

Child Work or Child Labour? The Caddie Question in Edwardian Golf¹

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What is child labour? We're conditioned to think in a particular way when we hear those words: children weaving Turkish or Persian carpets until they go blind, children making over-priced Nike trainers for a pittance, in short, children all over the Third World being exploited by global corporations for low cost production of consumer goods for the prosperous populations of the Western world. When these images first appeared in Western media in the early 1990s, many were upset and wanted to free the children from the low-wage slavery. But as it turned out, it's more complicated than that. Children have always worked; they have contributed to the provision of their families according to their ability. With increasing prosperity and degree of civilization, the Western world has managed to relieve the children of the need to work and provide them with a safe and secure childhood, as well as education for future security. But in large parts of the world, children still play a vital role in the family economy, and the alternative to work is more likely deteriorating material circumstances rather than orderly and regular school attendance. The more reasonable reactions to the revelations of children at work is found in ILO's convention 182 about eliminating the worst forms of child labour, and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which explicitly prohibits economic exploitation and "any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development".

What is child labour in sports? Is there such a thing? Well, it's not that easy to find children actually working in contemporary sports, at least not in ways that would represent a breach of the ILO and UN conventions. Wray Vamplew mentions the production of sporting goods, but also the girl gymnasts of the communist bloc and teenage African footballers that are imported to Europe and discarded when failing to meet the competition. Instead he turns to the history of sports, and observes that there were boy jockeys in horseracing and boy caddies in golf around the turn of the nineteenth century. It's the latter form of child labour that is the object of Vamplew's groundbreaking research. He has studied the labour market for caddies in the decades immediately prior to and following the year 1900, and he has found that the vast majority of the British golf club caddies were children, mainly boys between twelve and sixteen years old. Employing contemporary documents as well as secondary sources, such as golf club centennial jubilee books, Vamplew chronicles the situation for the young golf workers in terms of working conditions, remuneration, general welfare and education. His article forms itself into an important piece of social history of times and lives we knew very little about.

1 This chapter stems from an on-going research project looking at the development of the golf club as a British social institution, one aspect of which is the labour and community relations of the clubs. The author is grateful to the Leverhulme and Carnegie Trusts for grant aid and to Jane George and Orla Gilmore for research assistance.

Introduction

Child labour in sport is often regarded as a relatively modern phenomenon, usually with exploitative implications, involving third-world workers producing sporting goods, the abused bodies of communist bloc girl gymnasts, and teenage African footballers discarded when they failed to make the grade in Europe.¹ Although historical examples are generally absent from the academic literature, there are late nineteenth and early twentieth-century instances in Britain in the use of boy jockeys in horseracing and, the subject of this chapter, the child caddie in golf.² For the purposes of this chapter children are considered to be young persons under the age of sixteen, the line generally taken by golf clubs. Hence the discussion of child caddies is not confined to those still at school but also includes school leavers, many of whom could be as young as twelve.³

The perceived problems of such caddies were part of a wider issue in Britain. At the turn of the twentieth century there was concern that a growing demand for child labour in occupations such as errand boys, machine minders and industrial packers was creating a pool of young workers, trained for nothing else and destined to swell the ranks of casual labourers as they became older and lost their jobs to younger and cheaper boys who in turn faced the same fate.⁴ The list of jobs put forward by commentators as part of the ‘boy labour’ issue did not include the golf caddie, yet within golf the situation of the boy caddie had become recognised. In 1909 Garden Smith, editor of *Golf Illustrated*, estimated that there were 20,000 boys so employed. He believed that the mass of these boy caddies were living a ‘casual, irresponsible and purposeless life’.⁵ Three years later the Agenda Club – ‘an organisation of men in all parts of the country who realise that “all is not well with England”’⁶ – actually undertook a survey on the caddie question which emphasised the blind alley’ nature of the job.⁷

Modern observers distinguish between ‘child work’ and ‘child labour’. The former is regarded as normal social practice and is often seen as making a positive contribution to children’s development by having them take responsibility and gain a pride in their activities.⁸ Generally, however, such work refers to time-limited, small tasks around the home or family business. In contrast child labour, often coercive, is considered harmful or hazardous with children ‘being exploited, or overworked, or deprived of their rights to health and

1 Donnelly & Petherick (2004), Hong (2004) and Darby (2000).

2 There is little significant historical literature on the caddie. Of the two books available, Mackenzie (1997) deals specifically with the caddies of St Andrews and Stirk (1989) with caddies more generally, but neither are serious scholarship. More useful are the histories of individual golf clubs which often refer to caddie conditions and earnings drawing on material from the club archives. A major source is a report by the Agenda Club (1912) which, although focusing on London clubs, has national relevance. On child jockeys see Vamplew & Kay (2005), 74.

3 See section below on government legislation.

4 Tawney (1909), 517-537, Hopkins (1994), 225-6; Rose (1991), 101; Walvin (1982), 69-70.

5 Smith (1909), 125.

6 *The Helper*, 6.4, April 1912, 49.

7 Those undertaking the survey opted ‘to make personal and thorough investigation into 29 of the 56 ‘London clubs of importance’ with additional references to ‘provincial clubs’ in England though information on these was ‘insufficient to present an equally exhaustive survey of conditions in other parts of the country.’ Agenda Club (1912), 19-21.

8 International Labour Organisation (1992), 14; Donnelly & Petherick (2004), 302-303; Hedenborg (2007), 107.

education'.⁹ Although examining a historical rather than a contemporary labour market, this chapter will draw on these concepts and assess where boy caddies were situated on the spectrum between work and labour.

The Caddie Labour Market

The actual number of caddies is difficult to determine. Garden Smith reckoned on at least 20,000 in 1909 while the Caddies Aid Association, set up by a group of golf club secretaries in 1911, estimated that 12,000 were 'employed regularly'.¹⁰ Surprisingly the Agenda Club made no aggregate estimate but noted that 29 London clubs retained the service of 827 caddies in the summer months.¹¹ Admittedly these were among the larger clubs in Britain, but, in 1914 there were over 2,800 other clubs so, even though not all clubs had courses of their own, the number of caddies may have been higher than Garden Smith's estimate.¹²

Whatever figure is taken there is no doubt that caddying was a niche child labour market that expanded significantly in the four decades before 1914. At many golf clubs playing without a caddy was socially unacceptable, even when not specifically regulated against. Before the invention of the golf bag in the 1890s¹³ it was impractical, but generally there was the implication that the manual labour associated with a round of golf should be done by someone other than the player. Others felt that 'golf was a very difficult science which required extreme mental concentration and the labour of being one's own caddie was an objectionable and serious distraction.'¹⁴

The majority of caddies were boys or young men with a leavening of adults and, at weekends, a staple of schoolboys to meet the peak demand.¹⁵ Most caddies were labelled second-class whose duties essentially were to carry clubs, make sand tees, replace divots, and clean clubs after the round. Below them were the forecaddies, a hangover from the era when balls were expensive and terrain was hilly and rough. These were boys sent ahead with a flag to indicate when the fairway was clear and where balls had landed: both duties became of reduced importance as courses began to be laid out without hills as natural obstacles and balls became mass-produced with their loss less of a financial cost. Above them were the more experienced first-class caddies, who knew the intricacies of the local course. They did much the same as their second-class counterparts but also offered counsel to their employer of the day.

The rise in demand was in specific local labour markets, often in areas where there had been no club before, and there is no evidence that the caddie fee was driven up. The new clubs tapped fresh supplies from a reserve army of boy labour rather than competing against existing clubs in a limited market, so that generally clubs experienced 'no difficulty

⁹ International Labour Organisation (1992), 14.

¹⁰ Times, 12 November 1912, 16.

¹¹ Agenda Club (1912), 28.

¹² Peter Lewis, Director of the British Golf Museum, has estimated the number of golf clubs in existence at 161 in 1885, 959 in 1895, 1939 in 1905 and 2844 in 1914. Cited in Vamplew (2008).

¹³ Mackenzie (1997), 64.

¹⁴ Times, 12 November 1912, 16.

¹⁵ Agenda Club (1912), 4-5.

in keeping up the supply of regular caddies'.¹⁶ Nevertheless, although some descriptions portray a horde of youngsters clamouring for work, the situation was probably not one of an oversupply of labour.¹⁷ Pairs, trios and quartets of golfers setting out at regular intervals over a 18 hole course demanded a large supply of bag carriers. This appears to be reflected in the pay rates, rates set by the club, not the golfer or the caddie. At large clubs it was possible for caddies to earn 15 shillings a week though 10 shillings (exclusive of Sunday work) was more normal. Tips and food allowances could raise this by three shillings.¹⁸ Such earnings provided a much needed injection of money into many local households.

Welfare Issues

Caddies were relatively well paid for what they did. A school leaver in Dorset could earn almost as much as his agricultural labouring father for significantly less effort and time.¹⁹ However, critics considered such earnings demoralising as they encouraged youths to have false expectations of future income whilst at the same time the nature of caddying, with few transferable skills, offered little gateway to other gainful skilled employment. For some, albeit a minority, there was a future in golf. Of the 19 leading British professional golfers between 1890 and 1914, at least 13 began their golfing careers as caddies.²⁰ Golfing folklore also suggests that many, if not most, club professionals were also introduced to the sport in this way. There is sufficient logic in this view to render it more than an invented tradition. They could absorb the skills of the game by watching practitioners; they were often given old clubs by their employers; and there was the possibility of patronage from members impressed by their ability in the caddie competitions organised by some clubs. Nevertheless, even under the most optimistic estimations, less than two per cent of caddies became club professionals. Others might secure apprenticeships as club-makers or, as at Mid-Surrey where the best caddies were also employed as greenmen, they might progress to green-keeping posts elsewhere.²¹ For most, however, caddying proved to be a dead end job. Once given notice by the clubs at age 16, as was often the practice especially after the coming of compulsory national insurance in 1912 for over 15s, they drifted into the ranks of unskilled labour or the unemployed.²²

The work itself was not arduous but it had to be undertaken in whatever weather golfers opted to play in and their costume may have been more suited to the elements than that of the caddies. Some clubs provided a shelter for caddies to wait in prior to beginning a round, but out on the course there was no protection from the wind or rain. Garden Smith argued that 'round London ... the average caddy is quite insufficiently clad and shod to stand the cold and wet of our metropolitan courses in winter.'²³ On wet days at Aldeburgh caddies were loaned capes, though this was designed to keep the clubs dry as well as those

16 Agenda Club (1912), 27.

17 Hutchinson, (1892), 304.

18 Golf Illustrated, 6 August 1909, 173; 13 August 1909, 197; Agenda Club (1912), 7.

19 Times, 27 July 1909, 19.

20 Vamplew (2008).

21 Golf Illustrated, 4 February 1910, 133.

22 Times 17 March 1909. See also the section below on government legislation.

23 Golf Illustrated, 4 March 1910, 213.

carrying them.²⁴ The survey carried out by the Agenda Club demonstrated that most clubs provided little in the way of comfortable shelter. Indeed shelters for caddies when supplied often had no form of heating, sanitation and were in the words of Owen Seaman, chair of the Agenda Club committee of enquiry, 'little better than a cattle shed'.²⁵ Even shelters could have an ulterior motive as at Cathkin Braes where one was erected in 1911 to stop the caddies hanging round the veranda of the clubhouse.²⁶

There was also a major moral issue. Whereas the boy labour issue was a work problem, the boy caddie issue was one of leisure. The caddie operated in a casual labour market where the demand for his services was dependent on the number of players on a particular day. Hence bad weather, transport disruptions and the change in seasons meant that there was no guarantee of employment.²⁷ Moreover, golfers tee off at intervals, so potential caddies could wait around for a while before picking up a bag. The Agenda Club estimated that up to two-thirds of their time at a club could be spent not involved in caddying activities leading to a situation where 'the regular caddie has about five hours' leisure five days a week, but nothing to do to fill them except idling or gambling'.²⁸ The adult caddies, with whom the boys spent waiting time, were not seen as a leavening influence. J Stuart Paton, secretary at Woking, believed 'the man loafer is unfortunately the standard type at so many clubs'; H.S. Colt, secretary at Sunningdale, concurred that 'the vast majority of men who act as caddies are inclined to belong to the loafing class'.²⁹

Some members may have felt that working on a Sunday was also a moral issue. Indeed the whole debate on playing golf on the Sabbath exercised golf clubs throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Although gradually the prohibitions were withdrawn, many clubs hedged their first ventures in Sunday play with a proscription on the employment of paid caddies, either absolutely or under certain ages, 18 was suggested at Copthorne.³⁰

Solutions?

At the micro level, individual clubs attempted to ameliorate the situation of their caddies via benevolent patronage, discipline, inculcating the habit of thrift and encouraging them to obtain education or training.

An annual treat was not uncommon. The West Lancashire Club put on a 'Caddies' Supper' in 1909, with hot pot, bun loaf and entertainment for 140 caddies, while in the same year Hesketh Golf Club entertained 70 caddies in a similar fashion.³¹ A few clubs built club houses for the caddies. At Mid-Surrey the caddie-master himself set one up in 1900,

24 O.F.T. (1982), 17.

25 Times, 12 November 1912, 16.

26 Crampsey (1988), 28.

27 Calculations based on three London clubs in 1910-11 show an average of 34.0% of rounds were played midweek, 29.9% on Saturdays and 36.1% on Sundays. Winter rounds accounted for around 20% of all rounds through the four seasons. Data from Agenda Club (1912), 22-23.

28 Agenda Club (1912), 129.

29 Golf Illustrated, 4 March 1910, 213; 30 July 1909, 149.

30 Lowerson (1984); Clark (1991), 13.

31 Golf Illustrated, 11 February 1910, 159.

originally on a very small scale and housed at the caddies' own expense. Eight years later the Mid-Surrey members replaced it with a large clubhouse costing £600. It opened all day and three nights a week with books and games provided, food available at a coffee bar, the occasional concert and, less popular, the odd lecture. Unusually this was managed by a committee of caddies.³² Thrift clubs were rarer. Sunning Park organised a penny bank under the Post Office Savings Bank (but only found eight depositors) and at Sheringham and Fulwell caddies were 'allowed' to bank a penny from the fee of each round.³³

Disciplining young caddies was regarded as a way of increasing moral fibre. Most, if not all, clubs appointed a caddie master - sometimes yet another role for the professional - to organise and regulate the use of caddies by taking bookings from members and allocating caddies to players. This served to control the mass of casual labour seeking work but also allowed the clubs to ensure that the caddies did their job correctly, both in terms of due diligence and due respect. Fines were levied for bad behaviour and for losing balls. At some clubs the money was collected and given as prizes in caddie golf competitions, as Christmas boxes or to those junior caddies who had the best school attendance. Some clubs insisted that caddies worked on the course or undertook gardening around the club house to fill in their waiting time, for which at Woking and Pyecombe they received an additional small payment.³⁴ This inculcated habits of discipline and industry and, as the club secretary acknowledged, the club benefited from this cheap on-course labour.³⁵ Bramall Park was not untypical in warning caddies that they risked downgrading or suspension if they broke the working rules. The ultimate sanction was dismissal which could occur as at Axe Cliff for 'continued bad and obscene language'.³⁶ Caddies at the Stirling Golf Club were unusual in that they had to seek an annual licence from the local magistrates but were not untypical in being required to be 'decently clothed and strictly sober' and to conduct themselves 'at all times in a proper, civil, and decorous manner'.³⁷ If they misbehaved at the course or appeared in court for any offences, they could forfeit their licence; elsewhere summary dismissal was always an option.

Education and training were seen in some quarters as the way forward for the caddie. Sunningdale, with the indefatigable H.S. Colt at the helm, developed a two-pronged strategy. First they organised their own evening classes, initially in carpentry and clubmaking, but later, in conjunction with the local authority who had responsibility for the provision of public education in the county, also in 'rural science' which covered the basics of horticulture. The boys had to attend for a couple of hours at least twice a week for 20 weeks in the winter months. Attendance was aided by the inducement of a 'good tea'. Secondly, via a register of caddy interests, they encouraged members to find employment for the boys in jobs such as gardening, stable work and even driving.³⁸ Princes (Mitcham) was one of the first to insist that its caddies received some form of education and from 1890 it required them to attend evening school at least two nights a week. Several other clubs either en-

32 Agenda Club (1912), 66, 106.

33 Agenda Club (1912), 68-69.

34 Times, 12 November 1912, 16; 30 December 1908, 17.

35 Golf Illustrated, 4 March 1910, 213.

36 Knowles & Tait (1994), 72; Thomas (1993), 9.

37 Minutes of Magistrates of Royal Burgh of Stirling, 29 December 1909, minute 321, Stirling Council Archives. I am grateful to Miss M Noble for this reference.

38 Golf Illustrated, 20 August 1909, 221; Times, 27 July 1909, 19.

couraged or made such attendance compulsory.³⁹ At Purley Downs when caddies became 14, they had to select a trade and attend relevant evening classes three times a week from September to April (thereafter they were too busy caddying on the lighter nights). This was financed by a levy of a penny a round on members.⁴⁰ Education authorities in Eastbourne, Croydon and Folkstone among others made arrangements with local golf clubs.⁴¹ Certainly in latter case boys were also expected to contribute financially. Some classes were those open to the general public; more useful were those specially planned for the caddies of a particular club. One problem was that many opted to be trained in club-making, thus leading to an oversupply of labour in what was, thanks to increasing mechanisation, a declining sector of employment.⁴²

An exemplar among clubs was Royal Birkdale which set up an advanced welfare scheme for caddies in 1908 with the aim of providing material and spiritual welfare for the boys and to find employment for them where possible. The Birkdale Club Caddie Boys' Association did not allow the boys to gamble or smoke in the clubhouse, but the building did include a games' room, a gymnasium and facilities for the boys to have a bath. The club was also given clothes, games and books by Birkdale members, and the boys had singing and bootmaking lessons. The boys paid a penny per week and could have a bath for a further penny. The club leased premises for the scheme, employing the caddie-master as resident caretaker as it 'secured more control over the boys'.⁴³

Caddies at Sunningdale, Birkdale and the like were fortunate as these clubs were rich with large memberships. At Sunningdale the members raised £1000 to provide a building for the evening classes and a recreational room for the caddies.⁴⁴ Moreover, they had energetic individuals such as H.S. Colt who were prepared to devote themselves to the cause of caddie improvement. Other clubs might have similarly zealous secretaries but their resources were limited and much less could be offered to the caddies. Some found their effectiveness diminished by being tolerated by the general committee of the club rather than actively supported.⁴⁵

At the macro level, the first documented instance of collective concern for caddies, as distinct from that by particular clubs or individuals, came when an article about forming a caddies association appeared in *The Times* in 1906. The initiative appears to have come from Sherard Cowper-Coles, the inventor of a process to coat the heads of clubs, who had received a large number of letters from golf club secretaries. Each registered caddie was to pay an annual subscription of 2s 6d (about a quarter of a normal week's wages); help would be given to deserving cases and, where possible, employment found for those abandoning caddying. The executive committee was to consist of six or more secretaries of golf clubs: it is important to note that golf clubs were attempting to regulate the caddies, not help caddies organise themselves.

This organisation did not get off the ground, but eventually the Caddies Aid Society (CAS) was formed in the summer of 1911 and was supported by the Agenda Club which

39 Agenda Club (1912), 70-80.

40 Golf Illustrated, 30 April 1909, 184.

41 Times, 15 September 1909, 20; 18 December 1909, 7; 20 July 1910, 22; Golf Illustrated, 12 November 1909, 175.

42 Golf Illustrated, 4 February 1910, 133.

43 Agenda Club (1912), 119; Johnson (1988), 22-25.

44 Times, 16 December 1909, 6.

45 Times, 4 February 1914, 13.

gave it free use of office space.⁴⁶ Among the patrons were politicians Bonar Law and Balfour, both avid golfers. The originator was Mark Allerton, editor of the *World of Golf*, and the driving force came from the secretaries of Sunningdale, Walton Heath and Mid Surrey, all of whom had already made their own attempts to ameliorate the problem.⁴⁷ Early meetings included representatives from the Central Bureau of the Labour Exchange, the Board of Trade and the Apprenticeships and Skilled Labour Association. No caddies were invited to speak: indeed it is not apparent that caddies ever attended the meetings.

The Caddies Aid Committee (CAC), a joint offspring of the CAS and the Agenda Club, set up regional committees to produce reports on working conditions, post-caddying prospects, and ways of improving both.⁴⁸ Meetings discussed best practice and members suggested petitions to the Development Fund of the Board of Agriculture and the establishment of 'Care Committees' at each golf club.⁴⁹ All to little avail. Although by 1913 it was claimed that 25 'well-known' clubs had adopted schemes in the interests of caddies as recommended by the CAC, this was not a high proportion of all clubs and not even half of the limited number 60 [of 560 who had been appealed to] that had subscribed five shillings towards the publication debts of the Committee.⁵⁰

Government Legislation

An aggravating factor in the caddy labour market was the introduction of compulsory national insurance in 1912 as part of the Liberal Government's social welfare policy. All workers aged 16 or over and their employers had to make contributions to funds which were to provide unemployment and medical benefits. Legally the clubs, not individual players, were the employers of caddies, and thus all liabilities and responsibilities in connection with the Act devolved upon them. Clubs responded by either adding a penny per round to the usual booking fee or not employing caddies once they reached the age of 16 and became subject to the legislation. Both the Atherstone and Northumberland clubs decided not to issue badges to caddies over 16 and Royal Eastbourne discharged all its caddies above 16.⁵¹ At Cathkin Braes such a decision led to the unintended consequence of increased truancy from schoolboy caddies and an angry rebuke from the School Board.⁵²

The last three decades of the nineteenth century were a period in which childhood was progressively lengthened as compulsory full-time schooling, introduced in 1870, replaced wage-earning as the accepted activity for many children.⁵³ The age to which a child had to attend school had been first set at 10, raised to 11 in 1893 and to 12 in 1899 though the latter was disregarded in many rural areas as recalcitrant employers and needy parents conspired to thwart enforcement.⁵⁴ The demand for boy bag carriers by members of golf

46 *Golf Illustrated*, 21 March 1913, 17.

47 *Times*, 20 May 1911, 15.

48 *Times*, 4 February 1914, 13; 17 November 1911, 15; 28 November 1911, 11.

49 *Times*, 17 November 1911, 15; 28 November 1911, 11.

50 *Times*, 18 March 1913, 13; 9 December 1913, 15. *Golf Illustrated*, 21 March 1913, 17.

51 *Times*, 4 July 1912, 15; *Minutes of Atherstone Golf Club*, June 1912.

52 Crampsey (1988), 28.

53 Hendrick (1997), 63; Hopkins (1994), 231.

54 Hurt (1979), 188, 201; Horn (1978), 266.

clubs was ‘a great temptation to poor parents’ looking to supplement the family income⁵⁵; so much so that in 1902 Chief Inspector Willis of the school inspectorate reported on ‘children of nine, eight and even seven years old having been employed to drag clubs round the links.’⁵⁶ Eventually, however, particularly following the 1902 Education Act, school boards increasingly intervened and clubs had to employ boy caddies outside school hours; some clubs opted only to employ school children at weekends and school holidays.⁵⁷ Yet the prohibition was far from absolute. Even though their head teachers were golf enthusiasts, Gullane and Dirleton schools in East Lothian were probably not unusual in either allowing students leave to carry bags at the local club or simply closing the school at times of major competitions. However, this ceased in 1910 after visits from the school attendance officer.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, in the immediate pre-war years about half the children in elementary schools left between the ages of 12 and 14.⁵⁹ Those near a golf club did not have to look far for immediate employment. Almost 4% of all boys leaving elementary schools in Southport became golf caddies and at Churchtown School, close to Hesketh Golf Club, the figure was 28% of the 25 leavers.⁶⁰

Gender

The extent of female involvement is unknown but was probably insignificant relative to males. Women as cooks or cleaners raised no issues at golf clubs, not so females carrying golf bags for members. Some clubs, such as Reigate Heath in 1902, specifically banned their employment.⁶¹ Others operated an unwritten discriminatory policy. Yet there were exceptions. The first mention of regular girl caddies seems to have been at Guernsey in 1890, though one golf historian claims that girls replaced striking male caddies for six weeks at Gullane in Scotland around 1870. From about 1890 too, four years after the club was founded, Lytham and St Annes employed girls, though they had to be over 14 and could carry only for lady members. By 1897, however, they could caddy for men and at the Autumn meeting that year girl caddies outnumbered boys.⁶² Girls were also caddying at Newquay in 1901 and at Huntercombe in Oxfordshire and several Yorkshire courses prior to the First World War. Nevertheless they were uncommon enough for comments to be made in *Golf Illustrated* about the fashion for girl caddies at some continental clubs.⁶³ Moreover, girl caddies were not mentioned in the Agenda Club report. Possibly carrying a bag of clubs around the course was seen as being too heavy work for girls, but many members of clubs had no hesitation in employing young children for hard domestic work in their households. It might be that girls were supposed to do work indoors or around the

55 *Golf Illustrated*, 23 July 1909, 125.

56 *General Reports of H.M. Inspectors of Elementary Schools for the Year 1902*, 106. Cited in Horn (1978), 268.

57 Davies (1991), 122.

58 Cox (1996), 13-15.

59 Hurt (1979), 188.

60 Foster (1996), 107

61 Sheldon (1982), 43.

62 Nickson (1986), 97-99.

63 Stirk, (1989), 112-113, 115; Adams (1984), 19; *Golf Illustrated*, 25 July, 4 July, 24 October 1913; 13 March, 31 July 1914.

house not in the fields or elsewhere outside. Possibly too it had something to do with the perceived disreputable nature of those who caddied, particularly adult males, and a desire to keep females protected from their influence.⁶⁴

Conclusion

Unlike today, where social concern over child employment is a matter both of protecting children and also of acknowledging their rights, in Edwardian Britain the emphasis was on protection. However, child welfare in golf remained a voluntary rather than a legislative commitment, dependent on the individual club. Thus provision was sporadic and certainly not comprehensive. Some individual clubs took action to ameliorate the position of their caddies, hoping to avoid short-term idleness and longer-term unemployment. The boy's club was a success at Mid-Surrey; the value of discipline in obtaining later employment was proved at Woking; the provision of land on the course for the boys to grow and sell produce worked at Hanger Hill; evening classes were attended even when not compulsory at Sunningdale; the boys' spare time was used in a workshop at Fulwell; and the boys benefited from a clothing club at Birkdale. The problem was not only to persuade others to emulate these pioneers but for all clubs to develop the strands into a remedial package. As the Agenda Club enquiry put it: 'the parts having been successfully demonstrated, the whole should not be an impossibility'.⁶⁵ Unfortunately that proved to be the case.

Appeals to clubs and their members to act on the caddie issue were made by calling on their 'sense of duty' towards the boys and towards the nation and Empire, but these did not stir many to action.⁶⁶ Even in the progressive clubs it was a minority of members who voluntarily gave financial aid and an even smaller number who actually did anything practical.⁶⁷ Perhaps many members felt their social conscience had been salved by the tips they gave the boys, amounts 'often excessive and out of all proportion to the work done to obtain them'.⁶⁸

Two caveats should be made. First, no attention seems to have been given to girl caddies, either because of their relative insignificance or because, unlike some of the boys, they had no future in golf. Second, there is the question of geography. A distinction may have to be made between 'those clubs near great centres of population' and those in the provinces where there was a dominant local industry such as in mining or seafaring areas where caddying was a stop gap until proper age and strength had been attained. Elsewhere, Garden Smith also accepted that in rural areas 'caddying offers a start in life to a poor lad'.⁶⁹ Whatever their gender or location, all caddies lacked power in the master-servant relationship of golf club employment, but additionally child caddies also experienced the impotence of the age relationship. Others, always older people, made decisions for them.

64 Agenda Club (1912), 9.

65 Agenda Club (1912), 144-145.

66 Times, 27 July 1909, 19; 12 November 1912, 16; Agenda Club (1912), 68, 89, 118; Pars Minima (1910), 21.

67 Agenda Club (1912), 16.

68 Agenda club (1912), 9.

69 Agenda Club (1912), 38; Golf Illustrated, 27 August 1909, 245.

Clearly the child caddie suffered if the Convention on the Rights of the Child drafted by the United Nations in 1989 is applied retrospectively. There was no way in which the golf clubs or members followed the principle that the best interests of the child should be of primary concern.⁷⁰ Yet by contemporary standards caddies were not exploited economically. Although they were often competing with adults in the caddie labour market, pay differentials and job opportunities generally reflected knowledge and experience, not age. The introduction of National Insurance actually led to positive discrimination in favour of younger caddies but the increased enforcement of education legislation limited its impact on those still at school. Annual earnings were more than in most 'blind alley' jobs and the amount of time actually spent working much less. For boys the earnings were good but there was concern that this gave them a false view of life and led many not to prepare for the years after caddying. Non-wage rewards were less generous with generally inadequate provision of food, shelter and sanitary arrangements. Some commentators saw possible health and moral problems in that the boys were often hanging round the club in all weathers waiting for employment, but, worse than this, was it might be done in the company of adult males who, except at long-established clubs, were regarded as men of dubious character. 'Loafing habits' could be acquired while waiting for employment 'under insufficient supervision and in an uncivilised environment.'⁷¹

If Edwardian caddying is assessed using the International Labour Organisation's seven major characteristics of child labour, on virtually no count can it be classed as child labour in the pejorative sense.⁷² They were certainly not working for very little pay nor working excessively long hours. Despite the temperament of some golfers and the severe strictures of some caddie-masters, generally the caddy could not be categorised as either working under physical, social or psychological strain or being subject to intimidation. Nor did the job lack stimulation (except possibly at times when waiting for a bag) or carry too much responsibility. Although the conditions out on the course could be climatically uncomfortable, even unhealthy at times, they were not working on the streets in generally unwholesome and dangerous conditions. Whether they were working too young is a subjective judgement, though ultimately school-age children were restricted in their hours and days of employment. Hence caddying in Edwardian Britain seems much closer to child work than to child labour. Perhaps an appropriate way to regard child caddying is to utilise Hedenborg's dichotomy between work activities that are socialising and those that are instrumental.⁷³ The goal of the former is to educate the child in some way: for some caddies this occurred in that they acquired golf-specific skills which helped them progress to become clubmakers or club professionals. For the majority of caddies, however, their work clearly sat in the instrumental category being undertaken out of an economic need to enhance the family income.

70 David (2005), 26-27.

71 *Agenda Club* (1912), 33.

72 ILO (1992), 14.

73 Hedenborg (2007), 107-108.

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