

EDUCATION OTHERWISE

New Letter No. 106

October 1995



The above shield is yours to copy and keep.
It says some of what you do.

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POLITE NOTICES - small print

DISCLAIMER-

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor, nor of Education Otherwise as a whole. This newsletter is edited by a volunteer and its primary purpose is to provide support and communication between members.

REMINDER TO READERS

Education Otherwise 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 the 1st November 1995. All copy should be sent to the editor by this date, it saves a lot of headaches and extra work. All material intended as such should be clearly marked "for publication". Please ensure that you include your name, address and telephone number. Contributions are more likely to be included if they are concise. Some editors may be able to use copy on computer disc but still send in a clean paper copy.

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EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES -

Beverly Young has been compiling a list of free or discounted entry into places of interest and discounts on books, equipment, toys etc. Please send any information to:
Beverly Young, 91 Lyndhurst Drive,
Preston, PR2 1TB or phone 01772 735531

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EDITOR

Jenny and I are the proud parents of three lovely boys who have never gone to school. I believe that school is the second, (and a poor second at that), of the two choices in educational nurturing. I am also convinced that there are a lot of dedicated and caring people in the educational industry who are misled. I feel for them. There should be a way of using the experience and resources of both 'the system' and conscientious home educators with flexible access to suit all children and parents.

'School' has revealed itself to be a multi-million pound industry which has managed to convince the population that it is a 'natural' form of education and that everything else is 'alternative'. Society is waking up to the fact that 'vested self interest' is a very powerful influence in directing public opinion. For everyone's sake let us hope that honesty, foresight and true ethics will prevail in the corridors, and clubs, of power. All the best, John

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REPORT OF MEETINGS

held at

Featherstone Castle, Northumberland, 9-10 September 1995

For EO, the past year has been a turbulent one. Firstly we had a financial crisis. Secondly most of the Council of Management, plus a number of other postholders, resigned and were replaced. Apart from that, we applied for charitable status - but only after a heated dispute over our proposed articles of association. And we also took on the Department of Education over the wording of the Parents' Charter - but it cost us a four-figure sum in legal fees. Nonetheless, by the end of the year we had regained our stability, and we now seem to be functioning effectively once again.

These events were outlined in the chairperson's report, delivered last month at the **annual general meeting**. Reports were also given by or for other Council members, including the treasurer. But we were unable to consider the accounts, as they had not yet been passed to the auditors. The meeting was adjourned, and will be reconvened for this purpose in the new year.

We had to elect a new **Council**. All but one of the existing members stood for re-election, and all were confirmed in office by the meeting. Three new Council members were also elected.

Immediately after the **AGM** we had a **discussion meeting**. This gave us a chance to look at a few issues informally before making decisions on them the following day.

The agenda for the next day's **open Council meeting** was very long, and only the main points can be summarised here. Much of it was about people's jobs. **Anne Wade** had handed over the rôle of **general secretary** to **Val Gommon** and became **vice-chair** instead. A new post of **meetings secretary** was created, and **Rob Wade**

was appointed to it. **Beverley Young** was appointed to coordinate our new team of **publicity contacts**. **David Mason** took over **publications distribution** from Pat Dixon, and **Angle Targett** took on the job of dealing with **research enquiries**. Other names were suggested for coordinating the **special needs** support team and for specialising in **college admission**. We still need a contact for **GCSEs**, and will probably need a **database secretary** in the longer term.

Five people had been acting as **local coordinators** and were now ratified by the meeting. We are extending this system of provisional appointments to other jobs.

We adopted **Sue Hutchin's** draft **newsletter** guidelines for a trial period and decided to restore the newsletter to its former size from February 1996. It will include a thematic section of articles commissioned in advance by **Anne Mills**. The appeal for funds raised nearly £300, but this is not a large sum in relation to our bills. We decided to defer publication of the next **contact list** until spring 1996. Meanwhile **SINC** has run out and **Rob Wade** is working on an urgent revision.

Near the start of the meeting we discussed the responsibilities of people taking part in **EO gatherings**, and two people were delegated to draft

guidelines. Later we turned to **future venues** and drew up a provisional list for 1996-7. We hope we will be able to hold the next one near Taunton in early 1996. Places will be limited, so book early!

Anne Wade

Vice-chair

19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middx HA0 2LY

education otherwise COUNCIL MEMBERS

September 1995

Chairperson:

Pien Maltz-Klaar (London-North)

General Secretary

***Val Gommon** (Bucks)

Treasurer:

Priscilla Park-Weir (Surrey)

Other members:

Andy Archer (Leics)

Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight)

Gwen Baldock (Yorks-North)

Isobel Bogucki (Sussex-West)

Lucy Charlton (Leics)

Dineke de Jong (Yorks-South)

Maxine Griffith (Yorks-South)

Sue Hutchin (Kent)

***Hilary Mason** (Yorks-West)

Eleanor Stapleton (London-North)

Anne Wade (London-Middx)

Bruce Wallace (Highlands & Islands)

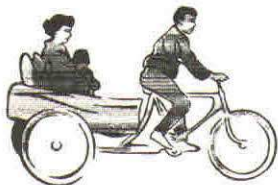
***Beverley Young** (Lancs)

*New member

If you would like copies of the full minutes (including reports, but excluding the annual accounts), please send me an addressed return label and stamp (or an A5 SAE), plus two further first class stamps for photocopying.

HOME SCHOOLED IS HOME INSPIRED

Home schooling in Hong Kong



by Johanna Castro

One of the reasons we left Africa was because of the schooling. We came to Hong Kong with every intention of paying for our children's education, (because that is what you do in Hong Kong), and every intention of the children being in schools within a couple of weeks. Ha! Within two weeks my children were driving me dotty and what is more I'd discovered that the International School on Lantau Island was full. So too were the zoned schools on Hong Kong Island. Even private tutors, (who we couldn't afford anyway), were fully booked with waiting lists. We lived on Discovery Bay - an apt name under the circumstances!

Where did that leave me? In Hong Kong without the proverbial paddle, that's where. On an island no less where a paddle might have come in damn useful! This is the point at which most people wallow in self pity, (I did), and acidly bemoan the whole idiotic, profit-making system where a government allows more emphasis to be placed on building acres of new flats than on providing facilities for the community which will live there, most notably basic facilities - like schooling. But finally I took a deep breath and made the best decision I'm likely to make in Hong Kong: Home Education.

It was a reluctant decision, which is turning out to have a silver lining, but at least I didn't need to speak Cantonese or have a University Education. I did quickly commit myself to the idea of helping my children to learn to the very best of my earthly abilities. I also discovered pretty rapidly that this involves a great deal of dedication, organisation and the desire to learn with them - not only national curriculum linked material, but personal skills such as untold patience, limitless flexibility, total understanding

and the ability to retain a sense of humour at all costs! I must admit, most of these skills still elude me! When the realisation of this impending and enormous commitment took shape, the desire to re-pack and head for England was strong!

But then so was I. The decision was made, and I made haste to a Discovery Bay Newcomers' Coffee Morning at the Residents' Club where I "networked" like mad. Fortunately people in Hong Kong are notoriously friendly and nearly everyone had something to offer from advice to books, to useful contacts and one contact quickly led to another. Next I bought a few supplies and very gently started teaching, which is a stage I wouldn't like to duplicate again because there was an initial rebellion - from us all. Particularly rebellious were Sam, at six, who has never enjoyed doing even ten minutes homework with Mum, and three and a half year old Emma, who didn't understand why she should join in at all, or keep quiet. But we weathered this stage and tried to keep calm until gradually things became easier and our small flat became more school-friendly. Well the dining area became the school, with posters and childrens' works of art stuck up everywhere and the sideboard filled with books, files and various teaching aids.

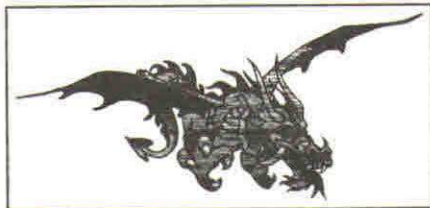
We found out that keeping to school hours was imperative and set aside three hours each morning, solely given over to following academic pursuits. Such pursuits may not always be 'school-like' in the strictest sense but they are designed to instruct and inform with as much variety and entertainment as I can muster.

Also important, for my sake as much as the childrens', is a day out. We called it our Adventure Day and it nearly always gives inspiration for a project for consecutive school mornings offering scope for discussion and creativity of some description. Hong Kong is synonymous with ferry journeys back and forth to the various islands, residential and even shopping areas, and these we turn into reading-times. We go to Hong Kong's excellent parks and theme parks as well as swim for our P.E. lessons, and we make use of the excellent museums. When we have time and spare cash we go sightseeing, not like tourists but like Indiana Jones-type adventurers - "What's round the corner? Let's take this road and see where it leads us! Let's take a tram, or shall we go underground?" In fact we don't have to even get to the place we were going, it's the journey from which we derive as much fun and knowledge! With a bit of imagination we are able to turn Hong Kong not only into an exciting treasure hunt but also into a gigantic classroom! To think I used to exist in a fuzzy blur where learning was something which happened mostly at school, now makes me cringe.

Yes I have worried about aspects such as social interaction, missing out on the 'fun' of school and the possible results a home education might induce, but, having talked to a number of mothers who have home-schooled for quite a few years, it seems fairly evident that their children do not appear to have suffered in any way. They said that the childrens' levels of attainment and motivation were higher in comparison to children in larger school classes and, having returned to formal education, their children were not apparently shy or lacking in social skills. They had no difficulties in making friends. It was felt that friendships made during the home-schooled period, being ones of choice and not necessity, were a building block for confidence because home-schoolers never have to bow down to peer pressure or bullying. Nor do they have to spend hours travelling to school. Instead they have been learning real life skills, spending a lot of time in the real world meeting and interacting with all sorts of people from a variety of cultures.

I signed the children up for extra-mural classes to provide diversity, fun, friends and interests outside the home, not to mention the benefit of learning additional sports or subjects. Yes, these can become expensive, but bear in mind that home-schooling cuts out school fees, ferry and bus fares, expensive school uniforms and all the other incidental school expenses.

Home educators can choose supervised correspondence courses from England, Australia, New Zealand and USA - all vary in cost and content. Or they can opt for the more localised, less structured road and go it alone. I've been lucky in Hong Kong because I've found plenty of material suitable for junior school children at Hong Kong book stores. Additionally, I discovered a Community



Playgroup which has a resource centre and a library, as well as the play, cooking, woodwork, arts and crafts facilities open to members. Naturally I joined the Urban Library on Hong Kong Island and made use of everything which I

could beg or borrow - although I did fall prey to the initial hysterical urge of "I must buy every teaching aid I can lay my hands on," but I soon found variety, practical work and flexibility counted for far more than yet another permanent fixture.

Learning together ought to be enjoyable, not a slog to be performed each day and I'm glad to have been forced into this awakening of home-schooling. Watching your own children develop at point-blank range is alarmingly rewarding.

If the cap fits, wear it, is my Hong Kong motto for survival, and for the time being, it does. Home-schooled is home inspired - there's no factory fodder in our household!

Johanna can be reached at . Flat 7d, Greenfield Court, Lantau Island, Hong Kong or Tel. 2987 6407 [Many thanks to her for such a lovely piece and our best wishes go to her there. - 'Dogé?Ed]

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

NORTHERN REGION CONFERENCE & SOCIAL GATHERING

Sun. 12th Nov. 1995 at
'Merchant Adventurer's Hall', York



- Lectures:** PROF MEIGHAN: Home-based education, effectiveness research
JOHN ADCOCK: Author of 'In Place of Schools' See EO newsletter 104
THE INTERNET: The Information Superhighway. Is it for you?
- Workshops:** DYSLEXIA with DONALD PAYNE... plus individual work throughout the afternoon
MULTI-CULTURAL RESOURCES in EDUCATION with Marit Tam Lit.
LEGAL with EOs own specialists Anne and Rob Wade
MATHS with Betty Ball who is known to many from previous workshops.

Activities running throughout the day for the smaller people: MINI BEASTS - Real, live bats and hedgehogs. GLASS PAINTING on light bulbs. STORY TELLING and making hats and masks. COOPERATIVE GAMES with parachute, rubbing brass etc. TRIP TO THE YORK RAILWAY MUSEUM- It's famous and free if you have your membership card, (parents must accompany).

Also BARN DANCE 6-9pm. All food & activities included in the price
Adults £8.50, Children (over 5s) £5.50. Families only pay for 2 children.

For further details and application form send SAE to: Gwen Baldock, 6 Villa Grove, Heworth Green, York, YO3 7TB. Please book as early as possible to assist planning.
p.s. John is still offering some AD & D e.g. Bughunters.

"LINKS BETWEEN HYPERACTIVITY/BEHAVIOURAL LEARNING DISORDERS AND DIET, NUTRITION AND ALLERGY".



The "Hyperactive Children's Support Group" (HACSG)

will be holding their Northern Regional Conference this year at

The Medical School, University of Newcastle, Sat. 11th Nov., 9.30am - 5.00pm.

Our morning speakers include NHS and private health care Doctors and Dietitians, HACSG representatives and a Consultant in "Nutritional Criminal Prevention". We are also offering afternoon workshops on diet and nutritional therapies for behavioural learning disorders; homeopathy and alternative therapies; neuro-developmental and developmental and auditory therapy; and opportunities for private consultations with HACSG medical advisers.

Ticket prices have been held low to make the Conference accessible to as many parents and professional workers as possible.

Professionals/Non-members £15. HACSG members £5. Low income/unwaged £3.

To book or for details, please contact Nicky Simmons, 40 Ravens Crescent, Dewsbury, W Yorks, WF13 3QG Tel 01924 469892 [Thank you Nicky. Wish you every success. Ed]



Spotlight on...



POINTS OF INTEREST

'WHICH' REPORT ON INFORMATION FROM GOVERNMENT

(Which? August 1995- Public Interest: data protection)
For copyright reasons we cannot give the actual page or extracts from it but summaries of the relevant bits should suffice. So here goes.

Access to Information Not on Computer -
Apparently you do have some rights of access to information which is not held on computer databases etc. It applies to some public bodies but not others. The three exceptions quoted are social work, education and health, which may not surprise anyone. Records can be withheld from you by these bodies if disclosure is likely to damage your health. If that is the case, then they don't have to tell you that they have done so.

There are two paragraphs on 'housing and social' and 'health but the last is concerning 'education records'. In the latter piece it states that pupils over sixteen years of age have a right to see personal information on manual

files held since 1st Sept'89 in England. Children under sixteen need their parents permission. Parents of children under the age of eighteen can see their child's record. Students in further education and, in certain circumstances, their parents, can see their records.

'Which' had a lengthy comment on these points and adds others. A few of the points that they made were as follows: 1/That the maximum fee of £10, which these information holders can charge in most cases, should not be levelled at people for every category searched.; 2/That the Data Protection Registrar is another underpowered body of control on the unscrupulous. 3/That many organisations which should be registered are not or they interpret the rules differently. 4/That new legislation is overdue and some should be on it's way by 1999.

Thank you Karen & Alan Butler - Ed

A RADIO REVIEW-

'C M Ward' (Address not supplied but possibly from N London) sent in his/her summation of a couple of radio pieces which were thought of interest to Eoers.



2nd July'95 Talk Radio UK @ 12:55am

On the 'Through the Night' show, an MP spokesman for the 'Redistribution of taxes debate' said that "Giving the government ever more money in taxes for health and education was not the answer to raising standards as after a hundred years of the educational system *less* people were able to read, write and do basic maths than there were before the educational system came in. after leaving school, one third of the people cannot read write or figure enough to get by in general society."

"The very next person who called in said

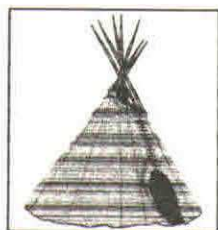
that she hoped that they were not thinking of giving people more forms to fill in concerning tax as she could not read enough to fill them in, neither could her three children who were dyslexic.'

3rd July 1995 Talk Radio News Item - A
Staffordshire youngster aged ten was awarded £500 compensation in court today after being forced to spend five hours practising for the school sports day. The girl suffered severe sunburn to her legs.

(C M Ward comments " There was no mention of any disciplinary action whatsoever being taken against the teachers or the school for what happened. If a parent did that to a child they could be prosecuted and the child taken into care. How do teachers get away with this when we as caring parents could be dealt with so harshly?")

OTHERWISE CLUB CAMPS FOR OVER 12s

by Sue Petszaff



Some of you will already have had information or heard that we are starting to have Otherwise Club camps for over 12s. It has come about in response to the need for our older kids to have more time to hang

out together. So our idea is to have a basic framework or purpose for the camp but quite a lot of free time around that. An extension of this idea is that similar camps should be held in other parts of the country where there are others of a similar age group, so that they can be part of a national peer group of 'otherwise educated' over 12's.

So far we have had one camp which was judged an overall success, though there were a few major blips such as hiring a tent which proved to be too small and resulted in a few people getting wet! There were 18 of us in all, using my garden as a site mainly because it is large and there are no camping fees. We had 11 young people, 2 very young people and 6 older people. The focus of the camp was outdoor activities. We had sessions of climbing, abseiling and canoeing which were generally enjoyed.

After the meeting held at the end of the last camp, we also agreed that a few ground rules would be in order for the next camp, so at the beginning of the next camp we will have a meeting to discuss the following suggested rules:- There should be an adult responsible for and to each young person at the beginning of the camp; everyone must be quiet from 11pm to 7am in the tents area; the house can be used for showers and loos; fires must only be lit in appointed areas; there should be no alcohol or drugs; booking for the camp is on a 'first come first served' basis before the closing date and money for booked activities has to be paid in advance when booking; there will be a meeting at the end of the camp to discuss anything of interest to participants.

Since that camp a lot of work has been done on some outbuildings in our garden and we now have some really good rooms to use if the weather is wet during a camp or if there is need for an indoor space for activities. We also plan a gradual process of clearing some land, sowing grass and planting trees which is work that can be done during camps as well. All ideas are welcome as to what activities people would like to happen.

The next camp is to be October 6th-8th and will have mixed activities. One session of canoeing, work in the garden, night games, drama games and perhaps making some furniture for the outbuildings out of old wood we have around, (if anyone has any aptitude in that direction), and anything else people suggest. The cost of the canoeing is £2.10 each for a one and a half hour session and food will be approximately £1.50 per day for vegetarians and £2.50 upwards for meat eaters. Everyone is expected to contribute to the enjoyment and general well-being of all and, if you have a tent, please bring it. Let us know if you are happy to share your tent with someone else.

We have put quite a lot of thought and effort, among other things, in an attempt to try and provide, what seems to be, a much needed facility for the 'over 12s'. I would be really pleased to get some feedback about it. If you think it is a good idea but can't make the next camp, I would still like to hear from you because it can be very dispiriting to get no response. It can also be frustrating to hear, at a later date, that someone was intending to be supportive but didn't get around to doing something about it until the event had folded due to lack of response.

Please contact: Sue Petszaff, 2 Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough, E Sussex, TN6 3RH or telephone 0892 661319.

[The newsletter may come out too late for the 6th-8th October camp but get in touch for the next one. Ed]

Autonomous learning and language

The final part of a three-part article by Anne Wade (London - Middlesex)

FELIX was made to go through the reading scheme in school. I complained and the teacher said, 'But it's such a nice little reading scheme.' 'But he can read!' 'Well he needs to do the scheme so he can do the comprehension.' Felix said of that, 'The roof is red - what colour is the roof?' 'What are they doing to us? Trying to make us stupid or trying to drive us mad?' Later I was told that he couldn't read. I asked Felix what was going on and he said, 'Well I tried going fast to get through it and she just kept finding more and more so now I'm trying going as slowly as I can.'

He was not allowed access to the library in the next room, although I pointed out that books would keep him quiet - he had to learn to be 'good' because the teacher said so. He asked for the 'Pirate' books, which he was dying to read, and knew were sitting on a shelf next door. He was told he would get them next year. A quarter of his lifetime away! He said, 'But I won't want them then - it's now I want to read them.' This seemed to me to be a valid insight, but his teacher repeated it as a complaint about how unruly he was, with no awareness that this is a crazy way to 'educate' a child.

The next complaint was that his coordination was appalling. I just laughed 'Are you really talking about the child who's always in trouble for being at the top of the ropes before the gym lesson starts?' 'Well, his fine motor coordination, then.' 'He's good at using scissors.' 'Well, he can't do a jigsaw and he can't write, can't even hold a pen.' 'Can't or won't? Did you ask if he *wanted* to do the jigsaw? He does lots at home.' I thought yet again how easily children are labelled, and on what inadequate evidence. I said firmly that his fine motor coordination was excellent - that the GP had actually commented during a checkup that his 'neurological development was fantastic'. But what happens where a parent is less confident?

When we took Felix out of school at five and a half, he still would not write, and we decided to leave it until he chose to do it. We did most things orally, and told the LEA inspectors that we were not going to contaminate his joy in learning by associating it with an activity which he disliked so much. When we felt that a story or a science experiment was worth recording, we typed it out at his dictation, and he illustrated it. We told them that we would look for occasions when writing was necessary and focus on them - but we didn't find any. Writing *isn't* necessary to a small child. He could remember everything he wanted to. It is arguable that literacy has ruined our oral traditions by discouraging our ability to

remember stories.

Rob had often made up treasure hunts for Felix and his friends, and at seven and a half Felix spontaneously started writing clues for occasional treasure hunts to welcome Rob home from work. He also wrote a rare letter to friends or family. Very little else. I remember the inspectors, whom he liked very much, being overenthusiastic about four nondescript lines of script, and Felix saying, 'I only did it because you were coming.' He was aware of the need to become fluent eventually, and that it was his responsibility. I remember him saying, 'I've been thinking of complicated ways of getting myself to write because I need to practise it because I'm not very good at it.' For a while he would write us notes: 'Now Rob don't forget (when the News is over) the *Loop the Loop* track.' His food would be labelled with such things as 'I do not like this.' He would write captions and speech bubbles on his pictures with no trouble, and write down the occasional poem he made up. He would write jokes and codes and notices. But if I tried to get him to write, he would be back to falling off his chair, chewing rubber and pencil, and crawling around looking for 'mislaidd' items. It was painful and obviously futile.

Gradually he began doing a fair amount of private writing: a letter to tell a friend about the current state of the insects in the garden; notes to himself; ideas for games; a long letter to Saturday club complaining because they were trying to make it more structured - he pointed out that he was not at all interested in their activities, which he could do all week at home, but that he went to play and talk with other children, which was exactly the same as the adults wanting to gossip in the kitchen, except that the children's way was healthier because they didn't smoke. Then he wrote a sequel to *Winnie the Pooh* because the stories had run out. The plot was thin but he caught the style exactly. Some of it we typed to his dictation, and some of it he typed himself, with great persistence and a lot of Tippex.

After this we saw very little of his writing for a year or two. He seemed to be doing quite a lot privately - he drilled a hole through a hardbacked notebook and padlocked it - but all his activity with us continued to be oral. Then at nine he began spending long periods typing ambitious stories. His variations in style and his characterisations were a delight, and as he wrote he gained a sense of structuring each piece.

He only ever wrote three essays. One was a beautiful piece on *Insulation*, immaculately written and illustrated,

for some badge for Cubs, when he was nine. When he was eleven he heard us discussing GCSE English, and he asked what 'essay' meant. We explained and he asked for some titles. He scribbled off a couple immediately. They were barely legible, but they were well constructed and witty. This was probably what enabled us to refrain from pressuring him in this area as he came to secondary age. We felt quite confident that he had the ability to write anything he chose, and that any pressure would only muddy the clarity and vitality of his writing.

Punctuation always fascinated him and never caused him any problem. He questioned us about it well before he admitted he could read, and he enjoyed the Usborne book *Punctuation* by Robyn Gee and Carol Watson, apart from defending his right to use four exclamation marks at once.

Spelling interested him periodically. He liked the Usborne book *Spelling* by the same authors, though he found it more complex. He liked using spelling workbooks orally sometimes, though some are badly designed and when we found one we liked we could not get the rest of the series. Joy Pollock's *Signposts to spelling* is very good. The book he got most out of was *Alpha to Omega* by Beve Hornsby and Frula Shear (Heinemann). He liked this for the same reason that he liked Margaret Hooton's *Reading and Writing* - he wanted the inside story, the patterns and inner structure, the bits the teachers know, the background explanations about why words are so. We read and discussed it together with lots of digressions as usual. He did the exercises orally and skipped anything he felt secure about.

Most of his work on spelling was more informal still. He would spend hours at a time on it, at his instigation, provided he was either being cuddled or could move freely. He would try any words we asked for, as long as he could digress and elaborate as much as he wanted to, exploring homophones and word plays such as *two can and toucan*, and going into the etymology of anything irregular, while hanging from doorframes or turning somersaults. He might spell out the answers, or write them in the air, or act them out in some ingenious way. The one thing he never did was write them on paper. Sometimes we had to take turns asking the questions. We played lots of word games, including more orthodox ones like Scrabble, My Word and Kan-u-go.

When he started writing in earnest, he showed little interest in spelling for a couple of years. He had reached a level where it was no longer an obstacle to communication, but something more like table manners, a social asset, the advantage of which is not very obvious to a child.

Whilst he and his friends were editing their Saturday club magazine, our dictionary became very battered. We

gave any spellings when asked, and when we were offered a page to read we might ask if they would like spelling corrections. Often the answer was 'no'. Some days other aspects of what they were doing and learning were just too important to leave room for concern over spelling.

Unexpectedly - because I am pedantic about spelling - I had an example of this myself. I was in a workshop, part of the group excitedly brainstorming and scribbling down words on a huge sheet of paper. I wrote 'crysallis', and was immediately aware of misspelling it and yet too absorbed in the next idea to bother going back to correct it. Allowing it to stand had a considerable effect on freeing my writing, and I realised how inhibiting a too obsessional standard of spelling is.

When Felix was eleven and a half, he asked for an electronic 'Spellmaster'. I said it was too expensive and offered a spelling dictionary, and he said, 'Yes.' I went straight out and bought *Teach yourself spelling* which includes wrong spellings and directs the reader to the correct one. He used it conscientiously for a while, and his spelling became about perfect.

When his school friends were starting cursive script, we offered him a workbook which led on to it. He said, 'I don't want to learn joined-up writing yet - I'm just starting to get good at printing and I'm not going to change to something new.' Then he went to the other extreme and explored copperplate and various old-fashioned cursive scripts with elaborate capitals. He argued that writing need not be functional, as that is what typewriters and word processors are for. He became interested in typography and graphic design, and lettering became part of his art. He differentiated this from calligraphy, which he rejected.

When he was eleven we all decided to improve our handwriting and practised together. We used the Nelson series, Ruth Fagg's *Handwriting* books (Hodder and Stoughton) and Rosemary Sassoon's books such as *Practical guide to children's handwriting*. He became competent but decided to revert to printing. We said that joined script was potentially faster than printing, which only served to make him practise printing very fast. He insisted that printing was quicker and more legible, and was delighted to read in *Learning all the time* that John Holt had done some research which backed up his assertion.

When he was around eight he became interested in grammar: 'I've been thinking - it's no use talking about anything on its own - you always have to put other words with it.' This led on to various ideas about philosophy and syntax, and we were still playing 'spot the adjective' well into the night. A week later we heard him muttering away, and realised he was finding an adverb for every

letter of the alphabet, following up some joke on the radio. He came across 'friendly' and 'ghastly', which are actually adjectives though they end in -ly, and we considered how to define an adverb; and again the discussion went on late into the night, and resumed the next day. He then read the Usborne *Grammar* book which he had found too difficult when he read *Spelling and Punctuation* earlier.

He would often hear us discussing linguistic points, and became quite sophisticated in his judgments and arguments. We never did any formal work, but we had interesting discussions on stress and intonation, thinking and language, other ways of communicating, how animals communicate, how they may think, whether we can teach them to understand more (he tried a lot of experiments on the cat), how we can improve our own thinking and communicating, whether we can develop the ability to use the right and left sides of the brain simultaneously, and many other aspects of linguistics.

Many discussions arose out of his passion for inventing codes on different linguistic levels. One of these codes had function markers attached to the words. This led him into an exhaustive analysis of parts of speech, different ways of analysing language, and the various ways in which different languages resolve such problems. I remembered trying to talk about the same ideas in school, and how frustrated I was at being told that I had 'finished' Language and there was only Literature to 'do'.

He was fascinated by writing systems and spent hours in the British Museum looking at old alphabets and manuscripts. He constructed a spelling-based code, which made him realise in more detail the anomalies and also the hidden relations in English spelling. He and his friends became fluent in one of his codes, a letter-for-letter code which looks as if it uses a blend of English and Greek letters and runes. He devised a phoneme-based code which led him to analyse English phonology. He spent several weeks on this, for hours each day, inventing his own phonological system and discovering in the process all the standard problems and many interesting facts.

He has sometimes spontaneously done the sort of activity he would do in an English class, but usually orally. Several times he followed up the same story in different (free) newspapers, and explored how differently it was reported. He saved up for an airbrush, and researched all the options very competently. He would often browse in the dictionary for new words which appealed to him, playing around, inventing ways to help him remember the meanings and generally finding much hilarity in the activity. When he was preparing to be a Tudor artist at Kentwell Hall during their 'living history' Tudor re-enactments, he spent several days in the British Art Library researching Tudor art materials and techniques and taking notes. He and his friends had a long craze for

'verbal adventure games', on the lines of computer games and programmed books, which amounted to cooperative story telling. I was in an EO home the other day and heard one of the children asking another to play VAG, so it's still going strong.

One question seems to stand out from all this: would the same method, or lack of method, work with a child who was less verbal to start with? If we are insecure about a child's ability to achieve what we feel is a necessary minimum, the temptation is to structure the learning for them and (ever so nicely if possible) impose it on them. With this style of education, we have to trust children to learn whatever they deem necessary for their lives, and, even harder, we have to accept that their ideas on what this is may differ from ours.

What is usually overlooked is that they will often do this anyway, and that if they are coerced into learning, a lot of their learning potential is absorbed in strategies to counteract our interference. A less verbal child may resist all remedial reading programmes as a protest about the way they are taught. If they are given space to learn in their own way, they will be more inclined to maximise their potential. For many this will mean learning to communicate competently in ways that are useful to them, and nothing more. They will use language as a tool, and have no wish to consider it further. But surely this is a reasonable choice? They may write letters but see no point in writing essays. Equally I defend my lack of interest in how to tune an engine. There are too many possibilities for learning to waste time on those which do not interest us - there isn't enough time in life to explore all those which do, unless the excitement of learning has been turned off for us.

When Felix was sixteen we had our last LEA inspection. Once again there was no written work, as far as we knew. As usual, we wrote a report beforehand, which was complicated by the fact that he did a lot that we knew little about. He said his education was his responsibility - which after all is the attitude we had encouraged. He wanted the inspector to come, chose to see her alone, and enjoyed talking to her for an hour and a quarter. She said how impressed she was, though we didn't really know by what. She said what hard work it must have been... I thought about that. 'Work' is not the appropriate word. We only ever did things we enjoyed, and mostly it felt like playing. It has sometimes been 'hard', but not in the way she implied. The difficulties have all been about backing off, not imposing our own needs and ideas, not intruding into his space, about not doing - about being fully available to him on his terms, not ours. About remembering to trust him.

Thank you Ann for such an extensive article.

PERSONAL NOTICES

COMPANION FOR TURKEY I am looking for someone aged 16-26 to accompany me for a year working in Turkey. I am thinking of going there around the first week in June '96 - just before I go to university. When I went there last June, I was pleasantly surprised at how safe the country was and how friendly the people were. If I do go to Turkey I will be living in the Southwestern parts, away from the cities, (where trouble is more likely). There are some Europeans living in that area already. If you are interested then write to me at the following address: *Sylvia Bell, 26 Bladnoch, Wigtown, Newton-Stewart DG8 9AB*

SHARE IN SCOTLAND I'm looking for a family to live in my static caravan with children of similar age to my own who are 3, 4 and 6 respectively. The facilities are basic. It is in a beautiful area of rural Scotland. No rent is asked for but I would like some help with the buildings, gardening or improving facilities. At the moment I'm not home educating but have a vision of renovating the barn for use as a school room and health centre. Anyone interested please get in touch as soon as possible. Yours hopefully, *Chloë Bruce, Spittal Mill, Kirkowan, Newton Stewart, DG8 0DB. Tel 016 71 830390.*

LANCS OR YORKS MEETS? Any EO families in the Pendle/Burnley area of Lancashire, or the Skipton area of Yorkshire, who would like to meet regularly/occasionally? (Trips, get-togethers, etc.) If so we'd love to hear from you. Contact Linda or George on 01282 812449

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS I wish to thank all those who kindly donated money as a result of the note in the last newsletter. We did not collect much, but I would especially like to thank a generous anonymous donor. I certainly expect the newsletter to be restored to full size in the New Year and hope to find ways to fund our other projects. *Priscilla Park-Weir, Treasurer.*



**BROMLEY, KENT.
FRIENDS AND
PLAYMATES FOR OUR
DAUGHTER** Are there any understanding young Eoers

in our area, (preferably girls), who would like to befriend our daughter

Carly aged 11 years? You would have to be easy going and of a patient nature. She is very friendly, loves sport, games, bike riding, swimming, reading, cooking and having fun. The LEA want to send her to a special school and we don't think Carly wants this herself. Friends and love is what she needs most. Please get in touch.

Yours Tracey, Peter and Carly Weller, 19 Herbert Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9SH

ANY MAIL ON E-MAIL?

If there are any EO children out there who would like to write to Harry (8) or Ben (4) via E-mail, please contact them at: 100606.3274@compuserve.com

EO FAX & MODEM DIRECTORY All EOers who are modem or fax based please send in contact details so that we can compile a communications directory. I suggest a 'system on' window of between 7pm and 8pm so that faxes, data or letters can be exchanged. Send as much detail as possible of interests, restrictions, e-mail address etc. to John Paddon at Bolton. [Address given elsewhere]

ORGANISATIONAL

CONTACT LIST Hopefully the contact list will be reprinted in the near future and I am updating the information. Would you please inform me of any changes to your details so that the contact list is up to date at the time of printing. You do not need to notify me of BT code changes. If you wish to check that the information held on the database is correct, please confirm your wishes in writing. This is especially necessary if your details did not appear in the last contact list. All updates should reach me by **1ST NOVEMBER**. If you need further information please call me. *Marc Cottee, 17 South View Rd, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex Tel: 01268 733259*

VOLUNTEERS FOR ENQUIRIES

Volunteers are needed for enquiries positions throughout the country and particularly in the North. Please contact Eileen Wilson on 01283 532547. [Please come forward]

MEMBERSHIP VOLUNTEERS

There are now regional secretaries. (Many thanks to those in situ, and for the other offers.) Until the updated SINC is available contact Maggie Swatridge if difficulties arise.



NOTICES

COORDINATORS UPDATE

The following areas need a coordinator. The three underlined have no current cover. They are Berks, Bucks, Cambs, Derbyshire, N Devon, Gloucester, Grampian, Kent, Notts, Norfolk, Northumberland and Surrey. The Acting Coordinator for N Yorkshire is Ann Mills

Coordinators: 1/ Please check that you have a third edition of SiNC available. Printing a fourth edition may need to be delayed to ensure that it accurately covers all the recent minor changes in the law. If supplies of the 3rd edition run out, new members will need to have access to a copy. 2/ Please let me have new phone numbers as soon as possible. 3/ Ask families who are not in the current contact list if they would like to appear in the next print run. 4/ Encourage local families to volunteer to do some form of publicity.

For further information or clarification please contact:
Isobel Bogucki (Coordinators Secretary)

'EUREKA' TV programme want Eoers who are too isolated to reach a school. Contact Steve Werner on 0181 540 8786.

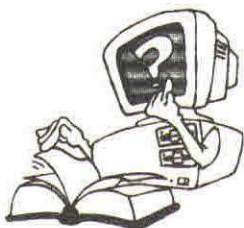
The February issue of the newsletter will have a special section on

Craft and Practical skills

Many Eoers love to do things with their hands, so please send in craft ideas, course information, book reviews, offers of help and workshop suggestions. If you enjoyed it and it worked, share it with other readers. Contributions from the many talented EO teenagers would be especially welcome. The deadline is December 15th.

Contact *Anne Mills, Waverley, Murton Way, Murton, York, YO1 3UJ Tel 01904 488088.*

INFORMATION PLEASE : NEED INPUT!



NEW ZEALAND - WHAT DO THEY DO AND HOW DO THEY DO IT? We are considering emigration to New Zealand with our sons aged six and one. The eldest is home educated. Does anyone have any experience of the educational system in New Zealand and, in particular, the sort of information we may not easily obtain from New Zealand House? What we really need to know is :- ① Is it possible to home educate in urban areas? ② Would we have to use the correspondence courses which are produced for children in isolated areas? and ③ Are there any organisations which would be useful to contact regarding Home Education or alternatives to the state system? We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you. *Karen & Anthony Butler, 217 Powerscourt Rd, Portsmouth, Hants, PO2 7JH*

SPANISH LANGUAGE VIDEOS? Could anyone let me know where I can get Spanish language video tapes, especially Walt Disney ones, and productions for younger children, like Sesame Street? Please write to: *Medusa, Redfield, Winslow, Bucks MK18 3LZ* [Tell the newsletter too please. -Ed]

ANY STEINER EOers OUT THERE? I left EO, and UK, around 1988 which was when we went back to Germany. This was just before my eldest daughter was due to go to school. There home-schooling is less widespread or, should I say, schooling is more compulsory! I am now back in UK with my children who are

in a Steiner school. My son however is 'acute special needs' and I would like to teach him 'the Steiner Way' at home. The previous two years he spent in a German Steiner which helped him greatly. There he had a regular and rhythmic framework of daily activities, nutrition and lifestyle, even actual therapies. I have however, chosen to return here to be "kinderrich", ("rich in children"), as the German term mockingly calls it. I am hoping to get finance for my son's 'curative placement' and hopefully to home-school the siblings also.

Facilities seem to centre around 'dyslexia' and my nine year old son cannot even speak! He makes himself understood by gestures and 'trial and error'. That works with me but I have become rather intuitive over the years! I do not want my son labelled dyslexic as it ignores the comprehensive nature of his 'special needs'. I experience much inner pain when I see how capable my children are and how much damage state education does to people. Maybe 'special needs' is a stark message to people out there to look more seriously at what they are doing and why they are doing it. He is sitting there happily drawing and singing away. I want him to continue to grow up happy and positive, i.e. free from state intervention. Please, would someone out there who is home-educating the Steiner way get in touch and share their experience with me.


Looking forward to your replies. *K Wagner-Dubois, 68 Tuffley Lane, Tuffley, Glos GL4 0DU*

MORE INFORMATION PLEASE!

EXTERNAL GCSE ENTRANTS AND THEIR TREATMENT I would very much like to hear from anyone who, as an Eoer, has had to deal with taking G.C.S.E.s, or, who is contemplating taking them sometime in the future. I am particularly interested in hearing about the problems they encountered or are encountering. My impression is that the out-of-school child (and parent) gets a raw deal from the system - worse than before, despite the general view that it is now more acceptable to be home educated. In maths and the science subjects at G.C.S.E., 'coursework' now has to be carried out. In the past there was no such thing as 'maths coursework' and, for the science subjects, an extra written paper could be taken in place of 'practical coursework' or, before that, in place of the practical exam. Now, not only does 'coursework' have to be done, but it has to be carried out and marked at the exam centre, (a school or college of further education). The teachers award a grade, and the marked 'coursework' is then sent on to the exam board for moderation. Normally the grade given by the centre is not altered by the board.

The situation, in a nutshell, is that the would-be private candidate has no actual right to use the facilities of any exam centre, "...you have to seek permission from a school or college in your area to be allowed to sit for your examination alongside its own students..." to quote from one of the G.C.S.E. exam groups. If you so get accepted as a private candidate at the local school or college then you are liable for the exam fees, (approximately £30 per subject), also, it wouldn't be unreasonable to suppose that the teachers would give more instruction and attention to their own pupils than to a

private candidate who, almost by definition, has opted to be independent. What I think would be fairer to us is that firstly, we should have the right for our children to use the local centre as private candidates, and secondly that, as private candidates, there should be no exam fees as is the case with the centre's own candidates. I think the schools in particular would oppose these changes for fear of losing more of their pupils to home education and a feeling that life should be as awkward as possible for us. My own opinion is that it would not make a lot of difference to the numbers out-of-school.



Again, I would be very grateful to anyone who could write to me on this subject giving their experiences, comments etc. My hope is that it will be possible for changes to be made, especially if we keep complaining about the present situation. Yours sincerely, *Roger Freeborn, 4 N. Fen Red, Helpringham, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 0RR. Tel 01529 421218* [This is an area which needs clarification. We need a contact to correlate GCSE matters, urgently. Please. - Ed]

FIRM INFO ON BRUSSELS'S PRESENT AND FUTURE INTENTIONS ON EOERS IN EEC

Can any members give clear and substantiated information on 'Brussels' intended policy as regards 'Home Education' in the EEC. Are they to legislate for, against or don't they give it a thought? With the vulnerability that some members feel it is totally unfair and irresponsible to make any statements which are not to a large extent factual or substantiated. The distress which such misinformation could cause does not justify it's being circulated. Please be careful with these essential insights into bureaucratic and political interference. [Send the next Newsletter editor any concrete facts concerning this important, and potentially worrying, matter.]

Regional Diary

Autumn 1995

STRATHCLYDE: Regular activities. Details from Rhona Cathcart 01563 540063 or Claire Young 01294 218562 or Shirley Shaw 01563 540063

[This entry has been copied from last issue. Could all regional diary entrants please indicate whether their details can be reentered without notification. There should be regular numbers for all areas as standard if this is possible. Ed]

LANCASHIRE: Dear Lancashire EOers, if you agree with the part in the last newsletter editorial, (105), written by Val Gomon, where it says that "Home Educating can be isolating and we should be as supportive as we can to each other", you might feel it is about time we got some regular meetings organized here in our area. Please ring Angelika on Blackburn 01254 771249 to exchange view and ideas on this.

N YORKSHIRE:

12th Oct 11:45 am- 'Eureka', Halifax
4th Nov 12:00 pm- 'Puppet Theatre, fireworks & BBQ' in York
12th Nov. 9:30 am- 'Regional Conference & Social Gathering', Merchant Adventurer's Hall, York. [Please come/book early.]
7th Dec 12:30 am- 'Knaresborough Pool'
21st Dec 11:30 am- 'Christmas Party' in York.
Also regular meetings in York. For details phone Anne Mills 01904 488088

N MANCHESTER: Contact John or Jenny on 01204 410723 if you want to start, or take part in, a local activity or group. Put our region on the map.

SUFFOLK: Meets every three weeks at Wetherden Village Hall. Autumn Events- Masks, drama, history of E Anglia.
Tel 01379 783 678 for details.

BATH: Co-ordinators Jo Ball & Andy Hanner 25 Larkhall Place, Bath, BA1 6SF, or contact Ros on (01225) 832118. Meet Tuesdays for swimming and occasional day trips, also on the 1st Sunday of each month for craft sessions/Dance/Drama etc.
Many apologies to Jean Edminston for mistakenly printing her phone number in previous 'Regional Diaries'.

WARWICKSHIRE: October- Ryton Organic Gardens. Contact Barbara Cooper 01203 412477 Also, hopefully, Armchair Puppet Theatre performing 'Small Wonder'.
Contact Alison Cox 01926 613619
November- Drama Workshop. Contact Mandy Stratton 01203 544562
December- Countries of the World. Contact Alison Cox 01926 613619

HAMPSHIRE: Well established Solent area group meets regularly for socialising and events. Details in local newsletter, phone Ann Hasler (01329) 6611238 to subscribe.

CORNWALL: Weekly events, S.A.E. for listing from Anna Wheeler, Cambrose Farm, Redruth, TR16 4HT Tel 01209 890378. Complaints report sent to L.E.A. Any problems with L.E.A. contact Anna.

SURREY: Activities and newsletter for Jehovah's Witnesses. For details contact Louise English on 01293 783102

KENT: All welcome at Friends Meeting House, Union St, Maidstone, 1st Mon in the month 11:15am to 4pm. Activities, themes, social contact - also other events. Xmas party 18th Dec For information contact Sue Tully 01322 664373, Jean Searle 01892 836438 or Amanda McKenzie 01634 402154



ARMCHAIR PUPPET THEATRE



proudly present
"SMALL WONDER"

on an autumn rehearsal tour for E.O. families and friends.

VENUE	DATE	CONTACT	TEL. NO.
Totnes	18th Oct	Ken & Jill Beagley	[01803] 861740
Bath	22nd Oct	Ros Foreman	[01225] 832118
Banbury	23rd Oct	Margaret & Alan Harper	[01295] 711991
Warwick	24th Oct	Alison Cox	[01926] 613619
<i>25th Oct to 3rd Nov - Visiting in Beeley, Dunsop Bridge & Reeth</i>			
York	4th Nov pm	Anne Mills	[01904] 488088
Leicester	7th Nov	Lucy Charlton	[01162] 592118
<i>9th to 12th Nov... Visiting friends in Colchester & Hainault</i>			
Milton Keynes	14th Nov a'noon	Joyce & Neil Taylor	[01908] 562451
Oxford	15th & 17th Nov	Pam Bellinger	[01869] 277391
Reading	18th & 19th Nov	Pat Connor	[01734] 662123
Hayling Island		Kay Day	[01705] 328036
Southampton	21st Nov	Julie Harvey	[01703] 849633

See June/July E.O. newsletter for more details.

All the above details were correct early in September 1995.

Please check the dates, times and venues with your local contacts.

For general tour information telephone Ken and Jill Beagley on the number given above.

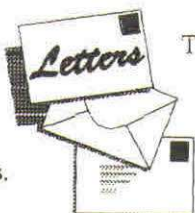
PLEASE WRITE TO DAD, MUM AND ME

Libertarian couple and 5 year old daughter would like to make friends by correspondence with families living near enough for visits. Please write and tell us about yourselves. We will answer all letters.

Richard, Suzanne and Emily Cox, 8 Berkeley Court, Vines Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2QE

DUNDEE DISCOVERY

Discovery Point at Discovery Quay in Dundee will give a concession to Education Otherwise members. Children cost £2.25 instead of £2.90 and one adult is admitted free.



They recreate the historic voyages of Royal Research Ship Discovery built in Dundee to take Captain Scott to Antarctica. They allow use of the Education Suite and are running a 'Drama and Science Workshop' in the near future. You can get an

'Educational Visits basic info pack', send a large S.A.E. to *Discovery Point, Discovery Quay, Dundee, DD1 4XA* or call 01382 201245. Yours Karen Spy.

[Please note that Beverley Young has kindly been compiling a list of such information. Relevant submissions may be forwarded onto Beverley and omitted from the newsletter. Ed]

BOOK REVIEW



The Freethinker's Pocket Directory to the Educational Universe.

by Professor Roland Meighan & edited by James Meighan.

[Educational Heretics Press - 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham, NG9 3PQ]

I imagine many home educators ask themselves at some stage or other the question: "Since everyone I meet seems to agree that schooling is the best possible thing for my child, who can I go to for the same sort of certainty about alternative education?" This book may go some distance towards supplying an answer.

This is not a course of lessons on how to home-educate. Rather, it assumes that the reader runs his or her own mind and actively intends to use it to help children grow up without fear and painful self-doubt. It sets out to say to such a person "Here is an array of diverse, undogmatic, thoughtful and demonstrably wise educators who know, and can explain, why children need alternative approaches to education. You don't have to agree with them, or do what they suggest, but they can give you a clear idea of what can be done, and they offer assurance born of long experience that educating children outside the classrooms of State Schools doesn't turn them into unemployable dead-heads."

There are articles on educators who have broken new ground - Denrey, Froebel, Macmillan - explaining their ideas concisely. Several innovative schools are described, not uncritically, and their contribution to educational thought briefly assessed. As befits a book for freethinkers the Directory avoids telling the reader what he or she should think. Professor Meighan writes about education from a resolutely non-authoritarian position, but a person who happened to approach the subject from a more structured, prescriptive standpoint would not, I feel, consider this an immoderate book.

Particularly valuable to the average homeschooler are the three pages devoted to the contrast between Authoritarian, Autonomous and Democratic views of education. A reader might be tempted to assume that one or other of them held the belt for Political Correctness, and adopt it uncritically and integrally. Professor Meighan prefers the more complicated line of approach, assessing the situation realistically and honestly with everybody concerned and adopting the best procedure for their unique mix of human needs and abilities. Thus he avoids the conflict, which has done a fair deal of harm in our ranks, between the champions of formal, structured teaching and of learning which happens as and when the child wants it to.

From the whole book emerges a clear message: education is not a religion or a science, but a human activity which is best done by people who know how to put aside their preconceived certainties about what is best for others and turn their attention to what those others actually feel and want for themselves. I found it most valuable. It is perhaps worth adding that there may be readers whose religious tradition reacts against the notion of "free-thinking" because it seems to imply 'moral rebellion'. This is not even remotely what the Directory is about. Believers as much as unbelievers will find it a valuable vade mecum. It will also furnish home-schoolers with sober, convincing replies to education professionals when they come around asking for an account of their stewardship.

Christopher R. Shute

EO PARENT ASKING FOR PRACTICAL BOOK REVIEWS AND POINTERS

Can anyone recommend FUN maths books to do with a bright eight year old boy?. Also investigations etc. which are really fun and which worked for you? Please write to: Jackie Bornham, 5 Arthur Rd., Horsham, W Sussex, RH13 5BG.

[Please also send answers to the next Newsletter Editor so that everyone can benefit from these important insights. Reviews on computers, software, educational books and materials etc. are desperately needed in the newsletter. Everyone has something to contribute somewhere!- Ed]

AFFORDABLE HOLIDAYS

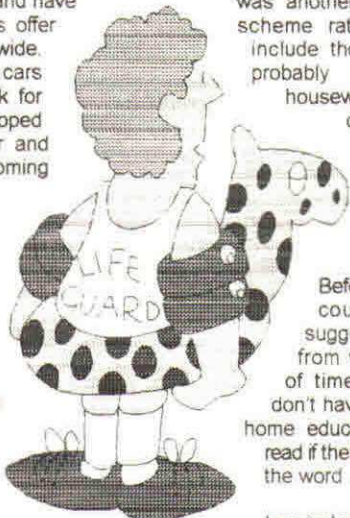
Finding affordable holidays can be difficult, however, this year we have had a short break at Easter and a two week holiday in August, with another short break planned for October - all for £10!! We did this by joining a house swap register, (in our case, one run by the National Childbirth Trust), as most people in it have baby equipment and toys suitable for our younger children, which made packing much easier. We even swapped buggies on one occasion. Some people in the NCT register also have older children, including teenagers. They joined the scheme some years ago and have stayed in it. Other schemes offer the possibility of swaps world-wide. Some people overseas swap cars too, and a lot of people ask for reciprocal pet care: we swapped rabbits this time, our Easter and October swaps have dogs coming with them.

For a single fee you can arrange as many swaps as you want - we originally planned to use it just for a summer holiday but ended up with more. We had to list the type of house, number of beds, household equipment, pets to look after, local attractions and finally the periods when you want to swap or don't want to swap. A lot, (but not all), of families only want to swap during the school holidays or at weekends. This sort of holiday may therefore be of more interest to families, like us, with a foot in each camp (a child in school and another out), or to those parents who are teachers. In the 1995 NCT register Scotland, Wales, and Devon/Cornwall were popular but under-represented. People who live in or near popular tourist spots probably find it easier to get the vacation they want, but I think everyone finds somewhere in the end.

If you do join a scheme, it helps to telephone people you would like to swap with as soon as the register arrives! Try alternatives. Be prepared to run up a phone bill for a few days. Console yourself with the thought of the cost of

a holiday home in August, (or whenever), or remind yourself that, unlike a tent, the house you go to will have an indoor bathroom! You also need to be a little cagey if someone phones you to suggest a swap you're not too keen on - only give a definite 'no' when you have firmly arranged something. We nearly said 'no' to the people we swapped with this summer but we had a great time there!

We used the swaps as a spur to have a good clean and tidy up and I do need a spur! This was another reason for choosing the NCT scheme rather than the one which may include those without small children who probably have different ideas about housework to me. Other companies offer world-wide swaps but I did get the impression that they expect houses in their scheme to be rather nice. We may try a European swap with them sometime.



Before anyone suggests that E.O. could run its own scheme - only suggest it if you're prepared to run it - from what I hear, it takes a great deal of time and energy which most of us don't have to spare. I have left out some home education books for people here to read if they want to, as a way of spreading the word.

I am including the names and addresses of two schemes I have contacted, (there are others), but you will need to find their details yourself.

Penny White, NCT House-swap Register, 56 Cornwall Crescent, North Yate, Bristol, BS17 5RX [1996 fee £15 for NCT members - £20 for non-members. British swaps mainly but they occasionally have foreign ones too.]

Homelink International, Linfield House, Gorse Hill Road, Virginia Water, Surrey GU25 4AS [UK swaps £9 fee - International swaps £53.]

Kim Wark, 48 Langford Lane, Burley in Wharfedale, Ilkley, LS29 7EJ.
[Thanks Kim, there may be a few well-deserved holidays as a result. Happy swapping. - Ed]

PR 'RESOURCES?'

There is a lot of PR and marketing material flying about so sources and assessments will be helpful to sort out the 'dross from the floss'. Also send information on items already ordered from some of the 'educational sales items' so that others are aware. Always send sufficient material to allow a fair assessment of 'resources' sent by various interests.

Free and useful

Nothing as yet on the horizon. See what you can find.

Mainly PR material

National Rivers Authority. Use your local address to ask for educational material. NW Region send leaflets covering their operation and a couple of posters.

The Education Officer, Wellcome Centre for Medical Sc, 210 Euston Rd, London NW1 2BE They send 'Labnotes' which may give an indication of the direction in which the drug companies want to move. There is a disclaimer in one of their booklets stating the differences between 'Wellcome Trust' the charity and 'Wellcome plc' the international pharmaceutical company.

Marketing material

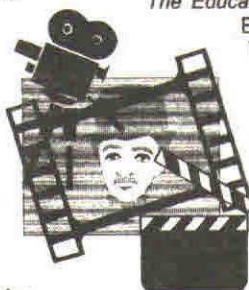
BBC Education Information Unit, White City, London, W12 7TS Tel 0181 746 1111

Two free programme booklets for radio and TV; primary, middle and secondary progs.

*The Educational Television Company, PO Box 100, Warwick, CV34 6TZ
Tel 01926 433333*

Will supply 'Annual Programme Brochure' free showing CH4 educational programmes.

BT Educational services, BT Centre, 81 Newgate St, London, EC1A 7AJ Tel 0800 622302. Provide a catalogue of educational material for sale.



This page could develop into a valuable 'resource' in itself if everyone contributes a little towards its upbuild and upkeep. The quality and quantity of information in it will largely depend on you.

PLEASE HELP STOP THE SOFTWARE AND COMPUTER GAMBLE

Could Eoers send in informed assessments of the so-called 'Educational Software' available in this country and abroad. The industry seems to rely on the fact that the software, (or hardware), cannot be assessed until it is bought. Even in situations where they could easily reveal the true pedigree of their product, they don't. We may then be able to put together a list of the 'truly useful' software we could use for our children without this commercial 'hide and seek' exercise! Please send as much material as possible, including copies of the actual software if legally permissible, to *John Paddon, 63 Doyle Road, Bolton BL3 4SA. [ENCLOSE S.A.E. IF YOU WANT THE MATERIAL RETURNED]*

n.b. Maggie Harnew of Wiseowl Software has kindly promised to give indepth insights into software available today and which may be of use to parents in our situation. All Eoers who have or wish to have a micro write into me with details of their units and aspirations. We'll then try to get a regular feature going in the newsletter. [Remember to enclose an

THANKS 'SERIF' Many thanks go to 'Serif' for supplying the clipart used here free and without strings. We bought 'Corel Gallery' clipart for £30 and found, among other things, that a large proportion was either americanised or pentagon military material. As if that was not bad enough there were severe limitations placed on the use of the clipart. (discovered in the small-print). This made it virtually unusable in these circumstances. Needless to say, 'Corel' will not be on our shopping lists in the future.

EO SWAPPING COLUMN

It is amazing that we do not have such a thing in the newsletter. Lets see if we can get the momentum going for one. Help respondents by giving your nearest town or village with your phone number.



Advertisements



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Tel: 01756 797423

DAY CONFERENCE FOR CHRISTIANS

IN THE NW 'Maintaining the Vision' with Ronald & Susan Macaulay. For more details send a S.A.E. to: *Phil Harman, 14 Eaton Avenue, Connaught Quay, Deeside, Chwyd, CM5 4HR* Christian Educational Resources available.

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Advertising in coming newsletters will be FREE but if you are hoping to profit from your advert, you may wish to send an appropriate donation. Please remember that EO is run **entirely by volunteers** and receives no income other than members subscriptions.

Adverts should be limited to 50 words. If you wish to send artwork, please contact the Newsletter Coordinator for details.

Copy should be sent to the Editor (with any cheques made out to 'Education Otherwise') by 1st November.
Services and products advertised in this newsletter have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise.

A big 'THANK YOU' to all the advertisers who have used these pages over the years.

EDUCATING ARCHIE

8/11/95

CHILDREN! DO NOT TRY THIS!

The autumn term is well under way for all except a brave minority. Don't take Archie's answers seriously, readers! Isn't he CHEEKY!

TESTCOS

YOU OUGHT TO BE AT SCHOOL, SONNY

I'M EDUCATED AT HOME

WHAT ABOUT YOUR SOCIAL LIFE?

YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE EVER SPOKEN TO

I'M SURPRISED IT'S LEGAL

IT'S NOT - I'M ON MY WAY TO PRISON RIGHT NOW

HOW WILL YOU DO YOUR EXAMS?

IN BETWEEN SEWING MAIL BAGS

TESTCOS

IT'S THE PARENTS I FEEL SORRY FOR

Where to get what

Books & newsletters

The following publications are available from **David Mason**
E.O. Publications, 2, Fairless Ave, Lightcliffe, Halifax, HX3 8H

Early Years	£2.50	The Abuse of Care and Custody orders [Pat Knox]	£3.00
Newsletter Digest ['82 to '86]	£1.50		
E.O. Newsletters [4 back issues]	£1.20	Learning from Home-Based Education - Roland Meighan	£3.00
Troubled Children [Pat Knox]	£3.00	U.K. Postage & Packing	£1.00

Stationery

E.O. envelope re-use labels with logo and address £2.50 per 100

E.O. stationery, leaflets, posters, membership forms and car stickers are available from:

Lucy Charlton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leics, LE8 9FT

Contributions towards printing and postage welcome -
Cheques payable to : Education Otherwise.

E.O. Membership Cards

E.O. membership cards are available from: *Marc Cottey, 17 South View Road, Rettendon Common, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8DX* upon receipt of a S.A.E.

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 SAE to *Education Otherwise, PO BOX 7420, London N9 9DC*

EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS

General enquiries - Send SAE for membership and other details to:
PO Box 7420, London, N9 9SG.

For recorded telephone message call 0891 518303
(Calls charged at 42p per minute peak rate and 33p minute cheap rate)

Chair - Pien MaltzKlaar, 39 Landrock Road, London N8 9HR. Tel 0181 348 0653.

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Tel: 0181 904 7155.

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Tel: Ask 192 for the new number, under the name D Cameron Young

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Tel: 0116 2592118

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Tel: 01580 762448

Single Parent Family Contact - Sarah Martin, Rose Cottage, Three Holes Bridge, Wisbech,
Norfolk, PE14 9JR. Tel: 01945 772336.

Special Needs - Hilary Mason, 2 Fairless Avenue, Lightcliff, Halifax, HX3 8H
Tel: 01422 202252

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Tel: 01403 261178.

School Refusal/Phobia Young People's Support -

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Research secretary - Angie Targett, 19 Wellcarr Road, Woolseat, Sheffield, S8 8QP
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