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## **Decreasing experiences of home range, outdoor spaces, activities and companions: changes across three generations in Sheffield in north England**

### **Abstract**

Home range is commonly understood to be the distance from home that children are allowed to go in the outdoor environment with the term being used within various academic disciplines. Different factors influence children's home range including traffic, age, parental fears and understandings of what it means to be a good parent. Research addressing home range over different generations has identified a context of changes in the built environment, demography and technology. This paper reports results from three generations of two families in Sheffield in the north of England and confirms a reduction in four major domains: home range, variety of outdoor spaces visited; range of activities undertaken and the number of companions.

### **Defining home range**

The concept and term home range has been used for over forty years, originated from the field of environmental psychology (Gaster, 1995) and is generally understood as a mechanism to describe children's engagement with their outdoor environment. Some have suggested that home range is 'the distance children travel away from their home in the course of their outdoor play and leisure pursuits' (Matthews, 1992 p ) or that it is 'the sum of children's independent, voluntary encounters with the world centring on the dwelling' (Gaster, 1995,p35). Taking an understanding relating more to frequency of use Moore and Young (1978) suggested the terms habitual, frequented and occasional range. Hart identified that home range was often not imposed by parents but was 'a product of negotiation and understanding between parent and child' (Hart, 1979, p. 46). He recognised the complexity of the concept and suggested three sub-headings of *free range*, *range with permission* and *range with permission and with other children*. It is this complex definition that forms the basis of the research reported in this paper.

The term home range seemed to fall out of use in academic discourse being replaced, to some extent, by studies about what is now called Children's Independent Mobility (CIM) with the research of Hillman et al. (1990) leading in this area. This has been followed by others exploring activity range, territorial range, daily contact space, distances children travel and places children travel to (see e.g. Spilsbury, 2005; Mackett et al., 2007; Tranter and Sharpe, 2012, Villaneuva et al. 2012).

## **Factors influencing home range**

Factors influencing home range can be numerous and complex depending on more than one factor (Spilsbury, 2005). Moore (1989) identified a series of physical and social fears as influencing children's home range. The major physical fear relates to increased levels of traffic (Outley and Floyd, 2002; Karsten, 2005; Skår and Krough, 2009). Indeed parental fear of traffic accidents coupled with the changing availability of streets as a play space can result in children being taken in a car to a play space further away (Tandy, 1999; Karsten, 2005). Parental anxieties about children's safety and the changing nature of childhood, rather than the level of public provision of play facilities, has been identified as one major influence on children's access to independent outdoor play (Valentine and McKendrick, 1997). These parental perceptions can be influenced by the time of year or day, knowledge of local incidents and parents own social and cultural values and the media (Valentine, 1997; Spilsbury, 2005). The culture of fear results in parents basing decisions on an over-estimation of risk (Spilsbury, 2005) and the view that children are not competent enough to negotiate public space and will not recognise danger (Valentine, 1997).

Gender can have an effect on home range (Hart, 1979; Webley, 1981; Matthews 1987; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; Tandy, 1999; Spilsbury, 2005) with a common understanding that boys are allowed a greater range than girls (Hart, 1978; Spilsbury, 2005) The work of Villanueva *et al.* (2012) suggested that for girls home range increased if their parents were confident that they could travel independently. Bicycle ownership has sometimes been studied alongside gender (Tandy, 1999; Anderson and Tindal, 1972) with home range being smaller for girls than boys owning a bicycle (Anderson and Tindal, 1972). Age too can influence home range as children grow and become more competent users of their outdoor environment (Anderson and Tindal, 1972; Hart, 1979; Moore and Young, 1978; Matthews, 1987; Spilsbury, 2005).

It has been suggested that parental models of what it means to be a 'good' or 'competent' parent over the generations have changed; 'producing distinct local parenting cultures and common sense

understandings of local geographies of risk' (Valentine, 1997, p.73). Some mothers reported that they experience pressure to impose restrictions and chaperone children in order to be perceived as a 'good' parent by their peers, while other mothers felt pressured by their peers to grant their child more spatial freedom (Valentine, 1997). Others have suggested that a contemporary understanding of a 'good' parent is one that focuses on protection rather than independence (Spencer and Blades, 2006).

### **Changing home range and its consequences**

Children's home range has been described as a 'transforming mechanism through which children interact with and learn about their local environment' (Spilsbury, 2005, p.81). However various studies have shown that home range for contemporary children in some parts of the world is reducing compared with that of previous generations (Spilsbury, 2005; Karsten, 2005; Kinoshita, 2009; Skar and Krogh, 2009).

The consequences of children's home range being reduced and limited are various and can have an impact on a range of physical and social skills including a child's natural mapping skills; a child's freedom to move without restraint in the outdoor environment (Blaut and Stea, 1974); a decreased sense of autonomy (Rissotto and Tonucc, 2002; Spilsbury, 2005) and decreased freedom to expand social networks, particularly relationships within the neighbourhood outside the family circle (Karsten, 2005; Spilsbury, 2005; Villanueva *et al*, 2012). Autonomy is a key to the acquisition of spatial skills, therefore the development of these skills can be hindered if children cannot move independently in the outdoor environment (Rissotto and Tonucc, 2002).

### **Home range over different generations**

Home range and children's use of the external environment over multiple generations has been specifically explored in research in different parts of the world: New York in USA (Gaster, 1991), Newcastle in Australia (Tandy, 1999); Amsterdam in the Netherlands (Karsten, 2005); Brumunddal in Norway (Skar and Krogh, 2009) and Tokyo in Japan (Kinoshita, 2009). These pieces of research are

set in disparate geographic locations covering, albeit in a sporadic manner, almost 100 years. They each acknowledge changing contexts in the *built environment*, *demography*, and *technology*. They also set context for this research by variously drawing attention to the reduction in a range of issues across the generations including: home range, types of spaces visited, activities children undertake and other children to do activities with. Some of this research also address changes in modes of travel with a reduction in walking and bicycling over time being accompanied by an increased use of the car to take children to specific locations and activities: described as 'the back seat generation' (Larsten, 2005 p286).

### **Rationale and Methodology**

In June 2007 a national newspaper printed an article entitled *How children lost the right to roam in four generations* (Daily Mail, 2007). The newspaper article reported findings of research undertaken with four generations of one family on the eastern side of Sheffield, a city in the north of England. The article stated that when the great grandfather was 8, in 1926, he regularly walked six miles without adult supervision, to go fishing: his family could not afford a bike, his home was small and crowded and he spent much time outdoors. The grandfather, aged 8 in 1950, was allowed to walk one mile to local woods and to school. In 1979, when the mother was 8, she rode her bicycle around the housing estate where she lived, played with friends in the park and walked both to school and the swimming pool. Her son, the fourth generation, does not spend much time outside in the garden or quiet street that they live in and is driven to school in the car, so that his mother could get to work on time. Embedded in this newspaper article was a map indicating the home range of the individuals in the four generations of this family. Two things are striking. First, that the recent child has no real experience of home range and outdoor activities. Second, clearly evident from the map, is that the greatest change in home range was not recent but was between the great grandfather and the grandfather: from 6 miles down to 1 mile, in about 1950. As far as I have been able to determine the information in this newspaper article was never published in any other form.

The aim of this study was to explore home range over several generations in this eastern area of Sheffield. The study was supported by a SURE (Sheffield University Research Experience) award allowing a student to work on this project in the summer of 2012. An ethics review was undertaken and a small thank you present of chocolates that was given to each participant was gratefully received.

Potential participants were identified and contacted through schools where some pupils were engaged in a project (Living with Nature) with which the author is involved. Originally it was hoped to identify families with four generations still living in the eastern side of Sheffield but this was not possible within the timescale and resources. One grandparent, parent and child from each of two families agreed to be involved and were interviewed. The interviews took place either at the participants' home or on neutral territory at a local community centre. Grandparents and parents were interviewed separately from each other. The children were interviewed with their parent present. This had not been the original intention but each child was reticent not to have their parent present and each parent wanted to stay while their child was interviewed. This approach was respected but it is understood that the presence of a parent might have influenced each child's response.

Semi-structured interviews were supported by the use of large local historic maps dated as close as possible to the dates of the childhood of the individual person being interviewed. Such maps can help interviewees to focus on the 'spatial dimensions of childhood' (Karsten, 2005, p.279). The interviewees were asked to point out places where they had free range, could go without permission, and places where they could go with permission on the map. In addition they were asked to identify where they were not allowed to go.

Interview tools were developed appropriate to whether the interviewee was a grandparent, parent or child but with a similar structure and changes to wording only as required to reflect the different generations. The question tool was structured to explore Hart's (1979) three concepts of free range, range with permission, and range with permission and with other children. Wording was made

accessible, not using the term home range, but expressed in language such as, 'without having to ask permission or tell someone'. Embedded within each of the three sections was a series of questions, informed by the literature, including: What did/do you do there? Who did/do you go with? Who arranged(s) for you to go there? How long did/do you stay? How often did/do you go? What season did/do you go? Does the weather change whether you go there? Within each section the tool allowed for the interviewee to answer these questions for several locations if they wanted to. The literature revealed that the use of bicycles as well as walking was sometimes mentioned in research about home range and so it was decided to take this into account in the interviews.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Analysis was undertaken by reading text to identify key themes. A series of tables were developed in order to provide a suitable mechanism for understanding the responses within the families, between the generations and between the families. The use of software was not considered to be appropriate for this sample size.

### **Study area and participants**

The area studied is on the urban rural fringe to the south east of Sheffield, a northern English city, now with a population of about 500,000. The study area consisted of farmland and mining villages in the county of Derbyshire until 1967 when the villages were moved into the City of Sheffield (Sheffield City Council, 2011). From the 1960s general trends of increasing urbanisation were accompanied by improved housing conditions, a reduction in farming and mining, an increasing population which has remained predominantly white British, changes in traffic including the construction of a major A class road built between 1980 and 1990. Today the area is still surrounded by some open countryside to the south and east.

Interviewees were a grandparent, parent and child from each of two families. The ages of the participants in family one were 62, in their 30s and 6 (all female) while the ages of those in family two were 56, 34 (both female) and 10 (male). As children the two grandparents lived about 500m

from each other. Thus the proximity of their homes and ages means that the physical landscape and external environment they were brought up in was very similar in the early 1960s and before the major A class road was built. The subsequent families all lived and continue to live within the same eastern area of the city and the stories told by the parents relate to the 1980s while those of the children, both born since 2000, relate to the early part of this century. In the following text the interviewees from one family will be referred to as grandparent one, parent one, child one and those from the other family will be referred to as grandparent two, parent two and child two.

### **Individual experiences of home range**

The paper now goes on to report the stories of the six interviewees commencing with the grandparent before moving on to the parent and the child. Experiences of family one will be followed by those of family two. The findings are then brought together into two tables: relating to experiences *without asking parental permission* (Table 1) and *asking parental permission* (Table 2).

#### *Grandparent one*

Grandparent one recalls visiting six different locations *without having to ask permission*. These were identified as being up to 3 kilometres from home with individual home ranges of 1.6, 1.8, 2.75 and 3 kilometres from home being recalled, measured in a direct line. The closest location was the housing area around where they lived. Here they would play out on the road, on the grass outside an uncle's house, and played roller skating, hop scotch, walking around the estate and going around on their bikes. These activities would be undertaken with friends and people they met whom they knew from school, would take place weekly and might be undertaken for two hours. Three other locations were between 1.5 and 2 kilometres from home. All these were places that would be visited with friends and decisions to go there were expressed as being made, '*as the mood took us*' or by a discussion about, '*where shall we go today*'. One of these locations was recalled as being visited every other week in the summer. At the time of the grandparent's childhood the location was fields with no paths and so access at other times of the year was not easy. The fields also included a stream which provided



opportunities for fishing and visits to this location were recalled as being two hours in length. Another of the locations within this was visited not very often and referred to as, '*a summer job*' and was walked to because it was '*too hilly to go on the bike*'. Again friends were the journeying companions and it would take two to three hours to get, '*there and back*'. The third location in this range was again visited with friends and remembered as being visited once a month. The grandparent recalled, '*there was nothing else to do so we just used to get on bikes and go down the fields to different places*'. The fifth location was 2.75 kilometres from home and was an aunt's house which was visited about monthly. The grandparent recalled going by themselves on the bus, '*because it was too hilly*', staying for a day and playing with their cousin. The sixth location visited was 3 kilometres from home. This was an occasional expedition with their older brother and they would, '*just agree to go for a bike ride . . . there were some good roads to ride on*'. '*We went around and came all the way back . . . we didn't stay there*'. This happened in the summer and autumn but '*we wouldn't have gone in the winter, not on bikes . . . because it was cold . . . didn't have all those things you can wear on bikes*'. Some of these activities and journeys were limited to specific times of year, partly because of weather and the resultant conditions on the ground.

Grandparent one recalled two locations that they were allowed to go with when *asking permission*. The first of these locations was another relative's home and they would go either alone or with their brother and by bike or bus, spending a day there. The other location was town and this would be a journey with a friend, travelling on a bus and spending half a day there. Both of these activities were not weather dependent and took place anytime being arranged by the child and brother or friend.

When asked if there was anywhere they were *not allowed to go* the grandparent of family one said there was not while stating '*we weren't very adventurous*' and '*if we were on our bike you (parents) never know where we were. So no . . . always used to come home for something to eat*'.

*Parent one*

The parent in family one was allowed to visit four locations *without asking permission*. All four locations were about half a kilometre from home. The first location was the park which was right next to their house. They would go with friends, their younger brother and cousins and meet friends from the estate, *'you would always know somebody'*. They would visit the park at least five times a week and *'we used to be there for hours. We used to go after school and at weekends, there was a big football pitch on there as well so there wasn't just slides and the swings. We used to take a ball and like I'd said there would be loads of other kids so you would start a game with them as well'*.

Although they did not have to ask permission to go to this nearby park the parent admitted that, *'we just went . . . me mum and dad would always know we be on that park, they only needed to look out the window and they would see us there'*. The second location was *'all sorts of little paths around the housing estate'* where bicycle was the mode of transport. The third location was the middle school playground. *'Before they put all the fencing in to keep you off, you could go on there at night and weekends and stuff so we used to go there and play'*. The fourth destination was an aunt and uncle's house, again reached by bicycle. This was done without official permission. *'I'd never used to tell my mum that I was there but just get on our bike and ride. That road is quite a busy road now but it wasn't busy then. But we weren't allowed to cross that road'*.

The parent of family one was allowed to go to one location *with permission* and had to ask to go because, *'you gotta go across to . . . Lane and right over the other end'*. The location was the shops which were 250 metres from home. Visits would take place a couple of times a week with their brother and friends, meeting other people there who were, *'doing exactly the same'*. *'We would just go up and get what we wanted (from the shops) then come back again cause we were usually on our bikes as well so we would have a little detour on the way back down we might ride down . . . Lane'*.

This activity would take place in any weather and at any time of year.

There were two locations that the parent from family one was *not allowed to go to*. The first was an adjacent housing area: the Lane to it was split in two because a road had been built through it. The

parent was not allowed to go because their parents felt it was, '*just too far and it were quite a busy road as well*'. When asked if they agreed with their parents about this they replied. '*oh yeah, yeah*'. The parent admitted that they had disobeyed and gone to this location and when asked why responded, '*ummm probably peer pressure, because other friends said they were going up there and they wouldn't be allowed up there either. It was sort of a dare really*'. They admitted, '*We wouldn't actually go into . . . we would just ride our bikes straight down the Lane and we sort of got a really good run up cause it were quite steep you see*'. They reported that they did not stay but returned because they were scared that their parents would find out that they had been to this location. The second location recalled as being somewhere that the parent was not allowed to go to was, '*through this council estate which were pretty rough on there so it were really quiet and there wasn't anybody on there*'. In admitting that they had been there the parent stated, '*my cousin took me there once and I didn't want to go and she wasn't allowed either. She was egging me on being like go on you will be alright. But I really, really didn't like it, I knew I shouldn't be up there. But different from . . . Lane, I just didn't like it*'. This only happened once or twice.

Further exploration about cycling revealed that there were no different parental controls for cycling than for other activities. However the parent revealed that the estate they lived in was quite big so they could cycle quite a long way if they wanted to anyway and that this and the park next to their home meant, '*I could be out for hours sometimes*'.

#### *Child one*

The child of family one was not allowed to go anywhere *without permission*.

There was only one location that the child of family one was allowed to go to *with permission*. This was the home of a friend which was 25 metres, or three doors away in the cul-de-sac where the child lives. These two children visit each other's homes '*quite a lot, about four times a week*' and may stay for up to a couple of hours. Visits tend to occur across the year with weekend being perceived as

longer than those in the weekday which are after school and usually ended by the need to return home for tea. These children do not go with anyone else, except a parent, to the other's house and only play with each other, not with other children. Sometimes the two children play on their scooters on the other child's drive and sometimes the child plays with his friend in the latter's garden on their trampoline. The parent commented that they watch until their child is inside the friend's house.

There were two places that the child of family one was explicitly *not allowed to go to*. The first was the shops. The parent, note not the child, commented, '*it's too far . . . could not bear not being able to see where she is. I think she is far too young to do anything like that*'. The child was also not allowed to visit their grandma by themselves. The child stated this was because it was too far but again the parent made comment, '*what about the busy main road? It's a really nasty one isn't it?*'.

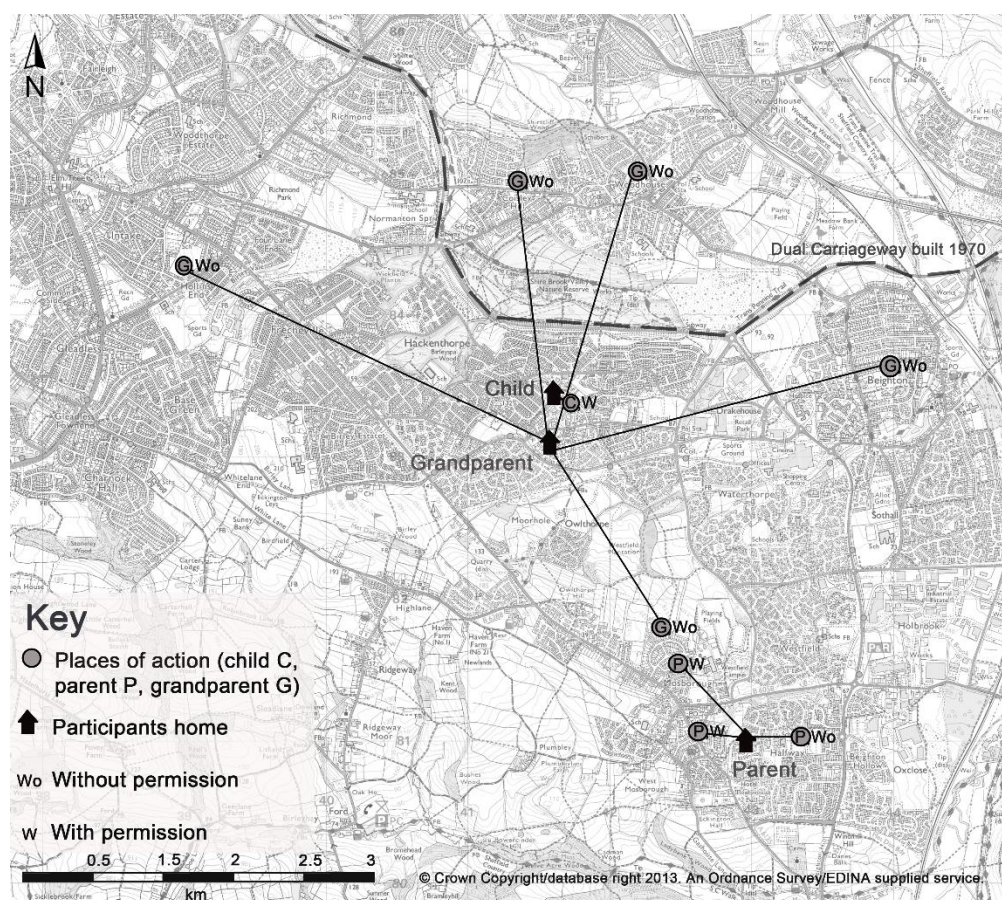
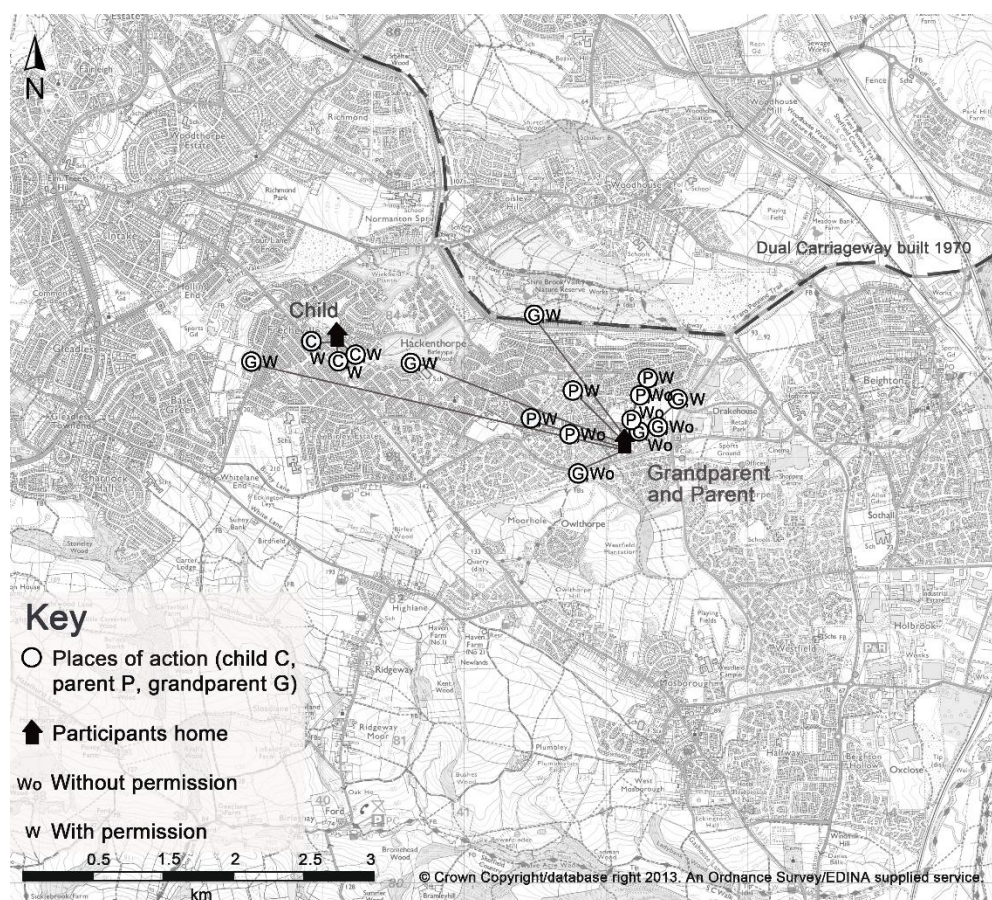


Figure 1: Home range for grandparent, parent and child of family one

The discussion moved on to places that could not be reached by walking or are considered by the parent to be, 'quite a way away'. A range of parks were mentioned where the child is taken to visit in the car. This included the 'little park' where the parent used to play. Two other parks and a country park were mentioned as being visited by car, rather than on foot or by bicycle. One of these parks is a destination park in the city. The child is very enthusiastic about this location. A local nature reserve is also mentioned as somewhere that is visited quite regularly on visits from school.



**Figure 2: Home range for grandparent, parent and child of family two**

### *Grandparent two*

Grandparent two identified three different locations that they were allowed to visit *without asking permission*. The first location was the school playing field which was about 340 metres from home. They would go with four or five friends from school and meet others there. 'it was a bit of a meeting place because there were other kids that used to come from that (the other) side of road'. The

decision to go to this location was made by themselves, *'we all used to say from school, oh we'll meet up on the field'*. This would be *'nearly every night'* in any season and the length of stay would be up to a couple of hours. They would play rounders, cricket and run across the fields. *'If it did rain we would nip across the road to the shop'*. The second location, slightly further away at just over 400 metres from home, was the bluebell wood. They would go with friends from school but not meet anyone else there and would go a couple of times a week staying for about an hour or so. *'A group of us just used to . . . you know have a bit of a walk up to the bluebell wood but in them days you could pick them . . . and there were a bridge, we used to go playing on the bridge'*. The third location the grandparent was allowed to visit without permission was the shops, just over a kilometre from home. *'We would all just say oh shall we go there?'* and a group of friends from school would go and sometimes they would meet others from school. They would go about once a week, at any time of the year and stay about half an hour. *'We used to go there and watch the traffic go up and down the street . . . watch traffic go up and down. We used to sit on the end of the (road) sign. We just used to sit there, you know chatting'*.

Grandparent two reported that there were three locations about 1.5 kilometres from home that they had to *ask permission to go to*. One was a nearby brook and in the grandparent's childhood the big road had not been built. They used to go with and meet school friends and they would congregate on the bridge *'just chucking stones and things in the water'*. Sometimes they would meet children from another area there, *'you know there was a bit of a war going on (between children from the two different areas)'*. They would visit here about once a week and stay for a couple of hours at any time of the year. Another location where permission was required before visiting was another wood and about twenty people would go there together nearly every day when they were not in school. When asked who arranged it the grandparent replied it was, *'just the done thing'*. *'Sometimes there were older kids there as well, you know and one or two of the girls liked the older boys'*. One attraction of this area was the pond and another was the fact that the location was secluded. *'It were a good meeting place. I think it were because it were a bit secluded, er ok and you could have got up to*

*anything. But you know somebody would snitch on you. Some kids did light fires there and we knew they shouldn't have done, but you don't bother when you are that age do you? You don't snitch on your mates'*. Grandparent one reported that they went here at different times of the year. If it was raining they could shelter under the trees but they would not go there if it was snowing because '*you could have fell into the pond*'. The third location visited with permission and about 1.5 kilometres from home was just before a dam area where there were large sewage pipes on the ground, which the grandparent reported are still there now. About half a dozen people would go once a week and they would not meet anyone else there. They would sit on one end of the pipe and shuffle down to the other end, negotiating who would go on each pipe and racing to get to the other end. '*If it were raining we would not stop long because I would be falling off – it would be too slippery. Some of us used to walk on them, others used to shuffle*'. The final location mentioned as needing permission to visit was an indoor one: the youth club nearly 3 kilometres from home which they walked to '*roughly twice a week*'. They stayed '*until it shut*' that was for about three hours. At school they would decide they would go to the youth club where they listened to music, played table tennis and sat and chatted.

The grandparent was asked if there was anywhere they were *not allowed to go* and at first they could not think of anywhere because '*father would have gone ballistic if I had defied him*'. However after a few seconds they recalled an instance where they had gone somewhere they were not allowed to. It was a pub and the grandparent wanted to stand outside and listen to the pop groups playing there. '*I stood outside with my friend once - and my dad, someone must have seen me - and my dad come up the road and I knew I were in bother as soon as I saw him and I were only stood outside listening to the music – weren't even stood near main doors and he went absolutely ballistic*'. Grandparent one admitted that the place had a '*terrible reputation . . . you know for drugs and all sorts*' and that they think their parent was absolutely right, despite the embarrassment of being marched off down the street by their father at the time.

### *Parent two*

The parent of family two reported that there were three places they were allowed to visit *without asking permission* from their parents. The first and second were houses of friends where they recall going a couple of times a week and staying for about a couple of hours and just hanging out together. One outdoor location mentioned was a '*playing field type place*'. They went to this location with friends and met a few more friends and hung about and played different sports including tennis. Remembrance of how often this location was visited and how long the visits were was a bit vague with most answers being prefixed by the work '*probably*' a couple of times (visit frequency) and a couple of hours (length of visit stay).

Places that the parent was allowed to go to *with permission* included their gran's house where the parent recalled going by themselves about once a week and staying for a couple of hours. Another location was the shop where a couple of friends would go about three times a week, buy sweets and return. There was also another friend's house for which permission was needed to visit because it was a bit further and '*it were probably all the roads, cause it's like a main road you have to cross there*'.

This parent reported an area which was a '*big woodland*' when they were a child where they were not really allowed to go to. It was considered to be '*too dangerous – we could go with my dad obviously but not on our own*'. The parent stated that they did not agree with this restriction at the time but do now. They also stated that they did sometimes go there without their father but with friends and that they went for adventure, visiting about once a week and staying for a couple of hours. They went in any season, '*the muddier the better*'.

### *Child two*

The child of family two was not allowed to go anywhere *without permission* or as the parent stated, '*he has to ask me wherever he goes*'.



The child indicated that there are three places that they are allowed to go *with permission*. Two of these are friends' houses which are 115 and 60 metres from home. At the first friend's house they play games both inside and outside but the child states that they prefer to be inside. He goes with no-one else and meets no-one else there. If calling for the friend to come and play at his house the child will stay about 10 minutes but if the friend's house is the destination for play then the child might stay for up to two hours. They play together every day but not always when it is raining. At the second friend's house there are sometimes other children there and they might play football on the '*grass bit up there*'. The third location that child from family two is given permission to visit is the home of the first friend's grandfather, where the child plays with the friend and sometimes goes with one other friend. This does not happen very often, nor for very long. The child stated that they would not go to their friend's grandfather's house if it was raining but might if it was snowing.

This child identified two main places that they are *not allowed to go* to. The first is the field which is '*far away*'. The child said they agreed with the restriction not to go to the field but also admitted that they had been near it. The mother responded that, '*yeah he has cause I seen him and had to shout him back*'. The child likes to go there because there are lots of people walking and the parent responded by saying the child is not allowed there because it is some woods. The other place the child is not allowed to visit is the end of the road. The parent stated that the child is not allowed to go because it is too busy with people and traffic because it is a main road. Again the child stated that they have been there on their scooter and again mum saw the child. The child stated that they had been there only twice and not for ages (said as if to reassure their mother).

### ***Different experiences across the generations and between families***

A summary of the furthest distance travelled, types of outdoor spaces visited, activities undertaken, companions, mode of travel and frequency of visit to the open spaces are shown for all six interviewees in Table 1 without asking for permission and Table 2 asking permission.

<b>PERSON</b>	<b>Furthest distance unaccompanied</b>	<b>Types of outdoor spaces visited</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Companions</b>	<b>Mode of travel</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>GP1: Female, age 62</b>	3 km	Fields; Streams; Up the hill and down again; On the grass outside uncle's house; Around the estate.	Play in fields; Fishing in stream; Playing out on the road; Roller skating, Hop scotch; Walk up the hill to Mosborough; Around the estate on bikes Ride our bikes to different places, across the fields.	By themselves; Older brother; Friends; Met people from school.	Walk; Bike; Bus.	Weekly; Monthly; Fortnightly; In the summer (depending on location).
<b>P1: Female, age in 30s</b>	460 m	Park next to the house; Paths around housing estate; Middle school playground (before it was fenced off).	Riding bikes; Roller boots; Lots of ball games.	Friends; Younger brother; Cousin; Met friends.	Bikes; Roller boots; Walk.	Five times a week: for hours after school; Weekends.
<b>C1: Female aged 6</b>	<b>NOWHERE</b>					
<b>GP2: Female, age 56, remembering when 10 years old</b>	560 m	School playing field; Bluebell wood with bridge; Local shops;	Play rounders; Cricket; Running across the field; Short cut to the shops; Picking bluebells; Playing on the bridge; Watch traffic go up and down the street – sat there chatting.	Friends from school; Met others there.	Walk	Nearly every night; Couple of times a week; Once a week.
<b>P2: Female age 34 remembering to about 10 years old.</b>	550 m	Friend's house (two); Playing field.	Play games; Hung about; Tennis; Different sports.	Friends: a few of u; Met other friends.	Walk.	Couple of times a week.; Summer time.
<b>C2: Male aged 10</b>	<b>NOWHERE</b>	Aunt and uncle's house.				

**Table 1: Distance, outdoor spaces, activities, companions, mode of travel and frequency across three generations in the east of Sheffield *without asking permission***

PERSON	Furthest distance unaccompanied	Types of outdoor spaces visited	Activities	Companions	Mode of travel	Frequency
<b>GP1: Female, age 62</b>	Aunt's house, town (several km)	Aunt's house; Town.		Alone; With brother; With friend.	Bus; Bike.	Every few months; Monthly
<b>P1: Female, age in 30s</b>	250 m	Shops.	Buy sweets.	Brother; Friends; Met people you knew.	Usually bike.	Couple of times of week; 'As and when'.
<b>C1: Female aged 6</b>	25 m: 3 doors away	Friend's house and garden.	Play on scooters; Trampoline in friend's (and own) garden.	One friend.	Walk: observed by mother.	Four times a week; Weekend (until the wettest summer for 100 years in 2012)
<b>GP2: Female, age 56, remembering when 10 years old</b>	1.5 km to outdoor location 2.8 km to youth club;	Shire Brook; Carr Forge Dam; Wood; Youth club.	Chucking stuff in the water; Climbing on the large sewage pipes; Hanging about; Listen to music, table tennis, sit and chat	A dozen of us (at the dam); Twenty of us (at the wood).	Walked	Once a week; Twice a week; Nearly every day if not in school.
<b>P2: Female age 34.</b>		Nan's; Friend's house.	Family things.	Family members.	Walk.	'Probably every week'.
<b>C2: Male aged 10</b>	115 m	Friend's house; Occasionally on the grass outside another friend's house.	Play games: preference for indoor activities.	One friend; Occasionally might play with two others.	Walk.	Daily; Occasionally.

**Table 2: Distance, outdoor spaces, activities, companions, mode of travel and frequency across three generations in the east of Sheffield *asking permission***

These tables give a clear summary of some of the key changes which have taken place over the three generations. There has been a dramatic reduction in four dimensions: distance travelled, types of outdoor spaces visited, activities undertaken and the companions for these visits and activities. The change is very dramatic. The grandparents went significant distances; visited multiple outdoor spaces

of different character; undertook many different activities and went with many companions (sometimes twenty or so), without permission, yet both children were allowed to go nowhere without permission. When permission was given the contemporary children were only allowed to go a short distance from home to the nearby homes of one or two friends. The contemporary children are not experiencing a variety of outdoor spaces, a range of activities and the social context of being with more than one or two other children. The grandparent and parent of family one seemed to have more freedom than those in family two which might be related to their additional mode of travel in the form of bicycles. The activities of the two older generations were undertaken at many different times including evenings, weekends and school holidays with few of these being affected by weather. The contemporary children also visited their nearby friends frequently although this appeared to be more influenced by rainy weather than the activities of the older generations,

## **Conclusions**

Despite this paper reporting a small number of interviews it provides a richness in understanding of the experiences in the outdoor environments of three generations of two families in the eastern, urban/rural fringe of the City of Sheffield. The findings show a move away from home range being negotiated (Hart, 1979) to being imposed by parents in a very rigorous way for these contemporary children. However in each generation at least one of the children reported going or trying to go beyond the range whether this was negotiated or imposed. This research also shows a very dramatic reduction in four dimensions of distance travelled; the type and variety of outdoor spaces visited; activities undertaken and the number of companions, variously reflecting findings of other cross generational research (Gaster, 1991; Tandy, 1999; Karsten, 2005; Skar and Krogh, 2009; Kinoshita, 2009).

These findings can also be understood in the context of Moore and Young's (1978) concept of habitual, frequented and occasional range. The grandparents and parents experienced all three types of range and with many other friends. The contemporary children predominantly experienced habitual

range and only with one or two other children. Occasional range was experienced but this was dependent not only upon negotiation with parents but also by them facilitating visits to more distant outdoor spaces in a car. This 'back seat generation' (Karsten, 2005; p286) is exemplified in family one where the child is taken in the car by his mother to visit even the little park she used to visit on foot as a child.

Finally the reflection of one of the current parents is worthy of comment. At the end of the interview about her child's experiences one of the mothers commented that she was worried that she (now) realised that she did not let her child go anywhere. This was coupled with a realisation that her home range now seemed to be a lot. Perhaps further research might allow other parents to consider their children's home range, exploration of the outdoor environment and real social networks.

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