

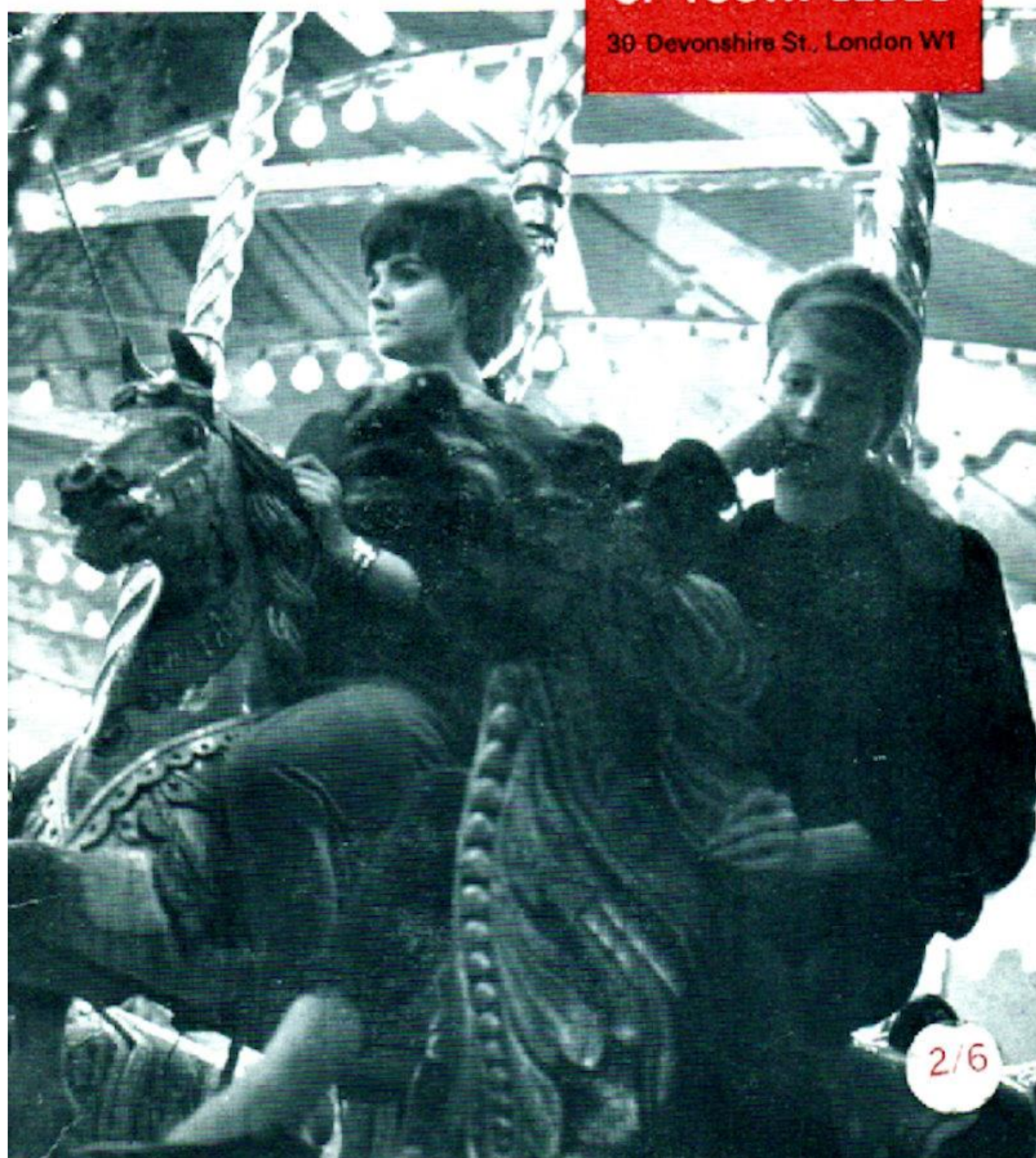
# GIRLS IN THE NINETEEN SIXTIES

*by Mary Robinson*



*published by the*  
**NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION  
OF YOUTH CLUBS**

39 Devonshire St., London W1



2/6

*The cover photograph is used by kind permission of "The Sunday Times". It was the winning boys' entry in the 1962 N. A. Y.C / "Sunday Times" Photographic Competition "Teenagers Today," and was taken by Christopher Franklin, of the Berkshire Association of Youth Clubs.*

# GIRLS IN THE NINETEEN SIXTIES

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*Published June 1963*

*Reprinted January 1965 by the*

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOUTH CLUBS

30, Devonshire Street - London, W.1

Printed by Mark & Moody Ltd. Stourbridge, Worcs.

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# Foreword

*A previous National Association of Youth Clubs pamphlet "Girls' Interests" originally written by Dr. J. Macalister Brew and revised later by some of her colleagues, has been a best seller for many years. Now Miss Mary Robinson has written a sequel "Girls in the 1960s". Miss Robinson, Senior Member Training Adviser to the Association and known to many generations of club members, probably has as wide a knowledge and understanding of today's young people as anyone in this country.*

*This book, with its practical suggestions and its imaginative approach, will be widely welcomed by all those who work with girls in these somewhat difficult days. Many of its ideas arose from a series of discussions with the men leaders of large mixed clubs affiliated to the London Union of Youth Clubs, and the Association would like to express its gratitude for their help.*

*I heartily commend this book to leaders, organisers and sympathetic adults, both in the National Association of Youth Clubs and in the wider sphere of youth service and education.*

**Jean Mackenzie**

*Chairman, N.A.Y.C. Executive Committee*

# Introduction

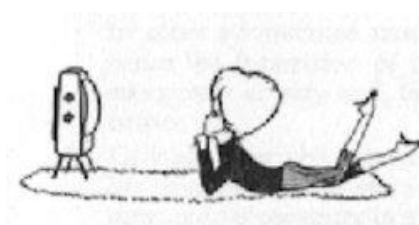
[page 7] The first girls' club of which there is a record was opened in Bristol in 1861. Its aim was "to provide advantages, pleasure and safeguards for young women away from home influence" at a time when many of the girls were living in deplorable conditions in slum districts, and standards of behaviour and morals were low. As girls' clubs spread throughout the country and more records became available, there is evidence of the kind of work the clubs were trying to do for girls. In most clubs, having paid their 1d. a week, they did musical drill with staves and dumb-bells ; they learned to sing ballads, hymns, choruses ; ladies came to help them with sewing, teaching them to make blouses of soberer hues than the gaudy colours usually worn by the factory girl, or to patch, darn or feather stitch a flannel petticoat. Each week there was a Bible class, a time when leaders could draw more closely to these rough young women and girls and try to put to them the positive virtues which would buttress them against the temptations of their working life. Club leaders were trying to give to girls in their scant leisure time "whatever is most lacking in their everyday life, filling up the gaps, broadening their lives, making them more complete women".

Over a century later, in completely changed economic and social conditions, the club leader of today has the same aim, but against the background of a revolution in the lives of the girls. To the girls of a hundred years ago, today's conditions would seem dreamlike, and yet a new pattern of softer affluent living has brought for the girls of today a new set of problems that can seem to them as nightmarish as those of long ago.

What is she like, the girl of today ? What are her problems ? What now is the day-to-day job of the club leader who would try to help ?

# Chapter 1: The girl herself in the 1960s

[Page 7] The needs of girls within a mixed youth group are especially important. Within any group it is vitally necessary that girls are given an opportunity to take a full part. Too often this full part is interpreted as the chores of the club for "isn't the girl to become tomorrow's housewife?" Indeed she is, but the successful wife and mother is the setter of standards in the home and the educator of the family. Girls' activities therefore need to be geared to help the girl to become herself, to widen her interests and to develop her talents. It is important to remember that the girl today is as much tomorrow's citizen as is the boy. Thus there is a need in a mixed youth club for activities geared to both the social and the cultural interests of the girl. Much of this work is best done by women, for girls respond to lively and enthusiastic women, and there is at the present time a vital need for volunteers who will share with groups of girls, in an informal manner, their experience, skills and enthusiasms. It is important to note that the girl's sphere of interest has widened enormously over the past few years. Rifle-shooting, pot-holing, canoeing, pottery, drama, art, archery and committee work are some of the activities she shares today with the boys. Here she has the chance to be accepted amongst them for her accomplishment. But there is still the need for her to develop as a woman— as a budgetter, buyer, dressmaker, cook, interior decorator, nurse, hostess, voter, partner and mother. All activities concerned with home-making have an appeal for most girls and are often most valuable when done as a separate girls' activity. The "girls only" activity is *as* important as the "boys only" activity, and, because of the new boy/girl ratio of the population, perhaps *even more* vital than ever before. The boy in the youth club has always been easier to cater for than the girl and the smaller numbers of girls in groups may mean that little attempt is made to provide a programme for them.





Whilst many of the things that educationists desired for girls are now part of their life, these very things have forced girls to face adult decisions at a time when they are still emotionally immature. They have, in most cases, immense freedom, but the teaching of responsible behaviour, in the light of increased freedom, lags far behind. They have more leisure, but too often a discriminating and satisfying use of it has not been taught. They have more money at an early age and the commercial world woos them— "You can only be Miss 1960s if your skin is . . . , if your hair is . . . , [page 10] if your vital statistics are . . . Thus, whilst the whole commercial world encourages them to be adult, school, home, church and the youth club leaders say "You are too young". Girls are still, in most places, in great demand in the employment market, but their scarcity value means that they are not stretched nor are standards of work set too high. They have a knowledge of sex, but the teaching of the uniqueness of each individual has been neglected. They are told "don't go too far", but there are varying standards of advice on what is meant by too far. They are often—as other generations were—lonely, bewildered, unhappy, frustrated and needing advice, but the one thing so often denied to them by adults is time and the ability to listen. The commercial world lures them to marriage—a romantic and ideal state—but around them they see a picture of shot-gun weddings and broken and unhappy homes. They have been given a collective name—teenagers—and typed by society at a time when better education is making them more individual. They live in a society where an adult world still demands "respect for your elders" at a time when debased adult standards too often command little respect in the eyes of the young idealist.

To an older generation , the 1960's girl frequently seems, brash, brazen, loud and sophisticated. To the 1960s girl, one half of the adult world seems to encourage her to be so – the world of glamour that that is *with it*. The other half – the world of *thou shall not*, the world that *I not with it* - seems to condemn. Many of those who come into the latter group demand from the girl disciplines which they themselves too often seem to ignore, even whilst they try to impose them on her. Into this bewildering world she has to grow and find her place.



## Chapter 2: Programmes and premises

### Programmes

[page 11] All youth group programmes for girls must be considered in the light of the following 1960s necessities :—

1. Girls do not enjoy ill-prepared, inefficient, sub-standard events ; neither do boys. But boys will sometimes put up with these, while the practicality of the girl makes her impatient of them and unwilling to participate.
2. Girls (older teenagers in particular) mind about the places to which they go. They want to be proud of their club. A boy can be proud of its achievements, but a girl is more anxious to be known to go to *the right places*.
3. Girls need to be treated at an earlier age as young adults. They are more sensitive to criticism than boys and more alert to any "micky-taking". They are often more criticised and teased at home than the boy and they want to escape to an adult world. Men are excused up to late middle-age for the little boy that remains in their make-up. No middle-aged woman is excused for the little girl that remains in her. Girls are aware of this.
4. It is therefore essential that an up-to-date and adult approach is used in any programme planning. Girls will not forgive a programme that is "what we did at school".
5. Any programme planning must take account of the new width of girls' interests, and knowledge of how to foster these interests must be a leader's concern. The four walls of a club cannot give the girl what she is demanding today.
6. Girls tire more quickly of events than boys. The 1960s world moves quickly and so should the club programme.

7. Points 4, 5 and 6 must be coupled with an understanding that girls are vitally interested in themselves—

(a) as girls

(b) as future wives

(c) as workers.

In older adolescence most boys are anxious for the top job— hence the frustration of the unskilled. Girls may do their job adequately or very well, but usually their interest is in (a) and (b) before (c).

8. Girls are invariably more concerned with a person than with his or her expertise. Much more integrating of any voluntary helper or instructor is necessary in a girls' group than a boys' group. Boys will accept a man whom they may not like very much if he is a [page 12] first-class football coach ; girls will not accept advice even from the world's most famous model if they do not like her as a person.

9. Girls can today so easily feel failures at an early age. Inability to pass the eleven-plus, slight physical imperfections (incredibly important to the girl) and no steady courting, can bring about a feeling of "I'm no good" by the age of sixteen. Chances to succeed and do well in the eyes of a respected adult are often tremendously important, but it should be noted that, in the older teenage girl, success must very often be individual success (sometimes geared to the girl's development as an attractive woman) and not so often team success. Amongst sports this is perhaps why canoeing, fencing, tennis, rifle-shooting, riding, judo, archery and angling are on the increase as interests. Team interests will often only follow on individual skill at one sport. Sailing, mountain climbing and some athletics are the second step. It is perhaps also worth noting that girls *play a game* ; they never *just kick a ball around*.



10. Because of widening interests and more individual tastes, it will be increasingly necessary to work often with very small numbers. This means that a good club must seek the help of neighbours with hobbies and special interests. Full-time clubs might well ask women's groups to hold at least one meeting a year in the youth club to hear what is happening and what help is needed. Townswomen's Guilds, Women's Institutes, Young Wives' Fellowships, Inner Wheel and similar groups must surely have members who would be prepared to offer short-term help in many subjects.

11. Girls are very conscious of age differences and frequently the seventeen-year-old will feel it very "infra dig" to be taking part in the same activities as fourteen-year-olds. Wherever possible certain extras should be laid on for the older girl.

12. Girls need careful briefing about every new activity they undertake. They make more mistakes about clothes than boys do and then are considered dumb or unsporty. Girls cannot be blamed if they have thought a social needed "best dresses" and then are [page 13] dismayed to find that they are expected to take part in games which involve lying on the floor or burying their faces in a mound of flour to extract a thimble. Nor can they be blamed for feeling furious if they have been lured to a training week-end where conditions are geared to roughing it unless they were told very carefully what to expect and what to wear. Made to feel a fool and out of it, a girl will rarely adventure again.



13. Many adults have still to learn to accept as programme the girls' gossip group and to stop perpetually urging girls "to do something". The gossip group, sympathetically guided, may result in *doing* something and, if it does not, much that is important to the girl may be thrashed out in chat. This is the place where the girl often learns to belong. Acceptance by a group and the status that follows by being a

contributor to the group is immensely important to the girl. It should be remembered that women can learn to stuff an eiderdown or bottle fruit as members of a women's group later on in life, but if they have never learned "to belong" then they will be held back from joining such a group through lack of confidence in their ability to get on with other people. The problem of the lonely women in many of our new towns is not that they cannot do things, but that they lack the confidence to join a group or the ability to start one.



A decreasing marriage age brings new considerations before every youth club leader. The most important perhaps is—are we providing a recreational meeting place for girls or is it felt that, as part of the Education Service of this country, the job of the mixed youth club is the provision of a programme which will gear girls towards satisfactory married life? If we are to answer yes to both—and especially to gearing girls towards a satisfactory married life—what does this [page 14] involve in terms of programme work? It has already been stated that the girl is expected, when she marries, to be a budgetter, interior decorator, buyer, dressmaker, cook, hostess, nurse, voter, partner and mother. Homemaking is therefore important, but many girls today will have had some training at school. As a wage-earner and young adult, the girl will expect a new and real approach to these subjects and it is at this point that programmes seem to suffer from malnutrition of the imagination.



A look at the individual roles may be worthwhile :—

**Budgetter.** Rarely do girls seem to know anything of how their £2 0s. 0d. contribution to the home is used. Housewives who can talk about their own experience as budgetters *with* - not *at* - groups of girls, invariably capture their interest and attention. This is real experience, not make-believe. Interest caught may lead on to the essentials of insurance, mortgages and hire purchase.

**Buyer.** A "Shopping Market" might be helpful, and here the help of local tradespeople could be sought. Many butchers today complain of the young married woman's abysmal ignorance of how to buy meat and how to cook it. One butcher was kind enough to take a side of meat to a girls' group and demonstrate the various cuts and the best ways of cooking them.

Other tradespeople could give similar help.

**Interior Decorator.** Furnishing, furniture, colours, fabrics could be part of the "Shopping Market".



**Dressmaker.** Here the value of a girls' room is obvious. Many girls have a basic knowledge of dressmaking and want somewhere to make a dress "to wear next Friday". Home does not always provide this facility. For those who enjoy making or altering their own clothes, well run fashion shows are popular today. The [page 15] right clothes for the right occasion teach not only dressmaking but dress sense and poise.

**Cook and hostess.** Girls enjoy entertaining and cookery can be made exciting when there is an end in view—perhaps a buffet for the Christmas party, a dinner for the adult committee, a coffee evening for club supporters, or a supper for international visitors. There are endless possibilities, but the occasion should be a real one. Girls want very much to do the right thing and here is a chance to learn.



**Nurse.** Once again the real situation is important. Here is the opportunity for service to others (so often needed by girls). Helping in hospitals, visiting the sick, old or handicapped, should tie in with any instruction in home nursing or first aid. With some groups mothercraft is popular—and baby-sitting the real, and needed, piece of service.

## **Voter**

(a) **Club Government.** It is agreed that the good club committee, and a well run annual general meeting, carry real teaching about democracy. But leaders must be patient with girls who do not at first find it easy to contribute to a discussion. Agendas should be carefully prepared to contain at least one practical item on which the girls' opinion is sought. Sub-committees and sometimes a "girls only" sub-committee for a special event can show the girl how necessary it is for her to say her piece and abide by majority decisions. Here too the girl often learns that loyalty to a club may have to over-ride loyalty to "my best friend".

Many schools today encourage young people to accept some responsibility within the life of the school. Once girls educated in this way have settled into work, a number of them accept a good deal of responsibility in their job. The kind of girl who has had responsibility at school and at work, finds the lip-service often paid to the idea of the "fourth partner" in the youth club infuriating.

It would be reasonable to suppose that many girls will not accept some of the responsibilities offered them within the youth club because they seem trifling



compared with work responsibility. Many of these jobs are in fact [page 16] trifling and young people need to be shown this to learn a readiness to accept them. They will not do this if adults make little of the jobs to be done and then, adding insult to injury, supervise too closely and are too prone to interfere.

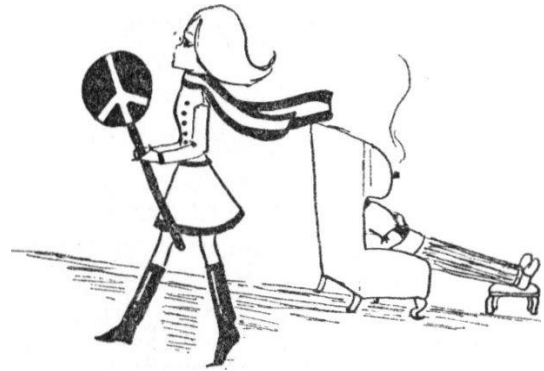
There is much in youth leadership still to be learned from, for instance, the hairdresser who, training the apprentice, supervises the rinsing of a head of hair. The mixing of the solution is carefully watched, as is the application, but it is all done in an unobtrusive manner that makes the client completely confident. The girl who has accepted this type of responsibility and supervision during the day is not going to accept obtrusive leadership in her leisure time. Girls must be given jobs and left to get on with them in the knowledge that, if necessary, there is the right person in the background to give instruction and advice. The badly handled giving of responsibility often leads to complete lack of interest, bossiness or rebellion, all of which eventually get labelled—irresponsibility. Responsibility can only safely be handed out when a leader really knows each member's individual ability.

*(b) Local Government.* Many girls are vaguely interested in health, welfare, town planning and "what you get for your rates". But a visit to a local Council meeting is not the answer to arousing a vivid interest in the neighbourhood. What first interests most girls are things that affect people and the home. How do you get a home help when mother is having a baby? How do baby welfare clinics work? Why are housing lists so long? Who gets on the lists? Who pays the teacher? Who builds new schools? Who subsidises free milk, and why? How does one grandma get into a different type of hospital from another? Who sees to street lighting? who arranges bus stops and decides where to build shelters? All these things have to do with a girl's life in a neighbourhood.



Girls always enjoy occasions. A special invitation to meet, and have coffee with, [page 17] a woman councillor can be very successful. This is the opportunity for finding out the answers to all the questions listed above and the time to discover why women want to serve their neighbourhood in this way. How much time does it take, how many committees does the councillor serve on and, if she has a home to run, how does she fit it all in? Here again it is the person who matters—then may follow an interest in how the neighbourhood ticks.

(c) **National Government.** Far too infrequently does the home take note of an older girl's interest in political affairs. If she has opinions about the 'Bomb' or wage claims, she often suffers from being "too big for her boots and she *will* argue with her Dad". She may also be teased at work for being a little know-all if she dares to try her ideas out there. But she is tomorrow's voter and should be encouraged in the youth club to learn how to think about the things she will soon be voting about. Social problems are often the way into this kind of teaching. Visits to hospitals, homes for the handicapped, old people's homes, children's homes, factories, offices ; talks with—not by—Members of Parliament, industrialists, Trade Unionists, educationists, social workers ; all these give an insight into the problems that face any government. How Parliament works is a second step ; what and who it is concerned with is the first. Visits from people mentioned above should be informal and be taken with a cup of tea or coffee. Many youth clubs could well consider a larger amount of money spent on hospitality as an item of valuable equipment where girls are concerned.



(d) **International Affairs.** Once again, the way to interest girls is often via social problems—hunger, disease, the plight of the refugee, racial discrimination. This is all to do with people first. Care should be taken that there is an end in the [page 18] leader's mind when this kind of subject is under discussion, e.g., a project which can be undertaken. There have never been more people from other countries living in the United Kingdom than at the present time—immigrants, students, au pair visitors, delegates to conferences. Here, surely, accepting girls' interest in people, is an ideal answer to a knowledge of other people and other lands. It is worth saying that so often straight talks to straight rows about, for example, the West Indies, cannot carry with them the same initial interest as a party with calypsos, bongo drums and coffee. Here is the chance to make friends, not "to hear about". Excellent as are the many programmes on international affairs offered us by T.V. and, as nearly as it brings friends into our homes, it is not as good as the one thing we still have within the scope of the club, i.e., face-to- face, living encounter with people. Much more should be done to encourage this.

It is important to note that nearly all the programmes mentioned for the girl involve a neighbourhood interest. The Supporters Council suggested in the Albemarle Committee Report opened a perfect way for such help. Have clubs really sufficiently explored this idea?

All this programme work needs either the premises suggested later on or, failing that—and even better sometimes—the use of a room in someone's home. Up and down the country, the latter is a growing extension to the youth club and the use of "our own room" or "somebody's front room" for such work will, in an informal, intimate atmosphere, teach the girl so much of what is perhaps the most important of all, something of people and personal relationships.

All of this assumes that all girls are gregarious. This is not so. Every leader will, from time to time, meet with the self-contained girl. Attempts to integrate her within a group fail, and she becomes the person of whom it is easy to ask "I wonder why she comes? She joins in nothing and has no particular friends". It is worthwhile making a special effort to discover the interests of "the solitary" outside the club. She is often a great reader, a keen needlewoman, or follows intently some interest that does not necessarily involve other people. She can often be helped by a link with an adult, who follows just as enthusiastically a similar interest, and who is prepared to guide, help and offer encouragement.

To leave programme suggestions tied only to the very obvious housewife, mother and citizenship needs would not satisfy today's girl. To list the indoor and outdoor activities that some girls enjoy would be to list almost every leisure time pursuit known. Only the widest programme, the widest conception of girls' interests, indoors and outdoors, [page19] can answer today's needs. The club leader, to fulfil these needs, must have far wider contacts and more helpers than ever before and must learn to work with adults as well as with the young.

Leaders, however, have also to remember that most young people come first to a club to enjoy each other's company. The leader's job is to show them how to work as a community and how to get the maximum enjoyment in their leisure time. The girl is slower to respond than the boy and example means almost everything to her. The leader who takes a group of girls to see St. Paul's Cathedral and says "go and look round—I'll sit and wait at the back" is asking for trouble. She must not be surprised if the verger seeks her out to ask her "is that your group of girls giggling in the Gallery?" Her very act of sitting has done two things. First of all, it would appear that she, the leader, is not interested in the outing and, secondly, that it is not adult to look around. If she cannot enjoy what the girls are doing, it would be better not to go, for no enthusiasm has been caught and nothing has been taught; better to send somebody-else who loves the Cathedral with the girls, or stay away and ask them to come back and say what they particularly enjoyed.

It is often depressing that the training of girls is still measured by how many hours of what appears to many adults to be valuable education are contained in the

programme, and programmes that include visits of observation and social events are often criticised as being only a holiday. Yet in well-arranged visits or well-run dinners, social evenings or barbecues, there can be much learned that is part of what today's girl wants to know, and should know. A well-prepared and organised sausage and mash party can teach budgeting, cooking and hostessing and may contain more that is real education than a spasmodically- attended arts and crafts group held in a corner of a youth club in poor lighting and with equipment well below school standards.

It is often hard for some training officers of voluntary organisations and some L.E.A. Youth Officers to convince adult committees that money spent on social and cultural education can return as many dividends, in an attempt to help young people mature, as can money spent on a training in committee procedure or public speaking. Well arranged social events contain this kind of learning but in an adult setting. Adults who really want to help girls in the 1960s have got to jerk themselves out of an attitude of mind that says "this is all fancy stuff". This it may be to many older people, but this fancy stuff is as everyday to the girl in the 1960s as is the owning of a scooter, a record player, or a tape recorder, or going to the ballet, an art gallery or a jazz club.

In a world where the time of the adult is so seldom offered to young people, it is perhaps significant that training courses on which knowledgeable adults give time to show the young people around on visits of [page 20] observation, or give parties for them or enjoy a social event with them, invariably bring from the girls, at an evaluation, the comment "what I liked most was the way important people had time for us and wanted to talk to us and listen to us".

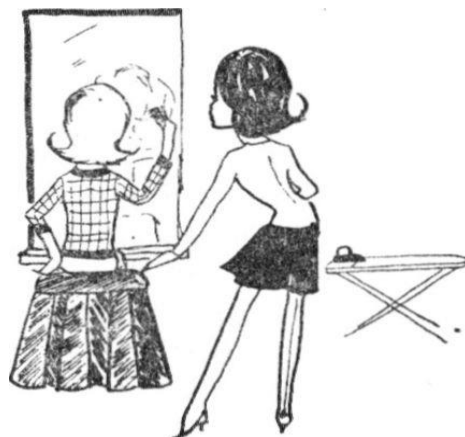
Adult committees who want to be up-to-date with the 1960s girl may have to persuade treasurers that petrol or bus fares for an outing to the Motor Show, the Ideal Home Exhibition, a fashion parade or a flower show ; or part payment of a first visit to a "posh" restaurant, theatre or art gallery ; or part payment for lessons in riding, sailing, ski-ing, angling or archery ; or money spent on helping girls to run a first party for children, old people or the physically handicapped ; are every bit as good an investment as is money spent on billiard cues, football boots or table tennis balls.

In the end, all programme within the youth club is training.

## Premises

Many girls today, at a time when home conditions are so vastly improved, will not be attracted to clubs unless standards of accommodation have also risen considerably. This is of vital importance.

In new buildings and in rearranged buildings, emphasis should be laid on the need for a girl's room. This may be a well furnished lounge or a large and comfortably furnished powder and rest-room. It is necessary to stress that both these facilities will be inadequately used unless :



1. Plans for building or redecorating are discussed with the girls wherever possible and they are participators in the decorating and upkeep of their accommodation. This should be *their room*—no boys or men should enter it without invitation. The girls may have to be helped to learn to share it on occasions.
2. There is a woman helper or leader, acceptable to the girls, who becomes the focal point for listening, advising and development of interests.

Where possible, the girls' room should be equipped with: a hair dryer, wash basins, ironing board and iron, up-to-date magazines, sewing machine, mending box, make-up box and tape-recorder. The powder room could have some of this equipment. Although in a number of homes these facilities may be available, the group benefit of [page 21] having club equipment of this kind is enormous. The group at work on Molly's new hair style or Margaret's party dress carries a wealth of development of the critical faculty, and here is the ideal place for the adult to make a contribution. Adults often complain about the manners of the young. It is not so much bad manners that are noticeable throughout society, as a lack of good taste.

One-room clubs could well consider the use of movable screening which could be set up in conjunction with coloured sections of flooring. Some of the equipment mentioned above should be available.

For clubs that have a room that can be used as a girls' room but which for the present there is no possibility of equipping fully, chairs, a long mirror and some books could be the beginning. If the girls are helped to feel it is a room of their own, they can then be encouraged to help themselves with collecting further equipment. A mending box and a make-up box could be the start.

In hired rooms, there should be a determined drive for at least reasonable cloakroom accommodation. This will be appreciated by adults also ! There should be clean lavatory accommodation, a decent long mirror, a mirror with a shelf underneath, and places where good clothes can be hung up and displayed without fear of spoiling. There is a training value even in the proper use of cloakroom accommodation and certainly in the care of, and taking a pride in, one's clothes.

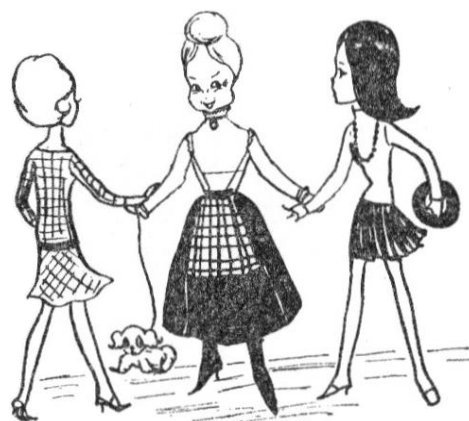
The following points are worth stressing. First, if facilities cannot be achieved in the club in order to do interesting programme work, it may be necessary to use a room in someone's home or a hired room outside the club itself. Secondly, it is vitally necessary as a priority to provide suitable accommodation, because girls' only activities need more emphasis in the majority of youth clubs.

## Chapter 3: Personal relationships

[page 22] Girls are always concerned about people and they feel they should be able to manage people. "I can't cope with ..." is a sentence so often heard. To be happy, to conform, to be in harmony with others, is vitally necessary to girls. Personal relationships are therefore immensely important.

### Home

Many of the problems of the girl at home, as she strives for independence and the overthrow of parental authority, are well known and have been fully discussed. Two points, that may be new, are important. The new small compact family life of this generation has often removed grandparents from a close relationship with young people. This influence is obviously much missed by the girls—"Grannie is with it—mother is not". The older woman helper in a club often offers the same unemotional advice that could be offered by Grannie. This is appreciated and is a point worth noting in the recruitment of helpers.



There has always been a group of young people receiving better education than their parents. This group is on the increase in this generation and many grammar schoolgirls talk of no — "meeting point with parents on things that interest us". Indeed the girls' .... *need of a grandmother*.... interests are often described as time wasters. They have no point of contact at the point of experience because emotional ties enter into the relationship, and problems concerned with vital things—gambling, drinking, holidays and behaviour—all mean rows. For girls this is particularly serious unless there is an unshockable, undemanding and sympathetic adult to whom they can turn. Many parents would welcome help with girls and it would be worth exploring whether there should be more contact with women's groups both in order to interpret and in order to recruit help for girls' interests. Could full-time leaders, members of management committees, organising

secretaries and Youth Officers be used more often as speakers for women's meetings. [page 23]

### **Relationships between boys and girls**

- Should the youth club leader feel it part of the club's job to offer young people sex education and to set aside time for direct counselling ?
- How can we develop the general climate of the club so that relationships between boys and girls are sound ?
- Do we accept that girls are the setters of standards of behaviour ? If so, what are clubs doing about this ?
- Are we wrong in expecting the same standards that were right for a past generation to be right for the 1960s ? Has a great deal of re-thinking to be done about this ? In a world where many people are saying that chastity is outmoded, how can the young be helped to cope ?

In many cases, it would seem that sex-education is not needed, but that almost every group of young people is wanting help with the face-to-face encounter with infatuation and with love. Standards and values are the key-point today, not the geography of sex. The straight talk on sex to straight rows in a large hall is also often outmoded, but the informal discussion is continually being asked for by the young.

Because of the personal nature of this subject, atmosphere and premises are extremely important, but again, because girls re-act to people before things, *the person* taking the group is the most vital matter.

It is essential that, if people are concerned to create the right relationships within a mixed youth group, this must be achieved in an atmosphere of partnership between the boys and girls. A programme biased towards boys or girls, responsibility meted out to one sex only, the using of one sex to attract the other without equal membership rights, can in the end only be harmful. Here, for the young to see in action, is a wrong adult attitude towards the individual ; here is no evidence of a desire to see individual people becoming all that they are capable of being. If, under these circumstances, relationships between the young are not what is desired for them, adults have only themselves to blame.



It is often erroneously stated by men club leaders that "all is well, the girls come to me with their problems". Girls can be helped considerably by a sympathetic man leader, but men must understand that a whole set of problems often remain undealt with because they are concerned with physical difficulties, which are the woman's province. Whilst a girl may well ask the man leader all kinds of questions concerning relationships with boys, home or work, no girl asks a man leader how to cure spots, what to do about a flat bust, how to cope with B.O. or premenstrual tension. All these problems are obviously vitally tied up with relationships between boys and girls and often cause great suffering. [page 24]

There is no doubt that the happily married couple within the club is almost always one of the answers to sound boy-girl relationships, for more is caught than is ever taught about relationships, but, failing this, are management committees alive enough to the need for women's help within the mixed youth club? Is the woman, helper's/leader's presence considered as a *must* at the management committee? Are



management committees sympathetic enough when requests are made for equipment and the spending of money for girls' activities? It would seem in many clubs that this is still not so. Not until leaders and committees have accepted that girls are not boys and cannot be led in the same way, that they need to be equal partners in their own show with the boys and that the woman leader/helper is the key to this situation, will youth clubs really be able to feel that they have begun to find the answer to the four questions asked at the beginning of this section.

It is worth noting that a well-known writer on a woman's magazine makes the following point: "twenty-five years ago, many girls were worried about how 'to get a boy-friend'—now the problem posed is more often how 'to choose a boy-friend' ". This may be the meeting point for much good informal education.

Young people today are well aware that, even in this enlightened age, there is less ability still between the generations to communicate on the subject of sex than on any other subject. The leader, married or unmarried, who cannot be relaxed and unembarrassed in discussion with young people should endeavour not to get involved. By the time young people come into clubs, they already have experience of hot-under-the-collar adults and it is better not to add to the list one more. There is a desperate need with this honest young generation for frank discussion, and it is far

better for older people who don't feel they can cope to say, "Look, I was brought up when sex was not discussed so freely and I don't believe I'm the right person, but so-and-so is most helpful. We'll get hold of him". It is important that so-and-so mentioned should be known as a friend of the leader and of the club.

All unmarried leaders should be sure that they count amongst the youth club's friends happily married couples who can help iron out, through their own knowledge of a relationship that has stood the test of time, the problems that the unmarried leader is not qualified to deal with. [page 25]

It is obvious that every attempt to make girls aware of their responsibilities as setters of standards must be matched by a concern that boys too shall accept their responsibilities. It would seem today that this need arises at a young age and that much of the help once given to the older teenager is now sought in the early teen group. At this age, both sexes would seem often to be exerting pressures, the boys often ganging up on the girls with their demands and the girls at times challenging the boys' manliness. Any leader concerned about boy-girl relationships must today be particularly sensitive to the right time, the right place and the right person to help. But this development of club work should arise out of situations and not be laid on as another activity. If sex education (as apart from personal and small group counselling) is to be given, it is often best done at early teenage and should be undertaken only with the knowledge of parents.

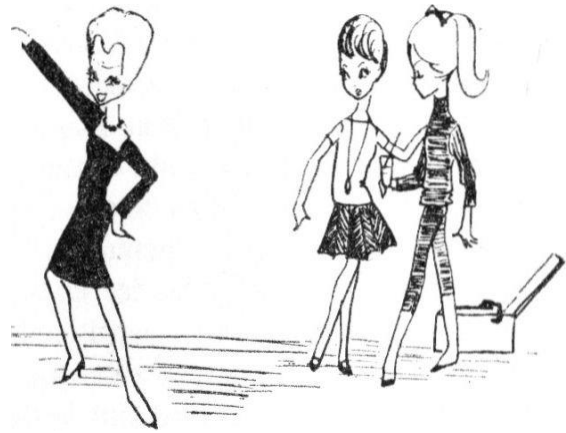
## **Leader-girl relationships**

### *The Woman Leader*

At a time when girls are desperately trying to free themselves of parental authority and become independent persons, it is hardly to be expected that the girl will turn to a mother figure to achieve her aim. And yet the woman leader will need to say many of the things that Mother would say. The right relationship can best be achieved by the offering of a friendship that accepts the girl as she is, whilst showing her the best she could be. This involves offering advice which can be rejected without loss of face, a personal, yet impersonal no-strings-attached approach to all situations and a readiness to give praise for each new achievement and each new sign of confidence gained. The relationship must be sincere—the young detect insincerity immediately—must be adult-to-adult and must be constant. Leaders who ask girls to do things "for my sake", whether it be washing-up in the canteen or attending a conference, are doomed to failure; so are the women who have forgotten their own

youth. Only the woman who remembers vividly how important was the struggle for independence, how important was "my best girl friend", "my first date", how ghastly her first day at work, how important her first love, can begin to get near the problems of a young girl. And this she has to do without nagging, without curiosity, and without reproach, but with sensitivity, with a sense of humour and with an undemanding affection.

The woman club leader may be the first person who recognises the young adult and not the child and because of this she has an immense chance to help during a difficult time of adjustment. Women should [page 26] remember that girls cannot endure undignified behaviour in older women. To them it is sickening to see an older woman behaving in an adolescent manner. You can either Twist or you can't, you can either play the Bongos or you can't, you can either play table-tennis or you can't. Girls don't want to see a leader trying to keep up them. You can be "with it" on the touch-line—it is understanding, not performance, that counts.



line—it is understanding, not performance, that counts.

### **The Man Leader**

Dr. Macalister Brew always stressed how valuable in the development of the girl is the part played by the man leader in a mixed youth club. But men must beware. At a moment when the girl is feeling her way towards happy relationships with the opposite sex, too much attention paid to her individually, any singling out, often because she is useful or reliable, may make her quite stupidly romantic. She may either blow up the relationship with the leader out of all proportion or become priggish with her girl friends about it and so cause them to reject her because "she's such a bore". Any attention paid to girls should be courteous, friendly, casual and astringent. It should never draw attention to mannerisms or to charm. It is worth remembering that the blush that may enchant the man is devastating to the blusher. The man is more likely to help the girl to widen her interests and



to be herself, if he will treat her as a young woman, asking for her opinions about things, not people.

Still in the home today, too little attention is paid to the girl's opinions about the world. The leader who in conversation asks, "What do you think about the space race" or "the dock strike" may be surprised how much the girl knows or may make her realise for the first time that in an adult world these are the things you are expected to know about. This is the kind of friendly attention and respect that is appreciated.

It is very important that men also understand that even in the new free and easy relationships between man and woman, the majority of girls are, underneath a veneer of sophistication, modest and shy. For this reason, men leaders must show an example of respect. The man leader should not feel free to enter the girls' room or powder room, described previously, without knocking - if indeed he ever goes in during club hours. He must not treat the girls in a way in which he will not want the boys to treat them. It is no good saying today to a group of boys, "I'm the leader - I can do it, you can't". They will see no difference and indeed it is hard to find a commonsense answer. "I'm a married man and these girls could be my daughters" is certainly no answer.



Every girl member should be treated with the respect that a man would himself give to his wife or daughters and would demand that his sons should give to their mother or sisters. And the girls can best be taught to demand this treatment of themselves by the boys via the man leader's behaviour. Women may say to girls "you must demand respect", but it is the man who can show respect, who can practise what the woman can only preach about.

Camps, holidays and residential training courses provide the best media for the leader to bring out the best boy-girl relationships. Here is the ideal situation in which to teach courtesy and respect, a situation in which boys and girls have each their part to play, where partnership really counts. For years the National Association of Youth Clubs has made it a practice to ask tutors on residential weeks to bring their families with them. Husband, wife and children relationships can be taught in this way without any set-apart sessions on "the good family life".

## Young marrieds

Many young married women now fall into the Youth Service age range. This brings before the club new considerations. Have we any responsibility towards young people within our age-group who are married, not so much to the girl who marries an older man but to the girl in her late teens who marries a young man of almost her own age?



If we have, the following point may be worth considering—the possibility in a full-time club for a young married women's group. The fact that they still think the club worthwhile might hold some of the older adolescent girls who tend to think of it as kid's stuff. It is also important that the young married girl should have an opportunity, if she so desires, to follow her own interests after marriage, be they netball, art or car maintenance. Some clubs are undertaking babysitting so that this increasing group of young women shall not be cut off from the very things the youth club had helped them to learn and to enjoy.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that one very successful team of club workers consists of a young married couple (ex-members of a youth club), their baby, their dog and the parents of the young couple, who serve on the adult committee. Here is the perfect family unit.

This poses further questions. Is enough done to conserve the interest of senior members? How often do clubs help them to get into touch with another club when work or marriage moves them to another place?

## Chapter 4: Work

{page 29] The great majority of girls are more concerned about being happy at their jobs than with their wage-packets. Changes of job are more often explained by "I don't like the people" than "I don't like the work". This follows the statement earlier that girls are anxious to fit in and be happy.

Whatever the job, indoors or outdoors, in office, shop, factory or elsewhere, club leaders can help their members with advice, assistance and encouragement. For instance, many girls are nervous at inter-

views, and a club leader can help by describing, or perhaps having members act, an interview; by helping with application forms to be completed, and by advising about possible tests —shorthand and typing, requiring mainly dexterity and intelligence, and about medical examinations. Knowing what to expect will give a girl the confidence which may get her the job.



*Many girls are nervous at interviews*

There is much evidence to show that girls respond well to induction courses. The practicality of the girl needs not only the "know how" of her own type of work, but the knowledge of where her particular job fits in to the end product. She is much affected by the attitudes of older members of staff, for, as in all else, more is caught than taught about the necessity for work well done. Senior members in the club could well be used to help school leavers understand the pleasures and the problems of the change from school to work, and the adjustment needed during the first year at work.

Industry and commerce more readily respond today to the need for character training as well as job training for the girl. Girls appreciate this, but frequently say that the attitudes of the established workers are discouraging and often unkind, and affect them deeply. "Fetch me a left-handed spanner", the trial of the boy apprentice,

could be labelled as good, clean fun compared with the harsh treatment often meted out to the new girl by older women. Women more quickly become jealous of the young girl than men of the young boy, and girls need protection against this, for it can be cruel. It is important that club leaders understand this and are sympathetic, for it is as often the cause of [page 30] moodiness or a flood of tears as the home row or the boy-friend quarrel.

Trying to put into practice what she has been taught at school, i.e., shorthand and typing, or domestic training, is not always easy for the new young worker ; learning a new job is less easy and coming to terms with the fact that to train as, say, a hairdresser or salesgirl or nurse, means that for many a long day she neither really dresses hair, nor sells nor nurses, is far from easy. Happily, in many work places there are people with sympathy and kindness who smooth the way for the new girl, but in cases where the men or women responsible for training, or possibly just starting new workers, have not got the time or inclination to carry out their duties properly, the club leader can give members the encouragement and help which may stiffen their resolve to stay at a job and make good.

Work relationships cannot be ignored in the club today. Nobody is a club member only ; each young person brings to his or her leisure not only the happiness and tensions created in those hours but the happiness and tensions of work and of home.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Conclusion

At the beginning of "Girls in the 1960s" three questions were asked : What is she like, the girl of today ? What are her problems ? What now is the day-to-day job of the club leader who would try to help her ? There is no blueprint but it is hoped that this booklet may help adults to re-think or confirm their own ideas. What is sure is that girls today are demanding from the Youth Service a more imaginative approach. Wherever and whenever the opportunity is given and the right person is there, girls are not slow to venture. The challenge of this lies not in the limitations of the girls themselves but too often in the inability of adult society to communicate to them, first of all the reward of self-achievement and secondly, the pleasure of becoming a useful member of a community.



# Appendix

## THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SCHEME FOR GIRLS

[page 31] The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for Girls, which started in 1958, sets out a complete programme of work for girls who can achieve standards at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. There are four sections, Design for Living, Interests, Adventure, and Service, and full information about the Scheme is to be found in a Leaders' Handbook, price 1/6. As well as the Handbook, special leaflets are available. Under *Section A, "Design for Living"*, syllabi have been prepared under the following headings : Grooming and Poise, Acquiring and Furnishing your Home, Running Your Home and The Girl, The Boy and Marriage. Under *Section B, "Interests"*, fifty syllabi have been prepared ranging from Archaeology to T.V. Appreciation, and under *Section D, "Service"*, information on courses of training in a number of worthwhile projects is available.

Any leader concerned today to find a club programme that appeals to girls, is advised to consider the possibility of carrying out the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme within the club. It may mean that only a small number of girls will want to follow the Scheme through, or that a number of the activities will have to take place outside the club and be led by people who may not necessarily take a full part in the life of the club. But, with the new width of girls' interests, and a new readiness on the part of the public to help young people follow their interests and hobbies, here is a chance for girls to follow through their club a more satisfactory programme than many clubs can offer when they meet only one night a week in one room. Many organisations and many individuals are prepared to help, and many girls who would describe themselves as ordinary, enjoy immensely the chance to do things seriously and well.

The main emphasis of the Award Scheme is on the girl's perseverance and the development of a sense of responsibility towards herself and the community. Whilst standards of achievement are necessary, there should be no competitive spirit, and each girl is judged according to her individual ability.

Under no conditions should clubs embark on the Award Scheme without permission from approved operating bodies (e.g., the National Association of Youth Clubs.)

Full information about the Scheme may be obtained from the National Association of Youth Clubs, 30, Devonshire Street, London, W.1., or from a Local Association of the National Association of Youth Clubs. {page 32]

The variety of girls' interests and the readiness of people to help can be no better shown than by a study of the list of societies who have agreed to help with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for Girls. For this reason part of the list is quoted below.

Automobile Association

Amateur Fencing Association

Amateur Gymnastic Association

Amateur Swimming Association

[page 32]

Association of Ballet Clubs

Association of Inner Wheel Clubs

British Canoe Union

British Cycling Federation

British Gliding Association

British Horse Society (incorporating the Pony Club)

British Judo Association

British Red Cross Society

British Veterinary Association

Electrical Association for Women

English Folk Dance and Song Society

Federation of Soroptimist Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland

Good Housekeeping Institute

Grand National Archery Society

Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing Incorporated

Industrial Welfare Society

National Council of Women

National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

National Federation of Women's Institutes

National Institute for the Deaf

National Savings Movement

National Skating Association of Great Britain

National Trust

National Union of Townswomen's Guilds

People's Dispensary for Sick Animals

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Royal National Institute for the Blind

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

St. John Ambulance Association

Women's Advisory Council on Solid Fuel

Women's Amateur Athletic Association Women's Gas Federation

Women's Voluntary Service for Civil Defence

Add to this list a panel of neighbourhood supporters, i.e., tradespeople, hobby enthusiasts, travellers, residents from overseas, and there is no doubt that the kind of programme today's girl needs can be excitingly and imaginatively thought out.