop 'the Lions', who acquire a new member who is less acquainted with Scouting and who is obviously from a well off background. When he arrives in camp he arrives by Rolls Royce and brings a trailer of camping equipment, which includes a silk tent and a camp bed.⁹⁴ The new Scout, who is named Girlie, does not fit into camp well, complains and cannot take the roughness of the Scout camp. For example, on his first night he does not take well to sleeping on the floor, "having been used to a featherbed all his life"⁹⁵ and often clashes with the rest of the patrol, who had been brought up in "one of the toughest quarters of Merlin Coombe".⁹⁶ However, Girlie soon becomes enamoured with the Scouting life and in simple things such as preparing breakfast through which, "he got quite a thrill out of frying bacon over the wood fire."⁹⁷ More so he becomes part of the troop and is enthralled by the

⁹³ *The Guider*, August 1930, p.283.

⁹⁴ *The Scout*, 8 April 1933, p.722.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.723.

⁹⁷ *The Scout*, 22 April 1933, p.764.

togetherness and brotherhood he encounters when the troop go out of their way a number of times to save his life and prevent his kidnapping. The message of this story is clear, that although anyone can be a Scout, it is the simple activities of Scouting which make the experience special and which are taken away if one relies on modern equipment and labour saving devices. Furthermore, it is the simple aspects of camp, the chores, the cooking and generally 'roughing it', which makes the camp much more enjoyable than and superior to town pursuits.

There are obviously class and gendered tensions at play in this story. Firstly, the connotations of the protagonist's name are quite obvious. By naming him 'Girly' the author was suggesting that his behaviour and attitude to Scouting was somewhat feminine. With, as we have seen, understandings of boyhood in the movement being directly linked with a 'toughness' and yearning for adventure, the fact that Girly dislikes 'roughing it', suggests that he is unmasculine. By extension, this suggests something about approaches to class as well. Girly, being upper class, exhibits these feminine traits, while the other members who are from "one of the toughest quarters of Merlin Coombe"⁹⁸ take to Scouting naturally. The suggestion being that working class boys fit into the Scouting lifestyle and can benefit from it, as they can identify with the 'going without mantra' of the Scouting philosophy. To this end worries that Scouting was becoming a "preserve off the better off"⁹⁹ arose in the 1950s when the cost of uniforms, equipment and trips, was identified as a barrier to membership, for those boys who most needed the influence of Scouting in their lives, but also who were most naturally inclined towards Scouting. In many ways then while Scouting was a middle class organisation they extolled the virtues of working class character.

Ideas of adventure, despite nuances of gender and class, were central to understandings of juvenile behaviour. By the post-war period however, notions of adventure became outdated in the context of a growing mass media and as older members appropriated more autonomy in their leisure lives. As a result there was the belief that older members were put off by the childish connotations of the movements, as Hilda Birkett argued in 1955: "Label our outdoor pursuits consistently with the tag 'adventure' and by reason of the juvenile connotation of this word in their minds, you

⁹⁸ *The Scout*, 8 April 1933, p.723.

⁹⁹ *The Scouter*, February 1951, p.52.

cut considerably the appeal of Rangering to the average city or suburban working girl.”¹⁰⁰ Ideas of adventure and nobility were no longer attractive to the ‘teenager’ who was seemingly living in a ‘different age’ than those before him. Changes in health, youth service, family life and importantly the extension of education, meant that Scouting had to adapt to a fit in with modern society and attract modern youth.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, continually across the period, ideas of adventure within the rural sphere were central to the Scouting experience, as we have seen by looking at some of the ‘adventure’ fiction that existed. Of course such fiction was written to be *instructive* and tells us more about how young people were expected to behave than how they did behave.

We have seen then, how understandings of delinquency could revolve around the notion of a youthful yearning for adventure. This notion was bound up with contemporary conceptions of both gender and class. Much of the gendered understanding surrounding the idea of ‘adventure’ was a result of sexually segregated notions of physical fitness. Young boys were considered to hold ‘boundless’ amounts of energy, which, if not expelled, could manifest itself in violent or attention seeking behaviour. Therefore, urban pursuits were inductive of such behaviour and outdoor activities presented as an antidote. This thinking was particularly prominent in the 1930s, when attention towards health and fitness gathered momentum.

It has been well documented that following the First World War there existed in England a drive for national efficiency and a focus on the state of both the male and female body. A national efficiency movement had been in existence at the start of the century but the mutilation and horror of the First World War, alongside the increasingly diminutive physique of the urban poor and the high occurrence of infant mortality, venereal disease and alcoholism in urban areas, led to a renewal in concern amongst contemporaries, regarding the health of the nation. The discovery that only 36 per cent of men were classed as ‘fully fit’ (A1 grade), to fight in the First World War, while 31 per cent were classed as unfit (C3 grade), sparked panic over the future of the British Empire and led to the growth of a physical culture with the popularity of

¹⁰⁰ *The Guider*, July 1955, p.213.

¹⁰¹ See a discussion of this problem in *The Scouter*, January 1956, p. 8.

sports, keep fit and outdoor leisure activities.¹⁰² In the 1920s several health and hygiene pressure groups arose in an attempt to tackle this problem. Groups such as the New Health Society (NHS), formed in 1925, encouraged health education and dietary reform, while the Sunlight League (1924) promoted access to the countryside and the open air as being curative of the ills of modern society.¹⁰³ As Zweiniger-Bargielowska argues, physical fitness at this time became part of a “reciprocal relationship between the state and the individual”¹⁰⁴, with it being the responsibility of each person to maintain a standard of health and fitness.

Here then, negotiations of citizenship became heavily linked with duties of fitness and the countryside became the arena in which to achieve this. Youth hostels and campsites became two of a number of places, along with gymnasiums and swimming baths, which became what Matless has termed, “modern sites for modern bodies”¹⁰⁵, places where men and women could go to improve their physique and their citizenship in tandem. The growth in popularity of the outdoor movement and activities such as hiking and rambling at this time can therefore be seen, partly, as a direct response to this call for fitness. This culture, Matless argues, had a direct result on meanings of citizenship at this time. He suggests that the ‘fully fit’ ‘A1’ citizen, in other words the ‘landscaped’ outdoor citizen, physically fit from regular countryside excursions was considered to be an exemplary ‘good’ citizen. On the other hand the unfit ‘C3’ members were labelled ‘anti-citizens’.¹⁰⁶

Calls for national fitness strengthened in the late 1930s as the government faced an increasingly uncertain situation in Europe and the growing threat of the Nazi regime.¹⁰⁷ With this the government, once again, placed improving the health and fitness of the nation high on its agenda, with campaigns for national health and fitness at this time encouraging healthy living and physical fitness through exhibitions, films, radio programmes and campaign posters with the declaration ‘Fitness Wins!’¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰² Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2006), ‘Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, **41** (4), 601.

¹⁰³ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2007), ‘Raising a Nation of ‘Good Animals’: The New Health Society and Health Education Campaigns in Interwar Britain’, *Social History of Medicine*, **20** (1), 74.

¹⁰⁴ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body*, p.13.

¹⁰⁵ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*. p.91.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘British Superman’, p.596.

¹⁰⁸ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘Good Animals’, pp.85-86.

onset of the Second World War further intensified worries over health, as the poor health of urban evacuees came to light.¹⁰⁹ As M-O reported, after studying material collected from diaries and evacuation reports, the urban, working class evacuees would often arrive with a number of illnesses and diseases including scabies, impetigo and diphtheria.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, there was a general belief that after a short time in the country, these children saw a great improvement in their health.¹¹¹

Following the Second World War the introduction of the National Health Service and welfare reforms did not diminish the focus on individual responsibility when it came to health. In 1954 *The Guide* proclaimed that:

Never has the Government been so concerned with the standard of public health as it is today. It was not until comparatively recently that local councils employed food inspectors and sanitary officers, and set up special school medical and dental services. Yet with all this care provided by the State, unless we ourselves are prepared to pay sufficient attention to our own bodies we shall still fail to enjoy perfect health.

We can see then that discourses of citizenship across the mid-twentieth century were consistently, but to varying degrees, centred on ideals of physical fitness and prowess. The youth of England were central to this discussion. In a speech given to the National Fitness Council on 17th February 1938, King George VI declared that it was the job of young people across the country to look after and improve their own fitness and health. He urged young people to remember that:

in the end fitness depends on the efforts of each one of us ...
and to youth in particular I would say: The future will be in your keeping. The present is your opportunity to fit yourselves for a full; active, useful and therefore happy life.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ See Howkins, 'A Country at War', pp.81-82.

¹¹⁰ M-OA, FR 11. 'Evacuation Report', pp.1-2.

¹¹¹ M-OA, FR 11, p.4.

¹¹² *The Guide*, 3 March 1938, p.1479.

Just under a year before on July 3rd 1937 King George, along with his wife and two children, had attended ‘The Festival of Youth’, a large rally of youth clubs, movements and sporting organisations, organised by the British Sports and Games Association, with the intention of exhibiting the vitality, prowess and commitment of British youth. The spectacle involved 11,000 young people, both boys and girls, from 40 organisations and reportedly attracted 50,000 spectators.¹¹³ The exhibition consisted of physical training exercises and gymnastic demonstrations, as well as a procession of youngsters which included “the life-savers in their bathing-suits, amateur boxers wearing their gloves, campers with rucksacks on backs, hockey girls in red and white, girl fencers, with the points of their rapiers lowered, girls dressed as Greek dancers, and finally the cyclists”¹¹⁴, along with a demonstration of maypole dancing by one thousand Girl Guides.¹¹⁵ It was with this event that the adoration of physical culture, but particularly that of young people, was solidified with participants demonstrating “an inspiring impression of England’s youth, its vitality and high spirits”.¹¹⁶

Clearly here youth movements were at the forefront of the provision of physical training for the young. It was this intervention, along with state encouragement that, Matless argues, saw the generation of an “art of right living”, with youth being enlisted into a new society of health.¹¹⁷ It was within this context of a growing recognition of the importance of fitness in understandings of good citizenship, that these movements emphasised the beneficial role of the countryside in improving the health of working class youth. They did this by encouraging outdoor activities and access to the open air, particularly for working class members, who were faced with conditions of urban poverty including ill health and malnourishment.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 July 1937, p.8.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.


¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.92.

¹¹⁸ This emphasis on physical culture and in particular the focus on young people was not an original idea or by any means ‘new’, as John Welshman argues ideas about child wellbeing and about the debilitating effect of city life had influenced debates on child health since the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, youth movements such as these were not the only establishment to centre the physical, intellectual and moral improvement of children within the sphere of the countryside. As Barron has shown, in the interwar period the School Journey Movement did just this by taking urban school-children into the countryside and away from their urban environment. John Welshman, ‘Child Health, National Fitness, and Physical Education in Britain, 1900-1940’ in Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra & Hilary Marland (eds) *Cultures of Child Health in Britain and the*

There was then, a wider understanding of the role of the countryside in maintaining health and fitness. Indeed the healthy benefits of country living were being extolled in the press at this time. Advertisements, for brands such as Ovaltine for example (figure below), consistently used the notion of ‘country health’ to attract consumers. One of these adverts which appeared in *The Guider* in 1930 with the tag line “Country Health for You!” depicted a country milkmaid with a basket of eggs and a tin of Ovaltine, suggesting that by drinking the product you would achieve the full health and vitality obtained through country work and living.

Figure 2.1: Advert for Ovaltine depicting 'country' health, 1930.¹¹⁹



**Country
Health for you!**

"Ovaltine" brings to you the health and vitality of the open country. Malt from sun-ripened barley, creamy milk from England's richest pastures, and specially selected eggs—these products of the sunshine and health of the country are concentrated in "Ovaltine" in the form of a delicious beverage.

Every particle of "Ovaltine" is nourishment—correctly balanced, highly concentrated, easily digested, health-giving nourishment. No other food can, to the same degree, build up healthy bodies, sound nerves, and alert minds, for no other food is prepared from the same ingredients.

Every member of every home—young and old alike—should drink this incomparable and delicious food beverage in place of tea, coffee and other mealtime beverages. Drink it also last thing each night to ensure unbroken and refreshing sleep.

OVALTINE
TONIC FOOD BEVERAGE

Builds-up Brain. Nerve and Body

*Prices in Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
1/3, 2/- and 3/9 per tin.*

*It is economical to purchase the
larger size tins.*

Symbolic of this distinction between the urban sphere as unhealthy and the rural as wholesome was the importance given to having access to fresh, country air. The fresh air of the countryside, in comparison to that of the city, was considered to have medicinal properties an exposure to which could cure a number of social ills

¹¹⁹ *The Guider*, March 1930, p.95.

symptomatic of urban society.¹²⁰ Companies of Scouts and Guides were therefore encouraged to get out into the countryside as much as possible to maximize the invigorating effects of the country air. It was for this reason that they encouraged regular excursions into the countryside, especially for poorer urban children. In 1931 the Guides ran a scheme encouraging members to befriend less fortunate children and bring them along to meetings and camps in an effort to improve their quality of life. In a letter to *The Guider* in 1931, a member suggested that befriending “a poor little one from the slums”¹²¹ or in other words, “Letting the Guide sunshine through into dark places”¹²² should be considered a ‘good turn’. This is an important distinction. While Scouting activities were considered to be useful, particularly in counteracting urban working class living conditions, it should not be forgotten that large numbers of members of the Baden-Powell movements were in fact middle class and therefore living in better conditions than their working class counterparts. Including the working classes was considered a ‘good deed’. Furthermore, in wartime the Guide movement campaigned for the regular involvement of victims of bombing in camping activities. There was a continuation of the pre-war Children’s Country Holiday Fund scheme, in which Guides received about 14 Shillings to take one or two London children to camp for weeks at a time.¹²³

It is clear, then, that health and fitness were an important part in considerations of ‘good’ citizenship at this time and outdoor activities were utilised by these movements to address the ill effects of the city on young people’s citizenship. Of course, worries over health and physique were not confined to the urban working classes at this time. As Zweiniger-Bargielowska has shown, debates over excessive consumption and growing obesity were rife in the interwar period. She writes that the fitness craze of the period “dramatizes class divisions, poignantly illustrated by the paradox of Britain’s first slimming craze arising in the midst of economic depression and record unemployment in the 1930s.”¹²⁴ Within the context of understanding the problem of the predominantly working class delinquent, this chapter shall not expand on this at this time. Therefore, faced with unemployment, cramped and underdeveloped living

¹²⁰ Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, p.10.

¹²¹ *The Guider*, January 1931, p.25.

¹²² *The Guider*, January 1931, p.25.

¹²³ *The Guider*, March 1947, p.62.

¹²⁴ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2005), ‘The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, Circa 1930-1939’, *Journal of British Studies*, **44** (2), p.242.

conditions, movements such as these saw themselves as offering an opportunity for many working class young people to escape the dreary conditions of urban poverty and in doing so hoped to reverse the negative effects of city living.

This physical training provided by the Baden-Powell movements was, as with notions of adventure, distinctly gendered; a trend which Zweiniger-Bargielowska has identified in wider discussions of physical fitness in the interwar period. She notes that notions of masculinity desired the upkeep of a muscular frame, to assert cultural authority in a society in which men were seemingly becoming emasculated. The female body, on the other hand, became a place on which ideas surrounding the role of women and motherhood were projected. It was considered a national duty for women as breeders to protect their bodies and stay healthy and in so doing so fulfil their duty as women of the British Empire.¹²⁵ In the movements then a similar distinction was made. Boys were expected to push themselves physically, participate in what was considered “Training”¹²⁶ and push their physical abilities to the limit. By contrast girls were considered to have limited capabilities in physical activities. In a discussion on cycling in 1930, Guide official G.G Jackson recommended that, while mixed sex cycling tours were fun, in the end the physicality of cycling meant mixed sex groups would be unmatched in ability. The report went as follows:

On the whole, girls will probably have to rely upon their own company for a tour. ... Boys, unfortunately, are apt to be a little inconsiderate in this respect. To prove the superiority of their sex, they will actually do more mileage than they would ordinarily in an attempt to show that they can go great distances without being fatigued.¹²⁷

This attitude towards the sexual division of physical activity was not limited to these movements at this time but part of a wider understanding of the female body. As Welshman has shown, with reference to physical education in schools, girls were considered to be physically weaker, having little experience in physical exercise, low

¹²⁵ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2011), ‘The Making of a Modern Female Body: Beauty, Health and Fitness in Interwar Britain’, *Women’s History Review*, **20** (2), p.300.

¹²⁶ *The Scouter*, November 1941, p.170.

¹²⁷ *The Guide*, March 25, 1930, p.1502.

stamina and were easily fatigued.¹²⁸ It was for these reasons that direct competition with boys was discouraged and girls were often found competing in feminised sports such as dancing.¹²⁹ The impact of physical exercise upon the behaviour of young people was therefore considered to be different for boys and girls. For boys, an innate need for ‘adventure’ was physical and as such the movement hoped that, by providing physical release of ‘energy’ through outdoor activities, boys could expel unwanted behavioural urges, which could lead to delinquency. The extract from *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* cited at the beginning of this chapter reveals the understanding of the relationship between physical exercise and delinquency. Colin, away from the temptations of town life, finds an unexpected release and enjoyment in long-distance running.

This short story was produced only a few years after American criminologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck had recognised the association of physique types with instances of delinquency. They concluded that boys with all types of physique could exhibit delinquent behaviour, but differences in physique saw different behavioural tendencies. They found that 60% of delinquent boys in urban areas were of the mesomorphic body type, which they describe as ‘bone and muscle’.¹³⁰ Such boys were found to be energetic, adventurous and impulsive and these attributes often led them into delinquent lifestyles.¹³¹ They too, as those in the Baden-Powell movements did, saw a direct correlation between leisure and delinquency. They wrote that:

Youngsters in today’s culture have ample leisure; and unless channels of legitimate energy-outlet are provided it is natural that uninhabited dire-tendencies may result in delinquency. Especially in the case of *mesomorphs*, opportunities need to be created not only in the home or in school, but in the community, for adventuresome yet socially harmless physical activity in the company of other boys, as diversions from anti-social expression of the strong drives of this body type, keeping in

¹²⁸ Welshman, ‘Child Health’, p.67.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Eleanor Glueck and Sheldon Glueck, *Physique and Delinquency* (Kraus Reprint Corporation: New York, 1956), p.250.

¹³¹ Ibid, p.251.

mind that mesomorphic boys typically “live by action”.¹³²

Here then the Gluecks discuss how physical activity can help deter delinquent behaviour and suggest that adventurous activity amongst the company of other boys was an effective mechanism for tackling the problem of delinquency. This sounds very similar to the form of leisure supplied by the Scouting regime, where we see concerns over a distinctly masculine form of deviance. Female deviant behaviour, on the other hand, was regularly framed around a discourse of emotions; with a desire for attention, love and care manifesting itself in forms of sexualised behaviour.

Finally, the activity of camping was also believed to be important in tackling the ‘problem of youth’. Camp taught both boys and girls proper social conduct, as well as teaching them how to look after themselves and others and the value of teamwork. The camp, being the culmination of a year’s hard work and Scouting, was greatly anticipated by Scouts, Guides and Woodcraft Folk alike, and the camping season was often met with great excitement. It was there that boys and girls could grow and develop, physically and mentally, into the ‘good’ citizens of the future. The camp vitally provided members with an education in community and social roles. It was in many ways a microcosm of society and a place where members could learn the necessary life skills for future citizenship. An article in *The Guide* in 1935 entitled ‘Camping and Good Citizenship’ spoke of the importance of camp for preparing girls for their future roles in society:

Camp is perhaps one of the greatest opportunities to train our Guides to be good citizens, both now and later when they are grown up. If we look on a camp as a town or village, we shall find in it all the essential things that go to make a healthy happy community.”¹³³

The camp represented the national community and larger society, with individual tents symbolising the home and the Guide Courts of Honour being symbolic of parish

¹³² Ibid, p.261.

¹³³ *The Guider*, July 1935, p.294.

councils.¹³⁴

As such the camp provided the ideal environment for the citizen training of young people and could be particularly useful in helping reform ‘troublesome’ boys. As *The Guider*’s Marcus Woodwood suggested in a 1930 article, setting up camps for delinquent boys, or “Camps for Scamps”¹³⁵ as one Reverend called them, could be highly influential in adjusting their behaviour and turning “their thoughts to service in a Scouting way”.¹³⁶ The countryside, as a setting for these camps, provided the perfect landscape in which to teach young people morals, discipline and manners-aspects of character traditionally learned from the family unit. Camp addressed worries over ‘modern’ youth, their lack of respect, anti-social behaviour and their apathy toward and seeming abandonment of their future duties. An article in *The Guider* declared in 1955 that:

‘The modern girl has no manners.’ ‘Courtesy is a dying grace.’ ‘The young have no respect.’ We hear such remarks every day and we see ill-mannered young people everywhere, in public and in their own homes, and either secretly or openly, we are ashamed to know how many of them are, or have been Guides.¹³⁷

Through a combination of chores and teamwork the camping experience was thought to prepare young people for the future and teach them the benefits of hard work and mutual cooperation. A 1947 article on camping in *The Guider* commented that it was at camp where girls learned the traits necessary for them in the future. The author wrote that it was “Those things which we try to instil indirectly – adaptability, resourcefulness, courage and many other qualities – are called for everyday in camp.”¹³⁸ Regular chores, such as kitchen duty or cleaning the latrines, served to teach members the meaning of responsibility, independence and working as a team.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ *The Guider*, January 1930, p.14.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ *The Guider*, December 1954, p.261.

¹³⁸ *The Guider*, March 1947, p. 62.

For the Woodcraft camp took on a further ideological importance. Faced with the homogeneity of the urban world, the Woodcraft Folk were concerned that working class young people were becoming slaves to the capitalist system and apathetic towards their political and economic situation. This was particularly worrying to the Woodcraft Folk, in which camp became utilised as a way of teaching young people their duties, as of the working class community. The message of cooperation and shared responsibilities was taught through a fairly rotated chore system and through team work and games. Worries over the growing political apathy in the working class were addressed through debates and discussion in camp. These activities addressed the growing concern, particularly in the 1930s, that the popularity of passive leisure pursuits such as the cinema, which was cheap and therefore available to the working classes, was making them apathetic towards their social situation and was central to the importance that the Woodcraft movement placed on activities in camp. The routine of camp was designed to teach young working class people about the national community and to think critically about their role within it. The Young Farmers' Club Movement, on the other hand, while not using the format of camping, did, through the avenue of farming activities, teach young people the importance of their future role on the land, their necessary role in the rural economy and their role in the farming community, through training in stock rearing and farm cultivation. This is worth more exploration and shall be returned to in the following two chapters.

Finally, these movements offered an alternative to the growing Americanised mass culture of the mid-century through activities such as folk dancing and an understanding of rural arts and crafts. By championing typically English pastimes they attempted to tackle the cultural 'levelling down' of Americanised youth.¹³⁹ The Guides, for example, were keen to encourage traditional country leisure activities, by offering tuition in old English quilting and the introduction of the Folk Dancer proficiency badge in the late 1920s (later renamed Country Dancer in 1940).¹⁴⁰ Such activities were considered valuable to a Guide and part of the English national heritage that the Guide movement was helping keep alive. This, as Snape has shown, was a popular trend in society at this time, towards the popularity of Folk Dance as a

¹³⁹ Osgerby, *Youth in Britain*, p.12. In regards to the 'Americanisation' of leisure in the post-war period see; Adrian Horn, *Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and youth culture 1945-1960* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2009).

¹⁴⁰ *The Guider*, October 1937, p.402.

way of resisting modernity.¹⁴¹ In 1939 *The Guider* stressed the importance of country dancing to members by declaring that:

It is now becoming increasingly clear in our harassed and mechanised lives that the art of natural song and dance is essential to all who wish to live fully and expansively. A natural spontaneity is still there in all of us and our English dance-forms are *our* way of expressing ourselves. These forms have been tested and bequeathed to us by generations of English people until they are as much a part of us as our own language.¹⁴²

Here then the attempt to ‘reconnect’ with a lost past and the importance of the countryside is clear.

We have seen how youth movements aimed to tackle the ‘problem of youth’, through adjusting the leisure practices of young people. The countryside could physically and mentally improve youth and combat delinquent behaviour. Discourses surrounding youthful delinquency were centred upon masculine notions of adventure and the landscape provided the ideal arena for adventurous activities. Another way in which young people could improve their citizenship was through a protection of the land from the impact of other people’s leisure. It is this idea of ‘good’ citizenry that this chapter shall address now.

Stewards of the Countryside

This chapter has shown how youth movements developed understandings of good citizenship and proposed a solution to the urban problem of the juvenile delinquent, *through* the English countryside by enjoying outdoor recreations. As members of these movements, young people were welcomed as citizens of a ‘landscaped’ society. However, ‘good’ citizenship within this ideal also centred on a stewardship of the countryside. One of the key ways in which these movements aimed to improve

¹⁴¹ Bob Snape (2009), ‘Continuity, Change and Performativity in Leisure: English Folk Dance and Modernity 1900–1939’, *Leisure Studies* 28 (3), 297–311.

¹⁴² *The Guider*, April 1939, p.109.

citizenship was through an education in the rightful uses of the countryside, and by inculcating a love and appreciation towards the rural sphere. Proper and responsible countryside conduct therefore became an important indicator of ‘good’ citizenship. As Whyte argues, movements, including the Scouts and the Guides, did not only foster a love of the countryside but also provided cheap access to the countryside and fostered a ‘responsible’ attitude towards recreation.¹⁴³

The importance of stewardship must be seen in the context of the growing number of debates over the preservation and protection of the countryside, discussed in the previous chapter. Within these contemporary discussions of preservation, youth held something of a contentious and contradictory role. Young people were considered by many to be the harbingers of destruction-careless, uneducated and unconcerned with the environment that surrounded them. As Howkins writes, “the largely young men and women who came into the countryside in the interwar years were seen as something like the hordes of Attila the Hun”¹⁴⁴, leaving destruction in their path wherever they went. Radio personality and philosopher C.E.M Joad wrote in 1937:

And then there are 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 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, and a roadhouse round every corner and a café on top of every hill for their accommodation.¹⁴⁵

This view was confirmed by news reports particularly in the post-war period, when ‘hooligans’ were reported to be running rampage over the Peak District. *The Times* described such an incident in 1957:

¹⁴³ Whyte, *Landscape and History*, p.201.

¹⁴⁴ Howkins, ‘What Is the Countryside For?’ p.172.

¹⁴⁵ C.E.M. Joad, ‘The People’s Claim’ in Clough Williams-Ellis (ed), *Britain and the Beast* (J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd: London, 1937), pp.72-73.

Life in the rocky little village of Castleton in the Peak District this summer has not been all the “rural simplicity” and “delightful customs” extolled in its guide book. Two manifestations, usually metropolitan, have cast shadows around the local caves and climbs ... At weekends the villagers are accustomed to seeing gangs of youths and Teddy Boys, with their girls, arriving from such towns as Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester to have a “good time”.

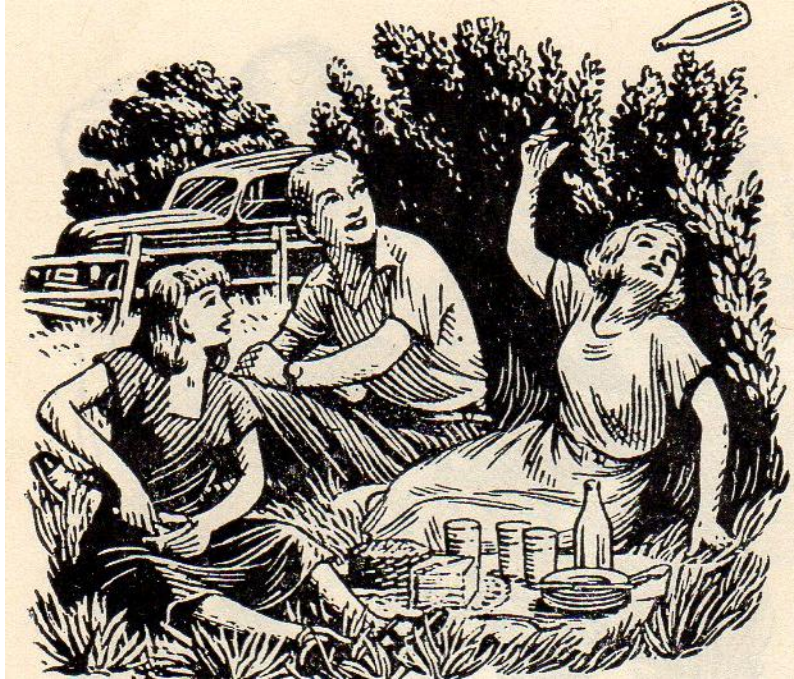
For many of these visitors a good time would seem to consist in beating the daylight out of the local property if not the population. They arrive in Teddy Boy dress or hikers’ kit, bearing enormous packs – “Lord knows what they carry in them,” one villager remarked, “because their hiking is all done on trains” ... Much of the local rowdyism occurred earlier in the summer; the usual uprooting of hedgeposts, damage to crops, rock throwing and so on occurred ... Armed though the roughs often are with knives (which were used instead of darts in one pub), knuckledusters and rings, the village police sergeant has proved more than equal to a score of them, so that trouble is mostly prevented. Wardens have been suggested as an additional curb.¹⁴⁶

In this *Times* report then, we see a clear definition of understandings of the ‘good’ citizen. The urban depiction of the juvenile delinquent here, is exhibiting ‘bad’ citizenship through ‘rowdyism’ and damage to the land. This story confirms Howkins’ assertion that the destruction of the countryside was considered by some to be at the hands of youth, though of course not all examples were as extreme as this. Youth posed a particularly interesting problem for preservationists, as on the one hand it was the actions of urban, working class, young people that were blamed for the ruination of the country. On the other hand, the countryside, being the heritage of all, needed to be preserved for future generations. Young people were therefore heralded as both the destructors and the saviours of the English countryside. As Matless points out the

¹⁴⁶ *The Times*, 4 September 1975, p.12.

Country Code of 1959 showed illustrations of the young as both future citizens and country hazards.¹⁴⁷

Figure 2.2: ‘The danger of litter’ from the Country Code 1951.¹⁴⁸



The 1957 report above highlights nicely this characterisation, with the behaviour of the Teddy Boys being contrasted with that of the ‘landscaped’ citizen. The comment of one villager that “their hiking is all done on trains” suggests that the Teddy Boys’ exploration of the countryside was not ‘true’ adventurous exploration as was undertaken by those who explored the countryside on foot.

Education was believed to be the key factor here. Young people needed to be educated in the right use of the countryside, to prevent destructive behaviour. As Howard Marshall warned in 1937, “No doubt a lack of wise education is largely to blame. Unless there is a deliberate education to counteract this blindness, we can look for no help from the younger generation.”¹⁴⁹ They were to be educated not just in proper conduct in the countryside, but in country manners, lore and in the

¹⁴⁷ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.248.

¹⁴⁸ The National Parks Commission, *The Country Code*, p.14.

¹⁴⁹ Howard Marshall, ‘The Rake’s Progress,’ in Clough Williams-Ellis (ed.) *Britain and the Beast* (J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd: London, 1937), pp.169-70

appreciation of 'beauty', which had too often been ignored by groups of urbanites visiting the countryside. In 1937, Joad detailed how the urban youth should be educated in country ways. He wrote:

Lessons in country lore should be given at every school and country manners taught as carefully as social. Not to eat peas with a knife, drink out of the soup tureen, spit, or pick the nose in public – these things, it is agreed, form a necessary part of a liberal education. Not to drive cars on to the downs, not to tear up wild flowers by the roots, not to leave newspapers and bottles lying on the grass – these, in my view are a part no less necessary. ... I would have every child required to pass an examination in country lore and country manners before he left school, and would awards prizes and scholarships in the subject. There is something to be said for requiring every townsman who had not succeeded in passing this examination to wear an 'L' upon his back when he walked abroad in the country, for, until he has learnt the elementary manners of the countryside, he is no better qualified to be at large in a wood than a learning motorist is to be at large on the road.¹⁵⁰

Contemporaries such as Joad called for more extensive schooling in nature study, countryside conduct and the appreciation of beauty. However while the existing school curriculum did include nature study, as Marsden has shown, it was youth movements that were central to the development of young people into environmentally conscious citizens.¹⁵¹ The Baden-Powell movements were at the forefront of this. In October 1930, a letter to the editor in *The Scouter* concerning wildflower picking excursions declared:

¹⁵⁰ Joad, 'The People's Claim', pp. 69-70.

¹⁵¹ See William E. Marsden (1998), 'Conservation education' and the foundations of national prosperity: comparative perspectives from early twentieth-century North America and Britain', *Journal of the History of Education Society*, 27 (3), 345-362.

What is wanted is the dissemination of right ideas, and that can only come by education. And the education, as we see them, should be the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides of to-day. They are the men and women of tomorrow.¹⁵²

A fundamental part of ‘good’ citizenry within these movements was therefore centred upon learning countryside manners and exhibiting them. An article in *The Scouter* reported in 1931 that:

Scouts and Guides can do a lot by helping in litter campaigning, and by setting the example of preserving the natural beauty of the countryside for the benefit of everyone. It is hard to believe – though, alas, it is very true – that there are people who besmirch and rob the countryside, and leave it in an unclean state, but if we can induce our fellow citizens to show consideration to the beauty around them. Citizenship in all aspects will be elevated and refined.¹⁵³

Here then the Scout movement was drawing upon a growing discourse of citizenship, which linked countryside behaviour with ‘good’ citizenry.

The dissemination of ‘right’ ideas through ‘conservation education’ for members was vital in tackling the perceived ignorance and stupidity of the urban working class young people towards countryside issues. In so doing, the movements set out a distinct code of behaviour that members should follow. Members were instructed in the dos and don’ts of countryside behaviour, including discussions about litter, poaching, flower picking and fire safety. To the extent that carelessness, such as leaving gates open, was considered “un-Scoutlike action”.¹⁵⁴ Such notions were disseminated through instructional articles, activities, games, fiction and poems. For example, the following poem from a 1930 issue of *The Scouter*:

¹⁵² *The Scouter*, October 1930, p.398.

¹⁵³ *The Scouter*, November 1931, p.450.

¹⁵⁴ *The Scouter*, November 1930, p.443.

The fellow who loves to leave litter about,
 whenever to camp or hike he goes out.
 Has never been trained to clean like a Scout,
 but is known to the world as a town “litter lout”¹⁵⁵

This poem reinforces the importance of not littering but also highlights the tension between the trained Scout and the urban ‘litter lout’. The magazine acknowledges, then, the socio-geographic distinctions at play, within understandings of ‘good’ citizenship.

Codes of countryside conduct remained central to Scouting behaviour across the mid-century. In 1955, after the production of the Countryside Code and in the context of growing nationalised discourses of preservation and duty, *The Guider* reminded its readers that:

Every Guider has a duty to back up the ‘simple rules of conduct’ outlined in this booklet [the Country Code]– shutting gates, protecting the crops by walking in single on field paths, avoiding damaging fences, hedges and walls, guarding against risk of fire, safeguarding water supplies, protecting plants, trees and flowers and *leaving no litter*.¹⁵⁶

While a campfire song from 1956 reinforced this codified behaviour. The song entitled “Don’t Leave Your Rubbish behind you” included the following first verse and chorus:

There are lots of people everywhere,
 When they take their meals in the open air,
 Who either don’t think or else don’t care,
 And leave all their rubbish behind them.
 Whenever you find a lovely view,
 Be tidy and clean & remember too,

¹⁵⁵ *The Scouter*, May 1930, p.175.

¹⁵⁶ *The Guider*, August 1955, p.249.

That others enjoy it as well as you,
So don't leave your rubbish behind you.¹⁵⁷

Similarly, the Woodcraft attempted to instil in its members thoughtfulness surrounding countryside behaviour. In 1954 the South London Wayfarers' Elfin Group presented the play 'The Litter Mouse', which included a hiker, a farmer, children, a talking banana and pirates. It told of a careless hiker who is visited by a talking Scarecrow after he has spent the day spoiling the countryside, who teaches him the error of his ways.¹⁵⁸ While the editor of *The Helper* declared in 1953 "Do not forget your countryside code!"¹⁵⁹

At the same time, the rise of the *Keep Britain Tidy* campaign cemented the idea that litter was a national problem and that it was the duty of the citizen to keep the country safe and free of litter. The campaign itself was followed closely by the Guide association, who in 1960 published a regular segment in *The Guide* magazine entitled "Pick Up All That Litter"¹⁶⁰, which followed the Guides' efforts to keep the countryside free of litter. We have seen so far how these movements highlighted the important role their members would play in the community, by changing their damaging behaviour towards the countryside. Ideas of national duty and service, therefore, became increasingly linked to country conscious behaviour in the post-war period and should be seen in the context of increased government involvement in issues of preservation.

The Baden-Powell movements therefore, developed a 'landscaped' citizenry through instruction. The Scouts and Guides were not the only youth movements to do this. The YHA created clear codes of conduct for their patriots to follow in an attempt to influence the behaviour of their members, and patriots were reminded of these regularly in the organisations publication *The Rucksack*.¹⁶¹ This has been identified by

¹⁵⁷ *The Guide*, 8 June 1956, p.367.

¹⁵⁸ The 'Litter Mouse', accessed online from Woodcraft Heritage Archive on 25/04/2010. http://heritage.woodcraft.org.uk/doc.php?fhref=fh_064_06; The Wayfarers Elfin Open Night Programme, 2nd February 1954, accessed online on 25/04/2010.

¹⁵⁹ *The Helper*, June 1953, p.8.

¹⁶⁰ *The Guide*, 1 July 1960, pp.476-477.

¹⁶¹ For some examples see; *The Rucksack*, Spring 1936, p.57 and *The Rucksack*, Autumn 1936, p. 92.

Matless, who writes that “preservationists found a more easily landscaped citizenship in the youth hostel”¹⁶², with their single sex dormitories, teetotal and no gambling policies, and the insistence on proper conduct in the countryside, through the following of a “proto-Country Code”.¹⁶³

Addressing the conflict between town and country also saw continued discussion of the issue of trespass, which had been a contentious issue across this period, particularly in the 1930s, when the action itself became highly politicised. To be sure, many instances of trespass by Boy Scouts occurred unintentionally. As such the movement often discussed the topic of ownership, in hopes of schooling its members in the importance of respecting landowners’ property. In 1935 *The Scouter* reported that:

There seems to be a curious belief in the urban mind that the whole country is “free” and can be roamed over and robbed of the wood entirely of will. This is not so. Every field, fence and coppice belongs to someone and his purpose, and the town Scout, who tramples young hay or destroys the hedge is doing exactly the same sort of damage and the country boy would in town if he threw stones through every window in a street – except that ... windows could be repaired very much more quickly and easily.¹⁶⁴

Interestingly here, *The Scouter* draws upon another urban / rural comparison and suggests that destroying a hedge is a similar form of delinquent behaviour for the ‘town Scout’ to window breaking. Interestingly then, similar to the reports of hooliganism in the peak district referenced earlier, it is the ‘town scout’ who is the concern for the movement and who exhibits delinquent behaviour. This reinforces the earlier suggestion that delinquency was believed to stem from urban backgrounds.

Conversely, however, the Baden-Powell movements also developed an understanding

¹⁶² Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.72.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ *The Scouter*, April 1935, p. 125.

of the universal nature of land ownership. In 1931 *The Guider* reported that; “None of us want to see *our* countryside damaged and hurt, and *our* trees and bushes and grass destroyed. They are ours, but only when we care for them and do what we can to help them.”¹⁶⁵ Here considerations of ownership come in to play. The use of ‘our’ reflects the growing acknowledgement that the countryside was the heritage of all. The movements fundamentally represent the growing struggle in this period in defining land ownership and use. On the one hand, the countryside was the heritage of all and ‘ours’ to protect; on the other, it was under the ownership of the landowning agricultural community and needed to be protected from urban ramblers.

It is clear, then, that each of these movements maintained ‘country conscious’ behaviour, as being a fundamental aspect of ‘good’ citizenship. Indeed the Baden-Powell movements believed themselves to have gained a reputation for this conduct. In 1936, regular contributor to *The Guider*, Rowland Chubb commented that:

In all my experience of rambling and camping I have never encountered a single landowner who has refused access to a Guide or Scout. They know, instinctively, or from actual experience that they may be trusted implicitly, and they invariably throw open for exploration almost every corner of their estates. ... There is hardly a corner of Britain which may not be explored by a Guide who first seeks permission and this privilege is a wonderful tribute to the high esteem and regard in which the movement as a whole is held.¹⁶⁶

There was, however, growing concern about the impact of Scouting education on its members, with reports of misbehaviour reaching the magazines. There are numerous reports across the period of ‘bad’ Scouts and Guides who wilfully committed acts of vandalism or destruction in the countryside. In a letter to the editor of *The Scouter* in 1935, a farmer who had also been a Scouter recalled a time when:

On my own farm I have seen a Scout – who had never asked my

¹⁶⁵ *The Guider*, July 1931, p.261.

¹⁶⁶ *The Guide*, 28 March 1936, p.1580.

leave to be there at all, he was camping on someone else's land – wrench a locked gate off its hinges, and leave it lying on the ground so that valuable horses might have strayed on to the road had I not passed at that moment. ... On another occasion I found two very jolly Scouts gaily chopping firewood out of one of my hedges. When I went along to their camp I found a delightful Scouter – an educated man who with no apology or sense of sin, explained that he had sent the boys out to get wood, with no indication of where they were to get it. It is difficult for us sometimes to believe that townsfolk can be quite so ignorant and lacking in common sense and that damage is not being done wilfully.¹⁶⁷

A letter to *The Guider* of 1933 reported the same carelessness:

“Dear Editor, - After all the appeals which have been made to the public in the papers and by the B.B.C to preserve the beauty of the countryside and of England's historic buildings, I feel that Guides should be among the first to respond, yet on the afternoon of Tuesday August 8th, while at Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight, I was horrified to see a Guide belonging to a London company ... carve her initials on the wall. Apart from the fact that this gives the movement a bad name, it was an act of vandalism.”¹⁶⁸

This problem did not go unnoticed as the movement moved into the post-war period. Guiders became more worried about the influence of general carelessness upon their Guides. A letter to the postbag in *The Guider* in 1958 declared:

As it is, although the public still believe that ‘Guides don't drop litter,’ we, who are in a position to see what really happens, know that the rising generation within our ranks is becoming

¹⁶⁷ *The Scouter*, April 1935, p.125.

¹⁶⁸ *The Guider*, October 1933, p.398.

more and more infected by the general thoughtlessness around them, while many of the older ones are beginning to feel the situation is hopeless.¹⁶⁹

The idea of an ‘infection’ of bad behaviour here is interesting and reflects the overarching concern in this period, regarding the impact of ‘modern’ trends on Guide behaviour.

Members of the Scouting movements were therefore, encouraged to exhibit ‘good’ behaviour in the land. Another aspect of ‘good’ citizenry was, however, the expectation that they would provide a stewardship of the land against others. It was through this action that young people could ‘actively’ protect the land. This stewardship was encouraged through becoming ‘Wardens’ for the CPRE as part of a scheme set up by the organisation in 1931, originally in the north of England. The description of a Warden’s duty as advertised in *The Scouter* was as follows: “The job of a warden is to help in fostering a thoughtful appreciation of the countryside in people who visit beauty spots in the country.”¹⁷⁰ Wardens had no powers and were not expected to accost anyone, they were simply there to instruct and point out the reasons why the protection of the countryside was important. An article on the subject in *The Guider* reported that:

The best functions for wardens drawn from our movement will probably be trying to show children how to preserve the wild flowers by not picking them up by their roots. Also emphasizing what others are telling children, namely that by throwing litter about they are spoiling the country for other living beings. We want to become conscious of the beauty of the English countryside and to guard it for the future.¹⁷¹

Guides were encouraged to be tactful and polite when approaching ‘litter louts’. An article on the subject in *The Guide* suggested that: “We need not sound superior if we

¹⁶⁹ *The Guider*, May 1958, p.155.

¹⁷⁰ *The Scouter*, December 1933, p.140.

¹⁷¹ *The Guider*, February 1935, p.188.

ask people if we could help them pick up their litter ... let us try and tackle it in a spirit of tactfulness”¹⁷²

Active citizenship could also be upheld by taking part and organising litter patrols, or by lending a hand with repairing the damage done by urban visitors.¹⁷³ In 1958, Guide leader Maureen Nisbet escorted five Guides and her Scout son to Ferndale where:

They patrolled a distance of 1 ½ to 2 miles of beautiful countryside, moving up and down in pairs, and preventing people from picking the daffodils by asking them (*very politely*) not to gather flowers. The very fact that they were there as ‘wardens’ did not stop people from picking the flowers.¹⁷⁴

While in 1960, the Whitby, York Division of the Scouts and Guides, with the aid of the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, spent two weeks picking up litter on a ten mile stretch of moorland, as a ‘good turn’ for the community.¹⁷⁵

Constructions of ‘good’ citizenry within these youth movements reveal a carefully negotiated ‘country conscious’ citizen, who prioritised the stewardship of the countryside. Citizenship could be enhanced by adjusting countryside behaviour, or actively by attempting to impact other peoples’ destructive behaviour. A study of conservation within youth movements highlights the growing discourse of the countryside in understandings of citizenship for urban people across the mid-century. As such, the countryside became symbolic in the rhetoric of duty in the Scouting movements. Whereas in the early stages empire remained central, by the 1930s the growing identification with the rural and unease with imperial notions meant that the countryside became symbolic.

Young people were not the only ones performing damaging acts on the land, but they were clearly considered to be the main culprits. In this way young people were assigned a dual role as both destructors and guardians of the countryside. These

¹⁷² *The Guide*, 22 July 1960, p.525.

¹⁷³ *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 July 1939, p.11

¹⁷⁴ *The Guide*, 2 May 1958, p.278.

¹⁷⁵ *The Guide*, 22 July 1960, p.525.

destructors were often characterised as urban; but what of rural youth and their leisure practices? It is to this final consideration that this chapter shall now turn.

The Rural Experience

The provision of constructive leisure for the urban working classes was a key priority for the Scout and Guide movements and it was through this that the organisations aimed to tackle the behavioural and physical failings of the youth of the day. The Young Farmers' Club movement on the other hand faced a strikingly different leisure landscape. Along with poor wages and bad conditions, the lack of leisure opportunities in many rural areas was an incentive for young people to leave. As a child the countryside provided a blank canvas on which one could create adventures and explore. As Adams argues, "Childhood, but especially country childhood, is typically recalled in nostalgic terms, and contact with the natural environment is a mark of special favour."¹⁷⁶ However, in teenage years, the rural village could prove to be restrictive and dull and was considered to be partly the reason behind the 'drift from the land' of young workers, which shall be discussed in Chapter Three. As this account from the Harden, York Women's Institute village scrapbook suggests:

From the age of about 3 to 14 years, when I still 'played out', I thought Harden was a marvellous place. But then I began to have doubts. The village has no cinema, coffee bar or dance hall where young people can meet and enjoy themselves.¹⁷⁷

In theory, the electrification and increasing availability of transport across this period opened up many leisure opportunities for those living in rural areas. The introduction of the radio and regular bus and train routes in the 1930s meant that rural leisure patterns were no longer distinctly separate to those of the towns. Further to this, the creation of the village hall as the focal point of the community provided many important leisure opportunities, including village dances, flower shows, jumble sales,

¹⁷⁶ Caitlin Adams, 'Rural Education and Reform between the Wars', in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Lynne Thompson (eds) *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Boydell Press: Suffolk, 2006), p.36.

¹⁷⁷ This scrapbook was created in 1965 in response to a WI Golden Jubilee competition aiming to 'picture of village life'. Paul Jennings, *The Living Village: A Report on Rural Life in England and Wales, Based on Actual Village Scrapbooks* (Hodder and Stoughton: London, 1968), p.15.

adult education classes, amateur dramatics, sports and games.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, such halls saw the introduction of ‘urban cultural forms’ of leisure, as Burchardt has shown, such as jazz and keep-fit classes.¹⁷⁹ By the 1950s, the gradual growth of car ownership and the introduction of the television, in theory, further served to open up a wider range of leisure opportunities for rural dwellers.

In reality however, such changes were far from universal. Not all villages were provided with a reliable electricity supply, not all were served by a regular bus service and certainly not all villagers had the available time, or money, to take advantage of these shifts. In reality, even in the late 1950s, the leisure lives of many rural dwellers remained markedly different from their urban cousins. As M-O found in 1944, the village of Luccombe in Somerset was far from the recreationally developed villages discussed above, having only superficial ‘modern’ developments, with one shop and one pub.¹⁸⁰ The inhabitants of the village were reliant on the nearby town of Porlock for ‘modern’ leisure activities such as cinema going.¹⁸¹

For the younger generation this difference was heightened. Far from experiencing the independence and excitement of the symbolic metropolitan teenage lifestyle, of milk bars, cinemas and street corners, rural teenagers faced a less commercialised leisure existence. Youth clubs, hugely popular in towns in aiding the socialising of younger people, were also less of a feature in rural areas (for many reasons: lack of sufficient space, lack of supervision, lack of attendance etc.) resulting in, in many areas, a discontent amongst young people towards the nature of leisure pursuits on offer to them. This for many, was considered to be one of the main reasons for the ‘drift from the land’, which blighted the countryside. To the extent that in 1957 farmers were advertising the fact that they owned televisions to entice young workers.¹⁸² According to *Farmer and Stockbreeder* the youth of 1957 did not just want work “They want a Job – and Television”.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Wild, *Village England*, p.124.

¹⁷⁹ Jeremy Burchardt, “A New Rural Civilisation’: Village halls, community and citizenship in the 1920s’ in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt & Lynne Thompson (eds) *The English Countryside Between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Boydell Press: Suffolk, 2006), p.34.

¹⁸⁰ M-OA, FR 1995. ‘Survey of the Village of Luccombe, West Luccombe and Lea’, 6/01/44, p.1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p.4.

¹⁸² *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 2 April 1957, p.99.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

The impact of ‘mass’ society had long been acknowledged, with a letter to *Farmer and Stockbreeder* in 1943 calling for agriculture and rural life to be made more attractive to young people. The correspondent, Henry. T. Clifton of London, wrote:

I think the answer lies within the youth, and it is up to the government to state *now* what they are willing to do to make agriculture more attractive to a generation which has so far been sadly misled into believing that the world consisted of motor cars, cinemas, e.t.c, and that food was just a necessary “thing” obtained over the shop counters.¹⁸⁴

The YFCs played an important role in doing just this by providing leisure for the youth of the countryside. The movement aimed to encourage young people to stay and take up an agricultural career by showing young people the fun that could be had in the countryside. Comically a 1952 round table discussion of Young Farmers in Elsted, West Sussex, concluded that an active village Y.F.C could “‘stop the feeling that the district was dead from the ankles up’ and that one had to go to the town for enjoyment.”¹⁸⁵ It did this through a regular programme of social events, including sports matches, agricultural competitions such as ploughing matches and socials including field trips and dances. The significance of the social activities in the clubs can be seen in 1960 report by an undercover member of the YFCs. The reporter, who visited a lecture on ‘Farming in Timbuctoo’ in East Sussex, commented that many of the members who attended were bored and restless during the lecture making it clear that they were only attending for the dance afterward. The reporter notes how both boys and girls turn up to the lecture looking smart and ready for the dance, which the speaker believes shows keenness towards his talk. The reporter states, “We soon disillusioned him. Quite naturally we want to get to the dance as soon as possible.” The reporter continues observing the members as they listened “There they sit, row upon row of them, all ages, sizes, colours, sexes and shapes. Some of them are smoking, others are looking for a partner for to-nights festivities. Some are

¹⁸⁴ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 13 April 1943, p.581.

¹⁸⁵ *The Young Farmer*, January- February 1952, p.37.

gossiping, others trying to look awake”¹⁸⁶. He concludes by writing:

As 8.30 approaches the lecturer begins to dry up, and comes to an end. “Now, I’ve been talking long, enough, are there any questions?” But upon seeing the blank looks on our faces, baulks ‘Well, thank you for listening so attentively and I won’t waste any more of your time as I’m sure you all want to be off to the dance.’ (Great man – he learns quickly!)¹⁸⁷

Conclusion

Across the mid-century, leisure was vital to understandings of ‘good’ citizenship within youth movements. This chapter has shown how youth movements across the period from 1930-1960, concerned with the leisure pursuits of urban youth, placed emphasis on the countryside as a nurturing alternative to the mass commercial leisure of the city. In doing so they situated themselves and, more widely, the countryside as an antidote to the ‘problem of youth’ at this time. These movements identified these problems to be symptomatic of shifts in urban working class life. Symbolic of this was the figure of the juvenile delinquent who exhibited deviant, and at times criminal, behaviour in his leisure time.

Deviant behaviour was however, gendered, with a closer look at the activities provided by the Scouting movements and notions of ‘adventure’ revealing the gendered nature of understandings of the relationship between youth and adventurous activities. Boys, it was believed, craved exciting activity and as such were turning to crime. Girls on the other hand were not seen in this way. The countryside was seen as being particularly effective in tackling this, as it provided the landscape on which boys could explore and learn.

Countryside leisure also provided both genders with physical recreation. This was particularly important in the 1930s, when concerns over the health of the working classes, predominated in discussions of fitness within the Scouting movements in

¹⁸⁶ *East Sussex Federation Year Book 1960*, YFC Collection, D71/51/18, Museum of English Rural Life (hereafter MERL), Reading, p.31

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

particular. In the post-war period by contrast, the movements focused on the countryside as a site of nurturing recreation, in contrast to the mass pursuits of urban areas such as the cinema.

This chapter has also shown that, while young people could enhance their citizenship *through* the countryside, at the same time they were also expected to develop good citizenship *in* the countryside, by exhibiting careful behaviour and teaching others to do so as well. Here then the movements worked within mid twentieth-century understandings of citizenship surrounding the countryside and suggested that in doing so they were creating 'good' citizens. The countryside was not however, just useful to combating current problems of youth. It was also a sphere in which young people could learn about their roles in society and the skills needed to fulfil them. It is to these roles that this thesis shall now turn.

Chapter Three **The ‘Good’ Citizen at Work**

In a discussion of the history of the YFC movement in the 1953 year book of the Lancashire county YFCs, the author asserted that members were the “future citizens of the land, and they would be better farmers and better citizens in the future for the work of the Y.F.C movement.”¹ This yearbook, alongside many other YFC materials from this period, identifies the close relationship between meanings of ‘good’ citizenship and work on the land. A similar relationship can be identified in both the Scout and Guide movements, which encouraged young urbanites to take up agricultural tasks as a form of service to the nation, particularly in wartime. We have seen in the previous chapters how youth movements focused on rural leisure as a means to improve citizenship, both through and on the land. This chapter will identify another strand of thinking at this time, which located ‘good’ citizenry within the sphere of work, particularly on the land. It will demonstrate how, across the mid-twentieth century, young people, both urban and rural, were encouraged to develop agricultural skills as a form of service, particularly in the context of the ‘drift from the land’ in peacetime and the drive for food production in the Second World War. Parallel to this, there was the belief that the physical experience and knowledge of farming could combat problems of urban youth, particularly, this chapter will argue, the problem of youth unemployment in the 1930s. Underpinning this discourse was an implicit concern over the impact of modernity upon agricultural life. The modernisation of agriculture and the drift of young workers from the land across this period meant that a proficiency and interest in agricultural work remained central to understandings of ‘good’ citizenship, particularly for rural boys, at this time.

The Problem of Unemployment

In 1933 an article in *The Scouter* declared in reference to the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) ‘British Boys for British Farms’ scheme that “farm work in this country may not appeal to all Scouts, yet there must be many who would gladly, if they knew of this opportunity, accept the chance of employment on the land, rather

¹ *Lancashire County Year Book 1953*, D71/51/13, MERL, p.19.

than hopeless idleness.”² Here the article refers to two strands of thought, which will be addressed at the start of this chapter; firstly, the concern over juvenile unemployment, which grew in the interwar period, and second, the utilisation of farm-work as a way to combat this trend. While in the previous chapter, we saw how working class conditions of poverty in the interwar period bred concern over the leisure time of young people; another aspect of young people’s lives under scrutiny was their working patterns. This was particularly the case in the 1930s when shifting work opportunities for both young men and women emerged following the decline of the old staple industries after the First World War, particularly the production of coal, steel, engineering and textiles, and the rise of new industries in areas such as the electrical and consumer sectors.³ These shifts saw the increase in job opportunities, for semi-skilled workers amongst the mass production environment of ‘new’ factories, which meant that experiences of work became highly regionalised. For example, the growth of new industries, particularly in the South East and the Midlands, provided the opportunity for well-paid jobs, which did not require long and arduous training, and many young men took advantage of this opportunity to earn disposable income. This, as we know, led a number of contemporaries to ruminate and agonise over how young people would use this income and on what leisure pursuits they would spend it. The correlation between work and the growing existence of distinctly adolescent leisure and spending patterns is clear here with increasing opportunities in the work place providing the income and consumer power to engage in leisure pursuits.

On the other hand however, experiences of work in the interwar period, particularly in the north of England, were often blighted by instances of unemployment. Historians including Laybourn, Stevenson and Cook, who emphasise the impact of mass unemployment across this period, have supported this view.⁴ As the 1938 Report of the Pilgrims Trust on unemployment, *Men without Work*, asserted, “Unemployment has been since the war one of the greatest social problems in this country.”⁵ The

² *The Scouter*, December 1933, p.408.

³ For a focused discussion of this shifts see: Ian Gazeley ‘Manual Work and Pay, 1900-70’ in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell (eds). *Work and Pay in 20th Century Britain* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007) & Gerry Holloway, *Women and Work in Britain since 1840* (Routledge: London, 2005).

⁴ Keith Laybourn, *Britain on the Breadline: A Social and Political History of Britain between the Wars* (Alan Sutton: Gloucester, 1990); John Stevenson & Chris Cook, *The Slump: Britain in the Great Depression*, 3rd Edition ed. (Longman: London, 2010).

⁵ Pilgrim Trust. *Men without work: a Report made to the Pilgrims Trust*. (Cambridge University Press:

experience of unemployment was not, however, the same for all and of course issues of region, class, gender and age came into play. Unemployment was highest in the north of England, with unemployment rates for the North East in 1932 being at 30.6% in comparison to the South East, which was at 13.1%.⁶

The position of young people within the history of unemployment at this time is widely contested. Garside confidently declared, in his often repeated opening to his 1977 article on juvenile unemployment in the interwar period, that:

One of the most pernicious and socially disturbing aspects of British unemployment between the wars was the enforced idleness suffered by thousands of youngsters under the age of 18. With ambitions quashed and its independence and morale noticeably weakened, the army of unemployed youth represented an economic and social problem of alarming proportions, not least because of its potentially disastrous effects on the future well-being of the nation.⁷

Benjamin and Kochin disagreed, pointing to the relatively small amount of juvenile unemployed in comparison to the wider figures of unemployment at the time and arguing that apart from isolated times, notably the height of the Great Depression from 1930-32, proportions of unemployed young people actually hit an historical low in this period.⁸ As Gazeley and Newell uncovered, generally young male workers under 21 had the lowest unemployment rates in the interwar period, with the unemployment rate for those aged 16 to 17 in 1932 at 4.1% and for those between 18-20 at 16.3% (a much lower rate than other age groups in this period).⁹ Recent years have seen further revision of Garside's interpretation from historians, including

Cambridge, 1938), p.1.

⁶ Figures taken from a table of regional unemployment rates, 1912-95 from Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell, 'Unemployment' in Nicholas Crafts, Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell (eds). *Work and Pay in 20th Century Britain* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), p.233.

⁷ W.R.Garside (1977), 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars', *The Economic History Review*, **30** (2), p.322

⁸ Daniel K. Benjamin & Levis A. Kochin (1979), 'What went Right with Juvenile Unemployment Policy between the Wars: A Comment', *The Economic History Review*, **32** (4), p.523.

⁹ Figures taken from a table of male unemployment rates by age 1927-1938 from Gazeley & Newell. 'Unemployment', p.235.

Fowler who focuses on Manchester and argues that there is little evidence to suggest that youth unemployment was ‘socially disturbing’ at this time.¹⁰ Todd has also critiqued Garside’s analysis, by highlighting the relatively reliable employment of juveniles, in comparison to their fathers. In actuality, she suggests, boys’ employment became crucial to the working class household and particularly to households in which the male breadwinner was unemployed.¹¹

Nonetheless, while this is the case, study of the policies and actions of youth movements at this time reveals persistent concern over youth unemployment and its impact. Across the 1930s, the Scouts advertised, and indeed in some cases boasted, of the success of schemes they had run for unemployed youths. Seeing their actions as tantamount to the drive against the ill effects of modern living on young people, the Scouts aimed to tackle the problem of unemployment in two ways. Firstly, by training unemployed members and secondly by ‘adopting’ the unemployed from poor distressed areas and introducing unemployed boys to the healthy benefits of the countryside.

Training was provided for unemployed Rover Scouts at selected ‘training centres’, the location of which varied from the famous ship the ‘Discovery’, gifted to the organisation in 1936, to club houses and estates.¹² The most well known of these schemes was the Hedingham Training Camps and Unemployment Scheme, set up in 1929 by the Scouts, recognised and supported by the Ministry of Labour and situated at Hedingham Castle in Essex.¹³ This scheme, vocally supported by the royal family, trained young men from ‘distressed’ areas aged 18 to 25 in skills necessary for private service, including cookery and gardening and guaranteed members the offer of a job on completion. As the caption for the photo below, printed in *The Times* on Wednesday April 11 1934, read “CHEFS OF THE FUTURE. Unemployed Scouts being trained as chefs, in the cookhouse at Hedingham Castle. Other men are being

¹⁰ Chapter 3 in Fowler, *The First Teenagers*.

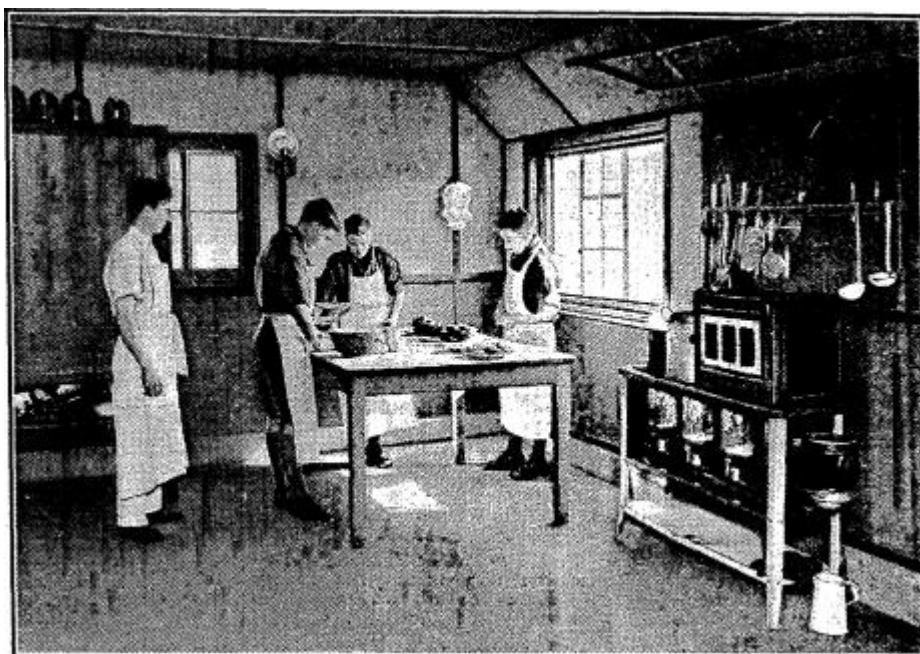
¹¹ Todd, ‘Breadwinners and Dependants’, p.69.

¹² *The Manchester Guardian*, 19 December 1936, p.4.

¹³ The scheme was funded by a grant from the Ministry of Labour, anonymous donors, proceeds from a B.B.C appeal and a donation from the Pilgrim Trust as reported in *The Times*, 29 July 1933, p.8. A government report on ‘Special Areas’ in 1936 detailed how the Ministry of Labour, as well as providing some financial assistance to this scheme would also offer a small grant to cover the cost of dental treatment for participants. Ministry of Labour. *Third Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas (England and Wales)* (HMSO: London, 1936), Cmd. 5303. p.156.

trained as chauffeurs, gardeners, handymen and parlourmen.”¹⁴ It is clear therefore that these were not the apprenticeship schemes, in the traditional sense of the word, they did not teach boys a necessary ‘trade’ but trained these young, working class boys, in different forms of ‘service’.

Figure 3.1: Hedingham Training Scheme - Rover Scouts learn cookery skills in 1934.¹⁵



The Scouts paid particular attention to the problem of unemployment amongst the organisation’s members. However, the movement also turned its attention outwards to the numbers of unemployed who were not associated with the movement. While the Hedingham training scheme required some evidence of allegiance to the Scout movement, involvement did not require Scout membership as such. As an article in *The Times* made clear in 1933, while the scheme was primarily for members of the Rover Scouts, other young men were accepted into the scheme, provided they were “prepared to conform to Scout discipline”.¹⁶ With this being the case, young men from areas hit hard by the economic slump would be invited to join the programme. This was reported in *The Manchester Guardian* in August 1934, when 100 youths

¹⁴ *The Times*, 11 April 1934, p.18.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.15.

from County Durham, from the ages of 18 to 20, were invited to join a three month training course at Hedingham.¹⁷ These boys were selected primarily because they did not fall under schemes of training for the unemployed that were provided by the government at this time.

Concern for the unemployed was therefore not just limited to those inside the movement but part of the organisations desire to improve the condition and citizenship of those living across England. As well as offering training schemes, the movement also organised 'sponsorships' of 'depressed areas' and encouraged their members to do a good turn, by offering assistance to areas in need. The most publicised of these being the 'mothering' of the mining village of Tow Law in County Durham across the 1930s. As part of London Scouts' 'distressed areas scheme', Tow Law became the beneficiary of Scout fundraising, with London Scouts donating money towards their voluntary work scheme. This scheme saw the building of a number of community facilities, including a recreation ground, a gymnasium, a tennis court, a cricket ground and a kitchen, in which young married women could be given free cookery lessons.¹⁸ The funding provided by the Scouts, was depicted as being vital to the survival of this scheme. As an article from *The Daily Mirror* in 1936 described, Scout funds were keeping the construction of such amenities going, by supplying each volunteer with lunch.

London Scouts As Mothers to Twelve Dozen Unemployed.

A GOOD mother always sees her family is well fed—and that is what London's Rover Scouts are doing in their "mothering " of Tow Law, the mining village in County Durham, where 75 per cent of the population is unemployed.

The Rovers' special "children" are a gang of twelve dozen unemployed men working voluntarily, moving 50,000 tons of earth to level the ground for a recreation field.

... Although the Rovers have never even seen the place they have adopted, they collect enough money among themselves

¹⁷ *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 August 1934, p.6.

¹⁸ *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 May 1938, p.4.

each month to supply those hungry volunteers with a mid-day dinner.¹⁹

Therefore, the Scouts were represented as literally feeding the good work done by these schemes and in doing so helping to provide a purpose for those who were unemployed. Both the Scouts and the Guides were also reported to have lent equipment for the organisation of camps for the wives of unemployed men.²⁰ But why were such schemes considered to be effective? It is clear, as we have seen in the previous chapter, that the Scouting way was considered to be particularly effective, in helping wayward young men. Unemployment was, in most cases, considered by these movements to be a factor out of the control of those who were subjected to it. Nonetheless, unemployment could still prove to be troublesome for young men, who could fall into bad habits as a result. Tackling unemployment was therefore of key importance to these movements, and particularly the Scouts, as it could have an immediate impact on issues of citizenship.

Youth movements also attempted to help unemployed youths through trips into the countryside, which, as we have seen, offered a healthy alternative to the pleasures offered to the urban working classes. Scouting and, indeed, trips into the countryside were considered effective in tackling this, as they were believed to encourage the aspects of national character, which were desirable for 'good' citizenship and which could counteract the negative effects of unemployment. Such aspects included self-improvement, the learning of skills, and the willingness to work hard, and these could all be achieved through an embracement of the countryside and an acceptance of the Scouting way. This notion of the self improvement to be found in the countryside can be seen, similarly in the popularity of hiking amongst the working classes following the First World War, which Claire Griffiths argues is evidence of a wider search for self improvement amongst the working classes at this time.²¹

Furthermore, the 'toughness' of outdoor recreations could prepare young men for the unreliability of the job market and give them a 'can-do' attitude. As *The Scouter*

¹⁹ *The Daily Mirror*, 5 May 1936, p. 25.

²⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 May 1935, p.11.

²¹ Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, p.89.

declared in 1930, “A British boy who has had to rough it in camp finds that when he comes back to civilisation he is more easily able to obtain employment because he is ready to turn his hand to whatever kind of work may turn up.”²² For many of these schemes, it was the outdoor and physical excursion of camp that could draw out the qualities of young men ignored or forgotten by industry. In 1933, a YHA discussion of an unemployed walking group was printed in *The Rucksack* under the title: “No Work but Good Walking” and declared, “These young men are unwanted by our industrial civilisation – it is a terrible condemnation of that civilisation.”²³ Similarly, the YHA organised walking tours for unemployed men, who were ‘Guided’ through the countryside by an experienced member of the association.²⁴ Constructive leisure, therefore, also has a role to play in this. It was clearly not just through the training for employment that the Hedingham scheme aimed to improve and help the unemployed, but through the other Scout training provided in the evenings and at weekends, under the watchful eye of a residential Scoutmaster.²⁵ Furthermore, Rover crews specifically for unemployed youths were also created, to help unemployed boys make constructive use of their leisure time and counteract fears that unemployment and the resulting boredom of being unemployed, could lead to delinquent behaviour.²⁶

Of course, these schemes did not stand alone and need to be seen in conjunction with the efforts of a number of other organisations to ‘save’ the chronically unemployed, including the YMCA, The Society of Friends (Quakers) and the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).²⁷ Similarly, the embracement of the countryside as a site of improvement for the unemployed was not specific to these youth movements either. As we saw in the previous chapter, many held the belief that the countryside was a particularly healthy alternative to urban living. In the case of the unemployed, the ‘back to the land’ mentality was deployed as a way of counteracting the negative influence of industrial unemployment. Under the governments’ Land Settlement Scheme members of the urban unemployed were placed on agricultural settlements in

²² *The Scouter*, February 1932, p.51.

²³ *The Rucksack*, Summer 1933, p.43.

²⁴ *The Rucksack*, Summer 1933, p.43.

²⁵ *The Times*, 16 January 1931, p.8.

²⁶ *The Scouter*, February 1932, p.51.

²⁷ For a discussion of voluntary bodies and unemployment in the interwar period see, Bernard Harris (1995), ‘Responding to adversity: Government-charity relations and the relief of unemployment in inter-war Britain’, *Contemporary Record*, 9 (3), 529-561. (Although he does focus highly on South Wales).

an attempt to combat idleness resulting from lack of work.

Furthermore, one should question the effectiveness of such schemes. While the Scouts and parts of the national press celebrated the success of the Hedingham scheme, the numbers enrolled and placed in work over the period, when considered against the large numbers of unemployed at this time, leads to a questioning of this 'success'. The Ministry of Labour reported on the Hedingham scheme, among only a few other voluntary bodies of training for the unemployed, in its reports in both 1934 and 1935. Figures from these reports suggest that over the period of these two years, 842 boys completed the three month training course and found suitable employment afterwards. This figure is relatively insignificant in comparison to the high numbers of unemployed at this time.²⁸ Moreover, one cannot really measure the impact that camps and rambles organised by both the Scouts and the YHA, had on the unemployed at this time. While the impact such activities had on the people themselves was emphasised by the movements, the opinions of members towards such schemes, would necessitate a different study.

Table 3.1: Hedingham Training and Employment Scheme 1934-35.²⁹

Hedingham Training and Employment Scheme		
	1934	1935
No. of Admissions.	537	527
No. of Terminations	42	58
No. Completed and placed in Employment	423	419
No. Still in Training	70	120

Nonetheless, despite these admissions, these schemes do highlight the importance of such activities in the work lives of a number of young boys at this time. Furthermore, the schemes highlight the growing link, between work and citizenship, particularly in the Scout movement. It is clear through these schemes that the Scout organisation believed they were tackling the effect of unemployment, on the citizenship of young

²⁸ In the interwar period unemployment never fell below 7% and peaked at just over 15% (about 3 million workers). Gazeley & Newell. 'Unemployment', p.225.

²⁹ Figures taken from the Ministry of Labour Report. *Ministry of Labour Report for the Year 1934*. (HMSO: London, 1935), 1935 & Ministry of Labour Report. *Ministry of Labour Report For the Year 1935* (HMSO: London, 1936), p.111.

boys and once again, often placed the solution to these problems within the landscape of the countryside.

The idea that the English countryside could improve the lives of the unemployed across the 1930s is indeed clear and one that was championed by a number of movements, which are the focus of this study. However, while overall this thesis argues that this period is characterised by strong continuities in approaches to ‘modern’ youth, the presence of the discussion of the unemployed is not one of these continuities. On the contrary, following the breakout of the Second World War, discussions of unemployment and schemes to help those young men who were out of work became non-existent or at least not visible in the published organisational sources. This was a result of a focus on national service in wartime and, following the war, the landscape of full employment, which meant that the effects of unemployment were no longer a concern for these movements. Nonetheless, a look at the role of the English countryside in helping young people find work in these movements clearly highlights how, once again, the countryside was seen as being a particularly effective solution to problems arising from modern urban living.

The Guides and Careers

So far, the discussion of work in this thesis has been predominantly masculine. This is not because the Guide movement neglected discussions of work or because work was unimportant in the movement, but simply because work was considered less problematic for girls. The Guide movement was aware of the issue of unemployment in the interwar period and did occasionally address this, by providing information and encouragement for those looking for work. In 1932, the movement provided its members with facts regarding employment exchanges and unemployment insurance.³⁰ While in February 1939, *The Guide* encouraged its members in an article on ‘Looking for a Job’ by saying:

Don’t be disheartened by all the talk you hear of difficulty in getting work. You may meet some disappointments, but any girl

³⁰ *The Guide*, 27 February 1932, p.1422

who really means to get on can find a job, if she is prepared to begin small and take pains.³¹

However, while such discussion did exist, for the most part these articles often referred to women only in terms of their relationship to men. This was because these movements often saw the problem of unemployment as being a male problem. This is a point that has been acknowledged by those studying interwar work patterns, who have often ignored the experience of unemployment for girls at this time.³²

By contrast, however, discussions of job opportunities for girls within the Guiding publications were plentiful. Growing work opportunities in the interwar period for girls in industry and offices were acknowledged by the movement on a regular basis. Across the 1930s, shifting work patterns of young women were reflected in a plethora of articles and features on employment choice, including advice for girls on careers ranging from, but not limited to, fashion drawing, journalism, the police force, farming, veterinary practice, acting, pharmacy, bee keeping and engineering. The movement, also aware of the growing presence of young women in white-collar industries, provided instruction on how to apply for a position and how to behave in a business environment. Moreover, the Clerks Badge required girls to be able to understand business terms such as solvency, how to deal with petty cash and how to write business letters.³³ Such skills were invaluable in clerical jobs that were fast becoming a popular form of employment for young women at this time.

Alongside this information, the magazines also encouraged girls to think about their career. With articles in *The Guide* such as “Have you the hands of a hairdresser?”³⁴ and “Have you decided on a Career?”³⁵ the movement encouraged girls to consider their employment destiny and to see work as much more than a small part of their inevitable lifecycle. In 1931 the magazine declared:

³¹ *The Guide*, 23 February 1939, p.1460.

³² For a discussion of young women’s unemployment in the first half of the century see Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family in England 1918-1950*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), pp.43-46.

³³ *The Guide*, 19 March 1932, p.1532.

³⁴ *The Guide*, 27 February 1932, p.1429.

³⁵ *The Guide*, 11 April 1931, p.1615.

In this generation girls can enter almost any profession, and to-day most of them want a career of some sort, not only for financial reasons, but because the present day girl is active and vigorous and keen to live a full life and so must have some outlet for their energies when she leaves school.³⁶

In 1938, *The Guider* printed a series of articles on 'Careers' and encouraged girls to pay mind to their future. Therefore, working was understood as being essential to gaining fulfilment in life. This along with the emphasis the movement placed on skills and development, through encouraging girls to enjoy and take utmost pride in art, photography and even ventriloquism, helped shape an ethos of 'you can be anything you want to be' and a sense of empowerment in their own future.³⁷

Of course there were limitations to this message. Firstly, despite the varied range of jobs that the Guides suggested for its members, there was a clear undercurrent of domesticity flowing through the magazine, with jobs in the domestic sector, nursing and childcare often at the forefront of discussion. Furthermore, the role that girls would play within their vocation was often centred on their gender. In a 1931 article on women in journalism, it was suggested that women would thrive in the position, because they could offer coverage of feminine events not usually covered by their male co-workers, including society events and a detailed discussion of the outfits worn.³⁸ Moreover, class was also a determining factor in career decisions. The magazine provided information for its readers' vocational training and wages but acknowledged that some girls may not be able to afford the necessary training and would be better suited for domestic service.³⁹ This is significant, as Todd has shown; domestic service remained predominant in the lives of many working class young women in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

Historians such as Marwick have suggested that the Second World War had a huge impact on gender relations and particularly the relationship between women and

³⁶ *The Guide*, 31 March 1931, p.1581.

³⁷ See articles such as 'Amateur Ventriloquism for Guides'. *The Guide*, 27 September 1930, p.721.

³⁸ *The Guide*, 20 June 1931, p.262.

³⁹ *The Guide*, 28 September 1935, p.753.

⁴⁰ Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family*, p.53.

work.⁴¹ However, a study of discussions of work within the Guide movement reflects important continuities with the 1930s. Following the Second World War, discussions of work continued to present themselves in Guide publications. There was however, a distinction between post-war topics and those that had preceded them. The emphasis on jobs that were suitably feminised, such as childcare, was more evident. This can be seen in the post-war focus in the Guiding publications on Nursing. Articles such as ‘Shall I Train as a Nurse?’, ‘Do You Want to be a nurse?’ And ‘So You’re Going to Be a Nurse’ were commonplace.⁴² Nursing was believed to be the ideal vocation for a girl who had been in the Guides, because it required the same moral attributes associated with Guiding, including patience, truthfulness and loyalty.⁴³ It was a profession, which the organisation presented as being exciting, professional and most of all worthwhile. In 1949, *The Guide* wrote:

A new world will be opened to you from the first thrilling day.
Gone forever are the old days of drudgery among nurses; now
ward-maids scrub the floors instead. When your training is done,
you are a member of a profession which is welcomed and
respected the whole world over.⁴⁴

Nursing in the post-war period was, therefore, suggested as being more professional than it had been previously, despite the fact that *The Guide* declared in 1953, “Don’t be misled into thinking that to be a nurse you must have to be a very brainy person. Some of the best nurses I have known have been far from that.”⁴⁵

Moreover, the movement enticed girls to join the vocation, by describing the good conditions of nursing. In 1949 *The Guide* wrote:

Conditions now are much better than they were a year ago. In
one of our daily papers I read recently that many hospitals in

⁴¹ Arthur Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (Macmillan: London, 1974).

⁴² *The Guide*, 28 April 1950, p.201; *The Guide*, 18 December 1953, p.616 & *The Guide*, 29 April 1949, p.196.

⁴³ *The Guide*, 29 April 1949, p.196.

⁴⁴ *The Guide*, 29 April 1949, p.197.

⁴⁵ *The Guide*, 18 December 1953, p.616.

South-East London are giving each nurse her own room, complete with bed-side lamp. Well-furnished sitting-rooms containing a television were fitted up, so that nurses could invite their friends to the hospital. Special rooms with electric irons and hair-driers were another attraction. The old uniforms were replaced by smart 'New Look' style frocks, and a certain amount of stockings were provided free. As hospitals usually supply very good food, these nurses must be living in luxury.⁴⁶

Here then, the magazine drew on the commodities and benefits of nursing, to attract the teenage girl. This was highly gendered, with the implication that nursing was a profession in which you could 'look' good, with a focus on stockings, 'New Look' frocks and hair-driers. Discussions of nursing were therefore framed around notions of femininity. To be sure, the enhanced focus on nursing, as a job for Guides within this period was a result of a growing need for nurses at this time. As *The Guide* declared in 1950, "At the present time there are many hospitals in this country where one or more wards are standing empty because there are no nurses to run them."⁴⁷ Despite this however, a focus on feminised jobs such as nursing reveals the wider position of the movement regarding the role of women in society. As the final chapter of this thesis will show, the post-war period saw an intensification of the importance of domesticity within the movement and the heightened importance of nursing in this period reflects this ideological trend. In the 1930s, domesticity was important to discussions of women's work. However, the movement cultivated an ethos of varied opportunity within this. By the late 1940s this had shifted, with nurturing and womanly careers such as nursing becoming central to discussions of women's work at this time. This supports arguments by those such as Summerfield who have highlighted the continuities in wartime of pre-war values and attitudes towards women's work.⁴⁸ The intensification of domesticity within the Guide movement in the mid-century will be discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁶ *The Guide*, 29 April 1949, p.197.

⁴⁷ *The Guide*, 28 April, 1950, p.201.

⁴⁸ Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War* (Croom Helm: Kent, 1984), p.1.

Agricultural Education

While significant attention was being paid to the issue of unemployment by the Scout organisation in the 1930s, issues surrounding the work lives of young men also came to the fore in rural areas, with large numbers of boys from rural families seemingly neglecting their duties on the land for opportunities made available by urban employment prospects. The ‘drift from the land’ of farm workers, or the ‘farming problem’ as it was also known, was for the most part a constant feature of agricultural life during the 1930s.⁴⁹ Faced with poor conditions, low pay and limited leisure opportunities, large numbers of young men deserted the usual calling of farm work, for better pay and working conditions in the towns sparking fears across the agricultural industry, of the demise of farming and of the ‘rural’ way of life in general. Many saw the drift as an unstoppable force of destruction to the agricultural trade and another nail in the coffin of traditional rural life. The drift was a reality for many, as numbers of workers on the land, particularly young workers under 21, dramatically declined across this period. In 1929, the total number of workers in agriculture, both regular and casual, in England and Wales was 770,000, by 1936, this had declined to 640,000.⁵⁰ Of course, some areas were harder hit by this migration than others. Typically rural industries which had suffered badly from the misfortunes of agriculture in the 1920s, such as cereal production, were worse off than those which had relatively prospered and could, as a result, offer better pay and conditions to the young farm worker.⁵¹ Nonetheless, despite regional fluctuations, there is no doubt that the ‘farming problem’ was considered a serious threat to the social, cultural and economic existence of ‘traditional’ rural life at this time.

The youth of rural England were of particular concern within this context, as young people made up a large proportion of the workers who were leaving the land in favour of jobs elsewhere. As an article from *The Times* made clear in 1939, rural areas could no longer maintain the attention of its youth, as education, work and leisure drew rural

⁴⁹ Many historians have written about the effects of the ‘drift from the land’ including: Moore-Colyer, ‘From Great Wen to Toad Hall’; & Alun Howkins, ‘Death and Rebirth? English Rural Society, 1920-1940,’ in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Lynne Thompson (eds), *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Boydell Press: Suffolk, 2006).

⁵⁰ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, July 20 1937, p.1767.

⁵¹ For a detailed description of the disparity of agricultural fortune at this time see Chapter 3 ‘The Misfortunes of Agriculture, 1921-37’ in Howkins, *The Death of Rural England*, pp.45-54.

youth away from their role on the farm.

It is not merely a question of wage. Even if agriculture could afford to compete with industry in this respect, there remains that fact that the amenities of village life become less and less attractive to modern youth. Intensified education and the gradual raising of the school-leaving age are producing a “younger generation” with a mentality less and less capable of adapting itself to the slow and unexciting conditions of farm life.⁵²

Therefore, once again, young people took on an important and paradoxical role in the future of rural society. On the one hand, they were seen as the cause of its decline, deserting their agricultural heritage for the benefits of urban living. On the other, they could (with the right training) be responsible for its survival.

It was the opinion of many at this time that rural youth needed to be trained in the virtues of rural, particularly agricultural, living and prepared for their role in the farming business. It was hoped that, by doing so early on, the lure of the towns could be counteracted. As Mr W.E Brumfield of East Riding, Yorkshire National Farmers Union (NFU) wrote in a July 1937 issue of *Farmer and Stockbreeder*; “Men have been driven into the towns, and once they leave the land they very rarely come back. ... There is only one remedy: catch ‘em young and keep them.”⁵³ This was certainly the view of the YFC organisation which through a programme of lectures, debates and demonstrations, as well as socials and sports events, aimed to instil in the youth of the countryside an enthusiasm for and proficiency in the agricultural trade, hoping that this would stop the progress of the drift from the land. In doing so, the clubs were providing an education and preparation for expectations and duties of citizenship, which for rural boys, was directly linked with their future role in agriculture and in rural community life. The activities provided by the clubs were dual by nature. They provided both an educational arena for future farmers and, as we have seen, a recreational aspect for socialisation.

The educational strand of the movement was imperative in preparing boys for their

⁵² *The Times*, 5 June 1939, p.22.

⁵³ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 27 July 1937, p.1822.

future role in agriculture. Boys were given lectures and demonstrations in, among many things, stock rearing, including calf, sheep and pig rearing, as well as lectures on crops, fertilisers and farm business management. Members were encouraged to take pride and care in these activities and were often given their own ‘charges’, for example, a calf, pig or plot of land to rear or cultivate on their own.⁵⁴ They would then be encouraged to show their progress, at local and sometimes national agricultural shows and enter their animals into competitions. The movement therefore, encouraged them to take pride in their work and in the agricultural industry, by introducing them to others with the same interests.

Furthermore, as well as encouraging an interest in the agricultural trade, the movement also hoped to improve the standard and overall efficiency of farming at this time. As a delegate from the American YFCs told the YFC conference in London in 1930, “we do not need more farmers, but we want better farming, and the way to secure this is to catch the future farmers when they are young and teach them to be better farmers than their fathers.”⁵⁵ Activities such as livestock rearing were hugely important to this, teaching boys how to rear ‘good’ quality animals. A report of the Ellesmere (Salop) YFC in Shropshire, by *Farmer and Stockbreeder* in 1930, reported that the club hoped that forming a ‘Young Bull Society’ would lead to “the elimination of the ‘scrub’ [feral or undomesticated] bull”⁵⁶ and in doing so “raise the standard of livestock across the countryside.”⁵⁷ By placing emphasis on the standard of livestock and the quality of the farming product the movement encouraged members to have an enthusiasm and pride in their skills as farm workers and indeed in their vocation as a whole.

In doing so, the clubs provided a vocational and practical education in agriculture, which many social reformers in the 1930s were demanding. The rural education system at the time was, in many people’s view, of poor quality.⁵⁸ It provided a weak standard of teaching, in comparison to towns, proliferated the unfair divide between the classes (as poorer children could not afford to the country town schools which

⁵⁴ Thompson, ‘Agricultural Education’, p.60.

⁵⁵ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 3 February 1930, p.248.

⁵⁶ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 17 February 1930, p.302.

⁵⁷ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 17 February 1930, p.302.

⁵⁸ Adams, ‘Rural Education’, p.39

offered a better education), and focused too little on the agricultural trade and rural sciences.⁵⁹ Many contemporaries worried that the present education system was aiding the drift from the land, by turning out boys who were unfit for country pursuits. Margaret Manor, in a letter to *Farmer and Stockbreeder* in 1930 wrote:

The countryside is being depopulated and the towns are overcrowded, because elementary schools are turning out citizens unfitted for country pursuits. They are fitted only to become clerks, errand boys, packers, typists, etc; whereas the country is in need of thatchers, ploughmen, hedge-layers, stack builders, gate makers, milkers, and men who can feed calves and shepherd ewes, prune, bud and graft fruit trees, make faggots and lay land drains. To fit a man to love the country and to make rural work remunerative, he must have been educated from his childhood for his country life. ... To run out a boy who can write essays on Henry VIII may be an illustration of mental gymnastics, but turn out a boy who can produce food for a score of people out of an acre of waste land is an illustration of how intelligence can be trained to increase human wealth.⁶⁰

Furthermore, some contemporaries believed that the current system of education focused too closely on academic subjects and was in turn educating boys ‘out of their station’, encouraging boys to expect more than agricultural labour and look for better opportunities elsewhere. Mr A Bicknell aired this view, in front of a branch of the Farmers’ Union in Devon in 1930, when he said: “the country must have labourers, and if boys were kept at school till they were fifteen none of them would do the dirty work.”⁶¹

The YFC movement therefore filled an important gap in the education provision of the countryside, providing continuing learning in agricultural trades to those children

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.43.

⁶⁰ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 17 June 1930, p.1417.

⁶¹ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 13 January 1930, p.67.

who left school at 14 with little knowledge of the field. Of course, in the 1930s, there were other avenues for agricultural education. The Local Education Authorities, for example, provided evening classes, but these were of limited range.⁶² Scholarships were also available, but there were relatively few and these would rarely go to poorer students.⁶³ There were also Farm Institutes, but small numbers made only a limited impact at this time.⁶⁴ Beyond this, one of the most important agents for providing education to rural people was the Women's Institutes, which provided a number of instructive courses for rural women.⁶⁵ In comparison to those mentioned above, it could be argued that the YFCs offered a more easily accessible and inclusive route to vocational training at this time. Education was therefore the key, through which young people could learn their role on the land. The wartime Luxmoore Report, from the committee on post-war agricultural education, concluded this from their findings. They argued for a "rural bias" in country schools and a stronger focus on subjects that would help children understand their role on the land. They wrote:

wherever practicable, illustrations should be drawn from the life and work of the countryside and from its natural and physical phenomena: for example, in nature study and science, much of the work should be based on objects commonly to be found and observed in the countryside.⁶⁶

Following the Second World War, the drift from the land, which had been halted by the war for a time, continued to haunt those concerned with the state of agriculture. As *Farmer and Stockbreeder* reported in 1952, "Thus urban England sucks the lifeblood from the countryside, thereby threatens to starve us all."⁶⁷ Here the author is referring to the youth of England, who were being attracted away from agriculture by better prospects in towns. The place of young people within rural society therefore increased in significance, as did their decision to stay or to leave the countryside.

⁶² Adams, 'Rural Education' p.43.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.36.

⁶⁵ Maggie Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement* (Lawrence & Wishart: London, 1997).

⁶⁶ Ministry of Agriculture, *Report on the Committee on Higher Agricultural Education in England and Wales* (HMSO: London, 1946), Cmd 6728, p.8.

⁶⁷ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 12-13 February 1952, p.41.

Agricultural training, therefore, continued to be of utmost importance and this can be seen in the growth of YFC membership following the war, and the fact that the organisation was recognised by the government in the 1950s, as being an important rural youth service and received both funding and support.

The education provided by the YFCs also addressed the growing need for a more focused agricultural education following the onset of the Second World War, with the growing specialisation and increasing mechanisation of farm work. Previously farming practices had, for the large part, been passed down through the family, with knowledge being transferred from father to son. However, as new production techniques and technical machinery slowly came into use following the introduction of wartime efficiency enhancing techniques and machinery, more training was necessary to ensure high quality farming and efficient production. Therefore, providing adequate training for future farmers became increasingly important. As Burchardt argues, there was a direct correlation between the onset of mechanisation and the development of avenues for agricultural education. He writes that mechanisation, “made it increasingly important for farmers and farm workers to have adequate intellectual and knowledge-based skills. For this reason, mechanization was closely associated with a major expansion of agricultural education.”⁶⁸ The growth of the YFC movement in this period can therefore be seen in the context of the increasing modernisation of agriculture across this period. YFC training courses provided much needed information on new forms of farming; training a more modernised, efficient and ‘better’ agricultural workforce. As *Farmer and Stockbreeder* wrote in 1943:

The more we see of the Young Farmer movement the more we realise its immediate value... The right class of youth is being attracted to the farm and is being educated to recognise and to choose good stock, good methods, and good machinery.⁶⁹

This focus on efficiency and improvement, was the basis of the introduction of proficiency tests in the YFCs in 1951, through which boys were encouraged to achieve their certificates in farm crafts, eventually leading up to gaining ‘master’ badges in

⁶⁸ Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, p.156.

⁶⁹ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 30 May 1943, p.841.

their chosen field. In doing this, the movement was building a new generation of experts who took pride in their profession.

The social activities also served to aid the revitalisation of rural life and to reinforce the importance of an active community life in the future. The movement was not just attempting to train its members in the agricultural tasks in being a farmer but of the public side as well. Young people were trained to have an active and important role in the rural community, through activities such as planning members meetings, attending talks by members of local government and national officials, attending meetings of the parish, taking part in local festivals and organising community activities such as ploughing matches and produce shows.⁷⁰ Clear emphasis was also placed on the importance of public speaking and members were encouraged to enter public speaking contests, in which they would have a small amount of time to speak on a subject of agricultural nature and then would have to defend their views, while being cross examined by a judge.⁷¹ This was an important skill, as it was assumed the majority of members would, at the age of 21, move on to being a member of the National Farmers Union (NFU) and would need to be able to express views in front of large numbers of people and in hostile situations. Hence, through a programme of both educative and recreational activities, the clubs aimed to train the future farmers of tomorrow and in doing so prepare them for duties of citizenship. This was essential in ensuring the future of the agricultural industry and was the main reasoning behind the YFC movement.

This emphasis on rural jobs and skills was not isolated to the YFCs, or to rural youth for that matter. Across the 1930s youth movements encouraged young people to take up agricultural or horticultural tasks, as part of a “call to the land” for young urbanites. This was certainly the case in groups such as the Scouts and Guides, who gave re-acquaintance with nature, the land and the soil utmost importance in their programmes. The practice of ‘adopting’ gardens and allotments, on which troops could practice land cultivating skills, was a common one, particularly amongst school troops and those from poorer or more densely populated areas, where a good garden

⁷⁰ *The Young Farmer*, July – Aug 1955, p.297.

⁷¹ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 2 March 1936, p.507.

was seen as something of a “luxury”.⁷² Furthermore, a proficiency in growing fruit and vegetables, understanding the nature of soil and manure and knowledge of flowers were seen as important skills, acquired through attaining the Scouts’ ‘Gardener’ badge. These activities were, to be sure, popular for many of the same reasons that pursuits such as rambling were also. Gardening, for example, provided the opportunity for town members to gain access to the open air and all the benefits that brought with it. But the importance of gardening was also about more than this. It was a way of connecting young people with their heritage and giving them an understanding of their shared mutual past. The opening of the 1939 edition of *The Scout’s Book of Gardening* highlights this:

The Englishman is noted for his gardening. Wherever he goes be it to the wilds of Africa or the uplands of India he makes a garden. Again and again when travelling in foreign countries one hears how Great Britain is looked to for its horticulture. It is indeed the poor man’s hobby and the rich man’s pastime.⁷³

Clearly, again, the movement’s emphasis on the land shows a desire to reinforce an understanding of a shared identity which is closely reliant on the land, be that for work or leisure, in this case the latter.

An understanding of heritage was also a key reasoning behind the training provided by many troops in farming and husbandry. In 1938, Scouter Alec G. Dickson outlined this reasoning in an article on ‘Scouts on the Land’. He wrote:

Not only did it appear illogical that members of a movement which cultivates in boys a practical familiarity with nature should be entirely ignorant of farm life at home; it seemed part of a good citizen’s training to know something of the country’s staple industry.⁷⁴

⁷² *The Scouter*, February 1933, p.47.

⁷³ W. E. Shewell-Cooper, *The Scout’s Book of Gardening* (The Scout Book Club: London, 1938), p.13.

⁷⁴ *The Scouter*, June 1938, p.195.

More than this, members were encouraged to attain agricultural based badges including the Farmer badge and for girls, badges such as Poultry Keeper and Dairy Maid (sometimes Dairy Worker), in an effort to instil an enthusiasm for agricultural trades and provide basic training, for those who may want to enter into a career in this area. The virtues of agricultural work were extolled by *The Guide* in a 1931 article on poultry farming, which declared:

No, the pay isn't much for the plain assistants, but who wants money in the country? As long as we have enough money for an occasional dance, theatre or a trip to town, what do we care! Take your offices, factories and overcrowded places and leave us our health and happiness.⁷⁵

While another article declared “WHY NOT BE A DAIRYMAID? IT’S A DELIGHTFUL JOB”⁷⁶. This encouragement served two purposes. Firstly, it served to fill the gap in the numbers of agricultural jobs being left unfilled, due to the ‘drift’ discussed earlier. Secondly, it served as an opportunity for young boys faced with long term unemployment to find work, as we have already seen.

Work on the land, therefore, was considered a viable career opportunity for those seeking employment. Furthermore, such articles highlighted the healthier and more fulfilling lifestyles that land work would bring, in comparison to those who found employment in towns. This trend was by no means limited to these movements but part of a wider tendency, for the encouragement of young people to take up work on the land and counteract the drift. Nowhere is this more evident than in the YMCA campaign ‘British Boys for British Farms’ which, set up in 1932, aimed to train and then place boys in agricultural positions. By 1949, the movement had trained nearly 8,000 young people.⁷⁷ While the success of this scheme is somewhat limited, its existence shows the wider position of other movements in the relationship between young people and the land and highlights the fact that the Scouting movements did not stand alone, in their attitudes towards urban youth.

⁷⁵ *The Guide*, 10 January 1931, p.1204.

⁷⁶ *The Guide*, 31 March 1931, p.1581.

⁷⁷ Gwyn E. Jones & Max A. Peberdy (1980), ‘Formal agricultural training in England and Wales: A new direction’, *Agricultural Administration*, 7 (4), p.248.

Education about rural practices of living was essential in the attempts of the Scout movement to develop ‘good’ citizenry. There was the belief that young people were becoming detached from the agricultural nature of the countryside and this led to destructive behaviour. *The Guide* reported in 1954 that:

Townfolk are often very ignorant of the ways of the country, and a little more welcome guests. Guide companies from towns are apt to look on the country merely as a playground and provider of campsites, and the countryfolk as necessary adjuncts, to be accepted as providers of milk and other necessities.⁷⁸

The movements attempted to resolve this by encouraging young people to engage with rural life, including work on the land as well as leisure. By teaching Guides and Scouts the importance of agriculture and the hardships and intricacies of farm work, the movements hoped to encourage members to treat the land and those who worked on it, with more respect.

This was also an aim of the YFC movement, which believed that, by learning about agriculture, urban members would gain a newfound respect and understanding for the countryside and for those who lived in it. The clubs’ magazine reported in 1951 that belonging to a club was:

the real ‘open sesame’ to the countryside and its people. As Young Farmers, the pupils are received by country men and women not as townsmen, but as real friends. ... When they leave school and disperse into the various trades and professions, they take with them their real, acquired knowledge of the country. Their outlook towards the land and its people will be sympathetic, because they have learned to understand them better.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *The Guide*, 2 April 1954, p.164.

⁷⁹ *The Young Farmer*, May-June 1951, p.161.

However, despite a growing number of urban young people taking an interest in the land, it is clear that there were still concerns that urban members would not have the natural inclination towards the agricultural trade, or the basic knowledge to succeed on the land. This idea was pervasive, with many farmers being reluctant to employ boys from the towns, as they required a larger amount of training than the country boy. As a report from a 1950 issue of *Farmer and Stockbreeder* suggests:

Those who have had a rural upbringing have an initial advantage, but young enthusiasts in the towns are searching endlessly to find the right lead leading to a farm. The bottleneck is in finding a farmer willing and able to accept them.⁸⁰

The 'Call to the Land'

A study of the organisational periodicals of youth movements across the mid-century has so far revealed the continued encouragement for young people to embrace rural life. As this chapter has shown, agricultural work was seen as beneficial for urban youth, particularly those who were out of work. This continued in the post-war period, with suggestions that members may choose to take up an agricultural career. The 'call to the land' of urbanites, however, became more explicit in wartime. This chapter will now consider the development of 'good' citizenship in relation to war and argue that the Baden-Powell movements explicitly encouraged young people to work on the land as part of their national duty. It will argue that, as the emphasis on the importance of agriculture in winning the war and in 'feeding the nation' grew at this time, so too did the link between understandings of citizenship and landscape within the youth movements at hand.

On 14th October 1940, Winston Churchill declared in a speech to the National Farmers' Union that "We rely on farmers. We depend on the efforts they put forth in the fields of Britain ... Today the farms of Britain are the front line of freedom".⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 28 February 1950, p.617.

⁸¹ Brian Short, Charles Watkins & John Martin, "The front line of freedom': state-led agricultural revolution in Britain, 1939-45' in Brian Short and Charles Watkins and John Martins (eds), *The*

During the later years of the 1930s, with the realisation that war was fast approaching, many officials exhibited concern about the state of British agriculture, which was, particularly in arable areas, in a state of disarray. With the severe loss of land following the First World War and the loss of farm workers, the agricultural sector was producing less than was required to the extent that, in 1938, 70% of the cash value of British food was imported.⁸² In wartime, the threat of u-boats and the unreliability of imports led to a national focus on food production. In response the government, through a system of mechanisation and subsidies, as well as the conscription of a national agricultural labour force through the Women's Land Army (WLA), aimed to increase output. In doing so they created an arable intensive 'national' farm, reliant on mechanisation, science and the labour of large numbers of recruits.

Agricultural production was therefore portrayed as being at the forefront of the war effort, and the citizens of Britain had an important role to play in this, particularly through the 'Dig for Victory' campaign, which encouraged urban men and women to get involved in helping the 'kitchen front'. The 1939 'Dig for Victory' campaign was a key part in encouraging awareness and enthusiasm for food production. It led to the large expansion in domestic food production over the period, by encouraging growing vegetables in home grown allotments, rearing poultry in backyards and forming pigs clubs.⁸³ The number of allotments, which grew from 814,917 in 1939, to 1,399,935 in 1943, and the growth in members of the Domestic Poultry Keepers' Council from 791,000 at its inception, to 1,369,000 in 1945, are evidence of the success of this scheme.⁸⁴ In fact it has been estimated that around 2 ½ to 3 million tons of food were produced from allotments and gardens during the war in England and Wales.⁸⁵ This importance given to agriculture and to the rural sphere in the Second World War, served to intensify the 'rural national identity'. As Rose argues, the war stood to reinforce the place of the rural within national belonging, to the extent that the rural became the "authentic nation".⁸⁶ She states, "during the war, visions of the English

Front Line of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War (British Agricultural History Society: Exeter, 2006), p.1.

⁸² Ibid, p.2.

⁸³ Keith A.H. Murray, *Agriculture: History of the Second World War* (Longman: London. 1955), p.245.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.247.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Rose, *Which People's War?*, p.198.

countryside commonly were invoked to conjure the whole."⁸⁷ Importantly, the end of the war had consolidated the rural consolidated in the hearts and minds of the British public. So much so, that often images of the countryside would be used to represent the 'true nation' and, even for those who were urban, the rural symbolized the England that needed defending.⁸⁸ Even today, as Ginn has shown, the Dig for Victory campaign remains predominant in our cultural memory of the Second World War with images of members of the Land Army driving tractors and of school children digging up potatoes being symbolic of a time when the true spirit and strength of the nation prevailed.⁸⁹ The use of the rural sphere to reinforce national identity was a dramatically different use of the 'rural idyll' that had previously served to mitigate interwar discontentment with the rise of modernity. But what role did youth movements play in this?

Young people were to play an important part in the 'battle' for production at this time, as many civilians became enlisted in agriculture as a way to help the war effort. However, as with other leisure pursuits, the onset of the Second World War put a number of obstacles in the way of organised youth movements. Problems included loss of members as a result of national service and evacuation, camping restrictions and the blackout. The blackout was particularly difficult on the movements because it prohibited where, when and for how long groups could hold meetings and was an obstacle for girls and younger members who often faced stricter supervision. Older members on the other hand were taken away from movements as a result of national service, which meant they often did not have the time or had been relocated to a different area. The war also saw increased camping restrictions that made activities in the Scouting, Guiding and Woodcraft movements even tougher. Camping was restricted to small camps, away from places of military interest and away from the coast. Tents were required to be camouflaged and campers faced food shortages in camp due to rationing.⁹⁰ Despite these restrictions, and the loss of members which resulted, as the table below evidences these organisations soon revived themselves, albeit slowly.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.203.

⁸⁹ Franklin Ginn (2012), 'Dig for Victory! New histories of wartime gardening in Britain.' *Journal of Historical Geography*, **38** (3), 294-305 & Short, Watkins & Martin. 'The front line of freedom', p.9.

⁹⁰ *The Guider*, April 1940, pp.98-99.

Table 3.2: Membership figures 1938-1945.⁹¹

Year	Scouts	Guides	Woodcraft	NFYFC
1938	460234	533130	4321	-
1939	-	-	5134	15000
1940	-	-	2558	-
1941	305760	400236	-	-
1942	-	-	-	21000
1943	424082	503421	-	37000
1944	452764	485063	-	56000
1945	471040	465379	2892	64000

This rebound or ‘soldiering on’ in wartime was a theme that ran through many areas of leisure at this time. As Walvin shows, the war became an extremely important period for the development of the leisure industries. Leisure gained a new national precedence in the war, the availability of a “people’s leisure”⁹² was ideologically important in the context of wartime, as the freedom of leisure for all was a vital message in the fight against fascism and an effective way of boosting the morale. Walvin argues that “It was as if leisure had finally come of age and been accepted as an essential part of the national effort”.⁹³

In terms of membership of youth movements this was undoubtedly true with membership figures, following an initial slump, they saw growth in wartime. The YFC movement, in particular, showed unprecedented popularity during wartime. At this time the NFYFC membership, at first restricted, gradually saw a steady flow of members, to the extent that from 1939 to 1945 membership increased from 15,000 to 64,000.⁹⁴ This, in large part, was a result of the heightened importance of agricultural production at this time and the need to produce home-grown food stuffs. Membership

⁹¹ Figures taken from respective movement’s annual reports and ‘census’ figures. See appendix.

⁹² Beaven, *Leisure*, p.230.

⁹³ James Walvin, *Leisure and Society: 1830-1950* (Longman: London, 1978), p.148.

⁹⁴ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 28 February 1950, p.617.

of the YFC was approved by the Board of Education as a form of youth service and as a result, large numbers of young people, particularly from urban areas, joined to 'do their part'.⁹⁵ As a 1943 article from *Farmer and Stockbreeder* asserted, "A fairly steady flow of boys from the town to the country exists, and although the total numbers involved may not be great, the stream is one which should be kept flowing smoothly."⁹⁶ Youth movements, therefore, flourished in wartime, as a result of government endorsement, as a form of national service for young people.

The Scouts and Guides had a long history of service to the country, specifically in wartime, and after the outbreak of war, Baden-Powell wrote to the Home Secretary offering the service of Scouts as messengers.⁹⁷ War was indeed a time when the Scouting motto 'Be Prepared' never rang as true. All members were expected to prepare themselves for the possibility of invasion, or the threat of bombing. *The Guide*, for example, encouraging its readers to have an emergency rucksack packed and ready filled with "the sort of kit you would need if you had to cross the country on a hundred mile hike because of invasion."⁹⁸ For Scouts the idea of adventure and excitement they had been chasing in the interwar period came knocking on their front doors and *The Scouter* warned them that they must be prepared to take up duties of fire watching.⁹⁹ Both movements adopted relevant wartime badges, the National Service Badge, for those over 14 years of age, and the Home Defence Badge. The latter required knowledge of how to protect themselves and their home and general wartime knowledge such as how to gas proof a room and how to behave in an air raid.¹⁰⁰ In training for this badge, *The Guide* gave regular instructions on how to care for your gas mask and even how to make a pochette to carry it.¹⁰¹ Requirements for existing badges were also developed to include knowledge and experience relevant to wartime. Rangers were also instructed to train for Home Emergency Service (H.E.S) and learn skills, including signalling and message work. Comically *The Guide*

⁹⁵ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 18 August 1942, p.1285.

⁹⁶ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 15 June 1943, p.941.

⁹⁷ Collis, Hazelwood & Hurill. *B-P's Scouts*, p.117. For histories of the movements in the First World War see; Chapter 1 in Proctor, 'Gender, Generation'; Angela Woollacott (1994), "Khaki Fever" and Its Control: Gender, Class, Age and Sexual Morality on the British Homefront in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 29 (2), 325- 347 & Allen Warren 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell', 376-398.

⁹⁸ *The Guide*, 27 August 1942, p.417.

⁹⁹ *The Scouter*, March 1941, p.39.

¹⁰⁰ *The Guide*, 13 June 1940, p.174.

¹⁰¹ *The Guide*, 20 June 1940, p.200.

reported in 1942 “Owing to printer’s error Rangers were advised last month to practise *Massage* work instead of *Message* work. We all hope sincerely you guessed for yourselves there was a slip here – unqualified massage is *not* recommended as part of your H.E.S!”¹⁰²

However, there was a distinction made between age groups. While all members were encouraged to help with the war effort, those under 16 were not allowed to be enrolled in any form of National Service. This, a 1961 history of the Scouts asserted, was met with disappointment from members who wanted to take part in activities such as fire watching. Scouts over 14 could be enlisted as messengers, or in civil defence.

Older members, on the other hand, who were available for National Service, were encouraged to sign up but to continue their involvement with the movement nonetheless. Articles in *The Scouter* were keen to suggest how Scouting could be continued in army garrisons and how, in fact, Scouting could be considered a vital part of this service and even come in useful.¹⁰³ One writer declared in April 1940 “I find it necessary to reiterate the fact that the Scout training is a valuable form of national service.”¹⁰⁴ It was suggested that Guiders, who were of the age, should join one of the women’s auxiliary services, as their Guiding experience would be invaluable to the team. An article on ‘Guiding and the ATS’ asserted in 1939 that: “The A.T.S., in many of its aspects, is almost grown-up Guiding.”¹⁰⁵ The emphasis on the importance of the training provided by these youth movements, particularly in wartime, was therefore clear.

Another way Guides could contribute was the Guide International Service (G.I.S). Formed during the war, this was a scheme developed to help war distressed countries after the war was over. Guides who volunteered would be sent abroad to do relief work and help improve conditions. *The Guider* reported on the scheme in June 1940: “The scheme is to be known as the GIS. Its aim will be to send out parties of trained and equipped Guiders and Rangers to the distressed countries, as soon as possible

¹⁰² *The Guide*, 30 April 1943, p.209.

¹⁰³ *The Scouter*, September 1939, p.345. Other examples include: *The Scouter*, January 1941, p.13 & *The Scouter*, July 1941, p.123.

¹⁰⁴ *The Scouter*, April 1940, p.112.

¹⁰⁵ *The Guider*, May 1939, p.155.

after the cessation of hostilities, to help with urgent relief work.”¹⁰⁶ The requirement for those that volunteered was that they needed to be over 21 and physically and mentally fit. “There will be a stiff test of fitness, efficiency, and general reliability, for those volunteering for service in Europe, as the conditions they will have to face will be of quite unusual hardship.”¹⁰⁷ Here the movement maintained its international standing, which had developed in the interwar period.

Guides, of the right age, were also encouraged to join the Land Army, as it was considered the most ‘natural’ vocation for female members, using the skills and qualities developed through the Guiding programme. As one Guide/Land Army member wrote in 1941:

I have discussed this “appeal” with several of my fellow Guide-Land-Girls and we have come to the conclusion that we were drawn to it for the same reason. Long, active hours in the open air. There was something of the old thrilling attraction of camp about it. Guiding taught me to observe. The Land Army has taught me to go on observing ...¹⁰⁸.

Those who were not old enough to enlist for National Service were encouraged to serve their country through other activities. Scouts instructed their Cub members that there were a number of ways they could be of assistance to the war effort and that it was their duty to do so. These included, but were not limited to, the collection of waste paper, tinfoil for the Red Cross, eggs for hospitals, firewood, acorns for farmers to feed the pigs, scrap metal and wild fruit, as well as delivering letters, knitting blankets, being ‘patients’ for ambulance classes and the A.R.P and for country Scouts to assist in the caring for young evacuees.¹⁰⁹ A writer for *The Guider*, Heather Kay, reported in October 1939 that: “Nearly everywhere there were Guides about in uniform talking to the refugees, holding babies, comforting, carrying the proverbial

¹⁰⁶ *The Guider*, June 1940, p.83.

¹⁰⁷ The G.I.S was originally named otherwise but had to be renamed to avoid confusion. “(Note. – The name of ‘Army of Good Will’ was considered rather vague and high-flown, liable to misinterpretation in other languages, and will be dropped from now on.)” *The Guider*, June 1940, p.83.

¹⁰⁸ *The Guide*, 26 June 1941, p.328.

¹⁰⁹ *The Scouter*, March 1941, p.57.

parcels, and acting as cheerful and happy messengers wherever they were sent.”¹¹⁰ The idea of ‘service’, was therefore of utmost importance to the movements and clearly the onset of the Second World War, marked a shift in notions of citizenship in the Guide and Scout movement. This was because no longer were Guides and Scouts considered as being trained for the future: active citizenship was thrust upon them at a time of war.

As Rose argues, “During the war, active citizenship was linked to ‘social responsibility’ and participation in civil society”.¹¹¹ Never was this idea of service and duty to the nation clearer than in the story of Derrick Belfall, who was fatally injured carrying out his duties as messenger, his last words being “Messenger Belfall reporting. I have delivered my message.”¹¹² In this case, Derrick fulfilled the true meaning of Scout citizenship in wartime, not only did he give his life in the aid of others but also risked it willingly and enthusiastically, in an effort to fulfil his duty as a Scout.

Notions of service and active citizenry in wartime were however directly gendered, with understandings of wartime service for girls drawn around their domestic role first and foremost. Girls, especially those living in reception areas, were encouraged to help their mothers in the home: *The Guide* offered tips on how to strip and make a bed properly, and on how to lend a hand with childcare.¹¹³ In 1940 *The Guide* wrote:

Perhaps you are living in a reception area and your mother has evacuees. Or she may be doing war work of some sort that leaves her less time for home duties than formerly ... If, however, you will be more useful in someone else’s home, by all means offer your services there.¹¹⁴

Similarly, the Guides continued to put emphasis on the domestic ways in which girls could help the war effort, for example, in wartime the Cookery badge maintained its

¹¹⁰ *The Guider*, October 1939, p.387.

¹¹¹ Rose, *Which People’s War?*, p.19.

¹¹² Collis, Hazelwood & Hurill, *B-P’s Scouts*, p.139.

¹¹³ *The Guide*, 11 February 1943, p.68.

¹¹⁴ *The Guide*, 9 May 1940, p.80.

important status. Under the strict restrictions of rationing a cook had to learn to make do and be creative with her supplies. In 1940 *The Guide* asked its readers:

Can you make half a pound of plain beef or mutton serve four or five people; serve a good, satisfying breakfast without exhausting anyone's butter or bacon ration too soon; make tea time "sweet," yet sugar-sparing; fortify someone who has to work after "blackout" time with a tempting, economical supper? If you can, like the lady in the nursery rhyme who has "bells on her fingers and bells on her toes," you will have music wherever you go. In plain language, you will be a very popular person.¹¹⁵

In this way the Guides were remoulding everyday activities into a form of war service for girls highlighting the important role girls could play in the domestic activities of wartime. A similar technique was adopted by other publications at this time which as well as encouraging girls to enter the women's services placed emphasis on mundane activities such as knitting as actions of national importance.¹¹⁶ Even in wartime, therefore, the Guides celebrated the domestic nature of 'women's role' and private forms of 'service', as Tinkler calls them, were extolled, particularly for members who were not old enough to enter the national services. This was not a policy taken on overtly by official youth policy in wartime. In fact as Tinkler has shown the government consciously steered clear of placing too much emphasis on 'private' and domestic forms of service for young girls in favour of public ones to highlight the equal position of women in society in comparison to fascist Germany which promoted the role of motherhood wholeheartedly.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, in the Guide movement, the home remained an arena through which young girls could serve the nation.

However, out of all the varied ways in which members were encouraged to take part in the war effort, it was clear that one of the best ways of doing so would be through work on the land. Both Guides and Scouts were encouraged to service the land and 'Dig for Victory'. *The Guide* demanded in January 1944:

¹¹⁵ *The Guide*, 9 May 1940, p.80.

¹¹⁶ Penny Tinkler (1997), 'The Nation's Girlhood and the Call to Service in England, 1939-1950', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 4 (2), p.369.

¹¹⁷ Tinkler, 'Nation's Girlhood', p.362.

Has your patrol started digging yet? Digging an allotment, digging a garden patch. Digging up the ground where a bomb has conveniently cleared it for you. Digging so that you can grow good, green vegetables, and perhaps some fruit and flowers as well.¹¹⁸

Similarly, *The Scouter* enticed its readers into working on the land in 1941, by declaring, “Help Beat the U-Boats ... Cook Hitler’s Goose with Home-Grown Vegetables!”¹¹⁹ Both movements offered regular advice on how to do this, for example, articles on how to dig properly, how to sow seeds, what fruit and vegetables to grow and how to deal with pests were a few of many subjects addressed.¹²⁰ *The Guide* magazine had regular columns keeping its readers updated on what was happening on English farms. “Down on the Farm” was written by a ‘yeoman’, while “Getting on with the Job” was written by a member of the Land Army, who gave tips on growing your own vegetables and tending to an allotment patch.¹²¹ This column ran for the majority of the war and in 1944 “Land Girl” began answering readers’ questions such as “Can you grow tomatoes from seed?” and “Is it too late to start digging now?”¹²² Those members who had no land to cultivate, were encouraged to join together and work on a piece of land collectively.¹²³

Another useful service was the harvesting of wild fruit, which could be done in conjunction with leisurely rambles. *The Guide* advised in 1940 “Every company should organise black-berry-picking parties now ... It may be good fun to do ... but it is important as well.”¹²⁴ Summer camps were often organised in conjunction with the farming camps scheme, so that Scouts and Guides could help out on farms. Scouts and Guides were also encouraged to participate in forestry camps, like the Shrewsbury school forestry camp of 1941 and the Norfolk forestry camp of 1941, which were believed to be a good fit for members, because they provided training in

¹¹⁸ *The Guide*, 27 January 1944, p.25.

¹¹⁹ *The Scouter*, March 1941, p.65.

¹²⁰ *The Scouter*, November 1939, p.414.

¹²¹ *The Guide*, 4 February 1943, p.56.

¹²² *The Guide*, 23 February 1945, p.64.

¹²³ *The Scouter*, March 1941, p.64.

¹²⁴ *The Guide*, 5 September 1940, p.363.

Scout craft, at the same time as being categorised as national service.¹²⁵ In 1944 *The Guide* advertised English land work camps, fruit picking in Sussex and forestry in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Applicants had to be over 16 for forestry work, and over 15 for fruit picking. They were expected to have camping experience and be prepared to do six hours strenuous work a day.¹²⁶ Another form of service was fundraising through gardening and farming. In the first year of war alone, the Eastbourne Guides raised £132 6s. 4d. by selling the fruit and vegetables they had grown in their garden.¹²⁷

These efforts should be seen alongside the heightened urban involvement in agriculture at this time, particularly of young people. As Moore Colyer has found, a vital part of the agricultural war effort came from large numbers of children working on the land, in the form of children's 'harvest camps'.¹²⁸ These 'farm camps' were organised both for school children and urban workers, as a combination of holiday and useful farm work. By 1943, there were over 1,335 camps throughout Britain, with 63,000 boys and girls working on them.¹²⁹ In 1943 *Farmer and Stockbreeder* declared that such children were part of a 'youth army' at work on the land performing jobs such as pea picking, potato lifting, harvesting and other farm work.¹³⁰ Despite the large numbers of urban land workers at this time, a study of the farming press still reveals an ingrained prejudice against those who had not been brought up on the land. This was perhaps the reason why farmers were so reluctant to accept Land Girls initially, being less to do with their sex (women had been a feature on the land for years) and more with their urban background. As a letter to *Farmer and Stockbreeder* in 1941 suggests "The Country-bred Land Girl is the Best. True, a lot of town bred girls do make good, but somehow they do not seem as strong as country girls."¹³¹ Despite this, however, one can see a clear correlation between work on the land and ideals of citizenship at this time. The 'call to the land' of young people is a vital part of understanding the role between the English countryside and ideals of

¹²⁵ *The Scouter*, July 1941, p.120 & *The Scouter*, November 1941, p.171

¹²⁶ *The Guide*, 19 May 1944, p.164.

¹²⁷ *The Guider*, June 1944, p.81.

¹²⁸ R.J Moore-Colyer (2004), 'Kids in the Corn: School Harvest Camps and Farm Labour Supply in England, 1940-50,' *The Agricultural History Review* 52 (2), 183-206.

¹²⁹ Howkins, *The Death of Rural England*, p.130.

¹³⁰ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 11 August 1942, p.1221.

¹³¹ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 21 January 1941, p.132.

citizenship at this time. Being under the age of conscription, for many members, work on the land became the best way for them to help the war effort and prove their worth as citizens of the nation.

The Guide and Scout movements therefore cultivated an understanding of ‘good’ citizenry, which was directly related to ideas of service on the land. This was part of the wider trend of encouraging urban involvement in food production. Not all youth movements developed such ideas of service in wartime however. In particular, the Woodcraft Folk did not encourage such involvement or extol the virtues of service, and while they continued their activities in wartime, they believed them to be vital in the fight against war. The *Woodcraft Reports and Accounts* reported in 1939 that:

The child’s attention is focused on international matters. Seize the opportunity of developing social history talks so that the youngster may know something of the root causes of war. At the same time, we must not make the war an obsession to our youngsters. Our moats, hikes, camps, must also serve as an antidote to the war atmosphere of the cities.¹³²

Furthermore, they saw themselves apart from other youth movements at this time, actively encouraging members to voice disapproval of the war.¹³³ They wholeheartedly lent support to the Central Board of Conscientious Objectors and had supported the No War movement in the 1930s. The movement believed they suffered from low membership at this time for this reason.¹³⁴ In 1940 a Woodcraft publication wrote:

Unlike other youth movements, we have no really popular appeal now. Other national children’s movements have

¹³² *Report of the National Folk Council 1939*, YMA/WF/4, LSE, p.18.

¹³³ It should, however, be noted that there had been growing pacifist thought in the Scouting movements before the war and while the Scout movements were clearly patriotic they were certainly not ‘pro-war (despite the Woodcraft’s criticisms). See Mark Freeman (2010), ‘Muscular Quakerism? The Society of Friends and Youth Organisations in Britain, c.1900-1950’, *English Historical Review*, **128** (51), pp.642-669.

¹³⁴ For more information on the conflict within the Woodcraft concerning pacifism during the Second World War see: Palser, ‘Learn by Doing’, p.5.

capitalised the war and devote many of their attentions to some form of war service, in many cases even to the extent of serving out steel helmets to their members.¹³⁵

Despite this opposition towards the war from the Woodcraft, it is clear from the sheer numbers of members of the Baden Powell movements as compared to the Woodcraft, that at this time large numbers of young people were engaging in numerous forms of war service. In wartime, the Scouting movements encouraged a close relationship with the land, as they had done before, but this became increasingly focused on food production. Ideals of 'good' citizenry, therefore, remained centred upon the countryside; but in wartime the importance of agricultural production was heightened.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how shifting employment patterns were addressed by youth movements in the 1930s, through a system of training. Discussions of work were highly gendered however. The concern over youth unemployment in the Scout movement was evident through the implementation of schemes to assist those out of work. The countryside was important here, with the Scouts utilising the landscape to combat the negative effects of unemployment. Discussions of unemployment within the Scout movement, subsided in the post-war period, within the context of full employment and this reinforces the fact that the mid-century saw a shift in the movements' understandings of the experience of working class youth.

Discussions of work within the Guide movement were, on the other hand, less 'problematic'. In the 1930s, Guide publications suggested a large range of occupations for their members, although they recognised the importance of class. Following the war however, girls were invited to join a less varied and more domesticated workforce. The impact of the Second World War on working opportunities for girls seemed to reinforce pre-war attitudes and indeed heighten them.

¹³⁵ *The Helper*, August-September 1940, p.1.

The chapter also argued that the mid-century saw continued emphasis on the importance of agricultural education in understandings of ‘good’ citizenship, especially for rural youth. It asserted that in the 1930s, the ‘drift from the land’ alongside calls for increased efficiency and improved standards in farming, saw the growth of the YFC movement, which upheld notions of citizenship which, for boys, were directly linked with agricultural efficiency. This chapter has, therefore, reinforced the notion that youth took on a ‘dual’ role in this period, with rural youth being represented as both the future of the countryside and agents of its demise. The choice of young people from farming backgrounds, of whether to stay on the land, or leave to pursue the opportunities of the urban, was therefore fundamental to understandings of ‘good’ citizenship in the 1930s. Following the war, the continued loss of young agricultural workers, and the growing mechanisation of agriculture, led to an increased importance of the work of the YFCs. Agriculture, for rural youth, therefore, maintained its importance in understandings of ‘good’ citizenship in the mid-century.

Agricultural ‘good’ citizenship was not exclusively centred upon rural youth however, with the Scouts and Guides encouraging an active participation in activities, such as poultry rearing and land cultivation, across the period. In the 1930s such activities became especially important, as it was believed that through instilling knowledge of rural life, the movements could alleviate the tension between town and country. The movements also encouraged agricultural learning, as a way of connecting to the past rural England. Activities such as gardening were portrayed as being part of the national heritage, as they involved contact with the land. Ideas of nation and the landscape, discussed in Chapter One, were therefore important in shaping ideas of ‘good’ citizenship in the Baden-Powell movements.

This chapter has argued that the Second World War was a time in which ideas of ‘good’ citizenship within the Baden-Powell movements continued to hold sway. It has suggested that the movements called upon their members to give service to the nation and develop ‘active’ citizenship. This ‘active’ citizenship could be fulfilled through a number of activities but the movements paid particular attention to the opportunities for both Scouts and Guides to work on the land. The involvement of members in ‘digging for victory’ was part of much wider nationalised understandings of service at

this time, but the importance of the land here reveals an interesting continuity, in the centrality of the countryside in understandings of citizenship within these movements. Therefore, while many have seen the Second World War as a turning point in the mid-century, this chapter has suggested that understandings of the landscape and ‘good’ citizenship within these movements were merely reinforced by the advent of war.

Chapter Four

The Home-Centred Citizen

In 1939 Rose Williamson, a Ranger of the 13th Stoke Newington Rangers, wrote an article for *The Guider* in 1939, which described the long lasting benefits of Guiding. She penned:

Now that Guides have been in existence for 28 years, there are many young wives and mothers who did not have to cook their first meal as newlyweds with such great trepidation, when they remembered cooking breakfasts in rainy weather on smoky camp fires, some years ago in happy Guiding days.¹

Studies of youth organisations have often noted the utilisation of leisure as a means for socialisation and those, which have focused on girls, have often been quick to point out the gendered nature of the training provided. As Latham concludes in her study of the Liverpool Union of Youth Clubs, across the period from 1940 – 1970, a conservative view of gender lay at the core of the youth work being conducted.² Similarly, Dyhouse has shown how youth training and education in the Edwardian period served to reinforce dominant constructions of femininity.³ The quote from Rose Williamson above supports this suggestion with her admission that the Guides were the perfect preparation for a girl's future role as wives and mothers.

This chapter will explore the role of the home in understandings of 'good' citizenship in mid-twentieth century youth movements. In doing so it will argue that while notions of domesticity remained central to perceptions of 'good' citizenry, particularly for girls, underlying this are more complicated nuances which need to be addressed if we are to gain a fuller understanding of the home-centred nature of meanings of citizenship for young people across the mid-twentieth century. This chapter will identify three specific issues, which together unravel our understanding of 'the cult of

¹*The Guider*, May 1939, p.165.

² Latham, 'Youth Organisations and Gender', p.436.

³ Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up*, p.1.

domesticity' across the period. Firstly, it suggests that the emphasis on domesticity within youth movements was strengthened following the Second World War. Secondly, through a study of the rural experience, often neglected, this chapter reveals how rural experiences of home-life and housewifery suggest that a reassessment of our characterisation is in order if we are to fully comprehend the importance of the home-centred citizen in mid-twentieth century England. And thirdly, this chapter will identify issues of agency within youth movements and argue that girls exerted a certain amount of influence on the training provided by youth movements.

Domesticity and the 'Good' Citizen

It has been historically acknowledged that domesticity was central to the early Guiding movement. From its inception, as Smith has shown, the movement drew upon the middle class sentiment of separate spheres, to ensure that girls were fully prepared for their future role as carers of the nation.⁴ Underpinning this was an imperial ideology. In the 1912 edition of *How Girls can Help Build the Empire*, the president of the Girl Guides at the time, Agnes Baden-Powell wrote:

As women have the bringing up and teaching of the little ones, they wield a great power. As citizens, you can help to make every child into a good citizen. You can also help to keep the moral standard of the nation.⁵

Early understandings of citizenship in the Guiding movement were, therefore, directly linked to motherhood and domesticity. Moving into the mid-century, while the imperial ideology of the Baden-Powell movements weakened, the emphasis on the home remained prominent in the training of young girls for 'good' citizenship.⁶

In January 1930, an article in *The Guide* declared that home-making was "The Big

⁴Smith, 'Be(ing) Prepared', p.2.

⁵ Agnes Baden-Powell & Robert Baden-Powell, *The Handbook for Girl Guides*, p.413.

⁶ Smith suggests that the decline of the importance of Empire can be seen in the rewriting of the Guide handbook to omit many references to empire following the First World War. Smith, 'Be(ing) Prepared', p.1

Career”⁷ and encouraged readers to consider home-making to be the most important of their life’s endeavours. Clearly then, while the movement encouraged girls to explore a varied landscape of career options, the underlying importance of their role as housewives remained; the article proclaimed “There is a great variety of careers open to girls’ to-day, but there is one bigger and grander than all the rest and that is Homemaking.”⁸ Guiding activities reflected this emphasis, with the provision of training in home-making skills. Badges such as “Laundress” and “Homemaker” required girls to complete tasks such as learning how lay a table “attractively”⁹ and through this emphasis the movement developed an understanding of ‘good’ citizenship, linked to a proficiency in domestic skills. The YFC movement placed a similar emphasis on skills of housewifery. As in 1932 Miss Norah Rayment, from the Witleigh contingent of the organisation, declared in an essay on the value of membership “Another way by which a club proves to be of value is through the making of better housekeepers”.¹⁰

Training in childcare and cookery were at the forefront of this preparation. Through the “Child Nurse” badge, members of the Guides could learn the basics of childcare. Girls were expected to ‘be prepared’ to look after the health of a number of dependants and as such the movement placed heightened importance in the understanding of nutrition. A proficiency in cookery was therefore fundamental to becoming ‘good’ housewives. Being a skilled cook and having a developed understanding of nutrition was hugely important and, in some people’s view, could mean the difference between raising a useful and well developed family, or a troublesome and delinquent one. As *The Guide* warned in 1931:

Two houses stand side by side. In the first live the victims of a mother who troubles not about her cooking, nor about the different values of various food stuffs. Her husband is weedy and wretched looking, her baby is puny and wailing ... Next door, the mother is a good cook. Her husband is cheerful and

⁷ *The Guide*, 25 January 1930, p.1256.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *The Guide*, 9 December 1933, p.107.

¹⁰ *The Young Farmer*, December 1932, p.173

happy; her children are plump, rosy and contented.¹¹

This tale suggests that by ignoring valuable nutrition and cookery advice supplied by the Guides, the first mother has not only wilfully neglected her family who have become ‘victims’ of her ineptitude but that she has also failed to fulfil her role as a citizen of the nation, by providing weak and unhappy offspring. This was important in the context of the 1930s, which saw the growth of fitness culture and a scrutiny of people’s diets, particularly on the growth and health of the ‘slum child’.¹² The importance of the mother in guarding the health of the family was therefore central to the training provided by the Guide movement.

Guiding could also provide moral preparation for the difficulties of motherhood. By placing emphasis on stoicism, hard work and self-sacrifice, The Guides hoped to instil in its members the qualities needed to cope with their future role. Talking of housewives with Guide training in 1939 *The Guider* wrote:

And although she doesn’t often have time to realize it, she is eternally thankful for the teaching of the Guide law ... Then it isn’t so hard to keep smiling when baby gives her a restless night ...¹³

Clearly the 1930s was a time in which these youth movements placed meanings of ‘good’ citizenship for girls within discourses of domesticity. As Proctor writes in reference to the Baden Powell movements; “Serving the nation came to signify the highly-gendered roles of men as martyrs and women as mothers in the Scout and Guide movements after the [First World] war.”¹⁴ Following the ‘backlash’ school of thought, outlined by Bingham in his work on domesticity, Proctor argues that the upheaval caused by the war, particularly to gender roles, meant that the movements were keen to reinforce the ‘traditional’ role of men as wage earners and women as

¹¹ *The Guide*, 20 June 1931. p.265.

¹² For a useful overview on the interwar scrutiny on people’s diets see; Gazeley, *Poverty*, pp.72-76. There was also considerable discussion on obesity at this time. See: Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ‘The Culture of the Abdomen’.

¹³ *The Guider*, May 1939, p.165.

¹⁴ Proctor, ‘Gender, Generation’, p.2.

carers.¹⁵ The domestic-centred training provided by the Guides can be seen as just this, an attempt to reassert order and to follow the ethos of conservatism that followed the war. Historians including Light, Beddoe and Kent have highlighted such conservatism at this time.¹⁶ However, on closer examination of the nature of the training provided by the movement, we can see a more complex reaction to the onset of ‘modern’ living in the 1930s.

Firstly, the domestic training provided by the movement in the 1930s can be seen to be particularly useful at this time, due to the growing professionalization of housewifery. With the introduction of labour saving devices (although patchy) and the decline in domestic service, the middle class housewife was gradually to become a more professionalised and important role within the household. As Giles contends, such shifts witnessed the modern ‘recasting’ of the housewife, as being part of a homogenous group of “quasi-professional workers”.¹⁷ As the article on the “Big Career” of home-making declared in 1930:

The world is fortunately awakening to the fact that Homemaking is an art which can only be achieved by education and practise, and a real love of the work. ... Homemakers are a necessity, but the world wants homemakers with qualifications to show that they know the fundamental facts of Housekeeping and the hows and whys of cookery, needlework, laundry, housewifery, and at least, an elementary knowledge of physiology, hygiene, home nursing, first aid and the Chemistry of food¹⁸.

The Guide movement therefore not only provided girls with instructions in everyday tasks but in the more technical aspects of housewifery. For example, in 1930 the ‘Housekeeper’ badge required a Guide to draw up a detailed expenditure plan for a

¹⁵ Adrian Bingham (2004), ‘An Era of Domesticity? Histories of Women and Gender in Interwar Britain’, *Cultural and Social History*, 1 (2), 225-233.

¹⁶ Light, *Forever England*; Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: the Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton University Press: Princeton. 1993); Deidre Beddoe, *Back to Home and Duty: Women between the Wars, 1918-1939* (Pandora: London, 1989).

¹⁷ Judy Giles (1993), ‘A Home of One’s Own: Women and Domesticity in England 1918-1950, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 16 (3), p.245.

¹⁸ *The Guide*, 25 January 1930, pp.1256-1257.

family for one week, taking into account expenses such as taxes, rent, food, clothing and education.¹⁹ Clearly, here, the movement was acknowledging the crucial role of the housewife in running the family income. Nowhere did the Guide motto of thrift come in as handy as to a housewife in charge of the family budget. Therefore, the growing acknowledgement of the housewife as a key figure in the running of the household meant that the training provided by the Guides was considered to come in particularly useful at this time.

Another shift, which was addressed by domestic training, was the concern surrounding the growing apathy of modern girls towards their future roles. Faced with growing employment opportunities and increasing leisure time, it was believed that some girls were not receiving the preparation they required from their home life. The Guide movement was concerned with this dilemma, as opportunities for girls grew and more and more girls took on ‘white collar’ jobs rather than focusing on domestic skills. This concern was recorded in an issue of *The Guide* in 1931, which observed that:

There seems to be an impression that the dull girls are good enough for cooking, and that the braining ones should devote themselves to typing and copying. The modern girl makes a grievous mistake if she thinks this science is beneath her.²⁰

Note here the use of the term ‘science’ to describe cookery, yet another suggestion that the role of the housewife was one, which required a level of training if it, was to be undertaken correctly. Therefore, while the movement encouraged girls to consider their career choice, as the previous chapter demonstrated, it was in the knowledge that they would marry and start a family in due course. This evidence lends itself to a reconsideration of historical debates surrounding the prevalence of the ‘back to the home’ philosophy following the First World War. While the emphasis on domesticity at this time has often been understood as a consequence of social changes brought about by the war, a focus on domesticity within the Guides reveals a competing narrative. The focus on ‘modern’ shifts; particularly changing female labour patterns

¹⁹ *The Guide*, 19 April 1930, p.1629.

²⁰ *The Guide*, 20 June 1931, p.265.

for young girls, and the growing authoritative and skilful identity of the 'professionalised' housewife, within the training provided by the movement suggests that rather than reasserting 'traditional' pre-war modes of domesticity, the movement was reacting to new emerging female identities. The Guides, therefore, were adjusting their training to modern forms of femininity at this time.

Within the rural context of the YFC movement, a similar relationship with modern shifts can be identified. In the interwar period the farmer's wife took on a symbolic role as Little and Austin contend, as the "lynch pin of rural society"²¹ as the drift of young agricultural workers into towns placed further emphasis on the importance of child rearing. While male members of the YFC were being trained to revive the agricultural industry and revitalise rural life so girls too had a crucial role to play in this, through the rearing and socialising of the next generation of young farmers. Historians and sociologists alike have both pointed to the important role of child rearing in the success of family farms; as Gasson comments "the role of wives in producing and rearing successors and in socialising them to accept that role is crucial to the survival of most farm businesses".²²

Following the Second World War, the centrality of the home within understandings of 'good' citizenship intensified as the post-war period witnessed a number of shifts which solidified the centrality of the family within English life. The rise in the sheer numbers of marriages following the Second World War, coupled with the declining age of marriage, particularly for the working classes, meant that for many young women the training provided, had more immediate relevance than it had done previously. The post-war period also witnessed the growth of what Mark Abrams called, the 'home-centred society', in which home life centred on a gendered model of consumption, the wage-earner husband and the 'chooser-spender' wife.²³ This, coupled with the rise of the 'companionate marriage' and the ideal of the domesticated husband, was symbolic of a decade, which held marriage and motherhood as being

²¹ Jo little & Patricia Austin (1996), 'Women and the Rural Idyll', *Journal of Rural Studies*, **12** (2), 101-111.

²² Ruth Gasson (1980), 'Roles of Farm Women', *Sociologia Ruralis*, **20** (3), p.166. Also see: Nicola Verdon (2010), 'The Modern Countrywoman': Farm Women, Domesticity and Social Change in Interwar Britain', *History Workshop Journal* **70** (1), p.96.

²³ Mark Abrams, 'The Home Centred Family', *The Listener*, 26 November 1959, pp.914-915.

the key aims of women's lives.²⁴

This heightened emphasis on marriage saw the continued importance of activities such as cookery, within both these movements. The importance of these skills was demonstrated in the 'Tell it to Aunt Agnes' section of the Hampshire Young Farmers' Year Book of 1958-59. In this particular letter a young Farmers' wife told of her embarrassment that she could not yet cook a decent meal to satisfy her husband. She wrote:

Dear Aunt Agnes,

I am absolutely heartbroken – my brute of a husband ate the cat's food by mistake last night and says it is the best meal I have ever cooked; what should I do, I'm terribly worried? We have been married 10 days.

P.J.C, Winchester.²⁵

To which 'Aunt Agnes' replied:

Dear P.J.C,

You poor child, you have my absolute sympathy- you do not say if the food has had any adverse effects, for example has your husband expressed any inclination to spend a night on the tiles, or does he return in the early hours of morning or has he started to grow a tail? It really is most distressing I suggest that you take a Y.F.C proficiency test in meal cookery and let him taste the difference.²⁶

While the authenticity of this letter is dubious, what the response does emphasise is the importance of such skills in marriage and the role the YFCs played in helping girls

²⁴ Janet Finch & Penny Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of the Companionate Marriage, 1945-59' in David Clark (ed.) *Marriage, Domestic Life & Social Change: Writings for Jacqueline Burgone (1944-88)* Routledge: London, 1991).

²⁵ Hampshire Young Farmers' Year Book 1958-59, D71/51/16, MERL, Reading, p.54.

²⁶ Ibid.

learn these skills.²⁷ Furthermore, if we think more about this section and what it is trying to do, it is playing on the format of popular women's magazines and the use of the agony aunt to encourage girls to go on these courses. In some ways almost attempting to 'scare' girls into thinking, that they need to take these courses in order to prevent themselves from destroying their marriage through bad cookery, by playing on the comedic mishaps of married life.

Training for domesticity also took on particular resonance at this time due to other shifts. In particular, faced with the growing concern over juvenile delinquency, discussed in Chapter Two, and the strong presence of a distinctive 'modern' youth, it grew even more important to instil in girls the idea that their most important job was child rearing, to prevent growing delinquency in children. A good mother would breed contented and happy children, who in turn would do the same, therefore breaking the cycle of delinquency, which had seemingly been caused by bad mothering. Oswald Bell reported optimistically in *The Guider* in 1959: "Fortunately, even Teddy Girls do not want Teddy Babies: however they behave today, they hope their homes and children will be good."²⁸ The Guide, therefore, continued to propagate the message that motherhood and housewifery were the most important jobs for young girls.

This came at a time when the media placed much condemnation towards working women and growth of discussion of maternal deprivation theories, championed by the likes of John Bowlby, which demonised women who went out to work, grew. Bowlby's study *Child Care and the Growth of Love* published in 1953 highlighted the mental and physical effects that an 'unfulfilled' relationship with its mother may have on a child.²⁹ While Donald Winnicott, more directly linked such theories with delinquent behaviour, in an address to magistrates in 1946, asserted that:

I put it this way. When a child steals sugar he is looking for the good mother, his own, from whom he has a right to take what sweetness is there. ... When a child steals outside his own home

²⁷ *The Young Farmer*, Sept-Oct 1956, p.382.

²⁸ *The Guider*, April 1959, p.100.

²⁹ John Bowlby, *Child Care and the Growth of Love* (Penguin: Hammonds Worth, 1965. Originally published 1953), p.13.

he is still looking for his mother.³⁰

Clearly then this was a period in which the problem of delinquency was in part seen as a result of ineffective mothering. The Guiding organisations were aware of this, and placed emphasis accordingly on the girl's future role within the home. In 1955, Sir Basil Henriques argued that, the Guide movement needed to "make them [Guide members] realise that in doing this job as mothers they themselves must never go out to work at times when they are needed by their school-age children."³¹ This, as Spencer has shown, was part of an ethos at this time, which presented domesticity and paid work, as being separate and incompatible roles for women.³² Actual experience often contradicted the ideal of course, with working class women working in part-time jobs outside the home, to earn so-called 'pin money'. Nonetheless it is clear, that the ideal of the role of the housewife was as strong as it ever had been.

It was within this context that in 1955 Sir Basil Henriques, Chairman of the East London Juvenile Court, declared in reference to the Girl Guide movement:

we say we are trying to make our girls good citizens ... the greatest act of citizenship is the creation of a good home ... I cannot help feeling that almost your greatest job with these older girls, the girls who have reached puberty, is to get them to dream and to think and to have visions of this home that they want to build for themselves.³³

Therefore, while early Guiding principle had foregrounded the role of motherhood, in imperial and almost eugenic tones, as being vital to the future of the British Empire, by the 1950s this concern had shifted to address modern concerns. The growing visibility of delinquent behaviour and of 'modern' youth meant that the instilling of the virtues of home-making, maintained its importance in the movement across the decades.

³⁰ D. W. Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency* (Tavistock: London, 1984), p.116.

³¹ *The Guider*, March 1955, p.83.

³² Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in the 1950s* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2005), p.1.

³³ *The Guider*, March 1955, p.83.

The post-war period also saw the importance of domesticity for girls intensify within the YFC movement. In the spring of 1946, the *Young Farmer* encouraged clubs to plan a distinctly separate agenda for girls; it declared “Clubs! You are now planning summer activities. Have you a programme for your girl members?”³⁴ This gendered separation continued into the 1950s, with the growing trend of introducing separate lectures and talks to the female members. One of many of examples of this being the Shipston-on-Stour Young Farmers’ Club in Warwickshire, which gave the following lectures in the 1957/1958:

October 30th - Boys: Farm accounts
Girls: Butter making

November 6th - Boys: Farm building
Girls: Laundry

January 29th - Boys: Care of livestock
Girls: Colour scheme in the home.

February 26th - Boys: Care of machinery.
Girls: Lampshades.

March 19th - Boys: Rotation of crops
Girls: Household bargains.³⁵

This practice of separation was not as common in the earlier part of this period and this suggests an intensification of the domestic angle of the clubs.

The heightened importance on domesticity for girls was also a reaction to distinctly rural post-war shifts. As sociologist Brandth argues, technological, structural and cultural shifts in farming practices following the Second World War saw the

³⁴ *The Young Farmer*, March-April 1946, p.31.

³⁵ *Warwickshire County Federation of Young Farmers’ Clubs Members Handbook 1957-1958*, D71/51/37, MERL, p.49.

masculinisation of work on the farm.³⁶ In particular, the growth of the use of mechanical machinery, which more often than not were handled by men, meant that (in theory) the scope of activities or jobs for women on the farm, particularly in food production, decreased. This “discourse of masculinisation”³⁷ meant that, from the post-war period onwards, farming has increasingly been considered a ‘masculine area of work’ and as such farming identities became shaped by a gendered discourse, which placed men as farmers and women in the subsidiary role as farmer’s wives.³⁸ This view is supported by an article that appeared in *The Young Farmer* in the March/April issue of 1949, which argued that spheres had opened up for both boys and girls in the post-war countryside:

What will I do? That was the question the country boy or girl used to find so difficult to answer when schooldays were nearly over. ... Now that has changed for the boy, there are new opportunities in farming; modern machinery and a more specific approach to agriculture has seen that. For the girl, too, there is a new opportunity. If she likes all kinds of work connected with the home, she now has the chance to train as a skilled ‘houseworker’, and to win a diploma which entitles her to good pay, reasonable hours, and fair conditions.³⁹

Therefore, as the process of farming became more masculine, the role of women in the domestic sphere gained importance. As J. Hunter Smith, Principle of the Hertfordshire Institute of Agriculture, suggested in an article discussing careers on the land, in spring 1946, with limited roles available to them on the farm; it was in the home where girls could provide assistance. He wrote that: “Girls, especially, should be informed that, apart from routine work, there are few opportunities for them in agriculture, except, of course, as the wives of farmers or rural workers.”⁴⁰ This did not mean that fewer women were present on the farm, but that work of the women on the farm became secondary to the importance of her work in the home. As Sarah

³⁶ Berit Brandth (2002), ‘Gender Identity in European Family Farming: A Literature Review’, *Sociologia Ruralis*, **42** (3), p.195.

³⁷ Ibid, p.187.

³⁸ Ibid, p.188

³⁹ *The Young Farmer*, March-April 1949, p.72.

⁴⁰ *The Young Farmer*, March-April 1946, p.28.

Whatmore argues, farming women become ‘invisible workers’ due to the dominant belief that they are principally housewives, who “happen to be using their leisure time in a profitable way.”⁴¹

It is clear therefore across the period, for a number of reasons, girls within the Guide and YFC movement were consistently taught that their most important role was within the home. But what does this continuity tell us? It does not suggest continuity in girls’ lives, or indeed women’s lives for that fact. Without a doubt there were significant changes in the lives of young girls at this time. As we have seen shifts in employment, education and leisure opportunities have greatly affected experiences of growing up in England. What is clear, however, is that despite shifts in administration and approach, these movements continued to place emphasis on the young girls’ future in domesticity and this was part of a much wider ideological emphasis on the home at this time.

That ‘Milkmaid Charm’: Understanding Rural Domesticity.

So far we have seen how the YFCs reflected the Guide movement, in the sense that it saw heightened emphasis on the role of girls, within the home, following the Second World War. There was however, a distinct difference between the training of both movements. The girls of the YFC movement were being trained in a specific rural domesticity, which not only required proficiency in home-crafts but in farm-crafts as well. Agriculture was an industry, which throughout this period, was considered to be masculine, despite the fact that across the twentieth century and long before then, large numbers of women worked on the land.⁴² The YFC motto “Good Farmers’, Good Countrymen, Good Citizens”, therefore alludes to the fact that boys, by showing skill in agricultural tasks and a proficiency in farming, would in turn be fulfilling duties of citizenship. But what does it suggest about girls’ role within the movement? As we have seen already, the movement did promote the role of the Farmer’s wife in

⁴¹ Sarah Whatmore, *Farming Women: Gender, Work and Family Enterprise* (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1991), p.3

⁴² Nicola Verdon, *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth-Century England: Gender, Work and Wages* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2002). Also see: Nicola Verdon (2009), ‘Agricultural Labour and the Contested Nature of Women’s Work in Interwar England and Wales’, *The Historical Journal*, **52** (1), p.118.

the highest order. Unlike the urban housewife however, the rural homemaker needed to learn a particular set of skills relevant to work on the farm.

Sociologists have explored the lives of farm women extensively but studies that are historiographical in nature are less prolific. Arguably this is because notions of domesticity and experiences in the home are often tied up in discussions of modernity. The focus on the introduction of labour saving technologies, as well as those for leisure, the suburbanisation and the modernisation of house-building, the growth of a family orientated leisure culture, along with the identification of the mutually rewarding companionate marriage, all come together to create an image of family life particularly in the post-Second World War period, which was inherently modern but also inherently urban. Historians have gone some way to tackle this. Verdon, through a methodical reading of farming publications, has explored rural domesticity and the identification of a 'modern countrywoman' in the interwar period; while Ritchie, has explored the distinctive understandings of rural modernity in discussions of the home in the NFWI's magazine *Home and Country*.⁴³ So far we have seen how the focus on domesticity by the YFC reveals concerns over the impact of modernity on the rural sphere. However this chapter will now explore the distinctiveness of rural domesticity within the YFC movement and draw from this conclusions about the role of women in the farming home in the mid-twentieth century.

The future rural housewife needed to learn specifically rural domestic skills and understand the relation of the kitchen to the farm and garden. With the possibility of living in isolation, the farmer's wife needed to be able grow, cultivate and prepare her own vegetables. Girls were therefore also given lessons in practical knowledge of food and food production. As Mrs J.R. Hooper, a Farmer's wife with three children and author of cookery books, advised female Young Farmers at a 1955 North Riding domestic training course, girls should not just take an interest in the home but in horticulture as well, "for they would find it invaluable to know the best vegetables to grow and the types of flowers they could use in salads and for crystallizing for cake decoration."⁴⁴ It was not simply important to understand how to make certain foods

⁴³ Verdon, 'The Modern Countrywoman'; Rachel Ritchie, 'The Housewife and the Modern: The home and appearance in women's magazines 1954-1969' (PhD diss, University of Manchester, 2010).

⁴⁴ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 3-4 May 1955, p.13.

but where they came from and the processes of production. Hence lessons in conservation and preparation, such as those in bottling, canning, freezing and curing, as well as lessons in the production of essential foodstuffs, from farm produce, including cheese and butter, were extremely useful.⁴⁵ Girls were also reminded of the importance of utilising the supplies found on the farm and were given lessons in farm crafts including skin curing and spinning and dyeing.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the importance of the role of the Farmer's Wife, not only in the home but also in performing tasks on the farm, meant that girls were often expected to show proficiency in both areas. This of course meant training in domestic tasks but also in farm crafts as well. Thus while boys were expected to excel in agricultural activities, preparing them for their future role on the farm, girls, on the other hand were expected to show proficiency in multiple spheres, in the home and on the farm, this dual role intensified across the period well into the 1950s. Therefore, while meanings of citizenship for boys were directly linked to the farm and community, increasingly girls were expected to negotiate a specifically rural femininity, showing proficiency both in the home and on the farm.

In the 1930s, many of the activities provided by the movement were co-educational. However, while separation was not actively practiced, there was clearly an enormous pressure for girls to stick to the more feminised agricultural crafts. These included poultry keeping, horticulture, dairying, bee keeping, and care of small livestock.⁴⁷ These activities were considered more 'feminine' and hence more appropriate for girls as they had underlying domestic and maternal connotations. As an article from *Farmer and Stockbreeder* declared in 1934:

Poultry farming is a career where women excel ... Provided you are well equipped, there is every prospect, even if you are a girl that you will excel as a chick-rearer. The baby chick, helpless and dependent, appeals to girls, who are acknowledged to be

⁴⁵ *The Young Farmer*, May-June 1954, p.179

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *The Young Farmer*, May-June 1954, p.179.

ideal chick-rearers.⁴⁸

This tendency for girls to take part in more feminised agricultural tasks was generally followed at this time and intensified following the Second World War, as evidence from the results of the 1950s proficiency tests suggest; throughout the 1950s, Girls were more likely to earn proficiency certificates in feminine tasks, such as hand milking, poultry plucking and trussing, whereas boys in comparison, were more likely to receive them in activities such as dry stone walling and tractor ploughing.⁴⁹ Such activities were seen as particularly suitable for young girls, as it appealed to their natural feminine maternal and caring instincts. They were also believed to be appropriate for girls, because they did not require a girl to mount a horse, or tractor or get overly dirty. Furthermore, it was not seen as acceptable for women, who were responsible for bringing life onto the farm, to participate in the culling or slaughtering of cattle, which was believed to go against their nature. The received wisdom of this notion can be seen in the response a female cattle slaughterer received from the farming public in 1931. Miss C. Payne, the only licensed cattle and horse slaughterer in England, received a letter in 1931 from a woman which declared “I think you are the most repellent and revolting woman I have ever heard of.”⁵⁰ Despite the fact that she was said to be bringing “gentle” methods of slaughtering to the profession, this was clearly not a suitable profession for women in the industry. The reaction of farmers’ to the girls and women of the Land Army can also be seen as indicative of this position with farmers initially being reluctant to take members of the Women’s Land Army (WLA) onto their farms.⁵¹

This gendered separation of agricultural work, as Verdon argues, had long been the case in the agricultural industry, which saw men dominating the majority of the food production, whilst women were delegated ‘light work’ or work in suitably feminine industries such as dairying or the poultry industry.⁵² However, the training of girls in such tasks should also be seen in the context of the changing agricultural climate of the time. In the 1930s, industries such as poultry and dairying saw relative prosperity

⁴⁸ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 5 February 1934, p.317.

⁴⁹ *The Young Farmer*, May-June 1954, p.217.

⁵⁰ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 6 April 1931, p.777.

⁵¹ Howkins, *The Death of Rural England*, pp.128-129.

⁵² Verdon, ‘Agricultural Labour’, p.118.

and as a result an increased demand for women workers in these industries. An annual report for the Women's Farm and Garden Association (WFGA) found in 1934 that there was an increased demand in that year for stockwomen and dairy and poultry maids to undertake jobs such as care of stock, butter making and taking charge on small poultry farms.⁵³

The focus on 'feminine' agricultural tasks must also be seen as a response to the economic climate of the time, in which farming daughters would often be required to help out on the family farm. An article on dairying in 1930 declared:

As a career for women, dairying offers a variety of work. It may be in the home, where the daughter of the house undertakes the responsibility of the dairy, which may well be one of the main sources of income.⁵⁴

The extra income generated by wives from activities, such as poultry keeping, could in turn play a vital role in the survival of the farming business, particularly in harsh economic times. A 1931 story about a wife, who saved her husband from bankruptcy by keeping hens, was hailed as "A wife worth having."⁵⁵ Therefore, skills learnt in the YFCs could prepare daughters for their role on the family farm. Emphasis on these skills also stood to prepare girls for their future role, as farmers' wives, which would regularly include sharing the agricultural jobs on the farm. Hence, across this period, for those women married to farmers, an involvement and investment in the farming business was commonplace. So commonplace that the countrywoman was advised in a 1933 issue of *Farmer and Stockbreeder* that, "It is well to bear in mind, when purchasing gloves for ordinary wear, that her ultimate use will probably be as protection for the hands when engaged in jobs on the farm."⁵⁶

The YFC movement then, through many of its activities, prepared girls for their future role on the farm as farmer's wives. This training was invaluable, as a 1952 issue of *Farmer and Stockbreeder* declared:

⁵³ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 16 April 1934, p.899.

⁵⁴ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 7 April 1930, p.791.

⁵⁵ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 30 March 1931, p.731.

⁵⁶ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 30 January 1933, p.249.

If the woman on a family farm is properly trained to be in sole charge of those departments which constitute her rightful sphere, then she can take her place fairly, ... not just as a help to her husband but as an equal partner in the progressive business of farming.⁵⁷

Therefore, Young Farmers' Clubs activities specifically catered to women's domestic duties within the farmhouse and on the farm and her importance in the household and farm economy. The clubs were aware of the important and complicated role of 'the farmers' wife', in keeping the household and the farm running and trained girls according to this dual role. This is important. While studies of the marriage and the home in the post-war period, particularly those by Finch and Summerfield, have highlighted the rise of the companionate marriage, based on mutual cooperation and teamwork, as a distinctive feature of this period, a study of rural domesticity reveals that a form of cooperative relationship between husband and wife had been in existence long before its heyday in the 1950s.⁵⁸

The prevalence of this dual rural domesticity can be seen in a 1936 article in *Farmer and Stockbreeder* reporting on the First Dairy Queen contest, which declared that the Judges were looking for "the perfect country girl to represent 'Milkmaid Charm'"⁵⁹ It is clear what constituted 'milkmaid charm', was a number of rural attributes. Girls needed to be naturally beautiful, having that 'unspoiled' country look, they needed to be domesticated and demonstrate 'wifely' attributes but most importantly they needed to show proficiency in farm crafts as well. The Miss Young Farmer and Dairy Queen pageants therefore highlight the importance of the dual role expected of rural girls in the movement; they were the epitome of a specifically rural femininity. Writing of the Dairy Queen Majorie Watson in 1959, a reporter for the Warwickshire YFC magazine wrote, "The new Dairy Queen has a wide practical knowledge of farming ... down on the family farm she gets up at seven most mornings and works a hard 12-hour day."⁶⁰ Whereas Miss Young Farmer 1957, who was an accomplished shepardess and spent

⁵⁷ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 11-12 March 1952, p.58.

⁵⁸ Finch & Summerfield, 'Social reconstruction', p.7.

⁵⁹ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 10 August 1936, p.6

⁶⁰ *Warwickshire Lads and Lasses*, September 1959, D71/51/1, MERL, p.7.

her spare time tractor driving and helping with the dairy herd, still found “plenty of time to help with the housework.”⁶¹ While *The Daily Mirror* reported of the 1952 Miss Young Farmer competition “Bathing suits don’t count in her beauty contest. Who looks best in working clothes?”⁶² Therefore, these girls were expected to have an active role on the farm, something which, as we have seen, was a regular expectation of girls and particularly of farmers’ wives. This confirms the dual nature of the specifically rural femininity, encouraged by the clubs, as these were pageants endorsed by the YFCs.

This dual image was one that was romanticised in twentieth century culture, as Whatmore has shown.⁶³ A typical representation of this romanticism can be seen in a Cadbury’s Bourneville advert of 1952. The advert shows the day of a farmers’ wife, who after feeding her dependents, cleaning the house, tending to the goats and hens on the farm and then to her garden, relaxes at the end of the day with a cup of Bourneville. The advert says:

Nothing gets her goat! Busy but never bothered is Mrs Patricia Sawyer, of Sheppard’s Farm, Crawley Down, Sussex, besides cooking, mending, scrubbing and gardening, this attractive mother of two sons (aged 10 and 6) runs a goat farm with her husband ... but takes everything in her graceful stride.⁶⁴

In reality however, experiences of being a farmers’ wife could differ, depending on household electrification, the size of the farm and the number of children in the household and the clubs intended to prepare girls for some of these difficulties.⁶⁵ For example, female members were taught how keep a house without electricity, something that many rural homes were without in the interwar period and even by the mid 1950s some rural homes had not acquired.⁶⁶ An article from *The Young Farmer* on

⁶¹ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 1 Oct 1957, p.111.

⁶² *Daily Mirror*, 7 October 1952, p.8.

⁶³ Whatmore, ‘Farming Women’, p.3.

⁶⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 7 October 1952, p.8.

⁶⁵ Whatmore, ‘Farming Women’, p.97.

⁶⁶ In 1939 1/3 rural homes were not electrified and 3,432 parishes in England and Wales were without piped water. Ministry of Agriculture. *Land Utilisation*, p.19.

“Electricity for the Farmhouse” in 1950 declared “that housework with electricity is nice work – if you can get it.”⁶⁷ Therefore, girls needed to be prepared for what was to come. Furthermore, as Brandth argues, women in farming families often took on an increased workload, especially in times of harvest, as the agricultural work they took on did not diminish the amount of domestic work they had to complete.⁶⁸

The assumption of the role of the ‘farmers’ wife’ is bound up with understandings of class. Girls were being trained for their role as what Gasson terms, the “farm housewife”⁶⁹, arguably a middle class farmers’ wife. In this role a girl would engage in activities on the farm but her role would remain home centred. This is seen in comparison to the working class “working farmwife”⁷⁰, whose loyalties were divided equally between the home and the farm.⁷¹ This can be seen in the training offered to girls in the movement. For example, if we go back to the list of lectures from earlier, we can see this.⁷² As well as being lectured on practical things such as laundry, girls were also instructed in colour schemes and lampshades and offered places on residential courses on “How to be a good hostess” and “interior decorating”⁷³.

Therefore, it was expected that these girls would have enough time and funds to spend on making her house presentable. It was also expected that she would often cater to important visitors and guests. This along with the large amount of training for boys in public speaking suggests that the movement were training couples who would play an active and important role in the village community. Therefore, the assumption that she had ‘time’ to lend to farm activities, relates to her role first and foremost as a ‘home-centred’ farmer’s wife.

It is clear from the evolution of YFC training policy towards young girls across this period, that it was training for their role as ‘farmers’ wife’, which held the highest priority for the future. It was suggested that by excelling in farmhouse crafts, domestic chores and certain forms of acceptable agriculture, young girls were learning to be

⁶⁷ *The Young Farmer*, Sept-Oct 1950, p.249.

⁶⁸ Berit Brandth (2002), ‘On the Relationship between Feminism and Farm Women’, *Agriculture and Human Values*, **19** (2), p.112.

⁶⁹ Gasson, ‘Roles of Farm Women’, p.168.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² See p.197.

⁷³ *The Young Farmer*, November-December 1953, p.461.

good farmers' wives and therefore 'good citizens'. In doing so they were expected to negotiate a specifically rural femininity, with a presence both on the farm and in the home. But what does this do to our understanding of domesticity in this period?

A look at experiences of rural girls, calls in to question our urban understanding of the concept of domesticity and indeed the relationship between work and the home in women's lives in the mid-twentieth century. In historical discussion of women's work in the post-war period, there has been a tendency to conceptualise work as being that which is undertaken outside the home.⁷⁴ The 'hidden' nature of women's work on the farm, being often placed within the sphere of the home or the garden, alongside the growing rhetoric of the supportive and somewhat subsidiary role of the farmer's wife, means that the complex relationship between work and domesticity gets ignored in our wider understanding of women's experiences of domesticity in the twentieth century. A study of understandings of 'good' citizenship for girls, within the YFC movement has shed light on the often complex nature of rural domesticity in the mid-century.

This chapter has evidenced how domesticity, in varied guises, was central to the training programme of both the Young Farmers' and the Guides. However, while this discourse was dominant, it is important to consider the amount of agency that girls exhibited within these groups. While post-second wave feminist historiography has a tendency to see housewifery and indeed the ideology of domesticity as oppressive, a study of youth movements can reveal subtle nuances in the relationship between the organisations and the girls themselves, revealing a mutually beneficial and cooperative relationship. The final part of this chapter will explore these nuances, by focusing on three areas, attitudes to and experiences of courtship within the movements, the effect of marriage upon a girl's experience of youth movements and the idea that labelling 'girls activities' as such hides a varied range of experiences within the movements themselves.

⁷⁴ Scholars interested in women's leisure have often discussed the conceptualising of defining leisure against 'paid work' as it hides the large amount of work undertaken by women in the home. See Langhamer, *Women's Leisure*, p.16. Also see; Margaret Talbot & Erica Wimbush (eds), *Relative Freedoms: women and leisure* (Open University Press: Milton Keynes, 1988); Eileen Green, Diana Woodward and Sandra Hebron, *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?* (Macmillan: London, 1990) & Betsy Wearing, *Leisure and Feminist Theory*. (Sage. London, 1998).

Courtship and Marriage

Along with providing training in domestic skills both the YFCs and the Guides also included preparation for courtship and by extension marriage in their programmes. They did this principally through an encouragement of good grooming and beauty habits. For example, in the Guides, girls were expected to keep fastidiously tidy and well groomed at all times, which greatly restricted the activities which a girl could engage in. It was believed that it was a Guide's duty, to look her best at all times for herself and for those around her.

It always seems to me that no ranger who does not dress as well as she can and take a little trouble about her personal appearance is really living up to her ranger promise. We have all promised to do our best to help people, so it is not wrong of us to go forth in frocks and hats that clash and for the eyes of all that see us?⁷⁵

Calls for a Good Grooming badge in 1960 reflect the continued importance beauty and grooming had in the movement across the period. Much of this was to do with teaching girls a level of respectability, so that they may grow up to be accomplished and ladylike. By educating Guides in how to look well groomed and in genteel traditions such as wearing gloves outdoors on formal occasions and always carrying a clean handkerchief, the movement was preparing the girls for the future when they may need to present themselves in a respectable manner.⁷⁶ To this end Guides were expected to *always* appear tidy, even during camp. Therefore the freedom gained by some girls within camp was restricted within the confines of middle class ideas about respectable femininity. This is what Zweiniger-Bargielowska has noted as the gendered nature of the physical culture at this time which saw the growth of a 'duty to beauty' discourse following the First World War, in which it was seen as a woman's duty to keep herself physically fit and beautiful through diet, exercise, cleanliness and health. The main aim of this was to attract a husband and to maintain a harmonious

⁷⁵ *The Guide*, 11 January 1930. p.1190.

⁷⁶ *The Guide*, 8 January 1960, p.22.

marriage.⁷⁷

Similarly, the YFC's provided girls with an abundant amount of beauty tips, as it was believed that looking good was vital to attracting a suitor and maintaining a lasting marriage. As Mr Mullins, organising secretary of the North Riding YFC, asserted in 1955, there was something to be said "for getting your man with face powder and keeping him with baking powder"⁷⁸. It was therefore important for every girl to know how to look after herself. Elizabeth Cross, a writer for *The Young Farmer* magazine, stated in an article entitled "Happier Housekeeping" from 1950 that organising your household chores was important to ensure more time for interests, such as looking pretty. She wrote, "In that way you will have some energy left for your individual interests and some time left too, to look nice."⁷⁹ Clubs organised lectures for girls on hairdressing, make up and dress sense as well as organising courses on dress making and printing articles on 'how to make your own cosmetics'.⁸⁰ Boys on the other hand were given talks on pig production.⁸¹ This importance of grooming and beauty was evident in the previously mentioned Dairy Queen Beauty competitions. An advert for which appeared in 1960 in *The Young Farmer* declared "Who will be Dairy Queen in 1960? Come on now, girls! Don't hide your beauty behind a bushel or even a barn door!"⁸² The main encouragement for this emphasis on beauty was to facilitate courtship.

Additionally to this, the organisations would also organise events to encourage and facilitate meetings with the opposite sex amongst older members. While co-education was not adopted in the Scouting movements, the two organisations provided the situation through which Scouts and Guides could socialise. For example, Guides and Scouts would play against each other in netball and cricket matches or hold midnight feasts. One Patrol Leader from the 7th Stoke Newington Guides wrote of a camp in 1948 when "We had the Scouts to tea on Tuesday and challenged them to a game of rounders and some races. On Thursday evening we paid a return visit to the Scouts,

⁷⁷ Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Making of a Modern Female Body', p.300.

⁷⁸ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 3-4 May 1955, p.13.

⁷⁹ *The Young Farmer*, January-February 1950, p.150.

⁸⁰ *The Young Farmer*, July-August 1953, p.292 & *The Young Farmer*, September-October, 1956, p.382.

⁸¹ *Warwickshire Country Federation Members Handbook*, D71/51/37, MERL, p.61.

⁸² *The Young Farmer*, February 1960, p.15.

who invited us to their campfire.”⁸³ How regularly this happened is hard to say. As it is clear that the call for mixed camping and activities really didn’t get underway until the end of the 1950s, however, by organising mixed sex activities the movements were making it possible for girls to meet ‘like-minded’ boys, who had been introduced to the same values and morals. This was particularly important in the movements when boys and girls reached the Ranger/Rover age and would naturally be seeking out companionship of the opposite sex. Through providing mixed camps and Ranger/Rover house parties, the movements took the opportunity to encourage “sensible friendships”⁸⁴ amongst the opposite sex. This was a possibility identified by *The Guide* in a 1954 short story ‘The Problem Patrol’, in which the main character Jenny Harland goes to camp and meets a confident Rover Scout, who at the end of the serial asks her to a Scouting dance.⁸⁵ Here then, the possibility that mixed activities could lead to ‘appropriate’ courting is clear.

This was also the case in the YFCs. Alongside the lectures, training and shows, an important part of the movement were the social engagements, such as dances and sports matches, which provided a great chance for girls and boys to mix. The movement encouraged the mixing of the ‘right’ kinds of young people (young farmers). This is demonstrated in the previously mentioned YFC agony aunt column in which one girl wrote to Aunt Agnes, upset because her mother would not allow her to date boys. Aunt Agnes replied:

The reason your mother is so strict is that she knows how wild boys can be. Attend your Y.F.C regularly & you will meet plenty of eligible, respectable boys there, boys that even your mother can have no objection to.⁸⁶

The movement therefore played an important part in building up future farming families and providing acceptable means of courtship. The ‘gossip’ sections of local Y.F.C publications often had engagement and wedding announcements for Young Farmers’ and it was regularly the case that members of the same Y.F.C would get

⁸³*The Guide*, 3 June 1949, p.261.

⁸⁴*The Guider*, April 1959, p.103.

⁸⁵*The Guide*, 26 February to 14 May 1954.

⁸⁶ Hampshire Young Farmers’ Year Book 1958-59, D71/51/16, MERL, p.54.

engaged or married.⁸⁷ In 1935 a member of the organisation declared that membership of the movement was useful “If only for that reason – getting a husband or wife as the case might be – it was surely worthwhile.”⁸⁸ Obviously, not all members met their spouses within the confines of the movement but it is evident that some did.

Calls for the facilitation of mixed sex activities in the Scouting movements in the 1950s reflected concern over the courtship and sexual behaviour of young people, particularly as attention towards the sexual delinquency of girls arose. In 1961 in a study of juvenile delinquency, the World Health Organisation concluded that, while delinquency was mainly the domain of boys; girls were at risk during adolescence when they emerge wayward and sexually promiscuous.⁸⁹ Such fears were not historically distinctive. Working class, female sexuality had been a continual cause for concern and anxiety in Britain since the mid-nineteenth century.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, reservations over the sexual behaviour of girls grew in the twentieth century, when the growth of mass leisure pursuits served to antagonise concerns.

In the interwar period, dance halls in particular were looked upon by many as being ‘dens of vice’, a place where men and women went to ‘pick up’ sexual partners. As Jephcott noted in 1948: “The dancehall, and relatively few other institutions now that churchgoing has so declined, provides that range of young masculinity which the girls so very properly desire to explore.”⁹¹ Anxieties over the dancehall and the process of ‘picking up’ were evident in the interwar period but saw renewed prominence during the Second World War when they became one of principal sites for ‘Yank-hunting’, a symbol of a renewed sexual licence amongst young women.⁹² The behaviour of such girls therefore, went against the domesticity centred understanding of service, extolled by the Guide movement during the war, as they were seen as rejecting their role in the home, for frivolous and morally questionable pursuits.

Discussions of courtship within the Guide movement, therefore, can be seen as part of

⁸⁷ *Berkshire Federation of Young Farmers Clubs 1957 Year Book*, D71/51/9, MERL, p.66.

⁸⁸ *The Young Farmer*, December 1935, p.163.

⁸⁹ Gibbens, *Trends in Juvenile Delinquency*, p.32.

⁹⁰ Sonya O. Rose (1997), ‘Girls and GIs: Race, Sex, and Diplomacy in Second World War Britain’, *International History Review*, **19** (1), pp.159-160.

⁹¹ Pearl Jephcott, *Rising Twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*. (Faber, 1948), p.68.

⁹² McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, p.396.

a long running gendered discussion of delinquency, which framed female deviancy within discourses of sex. Tinkler writes that “Whereas boys were drawn to adventure and thence to crime (the urge to adventure being a masculine characteristic), female delinquency was motivated by an altogether different and gender-specific concern, primarily the pursuit of glamour.”⁹³ This is what Campbell has identified as the sexual division of delinquency, in which girls were identified as being ‘in need of care and protection’ and as sexually unstable.⁹⁴ The Guides certainly followed such thinking. A 1959 article in *The Guider* declared that Guiding could help a number of maladjusted girls, one type of these being the “The Oversexed”.⁹⁵ The role of the Guiding movement in tackling the problem of sexual deviancy was not new. As Voeltz has shown, even during the First World War, Guiding was seen as particularly effective in tackling the problem of ‘Khaki Fever’, by providing Guides with a feeling of ‘liberation’ in a morally controlled environment.⁹⁶ Guiding was seen as effective as it was the urban environment that was considered to encourage such behaviour. As the following quote from Henriques in 1955 suggests, the delinquent and promiscuous behaviour exhibited by some girls, was a direct result of the immorality of drab urban dancehalls, which cannot provide the organic happiness of the countryside. The author reported that:

an enormous number of girls beyond control and in need of care and protection, girls of fourteen to seventeen who can only be described as young prostitutes, willing to have intercourse with anyone they can; not necessarily taking money for it, but terrifically over-sexed What they are longing for is noise and fun and laughter and beauty and happiness, and we put them into these drab places and then hold up put hands in horror because they become pregnant at a public dance hall at the age of fourteen.⁹⁷

Guiding addressed these worries by providing the natural, open and disciplined leisure;

⁹³ Tinkler, ‘Sexuality and Citizenship’, p.197.

⁹⁴ Anne Campbell, *Girl Delinquents* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1981), p.10.

⁹⁵ *The Guider*, August 1959, p.211.

⁹⁶ Voeltz, ‘The Antidote to Khaki Fever?’, p.635.

⁹⁷ *The Guider*, March 1955, p.84.

it was thought could counteract this. Girls therefore could benefit from access to the countryside, as it would reverse the ill effects of the urban environment, which had overly sexualised them. But it is worth noting, that this was not a view held by everyone. The countryside could in contrast be a site of illicit behaviour. Certainly the countryside could provide a space in which young couples could engage in courtship and indeed sexual activity away from the watchful eye of their parents. As ‘old’ Mr Gould recalled to Mass-Observation in 1944, in the organisation’s study of Luccombe:

Mr. G. “Tis a very nice walk over the hills of a summer evening.
Tis Tis good courting country round here.”
“You know the spots?”
Mr. G. “That I did, when I were young, I enjoyed myself in my
young day. I were quite a lad. Ay – I liked the young women ...
Ay, but you should have seen this place peacetime with all the
visitors. I used to work up there, and I’d see them all, lying
about in the ferns. Real hot they was, though I didn’t mind.
Besides, I was young once.”⁹⁸

Therefore, while the Guides saw the countryside as a wholesome counteraction to the soliciting nature of the city, by contrast the relative space and freedom provided by the country could allow for “lying about in the ferns”. The provision of structured meetings and opportunities for courtship under the eyes of the movements could counteract this.

The Guides also addressed this problem through teaching and providing information on both courtship and sex. In 1941, when discussing the troubles of war, *The Guide* advised young girls that should they come across soldiers, they should try to introduce them to the home life of Britain, rather than going out ‘on the town’ with them. The article declared:

Remember that many of the soldiers are mere boys. They have
lost for the time being not only their sweethearts but their

⁹⁸ M-OA, FR 2093, ‘Report on a Somerset Village’, 11/05/1944, p.55.

mothers and their young brothers and sisters. If you get to know foreign soldiers don't think that all they will want is to take you to restaurants, dances or the movies. What about you taking them to your home instead? It may be a god-send to them to play with children or talk to older men and women. Try to see that these visitors get the right idea of what home life in this country is like.⁹⁹

Here the movement was discouraging the 'pleasure seeking' behaviour of young couples and encouraging a more wholesome and respectable way to spend their leisure time. This was not the first time a Scouting movement had done so and such advice was not limited to girls. As Pryke has shown the Scout movement had, in the early days of its inception, held strong views regarding the sexual experiences of its members discouraging masturbation and at one point discouraging relations with girls all together.¹⁰⁰ While in 1946, the Public Health badge for Scouts was revised to include a compulsory knowledge of the dangers of Venereal Disease.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, the war encouraged thought and consideration towards the problem of courtship and led some Guiders to demand that training be provided to adolescent girls on aspects of both courtship and marriage. In May 1944 F.W.T Craske, Secretary of the Church of England, suggested in the *Guider* that they arrange a course of talks on personal relationships, which included lectures on growing up, the physical facts of sex, making friends and getting married. He wrote:

Every rising generation has a right to be introduced to every aspect of grown-up life and of the grown-up world, and to be helped to understand the most important facts about the relationships of grown-up people. ... One of the most urgent and central features of this educational preparation for manhood and womanhood is the right Guidance in the years of adolescence

⁹⁹ *The Guide*, March 27 1941, p.119.

¹⁰⁰ Sam Pryke (2005), 'The Control of Sexuality in the Early British Boy Scouts Movement', *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning*, **5** (1), 25-28 & Sam Pryke (2001), 'The Boy Scouts and the Girl Question', *Sexualities*, **4** (2), 191-210.

¹⁰¹ *The Daily Mirror*, 11 July 1946, p.3.

and youth in sex relationships and sex knowledge. Such Guidance is essential if boys and girls are to know where they are as they go through the exciting experiences of making friends, falling in love, getting engaged, and when the time comes getting married, becoming parents, running a home and bringing up family.¹⁰²

This was an important shift in the movement, who had until then, largely steered clear of discussing aspects of sex, choosing instead to focus on the practical side of marriage. There was a recognition here that many girls were going into their wedding day unaware of the facts of life and were in need of this socialization. Such ignorance, it was believed, led to misunderstandings. In 1960, an article in *The Guider*, entitled ‘On Becoming a Person’, discussed at length the importance of teaching girls about sexual relationships and how to conduct themselves within them. It asserted:

In boy and girl friendships, again, many misunderstandings could be averted if the young knew how differently men and women react. A girl has often no idea how provocative is her behaviour, her dress, or her make-up, because she does not realize how quickly a boy’s sexual feelings are aroused. Nor, when she allows petting and fondling does she realize how cruelly difficult control can be for him, nor yet what far-reaching desires she is unwittingly setting in train in herself; for her desire, slower to arouse but less easily satisfied, is not just for flirtation, but fundamentally for home and family. Whatever a romantic girl may think, her nature, once stirred, will not be *really* satisfied until she has a baby; and that – the creating of a new person – is not a matter for irresponsible play. It is not enough, therefore, to feel thrilled of ‘sent’, or to know that the boy feels it so; it is certainly not enough to just seek the prestige of having a ‘steady’. The crucial test of such a friendship is ‘Would I be proud of him as my children’s father?,

¹⁰² *The Guider*, May 1944, p.77.

and also 'How far does he (or *can* he), not only 'love', but respect me?',¹⁰³

This is significant, with, first and foremost, the organization placing the onus on the sexual desires of girls themselves; desires that could only be satisfied with the creation of home and family. Interestingly, by suggesting that it was important for girls to understand that it was their own actions, which caused, at times, uncontrollable behavior from boys, they were placing the responsibility of sexual regulation on their members. Here that as girls have an ultimate control in the regulation of sexual activity, through their manner, dress and behavior. Indeed, it is hard to ignore the implicit suggestion here that unwanted sexual relations from a 'friend' were the result of a mismanagement of the situation by girls. After all, they need to be aware that boys' sexual feelings are aroused quickly and these can be "cruelly difficult control"¹⁰⁴.

There were therefore, two separate girls that this training was addressing, those who were considered overly sexualized, the sexually deviant girl, and those who were ignorant of the aspects of personal relationships, such training covered. In doing so the Guides were part of a much older tradition of the use of leisure to regulate female sexuality. As both Dyhouse and Tinkler have both shown, from the onset of the girls' club movement, the sexual guidance and supervision of its members was a key aim.¹⁰⁵ Clearly, then the movements addressed concern over and attempted to control, the courtship patterns of young girls.

But there is a counter interpretation to this. The drive towards mixed activities and attention towards preparation for courtship can be seen as a reaction to a demand for such preparation from members. There is evidence to suggest this view was not simply limited to such organisations but that young girls themselves were of the belief, and quite enthusiastic about the fact, that matrimony and family life were of the highest importance. In 1948 social researcher Pearl Jephcott, labelled courtship and boys as being the 'dominant interest' of the young girls she interviewed. She

¹⁰³ *The Guider*, August 1960, pp.239-240.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Tinkler, 'Sexuality and Citizenship', p.198

wrote:

There was no false shame about all this interest, and the girls are perfectly open, not merely ingenuous, about the ways in which they try to meet a prospective husband. 'Take a ball with you (when you go to the coast) and you get plenty of boys' advises one, as old as 18.'¹⁰⁶

It was for this reason that opportunities for courtship often dictated how older girls spent their leisure time. This was an expected passage for a girl who, at the right age, was expected to actively seek out a partner.¹⁰⁷

It is in this context, that we can place the decline of the popularity of the Guides in the 1950s, particularly amongst the older members, who we have seen before left the movement in large numbers. Arguably some girls found the all-female nature of the Guides restricting, when it came to socialising with the opposite sex and sought out other opportunities. As such this period saw the rise in the popularity of youth clubs, as Collins has shown, which provided a less structured and more informal way to meet boys.¹⁰⁸ As Jephcott observed in 1942, it was the mixed evenings that most caught the enthusiasm of her interviewees.¹⁰⁹ Others were attracted away by the ability to spend their leisure time unscheduled and unsupervised with friends and many were influenced by friends who were no longer, or had never been, members. The 7th Dunstable Company recorded many instances of girls leaving due to the influence of their friends. Examples include comments such as:

Penelope Loners, P.Second in B.tit patrol has decided she wants to leave Guiding. This is on account of very strong influence over her by an ex-Guide, and Penny has formed the opinion that the friend offers stronger attractions than Guiding. Her parents

¹⁰⁶ Pearl Jephcott, *Rising Twenty*, p.66

¹⁰⁷ Langhamer, *Women's Leisure*, p.114.

¹⁰⁸ See chapter 3 'All Mixed Up: Boys, Girls and Youth Clubs' in Marcus Collins. *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain*. (Atlantic Books: London, 2003).

¹⁰⁹ Pearl Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up* (Faber, 1942), p.132.

have been approached, but they are indifferent on the subject.¹¹⁰

The lack of parental intervention here is very common in examples of Guides who have decided to leave and the troop seemed quite concerned about this fact. It is a regular feature in these particular logbooks, that when a member takes the decision to leave, the parents are approached and regularly they are indifferent or unable to sway their daughter's decision.¹¹¹ This suggests that 'teen' girls were gaining marginal autonomy in their leisure decisions and the introduction of more frequent mixed sex activities in the post-war period, suggests an acknowledgement and attempt of the movements to keep the attention of its older members. A study of issues of courtship within these movements therefore reveals an underlying agency.

But if being a member of these youth movements was considered preparation for marriage, then what place did the movement have in the lives of married members? Guiding, in theory, was for all intensive purposes part of the lifecycle stage, an activity to prepare girls for domesticity and therefore one that need not be continued after marriage. In 1930 a story in *The Guide* confirmed the youthful nature of the Guiding experience. In *Cherries in Search of a Captain*, a story about a Guide troop whose previous captain left them to get married, the 'cherries' attempt to find a captain in order to continue Guiding duties. Along the way they meet a Scout, Mr Sylvester, who although quite old continued his Scouting activities enthusiastically. Below is an extract of the Guide's first impression of him.

Peter nodded. "I think he's most awfully nice, don't you? He must be quite old, because his hair's nearly grey, but he doesn't seem a bit grown-up somehow."

"That's because he's a Scout." Cherry stated wisely. "Why, the Chief himself is over seventy, but you couldn't possibly call him 'grown up' in the bad sense could you? I suppose it's the same with Mr. Sylvester."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Guide Log Book, 7th Dunstable Company, 28 April 1958, GGA, ST2/S4/BZ.

¹¹¹ *The Guider*, April 1959, p.108.

¹¹² *The Guide*. 'Cherries in Search of a Captain' by Catherine Christian, 11 January 1930, p.1169.

Here then, the mantra of once a Scout, always a Scout is clear. By contrast a later meeting with an older lady by the name of Miss Harrison gauges a different response. When Lottie, a younger sickly girl, suggests that Miss Harrison becomes the Cherries new leader, Petronella (nicknamed Peter) opposes the proposition because she was simply too old. Peter protests:

“Yes – that’s all right – but, Lottie, she’s too old, and utterly unpractical. She’ll go and catch cold and die or something in camp.”

“Oh, no, she won’t.” Lottie was quite determined. “I’ll take care of that. She’ll be safer in camp with us than up at the cottage alone. As for age – I don’t believe she’s nearly as old as Mrs. Leicester, the new Ranger Captain.”

“But Mrs. Leicester is quite, quite different – she’s got her hair bobbed and she’s a captain.” Peter grabbed wildly at the first reasons that she could find in the chaos of her thoughts.”¹¹³

Here we see the representation of Guiding as a youthful activity. While Mrs Harrison is too old for the position, Mrs Leicester is suitable because she has bobbed hair. This suggestion that youth is the attribute best needed for Guiding supports the idea that for many women youth was a period of leisure opportunities before marriage.

Langhamer, who found married women’s leisure was often restricted and that many wives were forced to give up their favourite leisure pursuits on marriage, supports this.¹¹⁴ This tendency led Richard Hoggart to label the period of young girls lives before marriage “a brief flowering period” whereby girls were free of responsibilities. However, it is clear that culturally, they were expected to move on from this quite quickly. Hoggart describes this as “as kind of butterfly flight, giddy while it lasts but short.”¹¹⁵ In the post-war model of youthful marriage, adolescent leisure was depicted as being somewhat of a ‘free’ period for girls, a time of independence and autonomy over their leisure experiences, by comparison the onset of marriage marked a new

¹¹³ *The Guide*, ‘Cherries in Search of a Captain’ by Catherine Christian, 1 March 1930, pp.1392-1393.

¹¹⁴ Langhamer, *Women’s Leisure*, pp.134-135

¹¹⁵ Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, p.51

stage in their leisure lives. Members of the Guiding movement were certainly subject to these same problems and the question over what would happen to a member once she was married was a contentious one. One married Guider asked *The Guider* in 1935:

“What happens to a married Guider? “Once she begins Guiding, as have I done, having been a Brownie and a Guide, fully awake to the calls it will make on her, how is she to prevent it encroaching on the rights of her young husband? ... One evening a week? Yes but whoever heard of a Guide company that only takes one evening a week? ... Where are we to stop, how are we to stop, once our movement envelops us and absorbs our interest.”¹¹⁶

Therefore for many the ‘freedom’ provided by Guiding was often short lived. Guides, once married, were often expected to give up Guiding and spend the majority of their time at home.

It was expected that Scouts on the other hand, continue their duties to the movement. One Scouter asked *The Scouter* in 1933:

Assuming that the man before his marriage had been giving up the majority of his time to Scouting how is he to arrange his “spare time activities” to be fair to his wife and troop ... Then the question of summer camp crops up. Is it his duty to give his wife a holiday, or take the boys to camp?”¹¹⁷

The majority of the responses this letter received, encouraged Scouters to continue Scouting duties as normal, including camping. A number even suggested taking their wives to camp with them, for example, the following Scouter, who suggested:

I can imagine some readers saying “Why not take the wife to

¹¹⁶ *The Guider*, January 1935, p.12.

¹¹⁷ *The Scouter*, May 1933, p.185.

camp with you?" Yes certainly if she really likes it, but make quite certain she honestly means it, probably, like many other wives, she would appreciate a real change for her week's holiday, where there would be no housework, cooking etc.¹¹⁸

Another wrote that: "I think the wife must be trained to have a certain amount of interest in Scouting, and also have sufficient friends and hobbies of her own to bridge the gaps caused by Scouting activities."¹¹⁹ Therefore, for men, Scouting could remain a dominant part of their leisure time; women on the other hand were less likely to remain part of the movement after marriage. This once again suggests the dominant role of domesticity in understandings of 'good' citizenship. By putting her husband before her role in Guiding, Married Guiders were exhibiting the highest form of citizenship, putting the welfare of their husband and family before their own leisure time. This example too, encapsulates the gendered nature of leisure time previously discussed. While girls were free to engage in Guiding activities in their adolescence. The onset of marriage marked a period in which their leisure time was defined by the needs of her family. Guiders often found their activities restricted after marriage. Going on an annual camp, for example, was usually out of the question, while others found that they could, if they prepared their husbands in the right manner, have time away from the house for meetings etc. But this, as one Guider found in 1949, was hassle in itself.¹²⁰

However, while marriage could mark the end of Guiding activities for young women, the movement provided positions within the organisation, for those who wanted to continue. Though difficult, married women could participate in Guiding activities as Captains, or through post-Guiding, which provided an acceptable environment, where wives could spend their leisure time. As one Post 'Ranger' wrote in 1935:

I have been a busy District commissioner and division secretary and Post Ranger Captain. I married a man who works in an office all day and has the right to expect a peaceful supper and

¹¹⁸ *The Scouter*, May 1933, p.185.

¹¹⁹ *The Scouter*, September 1933, p.337.

¹²⁰ *The Guider*, October 1949, p.213.

his wife's company in the evening. Therefore ... I have given up all my Guiding except Post Rangers who fit splendidly into married life. ... After all, the object of Guide training is the making and, as I see it, the highest aim of good citizenship is happy family life in well run homes; therefore that must come first for those of us who are lucky enough to have our own.¹²¹

The above quote exemplifies the difficult relationship between Guiding and the married woman, suggesting that although Guiding could be continued following marriage it lost its use and appeal. Therefore, while Langhamer has, quite rightly, pinpointed the difficulty of continuing youthful leisure activities after marriage, Guiding provided for some an exception to this rule, by becoming leaders of the next generation of Guides.

'Doubly a Misnomer': Girls, Agency and the Home.

The centrality of the home within training provided by both the YFCs and the Guides has been addressed in this chapter. A consideration however should be made in terms of agency. In a discussion of Guiding, Proctor has highlighted the important role the movement in allowing girls to carve out a space for themselves, assert their identity and interact with others of the same sex.¹²² Similarly, this thesis suggests that a study of the movements' publications reveals a more complex attitude to gender role than first assumed. While the movements obviously had ideological reasons behind the elevation of the role of the housewife, it is clear that this was not one-sided and that girls exerted a certain amount of agency, when it came to their own leisure time.

In the YFC in the 1950s, concerns that the agricultural focus of the movement would drive girls away led to the introduction of more activities which would attract them i.e. cookery, needlework etc. As Elsie Traynor wrote of Girls Activities in 1953:

of course, we know that there are girls who prefer the plough to the needle and the cowshed to the kitchen, but there are also

¹²¹ *The Guider*, February 1935, p.68.

¹²² Proctor, 'Gender, Generation', p.45.

many who feel that a programme devoted almost entirely to the needs of the male members of the club leaves a gap that could well be filled by some activities that would help them to deal with the many tasks in life that usually fall to women of the household.¹²³

Therefore, what we have here is a situation where YFCs are adding in activities such as needlework classes to attract members. There is an acknowledgement here by the members themselves that housewifery was more relevant to them than the agricultural side of the movement.

Clearly therefore, when considering the role of domesticity within these movements one should consider not just how and why they placed such an emphasis on the home but how and what meanings, the girls themselves placed on domesticity. As Giles has shown, the mid-twentieth century was a period in which housewives' were constantly redefining, making sense and making meanings of their role in the home.¹²⁴ Similarly we should ask ourselves what meanings training for domesticity had for these young girls. To be sure, while some members may have found the limitations of these movements constricting, others were enthused by the prospect of motherhood and domesticity. For example, at one week-long residential course in 1955 at North Riding on 'The countrywoman's kitchen', the *Farmer and Stockbreeder* reported that "There the girls were "let loose" among the kitchen equipment and obviously enjoyed every minute."¹²⁵ Lessons in housewifery were therefore not just considered important but also very enjoyable for girls.

It is also important to remember that while domesticity was central to the movements' training, we cannot ignore the prominence that many female members had within the movement. While certain feminised forms of 'agriculture' were considered more suitable for female talents there were a number of female members who were active in heavier forms of agriculture, including stock judging and tractor ploughing. For example in 1955, female member Ms Jan Worthington gained her

¹²³ *Lancashire County Year Book 1953*, D71/51/13, MERL, p.47.

¹²⁴ Giles, 'A Home of One's Own', p.240.

¹²⁵ *Farmer and Stockbreeder*, 3-4 May 1955, p.13.

‘gold’ proficiency badge, in among other things, root hoeing, machine milking, rick thatching, hedge laying and tractor ploughing.¹²⁶ Therefore, not all girls abandoned the farm in name of the home and many chose to do both. The Editor of *The Young Farmer* stated in 1954 that:

It isn't at all that the girls have tired of the boys' games. Nor are girl members throwing down the pruning hooks and stock judging cards and hoping of their tractors, entirely preferring all the things that constitute women's work.¹²⁷

The example of YFC member Ms Jan Worthington was not an isolated one. It is clear that girls were partaking in activities that interested them and received no objection from the movement. The YFC was a co-educational movement and while encouraging an ideology of domesticity for girls, also encouraged a participation in a range of activities. At the same time ‘girls’ activities, such as baking, were not exclusively limited to girls. An article in the Nottinghamshire Federation year book for 1956 declared:

We all know that many of our girls have passed proficiency tests in ploughing, thatching, etc., but is not so well-known that we already have one boy who has gained his proficiency certificate for Baking, with five more ready to take the test! Girls' Activities is therefore doubly a misnomer and cue hope to change the title to farmhouse activities.¹²⁸

Therefore, the *Young Farmer* publication at the end of this period reveals the nuances in experiences within the movement.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that across the mid-twentieth century, the sphere of the home

¹²⁶ *The Young Farmer*, May-June 1955, p.217.

¹²⁷ *The Young Farmer*, May-June 1954, p.177.

¹²⁸ *Nottinghamshire Federation Year book 1956*, D71/51/8, MERL, p.63.

remained central to understandings of ‘good’ citizenship for girls, within youth movements. It suggested, that while historians have located the ‘back to home and duty’ discourse, of the interwar period as a response to the First World War, a study of these movements reveals that, the emphasis placed on domesticity in the 1930s, was predominantly a result of ‘modern’ shifts in young women’s working patterns and the growing professionalization of housewifery. In the post-war period, the importance of domesticity was heightened, when growing delinquency brought to the fore concerns over working class motherhood and maternal deprivation. Within the predominantly rural context of the YFCs, the continued importance of the home in categorisations of ‘good’ citizenry revealed concerns over changes in rural life in this period. The persistence of the ‘drift from the land’ of agricultural workers and the mechanisation of agriculture, saw the figure of the ‘farmers’ wife’ lifted to almost symbolic importance.

Moreover, the focus on the YFC movement also revealed a distinctly rural understanding of domesticity in this period. Arguing that historical conceptions of home are largely urban, this chapter has explored the complex nature of the training provided to girls, for the role of ‘farmers’ wife’. In doing so, it has shown that meanings of citizenship for girls in the YFC movement were heavily linked with a proficiency in activities relating both to the home and the farm. The movement was therefore aware of the dual nature of the female role within rural society and within the home, whereby ideas of femininity and of wifely duties were linked with ideas of a distinct rural femininity. Discourses of citizenship were therefore, greatly linked with gendered understandings of agriculture and of rural society.

This chapter also explored the role of youth movements in facilitating courtship for young girls and the impact of marriage upon experiences of leisure. It asserted that youth movements considered the countryside to be a desirable setting, through which to encourage acceptable forms of courtship, to counteract those of the urban. Here the chapter identified gendered discourses of delinquency in the Guide movement, which placed discussions of female deviance around promiscuous activity. It then considered the effect of marriage on experiences of membership and suggested that, while historians have been right to suggest that marriage in many ways hindered leisure, the Guiding experience reveals opportunities for continued involvement after marriage.

Finally, this chapter has called for a reassessment of the relationship between young girls and domesticity, suggesting, through a study of the training provided by youth movements at this time, that there are important factors of agency at play. The importance of domesticity in understandings of 'good' femininity was clearly propagated by the movements themselves but it is also important to consider how girls themselves constructed their roles within the home. Fundamentally, this chapter has argued that the importance of the home was a significant continuity in understandings of 'good' citizenship in these youth movements, across the mid-century; suggesting that, despite different conceptions of the role, it was one that all girls, no matter what class, or indeed in what society, rural or urban, the member belonged, should aspire.

Constructing the ‘Good’ Citizen: a Conclusion

We in Great Britain may some of us be doctors, some of us Editors and some of us coal heavers, but we must all alike be Citizens, we have no choice.¹

There is no doubt that, despite the varying guises that it took, the principle purpose of the activities provided by youth movements in the mid-twentieth century was citizen training. Within this the idea of the role of the citizen was an elusive concept and was directly linked to a vast array of spheres, in work, leisure, the home and indeed the community. Understandings of the role of the citizen within these spheres were not homogenous and were shaped by a number of factors, in particular political ideology and values. Despite this there was an accepted understanding across youth organisations that one could excel at citizenship, reaching the elusive and exalted stage of becoming a ‘good’ citizen. Importantly, however, the idea of the ‘good’ citizen, which was ever present in the rhetoric of youth movements across the mid century, was a construction. Created and disseminated through various means, from official publications, reports and speeches to activities and tests, it was a notion which was shaped by contemporary understandings of class, gender and, most importantly, nation.

This study has demonstrated, through an interrogation of organisational magazines, that inherent in established discourse surrounding good citizenry was the centrality of the countryside. The rural landscape was envisioned as the space in which the battle for the citizenship of young people could be fought and ultimately won. Be it field or farmland, the rural sphere was a space in which youth movements projected gendered and class based understandings of good citizenry. Subsequently, the ‘good’ citizen was constructed against the urban ‘other’, a conflict evident in the story of the 7th Dunstable Girl Guide Company, with which this thesis began. To conclude then, this study will make some final suggestions about the impact of this research on current

¹ *The Guider*, 30th January 1932, p.1292.

understandings of youth, class, gender and the English countryside in the mid twentieth-century and will illuminate the way for future research in this area.

The 'Rural Idyll': a New Generation

It has been established by a number of historians and geographers that, across the twentieth century, the English landscape, and particularly the image of the English countryside, became increasingly central to meanings of Englishness and understandings of both national identity and citizenship.² The period from 1930 to 1960 was arguably when this identification reached its zenith. With the interwar outdoor recreation movement, the importance of agricultural production in the Second World War and the significance of the countryside in post-war reconstruction, the English countryside became deeply entrenched in the hearts and minds of the nation. An examination of a range of sources, including M-O, popular newspapers, and contemporary literature, has supported this claim. Indeed, when in the early 1950s Players cigarettes introduced a series of advertisements idealising rural scenes, they were drawing upon widespread public identification with the countryside and its landscape.³

The training provided by youth movements undoubtedly formed part of, and worked within, this rhetoric. The English countryside remained a prominent and unchanging feature of organisational discourse surrounding 'good' citizenship across the mid-century. For these organisations the countryside served as a canvas on which young people could develop into the 'good' citizens of the future. Avenues to good citizenship via the landscape were twofold and reflected the tensions created by the on-going changing relationship between the urban and rural spheres. Firstly, notions of good citizenry required members to embrace the countryside as a site of leisure. This reflected continued concern over mass urban life.

Additionally, emphasis on the landscape resulted from a growing concern over the protection of the countryside from urban influences. The increased accessibility of the countryside, the emergence of the outdoor leisure industry and the suburbanisation of

² Lowenthal explores the complexity of this tendency. Lowenthal, 'British National Identity', 213-214.

³ See Chapter One, pp.52-53.

rural areas, led to concern surrounding the impact of urbanites on the land. Within youth movements the responsibility of protecting the land was explicitly placed on members who were urged to become ‘country-conscious’ citizens. As such, ‘good’ citizenship within them became defined around actions including the practice of land cultivation and activities such as litter picking. As the Girl Guide representative on the ‘Keep Britain Tidy’ Group told the readers of *The Guider* in 1960, “It all depends on you!”⁴. This reflected the growing prominence of rural protectionism within public discourses of citizenship, particularly in the post-war period. This study, therefore, speaks to the work of Matless who asserts that the twentieth century saw the development of the idea of the ‘landscaped citizen’.⁵

It is clear, then, that youth organisations were working within a wider public discourse concerning the countryside. For the Scouting movements, however, the growing emphasis on the countryside in the mid-century also formed part of a distinct shift in the organisation’s ideology. With the exception of a select few, historians working on the Baden-Powell organisations have often sidestepped the centrality of the countryside, focusing predominantly on the imperial overtones of the training provided.⁶ For many, the landscape was seen as the site on which training was organised but not through which it was ideologically shaped.⁷ Indeed, Dawson, in his exploration of the powerful image of the ‘soldier hero’, went so far as to claim that the countryside, for the Scouts, was simply the canvas on which Baden-Powell could reconfigure imperial ideology for the younger generation. He writes that within the Scouts “we see the transference of masculine skills and virtues identified with the imperial frontier to the English Countryside (itself transfigured into adventure terrain in the process) and their enlistment in national defence that is both imaginative and literal.”⁸

Fundamentally, however, this thesis has demonstrated that against the backdrop of the decline of the British Empire in the mid-century, the Scouting movements developed

⁴ *The Guider*. May 1958, p.155.

⁵ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.62.

⁶ See Springhall, *Youth & Davin, Imperialism*.

⁷ Warren briefly argued for the importance of the landscape within the movement. Warren, ‘Citizens of the Empire’, p.252.

⁸ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities* (Routledge: London, 1994), p.151.

an understanding of, and training programme for, citizenship, which ultimately placed the English countryside at its centre. Indeed members were enlisted in national defence but as campaigners in the organisations' crusade against the impact of modernity on the land. This is not to suggest that discussions of landscape were completely separate from imperial notions but simply that the gradual decline of imperialism within the movement saw the landscape come to the fore of discussion and concern.

This shift can be attributed to the 'decline' of the British Empire during this period. But alongside this, the shift away from the imperial sentiments of the initial Baden-Powell movements reflects more focused organisational shifts, specifically, the growing international membership of the organisations in the interwar period and the death of Baden-Powell in 1941; shifts which, in some ways, pre-empted the post-imperial climate of the post-war period. Nonetheless, it is clear that the idea of the English countryside is one that can provide a legitimate framework for historians looking to explore the Scouting movements in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Organisational agendas, that were explicitly shaped and tempered by political ideas, also permeated the training provided by other youth movements at this time. The emphasis on the land within the Woodcraft Folk signified their left-wing position and their belief that industrial life was the oppressor of the working masses. By contrast the training and motto of the YFC organisation, 'Good Farmers, Good Countrymen, Good Citizens' focused on the virtues of agriculture, which reflected the movement's political interest in the future of farming. It is possible to say, then, that these movements indicate a general tendency within society at this time to identify with the rural sphere, but they also reflect the complexity of the identification with this tendency. As Griffiths has demonstrated in her discussion of the Labour Party, the countryside could take on highly politicised meanings at this time.⁹ This study has highlighted the complexity of the national identification with the countryside, but significantly has outlined the overarching similarity within the landscaped ideologies

⁹ Griffiths. *Labour and the Countryside*. Griffiths also discusses the 'rural hegemony' of the Conservative Party. See: Claire Griffiths, 'Farming in the Public Interest: Constructing and Reconstructing Agriculture on the Political Left' in Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt, and Lynne Thompson (eds.) *The English Countryside between the Wars: Regeneration or Decline?* (Boydell Press: Suffolk, 2006), p184.

of youth movements in this period.

Alongside this it has also unveiled the intricacy of the role of the countryside with regards to understanding modernity in the mid-century. In the past, historians have understood the popular focus on the countryside as being part of the romanticism of the 'rural idyll' and symptomatic of a backlash against modernity.¹⁰ There is certainly an element of truth to this as time and time again the countryside was utilised within youth movements as a symbol of a shared national past, which was undeniably represented as being superior to the present. However, this study has revealed a more complex understanding of the role of the countryside within debates surrounding modernity. Discussions of the landscape within youth organisations were undoubtedly shrouded in understandings of a shared national past, one that needed to be protected from onslaughts of a predominantly urban modernity. However, more than this they were also based on an understanding of the English countryside as a symbol of the future with the moral, limber, hardworking and self-sacrificing members of youth movements being celebrated as such. To surmise; the landscape was presented as an antidote to the modern but it was not explicitly anti-modern. Instead, for these movements, the landscape was a sphere in which future 'good' citizens could be moulded and, as such, the idea of the 'country conscious citizen' was in many ways not a nostalgic one but a futuristic one. This was a rural idyll for a new generation; one in which modern ideas of fitness and leisure were transferred onto the rural landscape and presented as a path to modern citizenship, an ideal which included traditional notions of service with a growing liberal agenda. This study has therefore supported research by those, including Matless and Potts, who have identified the complexity of notions of rurality and modernity within the popularisation of the rural idyll at this time.¹¹ This complexity can most clearly be seen in the representation of young people within the movement, who were, on the one hand feared as the products of an increasingly detrimental modern state of living and on the other celebrated as being future 'landscaped' 'good' citizens. It is to approaches to youth in this period that we shall now turn.

¹⁰ Wiener, *English Culture*, p.47.

¹¹ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p.62 & Potts, 'Constable Country', p.175.

Approaches to Youth in the Mid-Century

In 1960 *The Scouter* devoted significant attention the figure of the teenager with a series of articles including 'Home and the Teenager', 'The Teenager and the World Around Him', 'Teenage Troubles' and 'The Teenager and the Scouter'.¹² It was a series that aimed to get at the heart of the conflict between the movement and its older members and was kick-started in the January by Oswald Bell who pondered the question "Teenagers – what makes them tick?" He wrote; "Who are teenagers, anyway – or to give them a more solemn name - the adolescents? ... Sometimes we wonder rather dismally whether they really want us or need us."¹³ It is fair to say that by 1960 the Scouts, and indeed youth movements more generally, were in the midst of a severe crisis of confidence when it came to their older members. Dramatic shifts in the leisure, work and home lives of young people, including the growth of mass consumption and leisure pursuits and the extension of education, meant that the popularity of youth organisations, such as the Scouts, were being challenged.¹⁴

Paradoxically, however, at a time when 'teenage' membership of organised youth movements was declining, such organisations felt they were needed more than ever before, perceiving themselves to be the most effective method against the problems of modern youth. This belief was not limited to organisations but was part of a wider consideration and concern towards the behaviour of young people at the beginning of the 1960s. The Albemarle committee, which met following its appointment in November 1958 to discuss the future of the Youth Service in England and Wales, reported that adolescents were responding to "complex and continuous elements of social change ... often in ways which adults find puzzling or shocking."¹⁵

This anxiety was, by no means, new; rather it can be seen as a culmination of growing

¹² 'Home and the Teenager', *The Scouter*, February 1960, p.34; 'The Teenager and the World Around Him', *The Scouter*, March 1960, p.74; 'Teenage Troubles', *The Scouter*, April 1960, p.108 & 'The Teenager and the Scouter', *The Scouter*, May 1960, p.138.

¹³ *The Scouter*, January 1960, p.5.

¹⁴ It should be noted that the decline of members within the Scout organisation was particularly amongst older members of the movement. In actuality membership of the Scouts hit an all-time high in 1960.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.1.

tensions surrounding the behaviour of young people in the mid-century, the genesis of which can be dated to the interwar period, and even before then.¹⁶ To be sure, the initial popularity of youth organisations in the 1930s reflects the acknowledgement that young people, faced with increased affluence and growing authority in their home and leisure lives needed to be given close attention. For these organisations young people, even before the emergence of the distinctive breed of teenager following the Second World War presented an immediate and pressing problem. This fear only intensified as the mid-century progressed.

In 1958 *The Scouter* lamented the leisure practices of the young, who, according to the writer, were spending excessive amounts of money on ‘pop discs’ and using them “in a way that reminds one more of voodoo ceremony in a tropical Africa than anything akin to civilisation.”¹⁷ Indeed, it was in their leisure time that movements identified increasingly deviant and dangerous behaviour. Behaviour that, in the post-war period, became synonymous with the panic-inspiring juvenile delinquent and the figure of the hedonistic Teddy Boy. In this context the leisure choices of adolescents came to hold symbolic importance, representing the road to both good and bad citizenry. Youth movements believed themselves to be a principal force in combating the problem of leisure by providing opportunities for constructive leisure and education in the right uses of leisure time. Within this a proficiency in outdoor recreations including hiking, cycling and, of course, organisational activities could develop citizenship.

The idea of the ‘good’ citizen was, therefore, often categorised against the urban ‘other’; young people who were preoccupied with spending their time in cinemas, dancehalls, gambling halls and, worst of all, on the streets.

Fears surrounding unconstructive leisure were predominantly focused on the impact of such pursuits on urban working-class young people. This tendency is explicable and reflects a continued concern over working class living in the mid-century. In the 1930s it was working class youth who were believed to suffer in cramped, poverty

¹⁶ For a discussion of youth before World War Two see: Fowler, *The First Teenagers*; Osgerby, *Youth*, chap 2; Springhall, *Adolescence*; Humphries, Stephen. *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1983); Todd, ‘Flappers and Factory Lads’.

¹⁷ *The Scouter*, May 1958, p.118.

stricken, urban tenements and slums; while fears grew over working class boys who were believed to be susceptible to long periods of unemployment and therefore vulnerable to the temptations of destructive leisure pursuits. Following the war, the impact of the welfare state saw a shift in these concerns but, nonetheless, the growing affluence of working class youth and the, supposedly new, propensity for working class mothers' to engage in paid employment outside the home, saw a continued focus on the innate corruptibility of working classes. The dichotomy of youth, of the 'good' citizen verses the 'problem' juvenile delinquent, constructed by youth movements in the mid-century, therefore reveals significant continuity in class based approaches to youth at this time, with delinquent behaviour being almost explicitly treated as a bi-product of working-class urban living.

This does not suggest that experiences of working class living remained the same across the period. In fact the shift in organisational concern, from the impact of poverty to the influence of affluence, supports the accepted historical narrative of class change in the mid-century.¹⁸ In terms of approaches to youth, however, it is clear that the Second World War, often seen as a force for social levelling, had little impact on how these movements characterised their members in terms of class, with working class youth remaining the key concern for youth organisations at this time. This supports Bourke's assertion that throughout the twentieth century class remained essential to understandings of identity.¹⁹

This tendency can be seen as a form of exerting, what some historians have identified as 'social control'. That is that, the predominantly middle class Scouting organisations and YFCs were attempting to indoctrinate working class members into middle class behaviour and values. Organisational publications have, however, revealed the complexity of this process. Certainly, middle class values were central to the ideology of the Scouting movements, with an understanding of chivalry and duty, which directly reflected the public school ethos, in which many of the movements' leaders had been educated. As Gillis argues "The movement proceeded under the banner of classlessness, but it was stamped indelibly with the lifestyle and ideology of those

¹⁸ Hopkins, *The English Working Classes*.

¹⁹ Bourke, *Working Class Cultures*, p.1

higher on the social ladder.”²⁰ At the same time, however, the movement continuously questioned the enthusiasm and dedication of middle class Scouters to the Scouting principle of thrift and tenacity. In 1933 *The Scouter* declared:

a large number of Scouters, especially university and public school men, seem to think that it is impossible to conduct a troop efficiently without expensive equipment and other accessories ... we hold that a troop could not only do without these additions, but will probably produce better Scouts without them.²¹

Within this context, the movement extolled certain attributes of working class living. For example, the ability to make do and to ‘rough it’ in many ways made working class boys particularly suited to the Scout regime. Importantly, then, the values extolled by the movement were not wholly middle class but a distinct amalgamation of both middle class morals and working class character, resulting in a complex relationship between the organisation and its working class members. Of course, there is an inherent contradiction here as while the Scouting organisations focused much of their time and attention on the problem of working class youth and celebrated the working class character, significantly, a significant proportion of members were from middle class backgrounds.²² In 1958 Oswald Bell confirmed this tension: “In my experience, too, the adolescents whom we keep are mostly grammar and public school boys who are in a sense, those who need us least. Those who need us most are surely the failures, the naughty, the hooligans and the Teddy Boys.”²³ This is significant. The Scouting movement, in particular, focused a large amount of consideration towards those young people seen as being problematic, despite the fact that large proportions of their membership did not fit into this category. As even the Albemarle committee concluded, at the end of the period, the idea that post-war Britain was being terrorised by “a generation of teenage delinquents”²⁴, materialistic and morally deficient, was

²⁰ Gillis, *Youth and History*, p.147.

²¹ *The Scouter*, May 1933, p.163.

²² A poll in 1966 revealed that 45% of middle class Englishmen had been Scouts compared to 25% of working class Englishmen. Gillis, *Youth and History*, p.147.

²³ *The Scouter*, October 1958, p.266.

²⁴ Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.31.

not only “untrue and distorting”²⁵ but was one of the “most striking clichés of the last decade”²⁶.

Despite this, however, the centrality of class in concerns over young people in youth organisations is understandable, the mid-century being the period in which working class youth, at the forefront of societal shifts, ‘came of age’. This study, choosing to end at the dawn of the 1960s, did not explore the significant impact of the growth in prominence and politicisation of middle class youth in the ‘sixties’. Widening our historical focus on youth movements to cover the latter half of the 20th Century would therefore allow historians to further illuminate class based understandings of citizenship for young people in the twentieth century.

If approaches to youth training in the mid-century were shaped by assumptions regarding class then they were also shaped just as significantly by gender, with highly gendered ideologies permeating three of the four movements. It has been established by a number of historians that education and training for young people in the early and mid-twentieth century was shaped by a gendered discourse.²⁷ This study supports such research having identified a fundamental continuity in the gendered training provided by youth movements across the period. The idea of the home and domesticity remaining central to the training provided by both the YFCs and Girl Guides. This gendered ideal of ‘good’ citizenry went beyond divides of class, with it being seen as necessary for all girls, despite their socio-economic background, to prepare for their role within the home. Therefore, while class had an overarching importance in the *experience* of girls in the mid-twentieth century, in terms of construction of roles, for young girls the role of housewife was as universal as the role of citizen. The findings of this thesis have therefore supported the arguments of those such as Tinkler, who have identified continuity in constructions of girlhood across the first half of the twentieth century.²⁸

²⁵ Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.31.

²⁶ Ministry of Education, *Youth Service*, p.31.

²⁷ Carol Dyhouse has written a plethora of work in this area. See: Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*; Carol Dyhouse (1978), ‘Towards a ‘Feminine’ Curriculum for English Schoolgirls: the Demands of Ideology 1870–1963’, *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 1 (4), 297-311. For more on the gendered nature of formal schooling in the 1950s, see: Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education*. For a focused study of the gendered training within youth organisations, see: Latham, ‘Youth Organisations and Gender’.

²⁸ Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood*, p.11.

However, the emphasis domesticity, particularly in the Girl Guides, was not unchanging across the thirty-year period. Far from it, in fact, with the 1930s seeing a less rigid approach to Guide training and the encouragement for Guides to explore many avenues and activities, be that for a hobby or for a career. This shift went hand in hand with a decline in the imperialist rhetoric of the movement. The 1950s however, by contrast, saw a heightened emphasis on the role of housewife and mother in response to growing sociological focus on the impact of bad mothering on children and the strengthened concern over the presence of juvenile delinquency. This shift is important and should lead us to further question the extent to which the Second World War dramatically altered gender norms.²⁹ In fact, in many ways, the shifts brought about by the Second World War only reinforced the importance of domesticity. This study has therefore supported historians who identify the complexity of gendered discourses in the 1930s and those who pinpoint the significant presence of domesticity in women's lives in the 1950s.

Youth movements then, as we have seen, focused on the countryside as a site in which they could mould young people into 'good' citizens. This idea was shaped by gendered notions and by received understandings of the nature of urban working class youth. We have seen then how the countryside became central in combating the problems of urban youth, but what of those young people living in rural England?

Movements on the Margins: the Inclusion of Rural Youth

The inclusion of the YFC movement in this study has had significant and far-reaching implications for its conclusion. Up until recent years, the urban experience has dominated the cultural memory and historiographical study of young peoples' lives in the mid-century. It goes without saying that experiences of being young, of leisure and of work, were significantly different for those living in the country. In the face of challenges to the availability of both work and leisure opportunities, experiences of growing up in rural England were in many ways markedly different to their urban counterparts. This was acknowledged by predominantly urban youth movements,

²⁹ Marwick, *War and Social Change*.

such as the Scouts, who recognised the difficulties faced by their rural members but at the same time would often lament over how 'lucky' they were. Indeed, despite differences, the YFC movement and the Scouting organisations maintained one striking similarity across the period, with an overt concern towards the impact of urban modernity on the land and on the behaviour of young people.

For the, predominantly rural, YFCs the ever looming attraction of urban living needed to be counteracted if the future of agriculture was to be secured. Indeed, the relative popularity of the organisation in this period reflects its important role in providing leisure and agricultural education for young villagers. For the YFCs, the main problem was not the behaviour of urban working class youth but the increasing amount of young rural farmworkers who were seeking employment in towns. Here then, the urban presented the main problem to the movement, by enticing the rural working classes away from the land with increasingly attractive work and leisure opportunities. Therefore, while 'good' citizenry could be determined through the leisure choices of urban youth by contrast the YFCs placed a more significant emphasis on the work lives of their rural members. It was on the land where rural boys could dig, plough and sow their way to 'good' citizenship. Expectations of members of this organisation were therefore different than those placed on Scouting members but, nevertheless, reflect the significance of increasing tensions between the urban space and the rural landscape within understandings and approaches to youth during the mid-twentieth century.

A study of the rural youth movements has also revealed the complexity of gendered discourse in the mid-century. This thesis has revealed how preparation for domesticity remained central to the activities provided for female members of youth movements. Nonetheless, it has also identified the distinctive rural domesticity extolled by the YFC movement, in which girls were required to demonstrate a proficiency in both the farm and the home. Here then, this thesis has challenged notions of a homogenous idea of femininity and the way in which historians, in the past, have defined it, by suggesting that while both movements extolled the virtues of domesticity importantly conceptions of the 'home' and understandings of women's role within it differed according to space. Certainly, the rural context did not impact the importance of domesticity in this period. In fact within the rural context gendered roles saw

increasing significance against the backdrop of rural migration but, gendered discourse was, nonetheless, explicitly shaped by an understanding of specifically rural (and in many cases agricultural) roles. This thesis therefore places itself within a new school of historiography, which explores the impact of factors such as region on women's lives and on constructions of domesticity.³⁰

The inclusion of the YFCs in this thesis has also questioned the at times simplistic distinction between town and country, within existing historiography. Indeed the prominence of the countryside within organisational discussions of citizenship in both urban and rural youth movements has revealed the complexity of the relationship between town and country in this period. The tendency for youth movements to situate their activities and learning in the countryside and to positively promote the countryside as a space for youth suggests that we need to rethink our predominantly urban understanding of experiences of youth at this time. Suggesting that the urban and rural experiences are removed from each other, particularly when it comes to leisure ignores a range of interconnecting experiences, which occurred between the two spheres in this period. Ignoring the rural does not just limit our understanding of youth and leisure to the urban context but ignores the large numbers of young people, both urban and rural, who were enjoying, exploring, making and indeed managing their identities within the English countryside at this time.

Studying Twentieth Century Youth Movements: a Methodological Consideration

Youth movements are undoubtedly a twentieth century phenomenon. Born out of early century developments in the recognition of youth as distinct psychological and physiological lifecycle stage youth organisations grew, both in scope and numbers, during the interwar period. Their popularity stemmed from a belief that there was a pressing need to provide constructive leisure and creative learning for young people who were being increasingly exposed to socialisation outside of the legitimate frameworks of the school and the family home. The historical study of youth movements, however, only emerged in the 1960s when, as Springhall notes, the increasing presence and politicisation of young people at this time led scholars to

³⁰ See: Rachel Ritchie, 'The Housewife and the Modern'.

question how youth had been mobilised in the past.³¹ Since the publication of Wilkinson's detailed study of English youth movements in 1969, there have been a number of approaches and debates in the historiography of youth movements, particularly, most of which have been particularly focused on Scouting.³²

As we have seen, in the 1980s a passionate and heated debate ensued in the pages of *The English Historical Review* in which prominent Scouting historians engaged in dialogue surrounding the militaristic training of the movement and their focus on citizen training.³³ By the early 1990s historians of the Scouting movements turned their focus to the gendered nature of training provided by the Girl Guides and the role that the movement played in reinforcing hegemonic ideas of femininity.³⁴ In these debates historians of the organisations concentrated on how the training provided reflected the attempts of the middle class organisations to control and ideologically shape their members. This 'top down' approach derived from the tendency for historians to focus predominantly on official sources such as the handbooks, annual reports and minutes of organisational meetings, sources that, without a doubt, exclude the 'voices' of those who experienced the training first-hand. This reflects, a general tendency in the historiography of youth and childhood to ignore the voices and experiences of children.

In recent years there have been attempts by historians to rectify this situation. Notably Humphries, addresses the lack of writing on the resistance of children to the adult world. Utilising oral histories he explores the ways in which the behaviour of children, often ascribed as delinquent, can instead be read as a significant form of class resistance.³⁵ Indeed, within Scouting studies histories from below are few and far between. Proctor, has perhaps paved the most significant way in this area, by highlighting the opportunities provided by the organisation for self-expression within the strict gendered roles adhered to by the Scouting movements. Boys could learn skills considered, in many other areas of life, to be feminine, such as baking and singing; while, on the other hand, girls were given the opportunity to participate in

³¹ John Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism', p.125.

³² Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements'.

³³ The primary debate being between Springhall and Warren. See: Warren, 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell' & Springhall, 'Debate: Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement'

³⁴ Warren, 'Mothers for Empire'

³⁵ Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?*, p.27.

activities usually considered out of their physical capabilities, including tree climbing.³⁶ Proctor has also pinpointed the significance of uniform in allowing members to develop individual identities. The ability to customise the Guiding uniform she notes, at least for middle class members, provided the ability to assert agency and held complex personal meanings.³⁷ Historians have then, to varying degrees, identified the presence of the ‘voices’ of the members themselves and varying amounts of agency along with this.

This study did not intentionally set out to find the ‘voices’ of the young people who were part of these movements. Using a close analysis of organisational magazines it aimed to establish how the countryside featured in the citizen training of youth organisations and what this reflects about the role of the countryside in the mid-century. Somewhat surprisingly however, this method has revealed an important aspect of these organisations; that is that the ‘voices’ of the members themselves were not silenced by the organisations but encouraged to flourish in a number of ways. The magazines, initially considered to be a source of instruction and the transmission of knowledge, in many ways turned out to be a source that allowed, encouraged and provided substantial spaces for members of these movements to contribute their opinions and ideas on a range of topics. Opportunities for artistic expression came in the form of drawing, painting, writing and poem competitions; the transmission of experience and knowledge was encouraged through pages dedicated to the problems and perks of different aspects of the organisations; and opinions on topics ranging from politics, to the environment to leisure, were not just given a platform but actively encouraged. We can therefore see here how attitudes and ideologies were filtered down to the members of the movements themselves and how members influenced the training they received. For the historian of youth organisations institutional magazines can, therefore, provide a route to the ‘public’ voices of young people, which are often hidden or forgotten. They are a space in which the debates so often regurgitated by historians on youth movements; the militarism of the boy scouts, the domestic centred nature of Guide training and the role of the working-class within them; are regularly approached, discussed and argued by members of the organisations themselves; a study of which provides fresh and new perspectives on traditional and on-going

³⁶ Proctor, ‘Gender, Generation’, p.159.

³⁷ Proctor, ‘(Uni)Forming Youth’, p.129.

debates in the field.

The impact of the ‘voices’ of members and the exertion of individual agency over their leisure time can be seen most clearly in the case of the gendered training provided by both the Girl Guides and the YFCs. Having identified that, significantly, the focus on domesticity within both the Girl Guides and the YFC movement was in many ways a pragmatic response to the decline of the popularity of the movements amongst older members and a response to the call for ‘useful’ activities from members themselves. As such this project has formed part of a revisionist history of domesticity, seeking to unpick the complexities behind the domestic training provided by these organisations and identify the degrees of agency exerted by girls within this structure.

This study has explored the way in which the organisational magazines published by youth movements, in particular, constructed the idea of the ‘good’ citizen’ and did so with an explicitly gendered agenda. However, this thesis has also revealed the complex tensions at play between construction and individual agency in the instructional magazines of these organisations. Historians often hold magazines as being a source of instruction but it is clear that the organisational magazines of youth movements transcended this tendency and provided a space for all members to assert themselves in a manner of ways. For historians, then, a close reading of such publications can reveal a myriad of complex relationships between youth movements and their members in the mid-twentieth century.

The ‘Good’ Citizen and the English Countryside

It is clear then, that the construction of the landscaped ‘good’ citizen of the mid-century within youth movements was principally predicated on a number of constructed socio-economic, gendered and geographical dichotomies. Mid-century youth movements identified the ‘problem’ of modern youth as a predominantly urban and working class issue and, as such, they held that the countryside offered an effective antidote to these problems. Being a ‘good citizen’ within this context necessitated a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship with the rural sphere. This tendency was explicit across the period and fundamentally; this thesis has argued

that the mid-century should be seen as one of continuity in the training of youth movements, with very little change to be found from 1930 to 1960. Although, administrative shifts, changes in approach and of course changes in membership did exist, underlying this was an overarching ideological stasis in the understanding of the future roles of both boys and girls in society. These continuities reflect a wider and more general ideological stasis in approaches to youth in England during this period.

There are many avenues through which future research can be undertaken in the study of the relationship between the rural sphere and youth across this period. Indeed the scope and time frame of this project has not allowed for a discussion of key areas of importance. In the future one may consider focusing on religion as a factor in the training of youth, or looking closer at the political affiliations of these movements and the effect this has on our understanding of the role of the countryside within them, one may also wish to include a study of far-right youth movements. Another avenue of study could be looking at the inclusion of experiences of youth within these movements who are little addressed in the current historiography. For example, the experience of 'Extension' Guides, who were disabled, particularly in the context of the 1930s fitness craze, could enhance our understanding of the role of the movements within discourses of fitness and the countryside. Further to this one may want to take a closer examination of the experiences of rural youth possibly through a local study. While this thesis has looked at the Young Farmers' Clubs, it has centred much analysis on the predominantly urban Scouting movements. A closer look at experience within the rural sphere of those living and working in the countryside could further elucidate our urban conception of youth at this time and unpick out understanding of both representation and experience of the English Countryside in the mid-twentieth century.

Importantly, however, this study has provided a number of frameworks through which this future research can be undertaken. It has argued that the countryside can be used as a tool to understand youth training in the mid-century; suggested that organisational magazines provide a rich source for understanding both approaches and experiences to youth in this period and most importantly, has revealed that by looking at both the urban and rural spheres the historian can gain a deeper understanding of experiences of growing up in mid-twentieth century England

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Appendix One

Figures for the Youth Hostel Association (YHA), Boy Scouts Association, Girl Guides Association, Woodcraft Folk and Young Farmers' Club movement (YFC) from 1930-1960. Figures for the YFCs include membership of clubs, the membership of the National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs and the numbers of clubs in existence. Membership numbers for Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and YFC, compiled by the movements themselves, numbers for the Woodcraft and YHA taken from contemporary sources.

Year	YHA	Boy Scouts	Girl Guides	Woodcraft Folk	YFC		
					Club	NFYFC	No. of Clubs
1930		438098	560654	721	-		-
1931	6439	457477	589505	780	-		-
1932	16914	477423	617681	1014	-	1500	100
1933	27905	480379	626028	1076	-		-
1934	37285	459980	605577	1432	-		-
1935	48057	448396	584360	1745	-		-
1936	59768	445411	547116	3490	-		-
1937	70505	443455	527585	3792	-		-
1938	79821	460234	533130	4321	-		-
1939	83418	-	-	5134	-		412
1940	50864	-	-	2558	-		-
1941	55321	305760	400236	-	-		-
1942	78382	-	-	-	-	21000	490
1943	100907	424082	503421	-	-	37000	792
1944	133678	452764	485063	-	-	56000	1068
1945	153751	471040	465379	2892	-	64000	1234
1946	166039	466986	454703	3089	-	65500	1282
1947	186930	415142	442732	3486	-	60000	1240
1948	228009	446202	445183	-	-	65500	1315
1949	208425	473216	420825	-	-	66400	1350
1950	210142	471364	434459	-	47100	61600	1303
1951	202316	477940	448251	-	48400	62900	1383
1952	197826	490786	464318	2873	46600	60000	1402
1953	184366	491935	469124	3126	49000	63400	1462
1954	180251	502724	481526	-	52500	67200	1532
1955	186796	511010	496138	-	55100	70100	1584
1956	192745	532388	514,264	2815	53961	68441	1580
1957	190048	561359	534616	-	53030	67458	1573
1958	187470	572349	545998	2509	51849	65702	1517
1959	195140	571402	566694	2494	48936	61742	1467
1960	181958	588396	594491	-	49317	62086	1456