

## Wanted: Memories of White Hall Centre

Are you fifty-something or older? Can you remember watching the White Hall film? ... the one that showed Joe Brown kayaking on the River Derwent? And that showed a school group rockclimbing on a wild autumn day at the Roaches?

If both your answers are yes, you probably saw the film one evening during a schools' course at White Hall Centre in the late 1960s or the 1970s.

Whether you remember this film or not, have you any other memories of attending a course at White Hall? Could you contribute reminiscences or photographs to a collection that will be catalogued and open to the public?

White Hall Centre is collecting written memories to be built into a record, probably arranged chronologically. We seek input of any length – tweets or tracts – either on paper or digital, relating to any time between 1950 and the present. We expect this record to be open for additions indefinitely, as long as there are still memories waiting to be collected.

White Hall is also collecting photographs taken on its courses. Initial research has dug up surprisingly few photographs from the 1950s and 60s. Where are they?



Goyting, April 1975.



Group on Kinder Scout in winter, 1970s.

It is likely that our collection of reminiscences will at some point be deposited at Derbyshire county council's record office, subject to that office's collection policies. Similarly, digital photographs donated to the centre will also be deposited at the record office. Depending on contributors' instructions, photographs on paper sent to White Hall will either be scanned and returned to the contributor or – if donated permanently – will be deposited at the record office.

### **White Hall Centre Archive: Where to Send Your Contributions**

Please send your photos or recollections, on paper or digital, to the White Hall office:

Post: Archive Material  
White Hall Centre  
Long Hill  
Buxton  
Derbyshire, SK17 6SX

Email: [white.hall@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:white.hall@derbyshire.gov.uk)

Alternatively, if you prefer, you may be able to deposit some items – substantial writing or photographs – directly at the county council's record office. There is no charge if you are donating the items, but there may be some formalities to complete:

Post: White Hall Centre Collection  
Derbyshire Record Office  
County Hall  
Matlock, DE4 3AG

Email: [record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:record.office@derbyshire.gov.uk)

### Roy Morgan Remembers

In April 2013, Roy Morgan, a member of Birmingham's Cave and Crag Club, contributed a few memories to the club's newsletter. Roy's recollections stretched elastically back to a time before White Hall Centre existed. In them we glimpse a young Arthur Afford, who later spent six years instructing at White Hall and then wrote *The Story of White Hall Open Country Pursuits Centre* (in two parts), which has become a significant historical source.



Cave and Crag Club

Roy Morgan and John Burton at an Alstonefield walk weekend in 2013

#### First Meeting with A. B. Afford

Early in 1947 when Brian Hogan and I were 11 years old together with some members of our little gang, we became interested in natural history, caterpillars and other creepy crawlies. After school we would set off on expeditions around the neighbourhood, searching in people's gardens and hedges for our prey.

One evening upon our return to our home territory we met with another of our gang who was talking to a man on a bike. We stopped and were introduced to Arthur who was at that time connected to the local scout troop. He asked us what we'd got in our jam jars and after a poke around in the greenery within, promptly identified our collection. We chatted for a while then finally he said he would take us for a hike in the countryside but we first of all must obtain our parents' permission. This accomplished we were introduced to the footpaths and country lanes of Warwickshire the following Saturday.

This chance meeting with A. B. Afford resulted in an early meeting with the Birmingham Cave and Crag Club with visits to Dave (Digger) Williams's parents' house where we helped to manufacture and assemble rope ladders for use in caving and of course our visits to Wetton and the Gateham dig.

Brian and I are the only two of our little gang who, at attaining the age of eighteen became members of the Cave and Crag and are still active today ...

Roy Morgan's account shows that AB was introducing young people to the outdoors as early as 1947. Andy Hemsted, the club's newsletter editor, added a fraction more to the picture: 'Though I'm a relatively new arrival in the Cave & Crag, the name of AB Afford comes up often when our older members are reminiscing. I don't think that he took a large part in club organising, but he certainly steered youngsters in the direction of the coach trips which were run at weekends by the club.'

At least two of those young people, Roy Morgan and Brian Hogan – and possibly many others – have enjoyed a lifetime of involvement in outdoor pursuits or caving, thanks partly or even wholly to AB's recognising and encouraging their budding interests.

### You Can Remember Too

So get cracking.

# Hunt out those old photos!

### **Recording the History of White Hall Centre: A B Afford's Contribution**

In 1978, Arthur Afford produced *The Story of White Hall Open Country Pursuits Centre* in two modest A5 booklets. I think they were available for about 25 pence each. He was helped by Dinah Winterton, who had been the secretary at White Hall, and by his friend Philip Bagshaw. The second book, covering 1950 to 1978, combined AB's own writing with sizeable contributions

– either as quotations from letters or as bespoke input – from Jack Kilkenny, Peter Mosedale, Ken Oldham, Eric Langmuir, Kim Meldrum and Lyn Noble.

Sometimes in local history, a flimsy back-kitchen document can serve as a primary source whose importance increases with age. Such is the case with AB's booklets, particularly his Part 2. This may not have been obvious to him in 1979, when he ended up with several hundred copies that he couldn't even give away. In a letter sent out with some books, he wrote:

13.9.79

Dear Sir

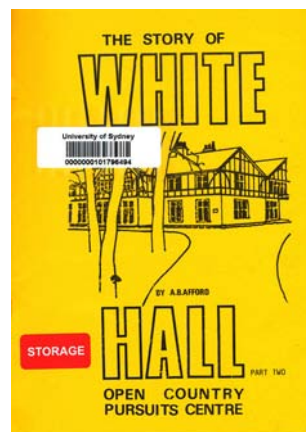
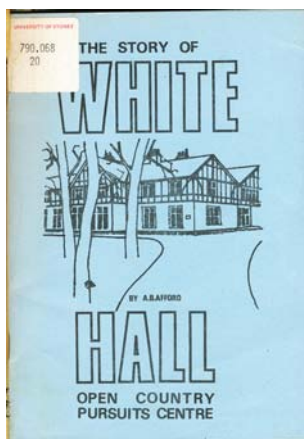
I enclose complimentary copies.

This was a home made printing on a special topic I had a personal interest in. Sir Jack Longland wants me to publish sometime an extended version – there is lots of information we had to omit.

If anyone wants copies I will post them free – the limited numbers we did [by] off-set litho have not sold as we expected to students at White Hall so we've several hundred in hand I'm not bothering to market.

Sincerely

A B Afford



Thirty-five years later, in April 2014, a search of Derbyshire county council's library catalogue did not find a single copy of AB's book in any of the council's public libraries. Nor was there a copy at the council's record office.

No problem! We'll find a second-hand copy on the internet ... Our searching did find one pair for sale, Part 1 and Part 2, at £100.00 for the pair. Enquiries to query this price met the answer that £100.00 was the market price.

A short time later, enquiries at Buxton Library revealed a copy there (which hadn't showed up on the catalogue).

This experience highlighted the need for a White Hall Centre archive. If important records such as AB's books were vanishing, what hope was there for finding and retaining less obviously significant items, such as old photographs?

People who visited White Hall Centre as fifteen-year-olds in the 1950s will now be between seventy and seventy-nine years old. We hope that some of them and some of the thousands who came later will send us their memories.

# **Send us your memories!**



# Lost!

## **Lost: Arthur (AB) Afford's Papers**

In his book *The Story of White Hall Open Country Pursuits Centre* (1978), AB mentions several sources:

- a printed list of courses for April–September 1961. This was the earliest programme he could find.
- a full account of the Pennine Way course of July 1961 including photos and slides; this course was organised by Jack Kilkenny, a well-known area youth officer.
- a printed annual list of courses for September 1969 – September 1970.
- letters from Ken Oldham and others.

**Are AB's papers in your attic?!**

## **Lost: Ken Oldham's Course Records**

In February 1951 Ken Oldham was a teacher at Spring Bank School, New Mills. A group of boys from that school, accompanied by Ken, attended the first schools' course to be held at White Hall, 26 February – 2 March 1951. Ken sent a diary – a complete written record – of the week to Jack Longland.

The following year, Ken was teaching at Longdendale School, Hollingworth, Cheshire. He brought a group of twelve boys to White Hall for a ten-day course, walking the twenty miles from Glossop. Again Ken kept a course diary. An abbreviated version of this diary was printed as a supplement to the monthly education committee's circular to schools, May 1952.

Although we do have copies of some of Ken Oldham's unpublished papers, our enquiries have failed to locate either his diaries for these two early courses or the abbreviated version of the second diary.

**What became of Ken Oldham's course records?!**



At Three Shires Head, June 1978.

## **Lost: The White Hall Film**

The White Hall film was made in about 1961–63. It included some sunlit autumn colour. Served its purpose well for a decade or so. Where did it end up?

We've been advised that this film is 'probably not in an archive as films like that only tend to make their way to official archives by chance'. Our best bet, apparently, would be if someone from the centre took it home after it was last projected.

Are you a film hoarder?

**Please can we have our film back!**



En route to Windgather Rocks, November 1976.

## **Awaiting Discovery: White Hall Course Diaries**

What happened to that diary we made you keep? You didn't like this forced writing practice. You thought it was too much like school. OK, we eventually realised that. But did you keep your diary?

**We want your White Hall course diary!**

# News

## **Peter Mosedale**

Peter Mosedale was the first principal of White Hall centre, from 1950 to 1955. We were saddened recently to hear of his death at the age of ninety-six. But what a life!

In April 1936, at the age of about eighteen, Peter Mosedale of the High School, Worthing, was elected to a Special Exhibition in History at University College, Oxford. He must have graduated just in time to join the army and go to war. He became a member of the Climbers' Club, a major in the Royal Artillery, an inspector of schools on the Gold Coast (now Ghana), a hill-farmer in Wales, first principal of White Hall Centre for Open Country Pursuits, principal of the National Coal Board Residential Training Centre in Clackmannanshire, head of department at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology, and an emeritus professor of Canberra University, Australia.

Unknown to those of us who thought we knew a lot about the history of White Hall, in 1975 Peter Mosedale wrote a short book, *Hill and Water Sports in British Education*. This 'book' is in the main collection at Canberra University library, but it is actually an unpublished manuscript.

About a quarter of the book provides a first-hand insight into the practical managerial challenges of the early years of White Hall Centre. It perfectly complements A B Afford's Part Two.

The rest of the book ranges over the overlapping areas of outdoor recreation, outdoor education and physical education.

Enquiries about copyright are under way so that we can repatriate a copy of this book to Derbyshire..



Gautries Hole, March 1979.



After Gautries Hole, March 1979.



Errwood Reservoir, June 1981

# Help!

## ***The Buxton Advertiser, the High Peak News, the High Peak Reporter***

Do you like reading old newspapers? Yes! Just the person we're looking for. There are thirty years of the *Buxton Advertiser* waiting for someone like you. About 1,500 copies, on microfilm. Not yet digitised, and with no index.

Similarly, archived copies of the *High Peak News* and the *High Peak Reporter* are available if you don't mind using old technology.