

Introduction

This is an unusual reading list. It omits many of the texts which are standard reading in the outdoor literature. Instead, it contains the distinctively individual personal recommendations of a number of key members of the outdoor community. All recommendations are texts which the contributors consider, for reasons they explain below, to fall in the category of “must read”.

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Recommended by Marcus Bailie and Barbara Deschner

An overview of child well-being in rich countries UNICEF: Report Card 7, Innocenti Research Centre. <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildPovertyReport.pdf> (2007) A detailed account of well-being under six different definitions, from material to subjective well-being, for up to thirty of the world’s richest countries. Excellent, authoritative reference in which the UK comes out badly, if not worst, in most of the dimensions.

Cotton Wool Kids Sir Digby Jones: <http://www.hti.org.uk/pdfs/pu/IssuesPaper7.pdf>
Financial, entrepreneurial and moral reasons why cocooning children and young people is not a good idea. Virtually the definitive text!

Nothing Ventured ... Balancing risks and benefits in the outdoors Tim Gill. <http://www.englishoutdoorcouncil.org/publications> (2010) Bringing the concepts of risks versus benefits full circle and back into the outdoors where it has been well understood and embraced for generations. Currently the definitive text!

Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide David Ball, Tim Gill and Bernard Spiegel. <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/managing-risk-in-play-provision-implementation-guide> (2008) How the benefits of play activities which children and young people experience can go towards justifying the risks inherent in them. Risk Benefit analysis is not a new idea, but this brings it up-front and main stream.

The Art of Happiness HH Dali Lama and Howard C Cutler. (1998)
Through a series of conversations with the co-author the Dali Lama offers his practical wisdom and advice on how we can overcome everyday human problems and achieve lasting happiness. This highly readable little gem of a book is the start point for what many of us are actually trying to achieve in our work with young people. An alternative, and more promising concept of their future.

Outdoor Activities, Negligence and the Law. Julian Fulbrook, (2005)
A fair summary of the development, with references to relevant test cases, of where negligence fits into the world of outdoor activities. Initially written for the narrow world of the legal profession this book de-bunks many of the myths we still labour under, and are confused by.

Culture of Fear Frank Furedi (2002) A shocking exploration of the growth of risk aversion and its limiting and damaging effects. Simply legendary!

No Fear: Growing up in a risk free society Tim Gill. (2007) More on the role of risk in childhood. This looks at the problem as well as seeking how it came about. The whole thing seems so obvious it’s hard to see why there is an issue at all!

Managing Risks in Outdoor Activities Cathye Haddock. New Zealand Mountain Safety Council
Quite literally, Cathye takes an up-side-down view of many of the issues we are familiar with in the Outdoors in the UK, and comes up with distinctly kiwi solutions. This humorous and informative book is highly readable and practical not to mention refreshingly new and imaginative. Nice one Cathye!

Outdoor Education – the RHP Companion. Edited by Peter Barnes and Bob Sharp.
A compilation of papers on a range of outdoor education subjects. Well worth dipping in to from time to time to see what it has to say on various issues, and who is saying it.

Error-nomics Joseph H Hallinan. (Ebury Press 2009) A fascinating look at why we make mistakes and what we can do to avoid them. And when we make mistakes we have accidents! This book, or at least the first half, will completely change the way you look at safety, and the measures you take in its pursuit.

Human Factors in Flight Safety Jeremy M Pratt. Private Pilot's License Course (2003)
How one sector of risk takers, private pilots, have so much fun where safety is simply part of the game. And they are very good at it! Originally written for pilots this text is highly readable, humorously illustrated, and packed with boxed one-liners: *Flying isn't dangerous, crashing is!*

The Black Swan Nassim Nicholas Taleb How we actually make decisions. Not logically, or rationally, or deliberately but seemingly randomly, and in spite of our better judgment. It is both compelling and disturbing reading that this is the way the world works!

Risk and Childhood Nicholas Madge, John Barker. Risk Commission, RSA. (2007)
An account of the issues in this area, and a survey of the various perspectives, from parents to children, and from the media to government. This is a very good explanation from the Risk Commission. However, their suggested solutions fall well short of their analysis of the problem.

A Good Childhood: Searching for values in a competitive age. Richard Layard, The Children's Society (2009) This is based on the findings of a staggering survey conducted by the Children's Society. It maps out, for good or bad, what children and young people actually think and do these days. This is the book to read if you want to know what children and young people in the UK actually do and believe, as opposed to what we think they ought to do and believe.

Happiness: Lessons from a new science. Richard Layard. Penguin (2005)
Layard looks in some detail at what he calls the seven causes of happiness, with particular attention to children and young people. The *Observer* said of this book "Read it and take heart'. I did!

The Invention of Childhood Hugh Cunningham. BBC Books (2006) A complete chronology of childhood in Britain over the last 1,000 years. I knew that childhood was a comparatively recent concept, but I had no real idea of what preceded it, historically, nor just how recent modern childhood, as we understand it today (or don't understand it) actually is!

Licensed to Hug Frank Furedi and Jennie Bristow. Civitas (2008) The front cover, by way of a subtitle states: "How child protection policies are poisoning the relationship between the generations and damaging the voluntary sector." Not one of Frank's better works I fear. I found it very subjective, one-sided, and media-driven. The focus, however, was spot on, that child-protection proposals were massively disproportionate to the nature and scale of the problem.

How to live dangerously: Why we should all stop worrying, and start living. Warwick Cairns Macmillan (2008) A survey of modern misconceptions on risk and risk taking, and how it effects our thinking. The last two chapters are called “The Dangers of Safety” and “The Safety of Danger”. Cairns takes a refreshing perspective on risk, probability, morbidity, and absurdity. From fear of flying (strictly speaking fear of crashing!) to child abduction when on holiday he looks at the preposterousness of the mathematics, and the mathematics of the preposterous.

National Accounts of Well-being: bringing real wealth onto the balance sheet. nef (New Economics Foundation)

http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/National_Accounts_of_Well-being_1.pdf This is a radical attempt to find a more representative measure of a country’s well-being than Gross National Product. This is from the same body which put actual economic bones on the Himalayan concept of Gross National Happiness. Compelling stuff.

Backing the future: why investing in children is good for us all [economically] nef (New Economics Foundation)

http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Backing_the_Future_1.pdf Based on the Happiness Counts Project, conducted in collaboration with Action for Children. Why and how investing in young people during these stringent financial times will bring future financial benefits, and how this can be achieved without short term financial compromises. Love them as innovators or hate them as fanciful you would be ill-advised to discount the nef!

The Great Transition: a tale of how it turned out right nef (New Economics Foundation)

http://www.neweconomics.org/sites/neweconomics.org/files/Great_Transition_0.pdf nef look at eight great changes which can bring us through the sustainability nightmare which faces us, from ‘The Great Revaluing’ to ‘The Great Interdependence’. Sustainability is the future for outdoor education as well as the rest of us. Ant ‘transition paths’ are the buzz words at the moment.

Prosperity without Growth: transition to a sustainable economy. Professor Tim Jackson.

The Economics Commissioner – the Sustainable Development Commission (2009)

The authoritative text on transition and sustainability. Jackson takes us from the Age of Irresponsibility, through the Dilemma of Growth, Keynesian economics today, to the happy ending , Flourishing - within limits! I went to see Professor Jackson speak at the Hay Book Festival. Amongst some of the best £6s I’ve ever spent!

The Well-being of children in the UK Edited by Jonathan Bradshaw. Save the Children (2002)

This puts the numbers on issues such as mortality, children’s health, poverty, across a wide spectrum of society. Now rather dated, this still gives a balanced and in-depth study of the way things were just a few years ago. Whilst some of the numbers may have changed the issues have not.

The Cost of Exclusion: Counting the cost of youth disadvantages in the UK. The Prince’s Trust (2007) [http://www.princes-](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf)

[trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf)

This powerful argument looks at the financial cost of youth unemployment youth crime, educational underachievement, and similar big budget arguments. Otherwise known as the cost of doing nothing! Fighting like with like: we can’t afford **not** to address these and similar issues.

The Risk Management of Everything: rethinking the politics of uncertainty. Michael Power, DEMOS. (2004) <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/riskmanagementofeverything.pdf?1240939425>

This is an authoritative study on the development of the risk management explosion. It covers arguments from state involvement to reputational risk and explains that the risk management of everything is about Function, Fashion, and Fear. This study benefits from being a few years old. It gains in stature by postulating certain issues which have subsequently come to haunt us.

Imaginative thinking for Better Regulation Better Regulation Task Force (2003) <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/brc/upload/assets/www.brc.gov.uk/imaginativeregulation.pdf>

A pros and cons review of different approaches to regulation, ranging from 'no intervention' and 'self-regulation' through education and carrots, sticks, and Classic Regulation. The Better Regulation unit grew out of the de-regulation unit.

Independent Regulators Better Regulation Task Force. (2003) <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/brc/upload/assets/www.brc.gov.uk/independent.pdf>

This sets out the principles which good independent regulators should follow, and how those regulations should be implemented. In our narrow circle of the outdoors, it refers to, and applies to, both HSE and AALA. It is difficult to know if this is written in support of Independent Sector Regulators or as an attack. Either way it accidentally (or perhaps deliberately) sets out how a good Sector Regulator *should* work.

Risk, Responsibility and Regulation: Whose Risk is it Anyway? Better Regulation Commission http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/brc/upload/assets/www.brc.gov.uk/risk_res_reg.pdf (2006)

This is a study, as the title suggests, of risks in society, whose responsibility they should be, and how government should regulate them. The BRC reports directly to the Cabinet Office, so this was aimed at the top. The summary of the scene in 2006 was commendable honest and insightful. The recommendations however seem to miss a number of the issues raised in the analysis.

Response with Responsibility: policy making for public risk in the 21st century.

Risk and Regulation Advisory Council (2009) <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file51459.pdf>

An analysis of some of the key players and how they play in the risk game. It looks at the jargon of Risk Actors and Risk Mongers, and how these players operate in the judiciary, in insurance companies, in the media and in single issue groups. It also looks at regulatory creep, and unintended consequences from narrow focus legislation which means land owners, for instance, are cutting down trees which were never intend to be cut down! Again the analysis is good, but the document is let down by its lack-luster recommendations.

Tackling Obesity in England National Audit Office (2001) Setting out the scene at the very beginning of the 21 st century. Only surprising because it is now 9 year old.

Learning Outside the Classroom: How far should we go? OFSTED (2008)

"At a time when the government is actively promoting learning outside the classroom, this report evaluates the importance of such learning in primary and secondary schools and colleges." Possibly the most supportive document for what the Outdoor Education sector has been doing for a decade. Not just what it says (nothing new) but *who is saying it*. If Carlsberg wrote reports!

Playing it Safe: A study of the regulation of outdoor play for children and young people in residential care. Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (2007)

As the title says : "A study of the regulation of outdoor play for children and young people in residential care." Brilliant! A real insight backed up with some strong common sense.

Out of School Trips research QA Research (2008) A survey of what actually happens across the UK with regards to school visits: barriers, solutions, fears, quality, impact, number of visits. Factual and balanced. A great place to source the truth about visits.

Protecting Children and Youths in Water Recreation. EuroSafe: European Child Safety Alliance. Some useful statistics and sensible generalizations, but mostly rather bland base level advice on an activity by activity basis. Good on wild swimming though. Not so useful for what it says, rather who is saying it.

Tackling Injuries amongst adolescents and young adults in the EU: Strategy and Framework for Action EuroSafe with Adrisk A synthesis of current thinking across member states. Something of a lowest common denominator approach rather than any new radical thinking.

Transition Timeline by Shaun Chamberlin This excellent book looks at how we can make realistic changes to our life-styles *now* so as to achieve realistic goals about an acceptable life style in the future. The Transition Movement already has a number of Transition Towns across the UK.

Recommended by Alistair Cook

Impelled into Experience by James Hogan It is an enjoyable read and provides an historical perspective with a pathway of integrity linking it to contemporary provision.

Inspiring Achievement: The Life and Work of John Hunt Edited by Ingrid Cranfield. A great collection of humorous and inspiring articles from the ultimate Outdoor Champion who devoted his life to the involvement of young people in the outdoors. It's a great entry-read which will hopefully leave the reader wanting more....so they can seek out The Hunt report 'In Search of Adventure'.

Beyond Adventure by Colin Mortlock I've included this in preference to Colin's earlier work 'The Adventure Alternative' as it is a more focused and balanced book, and one which you won't want to merely skim through.

Through the Tunnel by Doris Lessing. As a father of two young boys I read this short story at bed times. It's a 'rites of passage' story which all boys can relate to.

Touching the Void Joe Simpson. Adventure to nightmare to happy ending....ish.

Recommended by David Crossland

Games Climbers' Play Ken Wilson (ed) First published in the 70's but revised in 2005 I think. This has some interesting historical chapters on Outdoor Adventure Education including a report on the Cairngorm tragedy which is useful for youngsters who can't even remember Lyme Bay.

The Springs of Adventure Wilfred Noyce (out of print but you might find an old copy in a library or second hand bookshop). An interesting early attempt to categorise the various motivations people have for adventuring.

The Undiscovered Country 1993 Phil Bartlett - an attempt to explore the complex psychology of why people climb mountains.

Moments of Doubt 1986 David Roberts - a collection of essays by one of the few mountaineers who is also an outstanding writer, therefore they are thought provoking as well as a joy to read. Likewise

his accounts of ascents of Mt Huntingdon and Mt Deborah in the combined volume **Deborah and Mountain of My Fear** constitute some of the finest mountaineering literature ever (almost as good as Tilman!!). W.H. Auden was so impressed with Roberts' prose that he wrote a glowing review of Deborah.

High Mountains and Cold Seas A biography of H.W. Tilman 1982 J.R.L. Anderson An excellent biography of one of the greatest adventurers of the last century which helps to put our modern adventures into perspective.

The Travels of Ibn Battuta or one of the books that explain his travels - Sheikh Ibn Battuta (1304-77) left his native Tangier on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and over the next 27 years, managed to visit the lands of every Muslim ruler of his time - a great antidote to the cultural bias that sees all pioneering travellers as white!

Walden Henry D. Thoreau Thoreau's account of his time living simply in the woods near Concord, Mass. in the 1840's. The great 'back to nature' classic worth reading for the following quotes alone: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" and "most men lead lives of quiet desperation". Interesting to consider alongside the modern growth in Forest Schools and bushcraft.

Cultural Amnesia Clive James 2007 Clive James's tour of the cultural history of the 20th Century. Essential reading because most of the figures he covers are forgotten or unknown and because we need to understand that the culture of this century did not arrive fully formed from the void but is part of the ongoing story of western culture. We need to remember the intellectual struggles of the last century to provide us with perspective and lest we become tempted to forget their lessons. Outdoor Adventure Education sits within a wider culture which it should attempt to understand.

The Hungry Spirit - Beyond Capitalism - A quest for purpose in the modern world and The Empty Raincoat Charles Handy The titles say it all but remember these books are not written by an alternative lifestyle guru but by a former oil executive who was a professor of the London Business School. Books written by a prominent capitalist exploring the need for a new set of values to take us beyond capitalism, both written well before the present financial meltdown but perhaps worth rereading in the light of it.

The Long Way Bernard Moitessier Moitessier's account of the 'Golden Globe' round the world yacht race which saw Robin Knox-Johnson claim the first non-stop solo circumnavigation. Moitessier's boat was more modern and much faster and he could probably have won easily but having rounded Cape Horn he decided not to turn left up the Atlantic but to carry on round, past Cape of Good Hope for a second time and back into his beloved Pacific. He thus completed one and a half circumnavigations but it is his reasoning and his mystical awareness of the sea that make the book so much more than another description of a voyage.

Recommended by Jim Hammett

The Temporary Community by Tom Slater (available from Amazon, but out of print) published by Albatross Books. A philosophical book on the residential experience and the outdoors that develops a model of engaging with young people from our urban society.

Theme Games by Lesley Pinchbeck – published by Scripture Union. A simple set of children and youth games with themes that can be developed in review with a Christian theme.

Creative outdoor work with young people by Alan Smith – published by Russell House. A wide range of outdoor activity ideas that are worth looking through if only for the fun cartoon drawings!

Recommended by Dave Scourfield

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv. He brings together many of the studies about children and nature, describes how children wander less, discover less and are losing some important connections to nature and place. He coins the memorable phrase “Nature Deficit Disorder”.