

education
otherwise

newsletter 101

december '94
january '95

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Volunteer editors are always needed - Please contact the Newsletter co-ordinator (see inside back cover).

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A REMINDER TO READERS

The EO Newsletter accepts advertisements, offers of services, articles and notices of social events in good faith and **CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE** for the consequences of responding to any of these. Readers are reminded that sensible caution should be exercised when responding to such.

THE NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the next issue is December 31st 1994, all copy should be sent to the appropriate editor by this date. All material intended as such should be clearly marked "for publication". Please ensure you include your name and address and age for contributors to childrens pages.

Contributions are more likely to be included if they are concise and it would be helpful if they were typed. Some editors may be able to use copy on computer disc but always include a hard copy with the disc.

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EDITORIAL

Hello there folks! Well, I've enjoyed editing this Newsletter, although it's been a bit of a rush to get it done, and, as usual, I underestimated the amount of time it would take. There were several finger-biting sessions when I wondered whether I'd be able to meet the deadline. Some of the material that I've included, namely some of the letters/ articles, I've had to cut in order to maximize space, and also some of them repeated stuff published in the previous Newsletter. Apologies to those contributors - hope you understand!

To me has been given the dubious honour of being the first newsletter editor who has had to cope with a greatly reduced format. This is due to the substantial costs that EO has incurred, partly brought on by the Parents Charter challenge. Although this was an expensive move for EO, I feel that it was a positive thing to do, as it has helped to consolidate EO which has had quite a few difficulties over the past year. A smaller newsletter will go out bi-monthly until the financial situation improves.

The situation within the Ryan household has changed recently, Charlotte (15) and Myfi (13) have both gone back to school to do some GCSE'S. We were fortunate in that our local Community College agreed to accept Myfi, although she doesn't turn 14 until the end of the year. They have been lucky to fit into a programme that caters for people who don't undertake a fully taught curriculum. They have both settled fairly well and, in particular, are enjoying the social aspects of school. For myself, as the main home - schooling parent at the moment, I am enjoying the freedom of not feeling totally responsible for their 'education', and am able to concentrate on our two sons, Oisín (6), and Brendan (2), with a clear conscience.

This newsletter has been a real family effort in different ways - thanks for all the support.
Frances Ryan, 52 Boundary Road, Mountsorrel, Leics LE12 7ER.

CO - ORDINATORS UPDATE

Firstly, thank you everyone for all your EO voluntary work in whatever capacity. The amount of work which goes on unseen is enormous. Some co-ordinators especially around the areas with no co-ordinators, have had an increase in workload. Do you know anyone in those areas who might be suitable? If so, encourage them to send for the new guidelines, available from me soon!

One area is unusual in having two applicants where we only need one. Mary Trimble is willing to co-ordinate in Cumbria. If you have any thoughts on this situation please let me know soon.

The following areas need co-ordinators: Borders, Dyfed, Humberside, Strathclyde, Tayside, Norfolk.

New Acting Co-ordinators:

Avon: Chris & Jean Smith - 0934 414166 Joint co-ordinator, workshop info Kathy Nott - 0272 668265

Nottinghamshire: Mary Wells. **West Yorkshire:** Hilary Mason.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please note that ISOBEL ADONIS' phone number is 0248 601946. Please change in every Contact List

NORTH WESTERN AREA LEGAL WORKSHOP SATURDAY 21 JANUARY 1995 in LANCASTER

This workshop is specifically aimed at members and co-ordinators who are, or were willing to become, active in supporting families who are experiencing difficulties with local education authorities.

Rob and Anne Wade will be facilitating.

Contact **Beverley Young** on **0772 735531** to book a place and to confirm time and venue.

Report on Scottish Legal Workshop 21st September 1994

7 EOers attended from the Glasgow, Sterling and Perth areas. Rob and Anne Wade assisted the group through the relevant Scottish legislation, principally the 1980 Education (Scotland) Act, Section 30 of which reads "It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide efficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by causing him to attend a public school regularly or by other means". The discussion was wide ranging, several participants had just begun to home educate so to some the degree the focus was on sections of the Act which specify measures which can be taken against families withdrawing children from school, most notably the Children's Panel and the possibility of Attendance Orders. Given some of the problems which have arisen in these areas it was a pity no one from the local authorities attended. Rob and Anne encouraged a non-confrontational approach but to wield the relevant legislation if necessary (e.g. to give home education a chance to work after school trauma). It seems to be important not to accept the reason for any attempted referral to the Panel.

As well as discussing such problems we also considered access to educational resources, particularly relevant to older children wishing to undertake heavily coursework based certificated examinations. Access and/or p/t attendance at further ed. establishments is still unclear and is often decided on an individual basis.

In all the workshop should have left people feeling confident enough to advise others on dealing with some of the legal hassles about starting home education. A further workshop will be held in 1995.

Please contact Brenda on 0786 832042

Alastair Dickson, 36 Pelstream Avenue, Stirling, FK7 0BE

THE AGM OF EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION LIMITED WAS HELD AT
NEWCASTLE YOUTH HOSTEL ON SATURDAY 12th NOVEMBER

1. A quorum of members being present, the meeting was constituted.
 2. Apologies for absence were called for and a list of those present was drawn up.
 3. The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted with some amendments.
 4. Matter arising - none
 5. Directors - due to the resignation of a number of directors of the company there was a total of nine places available. An election was held according to the constitution of the Association and eight were elected to be directors: Eleanor Stapleton, Jude Ashley Walker, Eric Foggitt, Pien Maltz Klaar, Gill Murley, Sue Todd, Gwen Baldock and Maxine Griffith.
 6. The Treasurer's report was received and thanks given for the hard work put in by the Treasurer, who was now handing over to Paul Bentley.
 7. Annual Reports from Officers were received as under: Legal, Membership, Publicity, Database, Publications and Co-ordinators.
- The meeting closed at 12.45 pm
Eric Foggitt
Acting Chairman

CENTRAL OFFICE One of the points debated at the Directors' Meeting on 13th November was the issue of a Central Office. The proposal to research this option was accepted and a report will be given at the January meeting.

TO ALL MEMBERS OF EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION LIMITED
The following Special Resolution will be on the agenda of the January 28th Meeting at St. Ethel Dreda's Church Hall, Hatfield, Herts.
Special Resolution of the Agenda for consideration:

'To amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association of EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION LIMITED in support of application for Charitable Status'

SIGNED UP MEMBERS will be notified by post of the full text of the amendments. Any other member will be provided with a copy on request with a charge of £1 to cover p&p. Contact the Treasurer.

A Members Meeting (EGM) of Education Otherwise Association Ltd. was held at Newcastle Youth Hostel on Saturday 12th November 1994

1. A quorum of members being present, the meeting was constituted.
2. Apologies for absence were called for and a list of those present was drawn up.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.
4. Matters arising - none.
5. Parents Charter - A report on this was received from Jane Lowe, who informed the meeting that further contact with the Department for Education had finally elicited, what amounted to an admission of error, in the Charter: the suggestion that schooling was obligatory. After some discussion it was agreed to instruct the solicitor to draw up a legally sound statemnet to the effect that education at home was an option. The total expenditure to date on the Charter challenge was over £3000; £500 would be needed to meet further costs, and the meeting recognised the financial strain this was causing EO. Nevertheless the importance of the issue demanded action.
6. A full discussion was held on the issue of altering EO's status to that of a charity. Substantial benefits were now available to charities, there are sources of income such as Trust Funds available which EO, as presently constituted, is unable to tap into. Permission in principle was granted to alter EO's status accordingly, a final decision to be made in 1995.
6. AOB New Co-ordinators were ratified. Each had been serving as Acting co-ordinator for some time. A report was received on the issue of School Phobia. A question was raised about membership cards: some parents had requested that photographs be added; others that their child's name be stated, so that children encountering problems with police etc., could use them as ID and proof of their status as home-educated children. After some discussion it was agreed that this could not be sanctioned, since there were dangers involved if the cards fell into the wrong hands, and EO were unable to state that children were home-educated, only that their parents were members of EO. A publicity poster drawn up by Jane Lowe was circulated and approved as an excellent resource for co-ordinators to use in order to publicise EO's work. SAE to Jane for a copy.

The Meeting closed at 4.45pm.
Eric Foggit
Acting Chairman

Any member of Education Otherwise who would like a copy of the full minutes of either meeting please send an A4 SAE to General Secretary.

Finance Group Report

EO's financial position has been steadily deteriorating for a number of years and the Finance Group outlined the reasons for this and presented its proposals for rectifying this situation (outlined in the Oct/Nov newsletter, p35-37) to the EGM in Newcastle. In the limited space available here are the most important financial decisions that emerged from the meeting.

EO Newsletter

Most EOers are probably not aware that EO is having to pay the newsletter printer in instalments for the printing of the last two newsletters and the contact list. More than half the cost of the last newsletter is still outstanding and the newsletter you are now reading has added to this debt. The finance group put it to the meeting that it was unfair to the printer for EO not to take steps to reduce this debt and pay it off as quickly as possible. One way the finance group felt this could be achieved was in the short term to halve the size of the newsletter thereby also reducing our newsletter bill by nearly half. We must stress that this is hopefully only a temporary measure and the newsletter will be restored to full size as soon as finances allow.

Subscription Increase

EO's subscription rate has not changed for the last 5 years even though the costs of running EO have risen substantially. The EGM decided that an increase was necessary and justified, therefore the subscription rate from December 1st 1994 has been increased to £15 a year for renewals and £25 for new members. Will all members who pay by standing order please notify their bank of this increase.

New Treasurer - new address for returns and expenses claims

EO has a new Treasurer so all returns and claims for expenses should now be sent to Paul Bentley at this address: 83 Manor Park, London SE13 5RA.

Parent's Charter

EO's expenditure on the Parent's Charter legal action to date is £3,398. The final total cost is expected to be around £3,898. (Not £25,000 as one rumour apparently has it!)

LETTERS

More news on EO Green and Away Camp

Although Green and Away made us feel welcome once arriving at the camp, I also thought that EO as an organization could have been more visible. It would have been nicer if EO was part of the welcoming group, but as Pam was on her own, this didn't happen. If there is anyone stirred up enough to respond to my letter and offer their suggestions on any aspect of the camp, get in touch! Now is the time to discuss and communicate with each other, to talk through expectations, ideas, offer activities, and get our act together as a group of people who enjoy EOing and camping. I am nearing completion of a project to set up a toy library in Malvern, and would be willing to get involved in putting together a selection of toys, arts, crafts, and activity equipment for the camp next year. Anyone who can offer anything, or wants to get more involved, please get in touch too.
Josie Powell, 183 Upper Welland Road, Malvern, Worcs WR14 4LB.

The Conrad Partnership, Voice Consultancy

Following the success of the singing class for EO in the in the autumn term, The Conrad Voice Consultancy will be offering a course for the January term - **Sing A Song** Develop your voice through simple, enjoyable technical exercises; play games that will help you to develop your awareness of rhythm, pitch, and extend your familiarity with different styles of music. *10 weekly sessions from January 18th 1995 Time : 11.00-12 noon. Place : St Peter's Heritage Centre, Vauxhall (Tube and BR) line, parking available near Vauxhall City Farm. Fee: £30/ participant (discount of £10 for 2nd/ 3rd child in the family). Parents are welcome to stay and join in.* To book, please send a cheque made payable to Leon Conrad with a covering letter stating your address, contact phone no. and names and ages of children attending to : *Leon Conrad, 50a Courtenay Street, London SE11 5PQ.* A receipt and a map to the venue will then be forwarded to you. For more info phone Tanya or Leon on 071 582 8231

Measles Vaccine

A number of members have enquired about measles vaccination for home educated children. I consulted Mr Freeman - immunologist - at the Department for Health. He advised parents who want a child immunised to contact the District Immunisation Co-ordinator at the local health authority (LHA). The LHA should be listed in the phone book, but in the event of difficulties in finding it, please phone the nearest large hospital and ask them for the number. The concerns about the vaccine are religious/ ethical and scientific. General contraindications include: a) pregnancy b) steroid or immunosuppressive treatment eg. radiation therapy and malignant diseases c) tuberculosis d) sensitivity to egg protein (chicken embryos). The joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation also stated (1977) that children with specific conditions should only be given measles vaccine with the simultaneous administration of human normal immunoglobulin with a specific content of measles antibody. These conditions are : i) history of convulsions ii) history or family history of epilepsy iii) chronic disease of the heart or lungs iv) serious underdevelopment. Common side effects are fever (between 8-10 days) and possible allergic reactions (chicken- embryos- antibiotics). See NL 93. *Susan Long, 154 Long Brandocks, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3JR*

NOTICES

Peggy Thomas - Telephone 081 659 5815 has a selection of books of interest to EO families available at half price and a large collection of different magazines available for the cost of their postage - please contact her if you are interested in a detailed list.

Permaculture In North Wales. An Opportunity For EO people

I plan to create a permaculture system for my garden, making it mimic a natural ecosystem as far as possible. It will become more productive at the same time as becoming more sustainable and needing less work to sustain it. For example, if I grow plants of the cow parsley family near my fruit trees, its flowers will attract the ichneumon wasp. This insect has the gruesome habit of laying its eggs inside the caterpillars which attack fruit trees, eating up the caterpillars from the inside. The word permaculture signifies both permanent agriculture and permanent culture. Its a conscious design to create a sustainable future based on co-operating with nature and caring for the earth and its people. A system based on earth and people care is educational at its core. Learning to integrate natural systems with human societies includes education in a more sustainable way of living. I would welcome an EO person to come and stay with me and help me to set up this system. Come for a week, a month, or longer. Although my invitation is primarily for young people, mums and dads could also come for a short while.
Patricia Knox, Pen Llywenan, Bodedern, Holyhead, Anglesey. 0407 740767.

Educational Resources

I'm trying to compile a list of free/ discounted entry into places of interest, + discounts on books, equipment, toys, etc. Please write or phone me with any relevant info. Once I've got some relevant info.

I'll let everyone know via the NL. If we can all pool together, then we'll all benefit. *Beverley Young, 91 Lyndhurst Drive, Preston PR2 1TB. 0772 735531.*

Lesson Guides

I would like to recommend the lesson guides which were advertised in the June/ July NL (p.41). For those of you interested in a structured lesson plan, they prove very useful, but not in a rigid way. They are available from: *Millsteam Publications, 12 Albany Park, Cabot Lane, Poole BH17 7VX, (Tom Parker) 0202 8887.*

EO Questionnaire

Please could I appeal to EO families to help me by sharing your individual experiences of "education otherwise" in this anonymous questionnaire, in as much or as little detail as you wish. I'm a single parent EO member, with a 20 month old daughter (who will definitely be home - educated unless your answers put me off!) and a final year student of Educational Studies at the University of York. I've chosen to do a research dissertation about home - education - and, if it's a success, I hope to do further research into public attitudes to EO (i.e. LEA's and those unconvinced friends, neighbours and relatives who think we're insane!) So please reply. Don't feel restricted by the limitations of the A4 Yes/ No format or the phrasing of the questions (which are unlikely to suit every unique answer). Anything from 1 word to 10,000 word answers will be greatly appreciated, so do elaborate on extra sheets of paper if necessary. And of course any additional contributions from sons and daughters will be particularly valued. Thanks for your help, *Anne Mills, "Waverley", Murton Way, Murton, York YO1 3UJ.* (Sorry, no space to fit in actual questionnaire. Those who are interested please contact Anne. Ed.)

Software

We home- school our three children aged 6, 5, and 3. We have an IBM compatible computer and would like to get some educational software suitable for our childrens' ages. I would be keen to hear from any other home- schoolers who could recommend any specific software which they have used. *Helen Gibson, 44 Hale Close, Melbourne, Herts SG8 6ET.*

Growing Without Schooling

I (Barbara Sheppard) would like to give up the job of co-ordinating GWS subscriptions. It's not an onerous task and would suit a family of keen envelope stuffers and stamp lickers! A word processor which prints out sticky labels would be an advantage. Please phone 0539 727504 for details. *Barbara Sheppard, 18 Queen Catherine Street, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7OG.*

Enquiries Secretary

The Enquiries Group need more help in the New Year. Is anyone willing to answer batches of letters? If interested phone *Susan Long on 0245 421496* for details.

House in Exchange for help in organic kitchen garden. Beautiful Staffordshire countryside. Contact: *Patricia Wirz Johnson Lodge, Eccleshall ST21 6JA. 0785 851150*

MORE LETTERS

Dear EO,

I agree with Simon Price that NL articles and letters should be more concise and definitely more practical. Most of us don't have the luxury of spare time to dwell on opinions and intellectual debates, interesting though they may be. However, we always welcome ideas and info. Here is a simple idea that I learned from a wonderful teacher friend, which my kids loved and learned loads from. Take an object and explore all aspects of it, eg. a carrot. Look at it, feel it draw it, paint it, print with it, write its name, look at its spelling, eat it, cook and bake with some, count some, grow some, etc. These initial ideas led onto all sorts of explorations, amongst which was a discussion about what cultivation is, and looking at other plants. You can do the same sort of thing for almost anything, just be creative with it. Just think of all the different subjects you can cover to satisfy a visiting inspector, if necessary! *Lorna Brown, 130 Greenock Road, Bishopton, Renfrew- Shire PA7 5AS.*

Dear EO,

Yesterday morning my son asked me "Where do the rivers and lakes come from?"

"The rain", I replied.

"But where does the rain come from?"

"The rivers and lakes", I said brightly. However my clever retort wasn't appreciated, so I added that the rivers and lakes come from the sea. "The sea is salt water" he pointed out. Following on from this discussion we did the following experiment, most of which a young EOer can do for him or her self. You need : salt, water, 2 pans (or 1 pan and 1 heat-resistant bowl) and a collecting vessel.

This is a new supplement title and perhaps a strange one since most under fives receive their education at home. In fact, since there is no legal obligation at the moment to do anything in the way of 'educating' a small child it could be argued that this newsletter is not the place for such a supplement. I believe that it is for various reasons.

Many E.O. members have children who are not yet of school age but who wish to educate those children otherwise than by school attendance. Only a fraction of these go on to home-educate. It would seem logical to explore the many reasons for this. Pre-school society, while not overtly schooling often bombards small children with exaggerated pro-school images. The justification for this is preparation for school. How do prospective home-educating families cope with this without becoming hermits.

What are the parenting conflicts which beset the parents of under-fives which damage their confidence in their ability to home school their children.

Due to limited space I could not include all the suggestions, comments and contributions that I received for this supplement. What follows is a severely limited precis of the issues raised.

To Read or Not to Read

Does early literacy have its cost? If so, what do early readers miss out on. Much emphasis is placed on literacy skills and the oddly named pre-literacy skills in children's television and at playgroups and nursery schools. Do we need to master the skills of telling stories about ourselves and our own childhoods and those events that have made us wonder. It is the held belief of many educators (notably the Waldorf Schools) that early literacy is not helpful in many cases and that the telling of stories gives our children a very good grounding in the music of the language and in the essence of poetry as well as giving them material for fantasy. The reader who teaches himself early (as Cathie's son is doing) has undoubtedly reached the stage where he is ready for the challenge and liberation of literacy. Maybe active storytelling, perhaps as a pastime for a family should play a greater part in the lives of our children, replacing the often overdone emphasis on literacy in the life of the child who is under five.

Support for Parents who do not want to enter the School System

Many children who will not go to school have a common social life with their peers who will eventually attend school. There are some aspects of playgroups etc intended for under-fives which parents may find unsuitable eg the learning of school-type rules, the competitive nature of some of the games, or the very narrow age range. Parents may also be concerned that the set of children that their own children are mixing will progress to school en masse, leaving their own children socially isolated until they reach the age when they can join in the 'after school club' activities. To address many or all of these issues E.O. parents in the Solent Area have arranged meetings for under-fives. Maybe other groups currently do the same.

I Want To Go To School.

My daughter, Kicki, is 3K. My husband, Steve, and I joined EO a year ago, having been drawn to home-schooling during the previous year. The problems friends threw up, such as socialisation, GCSEs etc, didn't worry me. John Holt and Ivan Illich had convinced me. The stories of other families here and in the USA had given me courage.

My difficulty was in expressing my views about education to Kicki. Her only experience was of two or three visits to a very gentle playgroup, where I had stayed with her and she had been free to do what she wanted when she wanted. She has many friends, most of whom are already in some sort of pre-school education system. She has heard much discussion of the merits of various schools amongst adults. I didn't want to say simply that schools are generally bad for children, they squash your character, your interest in discovering things, all the other negative things that sprang to my mind. I didn't want Kicki to upset her schooly friends with 'poor you, lucky me' and 'my mum says' stories. They are all small children with little control over their lives. Although they and their families may discuss home schooling because of what we are doing, I don't feel we can force the issue.

In addition I didn't have the easy certainty about home schooling as I do about vegetarianism and animal rights. Having been vegetarian since 1975 and involved in much AR campaigning during the 1980s, the answers to Kicki's questions came very easily, but home schooling had been in my world for only two years, and I was (and am) still answering my *own* questions.

Thinking how to resolve this problem in time to write about it concentrated my mind wonderfully. In addition, Kicki pointed out which house we could move to in order that she should live opposite the school of her choice.

Steve suggested that I emphasise the positive aspects of home schooling without mentioning school at all. Somehow I needed more subtle propaganda. Why couldn't I just go into Dillons and buy a book? So I wrote one. I tried to be honest about school as I knew it, (35 years ago.) Maybe it was different now.

There were very few words - just contrasting the school and not-school life of two little girls. Kicki saw me drawing the pictures very early on and renamed the girls Kicki and Dorothy (her alter-ego) from my Ellen and Josie. 'Kicki' didn't go to school. I took this as a very positive sign. I snuck in some unsubtle propaganda visually - particularly 'Kicki's' many different frilly outfits to 'Dorothy's'

uniform - which my Kicki quickly spotted. It took me about a week to finish this very rough book. The completed book looks like a first visual. But *one reading* did the trick. Kicki tells everyone proudly (as did the book girl) she doesn't go to school; she's home-schooling.

This is my personal answer to the problem. It may even be my personal problem. Perhaps you're more pragmatic. Perhaps your children don't have schooly friends. All I know is that the book didn't seem so didactic as I would have been saying the same words directly to Kicki. There are many Starting School books. It felt like we needed a Not Starting School book.

Kicki's friend, Dorothy, went to school.
"I want to go to school as well," said
Kicki
"Daddy and I think learning at
home is more fun," said mum,



"but you can decide for yourself."

We have two children, both under the age of 5, and both destined to be home-educated. Our reasons for this are probably similar to dozens of other parents, namely ; the futility of 'enforced learning' which generally has the opposite result; the lack of individual attention in schools due to the large numbers of pupils and few teachers; the very limited subject matter on offer (the national curriculum); the problems caused by having large numbers of children of the same age forced together resulting in barriers between these children and different aged children and adults....etc. The list could go on and on.

We believe that education can only be initiated by the child. Our eldest child Joshua, is now three and a half years old and already has a wide knowledge of things we have not actively taught, but which he has picked up by himself. If any pressure is put on him, his interest noticeably wanes. We have found it easier to get concepts across through the medium of play. He now recognises the letters of the alphabet, having a set of foam ones which he plays with in the bath. He asks how things are spelt and is keen to write down words. We didn't expect him to be interested in writing at this stage and had no plans to 'teach' him yet, but he is obviously ready now.

We have no preset structure to our days, unless we have planned to go out somewhere.

Both our children like socialising with adults and children. We believe that they should be treated with as much respect as adults and do our best not to undermine them. We offer them guidance when needed and have certain house-rules which we enforce with adults, children and visitors alike. This doesn't appear to cause any problems and has taught the children that certain behaviour is not acceptable (eg damaging other people's property, throwing food around, hitting people etc)

The children have free access to books, any materials they need for making things, they can use the stereo, in fact anything within reason. We spend a lot of time talking to and playing with the children.

When looking at animals and how their young learn, it seems they spend a lot of time studying the adults and mimicking their behaviour. Human young are no different and we often see Joshua saying or doing something that we recognise as being a trait of our own.

We are happy to continue with this method of child-led learning for the present as it seems to be successful, but we are keeping an open mind as to what we will do in the future.

Without adequate support home-educating could become very difficult and lonely. Our local E.O. group has given us a lot more confidence in ourselves and what we are doing as well as providing us with some social contact with like-minded people.

Best Wishes, Cathie and Robert Hinson

To make sea water: Pour 2-4 teaspoons of salt into pan. Add approx. a cup of water (preferably warm as this helps dissolving). Stir until all salt dissolved. Now taste it.

To make clouds: Heat on cooker until boiling, allow to boil. you don't have to heat the solution, but it will reduce the time taken to evaporate the water to a few minutes instead of days or weeks.

To make rain: Place the other pan or bowl upside down over the boiling solution. Take this off after a couple of minutes and pour off the condensed water. Repeat this last step as often as you like. Allow all the water to evaporate or at least enough to show that salt stays when water goes. Then taste the rain. Whilst doing this experiment, relate the stages to real life. Of course the sea doesn't generally boil, but evaporation does take place from its surface. *J. Collins, 82 Cardinal Drive, Kidderminster, Worcs.*

RESOURCE CENTRES

Does anyone 'out there' use their local Teacher's Resource Centre? I went there a couple of times and showed my EO card. Fine, no problem, the staff were very helpful. However, on our third visit I was spoken to rudely by one of the men who was there. He didn't actually say who he was. My husband had a talk with him to explain about home education, that we had checked that it was all right for us to use the centre, and to have a look at reading schemes in particular, before we ordered from the publishers. We have now been told that we can have a look at the copies of Curriculum catalogues (which we already have at home), but are not allowed to use the room where the books are kept. We did notice a lot of the resource materials are covered with dust through not being used. It seems such a waste! How have other people got on? I was told that I couldn't use the centre because I'm not a qualified teacher. Also, does anyone have ideas to help motivation? We have 4 children. David, 7, and Jenny, 5, have never been to school, but Darren, 15, and Claire, 13, went through Primary School in Helston (Cornwall), and then Waterlooville in Portsmouth. They have both settled to home education, but motivation can be difficult.

I would welcome any suggestions, and look forward to hearing from anyone with ideas. *Mr and Mrs R.C. Rogers, 150 Faversham, Southill, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9SL.*

Dear EO,

I have recently joined EO. My son Paul is 13, and I took him out of school due to bullying by classmates and teachers. Are there any families in the Purley/ Croydon area who would like to get to know us? I'm a single parent and transport is limited, but I would like to get out with Paul as we do feel rather trapped where we are! Also, it would be good for Paul to get to know other children who are home- educated likewise.

If there is anyone in our area, please contact us. *Denise Hodgkins, Cottage Five, Purley Fire Station, 128 Brighton Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 4DB. 081 763 9640.*

Dear EO,

I'm writing this letter in the hope of finding contacts and help in Devon. My name is Anna, mother of Meg (9 years) and partner to Aranga, who's Spanish. We're hoping to move from Spain to England in Nov/ Dec of this year, and would greatly appreciate some help, friends, contacts for Meg and us! We are hoping to move to North or South Devon - Totnes sounds very interesting (thankyou for out phone conversation Sammy). Meg needs friends of her own age after a year in Spain. Her interests include animals, music, ballet, sports, reading, and we all need a home with a garden/ land to rent initially for at least a year. After this we'll buy, if we feel settled.

We would love to connect with similar folk to ourselves in the following areas: I'm a healer/ therapist, writer, gardener and singer, and Aranga is an electronic wizard, masseur, yoga teacher, wood carver/ worker. We are open to all ideas, and have some capital available and a property in Spain. We have lots of energy, after we've had a rest, to put into alternative ventures such as eco - villages, spiritually centred lifestyles, creative ventures etc. We also have contacts in Spain, which we would love to help English folk link into.

Any offers, contacts, requests etc. will be answered. Please send all letters c/o my mother: *Anna Jacobs, 7 Childwall Bank Road, Liverpool L16 7PH.*

Want to contact Les Enfants D'Abord?

Write to: *Shosha, 4 Rue De Lergue, 34800 Brignac, France, or phone 67 96 90 44 any time (answering machine if not at home).*

Dear EO,

We have recently joined EO. We live in London at present, but hope to move to Totnes in South Devon. My daughter is 11, and has a passion for horses and farm life. If there are any children of this age group who feel the same way, perhaps we could meet. *Ms. P. Wynne, 37 Poplar Court, Gap Road, Wimbledon SW19 8JN.*

Dear Friends of Education Otherwise,

Please would you be so kind as to publish this small ad for us? As you know, home- schooling in Spain isn't legal and our situation in this matter is one of clandestinity. It would be very important for the kids

to have close contact with someone one who lives in a country where home schooling isn't considered to be a crime. Besides, if they learnt English, they might one day have access to higher education in Britain, since this is almost impossible for them here in Spain.
We're looking for a person to teach English and possibly Maths and piano etc. to our 4 children who are all home - schooled (aged 5 - 15). In exchange, we offer free accomodation, meals and Spanish lessons, plus the possibility to earn some extra money with translations and/ or English classes. We have a small translation office and we also teach languages. We promise to answer all letters. Please write soon to : *Fam. Muniz, C/ Maestro Barbieri, 26, 1 Dcha, 03004, Alicante, Spain.*

Dear EO,

Hi! We're Christian home - educators who live on Norfolk Island in the South Pacific. We'll be visiting England from mid - April 1995 for 1 month.
We have 3 children : Emily, 8, Nathan, 7, and Rebecca 4. We'd love to meet other Christian Home Educators to share some time and ideas. *Frances Calvert, P.O. Box 434, Norfolk Island 2899, via Australia.* Drop us a line if you'd like a visit.

Dear Yolanda,

I enjoyed reading your (very!) long and interesting letter. Unfortunately I haven't had space to put it in, so will send it off to the next newsletter editor. (ed.).

Dear EO Newsletter,

In reply to Elaine Slade's letter in which she highlights the need for research into EO, I'm writing a dissertation entitled 'Education Otherwise' during which I have come across positive research which may make interesting reading. These are :

1) Becker S. (1981) 'Case Studies in Home Education', unpublished Med thesis. (Your library may be able to get you a copy 'restricted access' from the University of Sussex). This is an excellent study of home- schooling.

2) J. Webb, 'The Outcomes of Home- based Education: Employment and Other Issues. Educational Review, Vol. 41 no.2 1989'.

3) Roland Meighan, 'Learning from Home- based Education' (see EO Newsletter).

I have a full reference of books and articles should anyone be interested in further reading. *Bev Poole, 9 St. Mary's Road, Great Eccleston, Lancashire PR3 0YJ.*

Continuing the debate on structured versus unstructured education

I would firstly like to congratulate those families who have had the courage to take the step out of mainstream society. However, there are many home - schooling families who either wouldn't be able to do that, for various practical reasons, or wouldn't want to. These families, living where they do in cities, towns, and all sorts of accomodation, still have to make home - schooling a viable experience for themselves and their children, often in environments which mightn't be all that 'natural', where parents have to earn a living in all sorts of jobs. Some families will be on the dole. Is that 'natural' and what does the word mean anyway?

Unlike some people who have written into the newsletter, I wouldn't presume to know the answers as to how children learn best. I myself am an ex - teacher (I taught in the Comprehensive Sector for 7 years), and while I was teaching I began to increasingly question the forcing of kids to do various things, seeing it as more and more counter - productive. However, kids can be gripped by the excitement and enthusiasm that a particular teacher shows for his or her own subject and I see that as a positive attribute. After all, we don't learn in a vacuum and are often influenced by someone else's ideas or ways of doing something. Its clear to me that one of the ways small children learn, for example, is by modelling behaviour, and this process tends to carry on through to adulthood.

From my own experiences as a home - schooling parent, I can only say that I'm learning all the time, and often have to 'un - learn', sometimes painfully!, how to approach their education. I make many mistakes and keep on trying. I sometimes use the 'child- centered' approach, and at other times I ask them to do things that I feel could be beneficial for them in the longer term, (whatever the theory I have'nt seen much that's different in practice!).

As for other people's children, they have their ideas and ways of doing things which are fine for them. I think that everyone has to work through their own family dynamic and individual learning styles. In that sense it would be difficult to formulate an educational polemic to suit everyone. *Frances Ryan, editor.*

Meanwhile, a desperate parent writes..

I have two home - educated children. My daughter is a delight and loves learning for its own sake. My son, however, is only interested in creative writing, performance art, and music. His creative writing consists of lurid and gory stories about X men, his performance art is acting out the more brutal scenes from 'The Terminator', and his musical appreciation runs to Bat Out of Hell and Frank Zappa. So far, the only use he's found for John Holt and Illyich is to use them as bombs!

The only way I can get him to do anything is to hang his school uniform on the door, and suggest he either gets it on or gets on with some work. Left to his own devices he's thoroughly disruptive and obnoxious.

I don't believe in smacking children or forcing them to go to school, but right now if anyone has a length of cheese wire or a handful of valium, I'd appreciate it! Gillian Woodman, 24 Sandys Road, South Ham, Basingstoke.

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EDUCATION OTHERWISE MEETINGS

SATURDAY 28th January 1995

10.00 a.m. Director's meeting 12.00 Member's meeting at St. Etheldreda's Church Hall, Church Street, Old Hatfield, Herts. Send an SAE plus 2nd class stamp to: Publicity, 5 Elm Gardens, Welwyn Garden City, for info. re local activities and places to go.

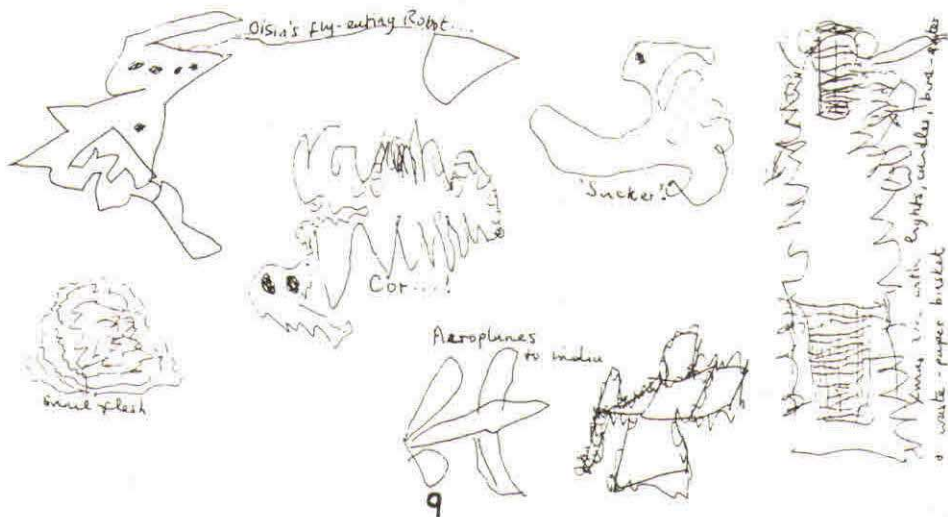
SATURDAY 25th March 1995

10.00 a.m. Director's meeting

12.00 EGM meeting at Crowcombe, Heathfield Youth Hostel, nr. Taunton, Somerset.

This meeting is included as part of a 3 day residential. For more info. and to book places, please send a SAE to the General Secretary. In an effort to keep costs down, this event is being run on a self-catering basis i.e. you feed your own group. Breakfast and tea/ coffee etc. will be inclusive, and Somerset Group have offered to cook a hot meal on Thursday PM. (The cost of this is also included in the overall price).

This Youth Hostel is a large country house ideal for cycling, walks etc. It has part central heating and a large common room with open fire. Showers, bunk rooms and a drying room are part of the facilities. **By road** - From the M5 (junction 25) follow the signs for Minehead. 9 miles north of Taunton on the A385 take the turning for Crowcombe Station and Lydeard St. Lawrence at Triscombe Cross. The Youth Hostel is second on the right after the railway bridge.



Regional News

The full service of Regional News has had to be dropped for the purposes of this newsletter, apologies to all those people who sent in such detailed lists - please contact the people below for info:

Hertfordshire - local EO newsletter and events list phone Glyn - 0707 335428

Activities for older children (10+) phone Lynne Fox - 0707 271594, Margaret Moore - 0992 551744 or Donna Maskell - 0707 328635

East London - Jackie Mason - 081 981 1213 or Judith Harrison - 081 556 1706

North London - Jo Jenkins - 081 883 8052

London - London listing available for £5.00 subscription (4 issues) to Toni Cushman, 17 Crosby Road, Forest Gate, London. E7 9HU

Surrey - Lynn Ryan - 0483 503971 or Penny Meader 0483 481882

Oxfordshire - 0869 277391 to check events. Philosophy for children - contact Suki Pay - 0865 53339

North Yorkshre - Sandra - 0723 360658 Dance/music event Merit 0653 658346 or Roseanne 0904 704485

West Yorkshire - monthly meetings and general enquiries - Diane Green 0484 84694

Farm visit in May - 0706 813946

Warwickshire - Vivienne Bennett - 0608 641354 or Alison Cox 0926 613619

Herbert Art Gallery visit - Lesley McKenzie 0203 318401

CWR or West Midlands Police Museum - Mandy Rogers 0926 641729

Open meetings - the Babbs - 0926 316631 and the Archers - 0203 422575

Dorset - please send four s.a.e.'s to Rosemary Newton, 6 Yeatmans Close, Enmore Green, Shaftsbury, Dorset SP7 8LU for further details.

Cumbria - contact Jane Gregory 05395 67344

Berkshire - contact Pat Connor 0734 662123

19th Jan. Open day - contact Corinne on 0256 771676

Bedfordshire - June Mc Donald 0234 341375 or Joyce Moore - 0908 562451

Open house in Luton phone Cliff on 0582 508499

Northamptonshire - Joyce - 0908 562451

Kent - Sue or Keith Burchett 0732 870344 or Amanda MacKenzie 0634 402154

Open House phone Cath cooper 0634 715389

Buckinghamshire - Joyce Moore 0908 562451

Local NL from Caroline Cooke, 41 Main Rd, Drayton Parslow, Milton Keynes 40p + sae

Avon - Chris and Jean Smith - 0934 414166

Workshop info Kathy Nott - 0272 668265

Bath - Twice weekly workshops contact Andy and Jo, 4 Lower Swainswick Cottages, Gloucester Rd, Bath. Other info 0225 334820

Leicestershire - Weekly meetings Frances Ryan - 0533 302504. Other info Gill Fisher 0533 701735



CONTACT LIST

If you have discovered any errors in your listing, please contact Paul Lowe or Marc Cottee who will change the entry. Their details are inside the front cover of your new (blue) Contact List.

Please note that the following member is very keen to make contact with other families in and around her area; her details will appear in the next Contact List.

Roslyn Price, 5 Station Cottages, Station Approach, Cheddington, Near Leighton Buzzard, BEDS LU7 0SQ

Royal Botanical Gardens Kew

Due to the increased uptake of free educational visits it is now essential that a call be made to the Enquiry unit who process vouchers, before undertaking a visit. Please phone 081 332 5622 to find out if space is available and to book provisionally.

Confirmation is then required in writing. If a parent has managed to book at short notice a voucher may be collected at 37 KEW Green on production of a valid EO membership card.

Visits may be made Monday to Friday only and one adult is permitted per child. Please book as far in advance as possible to avoid disappointment

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ITALY MAY 28 or JUNE 11: Week's healing meditation, dance, sweatlodge at hill farm. Childcare available during sessions. £150 (plus travel). Write: Pratale, Vallingegno, Scritto, Pg, Italy or call 01568 750229 (UK)

ITALIAN...the SILENT WAY. A weekend of language learning in Beaconsfield (Bucks) using Caleb Gattegno's approach (of subordinating teaching to learning). February 17th (evening), 18th, 19th 1995. Piers Messum 0170 2746306

CHRISTIAN EOers. Interested in finding Curriculum, Readers, Creation Books, Rubberstamps, Children's Cross-Stitch? Send 9" x 12" SAE and 50p to: Transplant, Christian Educational Aids, Otterhill Farm, Rowtown, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 1HD.

ADVERTISING RATES

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Artwork (actual size please) for display adverts and copy for small ads should be sent, with a cheque made out to Education Otherwise, to the Editor

MEMBERS

£10
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£50

NON MEMBERS

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Deadline 1st January 1995

EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS

General Enquiries : Send Sae for membership and other information to : Education Otherwise, PO Box 120, Leamington Spa CV32 7ER. For recorded telephone message phone 0926 886828.

Chair : Pien Maltz - Klaar, 39 Landrock Road, London N8 9HR. Tel 081 348 0653.

Vice Chair : Eric Foggit, The Manse, East Church Street, Buckie AB56 IES. Tel 0542 832103.

Publications Director : Vacant.

Newsletter Co - ordinator, Vacant

General Secretary : Sue Claire, 2 The Kennels, Birdsall, Malton, North Yorkshire YO1 79NF. Tel 0944 768480.

Treasurer : Paul Bentley, 83 Manor Park, Lewisham, London SE13 5RA.

Publicity Officer : Jane Lowe, 5 Elm Gardens, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6RX. Tel 0707 390070.

Single Parent Family Contact : Sarah Martin, Rose Cottage, Three Holes Bridge, Norfolk PE14 9JR. Tel 0945 772336.

Special Needs : Sylvia Jeffs, 16 St. Bernard's Road, Solihull, West Midlands B92 7BB. Tel 021 706 6460.

Co - ordinator's Secretary : Isobel Bogucki, 20 Rusper Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 4BD. Tel 0403 261178.

School Phobia Helpline : Pam Stevenson, 0304 210997.

School Phobia Young People's Support : Angela White, 30a Field View Close, Coventry, West Midlands CV7 9BJ.

Subscription Renewals : Marc Cottee, 17 South View Road, Rettenden Common, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8DX. Tel 0268 733259.

Regional Enquiries Secretaries

Orkney, Shetlands and Scotland	Jasmine O'Sullivan	0595 6562
North	Eileen Wilson	0283 532547
Midlands	Gillian Brown	0922 41 4286
Wales	Miryam Bush	0742 553836
East Anglia	Sandie Cottee	0286 733259
South	Jude Ashley - Walker	0983 78680
London	Susan Long	0245 421496

Regional Membership Secretaries

Scotland Lorna Brown, 130 Greenock Road, Bishopton, Renfrewshire, Scotland PA7 5AS.

NE England Doreen Wicks, 7 Lowell Park, Wheldrake, York YO4 6BS.

NW England Jenny Paddon, 63 Doyle Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 4SA.

Wales & Midlands Gillian Murley, 84 Witney Road, Stafford ST17 0BP.

E. Anglia & Home Counties Donette Stidwell, 1 Michaelstow Close, Ramsey, Harwich, Essex CO12 5ES.

London & SE Margaret Bending, 5 Oakhill Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 OAE.

South West Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carey Park, Polperro, Looe, Cornwall PL13 2JP.

HELPLINES : Childline 0800 1111 (free) Kidscape 071 488 0488

education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- reaffirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school;
- establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education.

For further information send an A5 (approx. 6"×8.5") stamped self-addressed envelope to:

Education Otherwise
PO Box 120,
Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire,
CV32 7ER

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