

The Story of White Hall Centre: A Book in Search of Authors

Proposed Book Project – A Nonprofit Undertaking

Much of Part One of *The Story of White Hall Centre* is already drafted. Part Two and Part Three are looking for authors (or one author to write both). There's the potential to end up with one coherent volume, covering 1905–2015.

The project at present is noncommercial. Authors will be donating their time and energy for a good cause. This might remain the case even if a commercial publisher becomes involved.

Electronic or printed? To be decided. The most likely outcome is an e-book available free or for a modest price. Production of a printed book will be unlikely unless a funder or commercial publisher is found.

Synopsis

Part One: 1905–1969

My preliminary draft of Part One, which is at an early stage, contains about 65,000 words. The structure is mainly chronological.

Initial chapters deal with the first half of the 20th-century, looking at Longland before Derbyshire (Jack Longland's life and career before his appointment as Derbyshire's director of education), and at Derbyshire before Longland (outdoor recreation in the Peak District before White Hall Centre existed).

The rest of Part One focuses on the everyday realities at White Hall in 1950–69 and on how the centre's ethos and character and approaches evolved under four wardens/principals. This local history is accompanied by occasional summaries of national developments. References are in the form of footnotes at the foot of each page. (They could be converted to chapter endnotes later).

Part Two: 1969–1992

Examining the White Hall of the 1970s, in a local sense, will be fairly straightforward. More challenging will be the need to summarise the main national issue of the 1970s, the BMC–MLTB row of 1975–7, in which Jack Longland was one of the key figures. There are detailed written sources that cover this dispute.

Internally, the second half of the 1980s at White Hall was a difficult period that would test the skills of any writer. It would be desirable to interview those ex-staff members who are still alive, if they are willing to be interviewed. A draft list of permanent teaching staff is available. The basic structure should match Part One – chronological and fully referenced with footnotes. (Ideally use Modern Humanities Research Association style or something similar.)

Part Three: 1992–2015

Having a third writer would be ideal, someone young enough to have experienced this period. Most of the people involved may be available for interview, something that doesn't happen so much in researching the earlier years. A useful start to the research would be to read Phil Booth's study, 'The Impact of Financial Cuts upon an Outdoor Centre: A Case Study of Whitehall Outdoor Education Centre to Examine the ...' (MA dissertation, University of Sheffield, 1993).

Other Volunteers Needed

General editor	To coordinate the whole project, deal with general correspondence, edit the manuscripts. (Temporarily Pete McDonald, pete.mcd@vodafone.co.nz)
Illustrations editor	To receive images from authors, research other sources, arrange permissions to reproduce, select which images to use.
Book designer	To convert the manuscripts to a finished e-book (or to a print-ready file, if funds for printing become available).

Estimated Project Timescale

Start: 1 February 2015

Confirm authors: by 1 August 2015

Confirm general editor, illustrations editor, book designer: by 1 February 2016

Final manuscripts: 1 November 2019

Publication: 1 November 2020

More than a Local History

The book's narrow focus may tempt some readers of this proposal to categorise the stories of Jack Longland and of White Hall Centre as merely parts of local history, of little interest outside Derbyshire. This would be inaccurate. Longland had a national presence. In mountaineering he became a ubiquitous and influential patrician figure, president of the Mountain Leadership Training Board and of the British Mountaineering Council, member of the Central Council of Physical Recreation executive and of the Countryside Commission, and chair of the Sports Council and of numerous symposia and conferences.

The place he set up, White Hall Centre, also gained a national reputation. Writers on outdoor education have frequently described White Hall Centre as Britain's first LEA residential outdoor pursuits centre. They may have all been wrong. Keswick Youth Centre, later called Denton House, might have been the first. Not that it matters. What is significant is that a strong consensus seems to exist that identifies White Hall Centre as the mould followed – closely or not so closely – by many of the LEA residential outdoor pursuits centres that were established in the 1960s and 70s. So the approaches and ethos that evolved at White Hall in the 1950s hold more than just local relevance.

The centre that grew under the wardenships of Peter Mosedale and Geoffrey Sutton was very different from the Outward Bound (OB) schools of the 1950s. The reasons for this were partly practical, such as the absolute necessity to find approaches that suited the younger age group and that suited courses of a week instead of a month; and they were partly philosophical, such as reservations about or rejection of the 1940s character-training ideas of OB and the Boy Scout movement and the War Office.

For much of his life, Longland was heavily involved in a wide range of national sports and countryside bodies and in a variety of local government and central government groups and commissions. His life and achievements and the centre he set up occupy important places in the histories of British outdoor education and mountaineering.

Support for this project from local or national organisations would be welcomed. Editorial control will remain with the authors and editor.

Possible Involvement of a Commercial Publisher

Although this project is starting out as a nonprofit, volunteer enterprise, the possibility of a commercial publisher becoming involved, either as a partner or as a normal commercial publisher, cannot be ruled out. Such a development could require the willingness of authors to pass on their writing to a commercial publisher, possibly for little or no monetary reward.

Stand-by Plan

In the event of this proposal not finding the necessary authors, Part One will be able to stand alone as a medium sized book.

Contact Details

Until a general editor in the UK is available, I will coordinate the project from New Zealand. Ideally, authors should have some experience of research and of writing with footnote references, although both of these skills could be learnt on the job. Authors should also be familiar with outdoor education in the UK. They need not necessarily be climbers.

If you are a potential author, please contact me to register an interest. Please say which part you are interested in, Part Two or Part Three. There's also the possibility of one author writing both. I will acknowledge your message and will contact you again when a decision on authors has been made.

A headings outline for my draft Part One is available from me on request.

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'The rope', Jeff Sutton says, 'is all important, the source of much of your confidence, in the beginning anyway ...' At Windgather Rocks, 1956 or 1957.