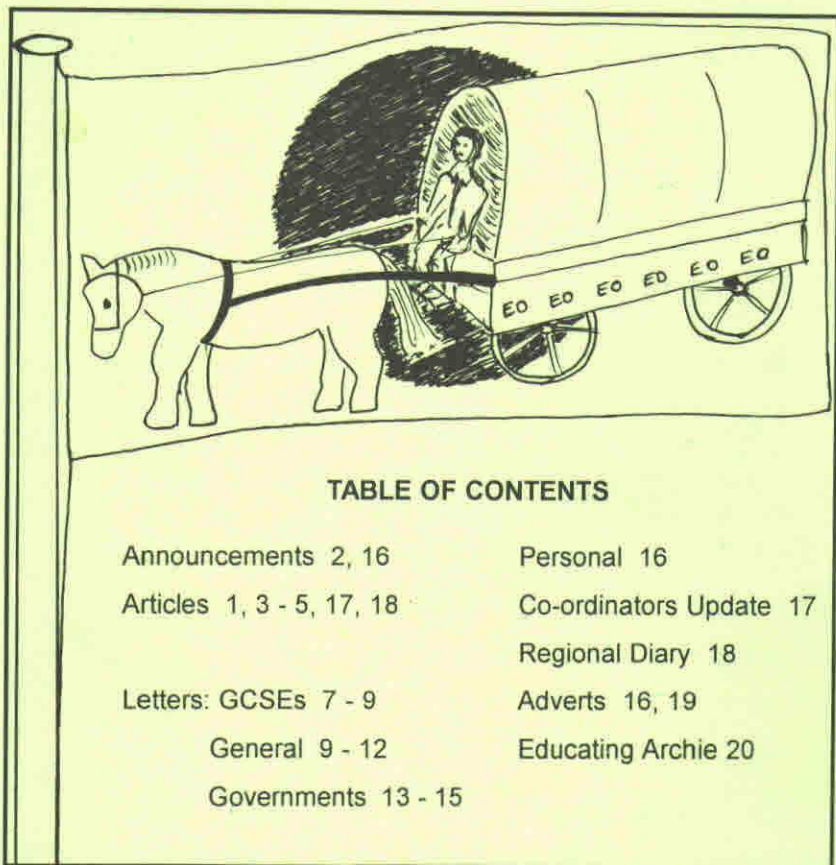


# EDUCATION OTHERWISE



DECEMBER 95

NO 107

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## Stationery

EO stationery, leaflets, posters, membership forms,  
car stickers and re-use labels (£2.50 per 100) are  
available from Lucy Charlton (see above).

## Publications

David Mason (see above) has stocks of the  
following books:

<i>The Abuse of Care and Custody Orders</i>	
<i>Pat Knox</i>	£3
<i>Troubled Children</i>	£3
<i>Pat Knox</i>	
<i>Learning from Home-Based Education</i>	
<i>Roland Meighan</i>	£3
<i>Early Years</i>	£3
<i>Newsletter Digest ('82 - '86)</i>	£2.50
<i>EO Newsletters (4 back issues)</i>	£1.20
UK postage and packing	£1

## AT LAST - A NEW REGULATION!

### *EOers dance in the streets*

**1 SEPTEMBER 1995** was a momentous day for home education in England and Wales. On this day, the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 came into force. So what's so special about that? After all, they look virtually the same as the (recently amended) 1956 regulations they replace. And yet they differ in one crucial respect. Under the new regulations, *the deregistration trap has been abolished.*

This trap will be familiar to many who have grappled with the problem of withdrawing a child from school. Under the old Regulation 4(1)(c) (originally numbered 4(a)(iii)), a 'school-age' pupil's name was to be deleted from the admission register if

he has ceased to attend the school at which he is registered and his parent has satisfied the authority that he is receiving efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than by attendance at school.

As long as their name is on the register, you have a duty (now under s 199 of the 1993 Act) to see that your child attends regularly. To get them off the register, you had to show, under the old regulation, that they were being properly educated at home. To show that they were being properly educated at home, you had to take them out of school. If you took them out of school, they wouldn't be attending regularly...

In practice, you were allowed enough time to set up your arrangements. But at the end of the day, it was for the LEA to pronounce whether they were satisfied. And if they weren't satisfied, your child would still be on the register and you would be guilty of failing to secure regular attendance.

*These days are now at an end.*

The new Regulation 9(1)(c) states simply that a 'school-age' pupil's name is to be deleted if

he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.

What does this mean?

It means that if you want to withdraw your child from school, all you have to do now is *write to the head, explaining clearly that you are educating the child at home.* The head will then be *legally obliged* to take the child's name off the admission register without further enquiry. The head will also be obliged (under new Regulation 13(3)) to inform the LEA within two weeks. It will then be up to the LEA to enquire about your arrangements. But these enquiries will take place *on the same legal basis as if your child had never been a pupil at the school.* You will not risk prosecution for any supposed irregular attendance beyond the date on which your notification was received. From then on, you can only be guilty of failing to educate properly. And if the LEA disapproves of your provision, you will be entitled to defend it in a court of law.

*This is the one single reform that Education Otherwise has most wanted ever since it was first set up in the late seventies.* It's only a little regulation. But any EO members seen dancing in the streets will be perfectly justified.

**Rob Wade**  
London-Middlesex

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the last of the Austerity Issues! We volunteered to edit this as a gesture of support to EO itself as it works through a number of serious issues which threaten its future.

Mark Twain once stated in a preface that it was a book without weather. This is a newsletter without pictures. We tried to keep the size of the print up to what John can read, but we had so many contributions that the print size in most sections has been reduced. Unfortunately we still had to leave some things out (but they have all been sent on to the next editor).

Please consider becoming an editor yourselves. John Paddon liked doing it so much last time, he has done the Microwave page in this one!

John (44), Susan (42), Jessica (14), Malcolm (11) Sullivan, 35 Dovedale Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6JB

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Volunteers for Enquiries**

Volunteers are needed for enquiries positions throughout the country. Please contact Eileen Wilson, Enquiries Secretaries Co-ordinator, on 01283 532547.

**Special Needs Support Network**

EO urgently needs families to help set up the above. It is vital that we can organise this to spread the workload effectively and ease pressures on individuals.

Would any who can offer accessible information and/or support, in any region and/or in any area of expertise and experience, please contact:

Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carey Park, Polperro, Looe, Cornwall PL13 2JP, 01503 272087 (especially if you could become one of the service co-ordinators)

From the Scottish Certificate of Education Standard Grade English Examination Paper II, 1994: *"Imagine that there has been a change in the law: school is no longer compulsory. Discuss what you think might happen, and whether it would be for the better or worse."*

Sent in by Alison Preuss, 311 Perth Road, Dundee DD2 1LG.

**EO GATHERING**

(including reconvened AGM to consider annual accounts)

AT

**CROWCOMBE HEATHFIELD YOUTH HOSTEL, SOMERSET**  
**14-18 March 1996 (Thursday p.m. to early Monday)**

The hostel is located about 10 miles northwest of Taunton, within a mile of the A358 Taunton-Minehead road, which is served by buses. Accommodation (*not* expected to be self-catering) will be limited, so early booking is essential. Alternatively you may prefer to make arrangements to stay elsewhere in the area. Details of meetings will appear in the February newsletter. For further information about the gathering, send SAE to:

**Dineke de Jong**, 48 Montgomery Road, Sheffield S7 1LQ

## HOME IS WHERE MY HORSE IS (2)

*(Flashback: We, the Grant Family, David (54), Kate (44), Torcuil (15), Eilidh (13½), and Fionn (11), set off from the UK in September 1990. We set off with the first horse from Holland to Belgium and France where we changed our horse for the heavier "Traceur" who is still with us. Now read on:)*

Perhaps this should be subtitled "Carry on Caravanning!" It was at the end of 1992 in Newsletter No 88 that I last wrote about how we were faring in our attempt to be First Round the World by Horse-drawn Caravan. We had not then reached Hungary.

Now, three years later, we have crossed Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and a bit of China to reach Japan. It has not all been easy going. The former Soviet Union was extremely friendly despite the hardships facing people there and we had no trouble at all until much of our harness was stolen in Kazakhstan. Then, in Mongolia we ran into serious trouble through defending ourselves from the menace of three drunks who would not leave us alone and tried to steal our horse. One of them claimed we had injured his eye and I found myself in court. The incident made quite a furore in the UK press at the time and was only resolved by my agreeing to pay the man a settlement. Otherwise we should still have been stuck in Ulaanbaatar arguing the case.

It was a relief to set off again and be driving contentedly through Inner Mongolia, which is of course one of China's autonomous regions. Our peace was shattered when we reached the town of Jining, about half way to Beijing. The Bureau of Public Security ordered us to leave the country without explanation. We had all the required documents and had broken no laws but nothing we said made any difference. As it was we were lucky to be allowed to truck everything to Tianjin port instead of being sent back to Mongolia!

We were not allowed to seek for a ship to Canada in Tianjin but put directly on to a very expensive ferry to Japan. Japan had been on our list of countries originally but deleted when we discovered that we might not be allowed to drive there and because of the horrendous cost of living. Just multiply UK prices by 10 and you will not be far out.

The house we sold to finance the trip is all but gone, only the price of the foundations and a couple of courses of bricks remain! Somehow we should manage to make it across the Pacific to the USA - the only place we can take

... continued next page

*continued from previous page . . .*

"Traceur" our horse into North America is Los Angeles - but what happens after that I do not know. It will not be easy to make up the estimated £12,000 plus unforeseen expenses, money which should have taken us to the Atlantic coast. But we are not giving up, now that the hardest portion of the route is behind us.

Torcuil, Eilidh and Fionn continue to work away at their lessons - sometimes! I should pay tribute here to the excellent "Examiner Plan" courses in English, Maths and Geography 'O' level from the British Self Study Centre which we obtained after reading about them in "The Later Years". Apart from formal study of course, they pick up may strange and esoteric pieces of information as well as being fairly fluent in Russian and thoroughly self-confident.

There are some disadvantages. We have no access to computers normally so they are not as familiar with them as is probably necessary these days. We cannot run to lab facilities for chemistry or physics in the van either. Against that, the children are able to mingle freely with others of whatever nationality is available and have a thorough awareness of the world. Just to move from the poverty of urban Mongolia to the incredibly materialistic and wasteful environment of Osaka, Japan, provides an object lesson, in itself.

It has greatly saddened us to read in various Newsletters - when eventually they have caught up with us - about EO's difficulties. In particular, the divisions which have appeared so destructively are most upsetting. EO is an invaluable organisation, far too useful to put at risk through squabbling, no matter how great the differences of opinion. Tolerance and compromise are qualities which must be exercised - something we ourselves are learning from the multitude of cultures we have lived among on our journey.

It is of course impossible to give more than a glimpse of "EO on the Road" in an article kept short because of the reduced size of the Newsletter at present. But we should all like to say how greatly we appreciate EO and especially the Newsletters AND all of you who work at making them possible. Keep it all going! See you circa 1997.

The Grant Family

PS David has recently become a member of the Bahá'í World Faith and wonders if there are any other EO Bahá'ís?

## FIRST TIME AT FEATHERSTONE

We are now educating our eight year old daughter Sophie at home. She left in May after a fairly miserable time at school. We have older children at school and a younger son aged three. Finances dictated that just Sophie, Joshua, and I made the train journey, seven hours and painfree, to Haltwhistle to be met by Jose and his amazing expanding minibus!

We arrived at the impressive castle (not the bouncy one expected by Joshua) in the early evening and were met and welcomed by Eleanor, Dinks, and families. Found our room, tested beds and pushed three of them together and rolled out our sleeping bags. Sophie disappeared as soon as we'd eaten our soup supper. Joshua and I helped wash up and then locked up and signed up on the notice board for jobs and outings.

Lots more people arrived the next day. We were soon chatting like old friends. Joyous dancing broke out each evening. Children of all ages getting along with each other, the old hands helping the younger and new children with patience and hilarity. I hardly saw Sophie when we were in the castle, she went to bed after me! Darting about, out walking, dancing, drawing and chatting (like me) having a brilliant time. For someone who, in her school teacher's words "was not very sociable" she wasn't doing badly.

I tried to attend as much of the AGM as possible, Joshua whizzing around on his bike. It all seemed business like but friendly and it was good to put a few newsletter names to faces.

I can't get away without mention of Featherstone Ferret. He came bounding up to Felix one morning and stayed in his EO built home in luxury for the rest of the week, finally travelling with Felix to pastures new.

The food was filling and tasty, the castle not as dusty and crumbling as I had imagined and it did make me feel that my own bathroom is quite pristine as I gazed at the years (no decades) of accumulated cobwebs from my bath tub.

We visited Beamish Museum, ambled from building to building, rode the trams, ate the chips - we were definitely being educated! The children became mountain sheep at Hadrian's Wall, escaping, climbing, and looking out, and a dead sheep provided an added attraction.

The weather stayed fine and the rain fell at night. Only the violent "tummy bug" which struck at 2 am one morning dampened my enthusiasm for a day. Everyone rallied round to take on my parental duties.

The evenings spent in the big warm kitchen talking, exchanging views and ideas are what I'll keep and treasure along with meeting the interesting and interested people of all ages. I hope we'll be able to get back one day with all the family. A big thank you to all the EOers who made our stay so worthwhile and happy!

PS Message for Felix: How is Featherstone Ferret? Please can we have a photo of you both?

Debs Puttick, 8 Crossgates, Amberley, Arundel, W. Sussex BN18 9NS

## "Maths": A message on the Internet

*What follows is a message from Robbie Hornsby, age 16, on the home-ed list on the Internet.*

On the subject of maths, about which a lot of crap has been written on this list lately, I was never given a formal maths lesson in my life until I asked for them (because maths is my great love, and I am doing exams at college now, with others who are *much* older than I am). And had I been one of the unfortunate children of some of the parents on the home-ed list, I do not think I'd be doing maths now, and I don't think I'd be thinking of being a mathematician in later life.

So what *did* I do, maths-wise? What used to happen was that me and my Dad used to go for a walk every Saturday morning – to the pub – and we used to talk about maths, and chat about mathematical problems, which I liked. We used to sit there in the pub and talk maths and many other things over a drink or two. We also talked about current affairs and anything else we both found interesting. None of that was designed to "teach" me anything – it was just something we both enjoyed.

All this stuff you all think it essential to teach your children about maths sounds *so* boring to me, and no doubt to them too. Maths can be fascinating, or it can be totally boring, depending upon what you think of as

maths. There are some fascinating bits.

Parents think that making their children count tortoises makes it "interesting" and part of the real world, but they always get it wrong and ruin it for their unfortunate pupils. The mechanics stuff some of you want to push on your children is what makes it boring. What is interesting is the ideas, like about curves, and triangles and interesting things.

I never had a single formal lesson in my home education, and I was never forced to do anything nor "taught" anything. I just got a prize at college for being the best student, having the highest exam results last year, and although I have had no real formal education beforehand (following my own interests without parental restriction/direction) I am now thinking about what to study at university. The only reason I am saying all this is to indicate that children will choose to learn things even if their parents don't force them to – and indeed – forcing them to may make them react against learning things. □

Sent in by Sarah Lawrence  
Editor,  
*Taking Children Seriously*  
23 Whitley Road,  
London N17 6RJ  
Telephone 0181 808 3200  
Internet: TCS@lawrence.demon.co.uk

### Letters: GCSEs

Roger Freeborn's letter in the last issue of the newsletter brought a swift response from several people. The following letters have been edited to remove overlaps in the information. Some people wrote volunteering to act as GCSE Co-ordinator, their names have been passed to Eileen Wilson, Enquiries Secretaries Co-ordinator.

With regard to Mr. Freeborn's letter (EO Newsletter October 95), it may help to know that it is possible to sit what is called an International GCSE (IGCSE) through the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). Their address is:

IGCSE Office  
UCLES  
1 Hills Road  
Cambridge CB1 2EU  
Tel 01223 553311

The IGCSE has the advantage that in Mathematics and Science there is no requirement for certified coursework to be submitted. The Science papers also get around the problem of sitting a practical examination by offering an additional paper in lieu.

Many local colleges and tutorial bodies now present a IGCSE, and the UCLES will provide you with a list of those in your area.

S. J. Wilson  
73, Harburn Road, West Calder, West Lothian EH55 8AT

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

On p. 15 of the October newsletter I see a "coursework" at GCSE mention. Only three days ago I discovered that the Midlands Examination Board offers three levels of GCSE Maths: Basic (DEFG), Intermediate (BCDEF), and Further

(A\*ABCD), all without coursework being involved. The Intermediate Grade consists of two 2½ hr papers. I have only just joined this GCSE Evening Class (in F.E.) so have no more details at present.

Mrs Margaret Parsons (grandparent educator to 10½ yr old grandson)  
242 Spring Road, Ipswich IP4 5NN

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

... I have recent experience of this topic - our eldest daughter having taken four IGCSEs of the Cambridge Examination Board this year with more planned for 1996.

It is still possible to take an extra paper instead of coursework (although not in all subjects) and an alternative paper to the Practical, for sciences.

With all the enquires seen in the newsletter it is obvious there is confusion about what is and is not available...

Veronica Cottam-McConnachie  
12 Oak Tree Cottages, Brook Road, Aldham, Colchester CO6 3RJ

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

Our elder son Sam, now 14, is planning to take 4 GCSEs next summer. He is studying Maths and Italian at our local College of Further Education, and Chemistry and English at home through the open learning system at the College.

Although it all took a lot of sorting out, we have received only support and encouragement from everyone involved. We are paying for everything, although our LEA education chief did his very best to get Sam funded, as did the College.

There is no doubt that we are fortunate as

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**Letters: GCSEs** *continued*

home-educators to fall within the private sector as far as the National Curriculum is concerned. We are not bound by it (however sane much of it is) or by the testing and assessing it involves. But we suffer from a complete lack of state funding.

Had Sam wanted to study all four subjects at the CFE he would have qualified automatically for funding. He prefers however to use the College as one resource amongst many, and to continue to run his affairs from home.

As far as practical work is concerned, again it took a great deal of organisation, but we now have access to lab space at a local school when needed. The chemistry coursework involved in the National Extension College pack which Sam uses is designed to be done at home with fairly ordinary household items. So this lab work is an added dimension rather than a necessity.

Again, we pay. We share the cost of this, however, with another family working along similar lines. (They live in Sussex, believe it or not.)

The schools with which we have been involved over the years have given only support and encouragement for our home education venture. I think they have felt bemused rather than threatened.

But money is clearly an issue here. We do pay for various things and it does mount up, especially with two children. Yes, of course we must lobby to change a system which excludes people unless they automatically bring funding with them. I've tried and failed at a local level, though all the goodwill was there.

I have many friends whose children are in schools where staff have been cut

drastically and where resources become increasingly scarce. Parents and teachers battle on with great commitment, and I for one am full of admiration for them. In my opinion it is not schools we should attack, but government policies which have created this situation.

I must say I feel privileged to be in a position to home educate.

Suki Pay  
79 Southmoor Road, Oxford, OX2 6RE  
tel/fax 0865 53339  
email: Suki@stsm.demon.co.uk

☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒

In respect of the request for more information re External Candidates in the October issue, here are some comments and thoughts, the result of our experiences.

Firstly, I doubt whether schools get "free" exam entries. I presume that the schools pay the Examination Boards from their funding (be it locally, centrally, or privately funded). And it appears that state schools only receive money for pupils "under the statutory leaving age" if the pupils are on the School Roll.

As regards "sitting in with classes" - the same applies to the under 16s - no funding if not on the Roll ("and if on the Roll, the full National Curriculum must be delivered.") In practice I think that this must vary from school to school. I had arranged for my 15 yr old son to attend English classes in the 6th form of our local Community College. This was arranged in the summer term. In the autumn term it transpired that this was no longer acceptable. The old Head had retired and the New Broom was determined to stick to the rules! So that was that. Previously I think a few under 16s had been discreetly slipped in with no problems.

### Letters: GCSEs *continued*

I don't know about all the Examining Boards but Southern Examining Board (SEG) does accept External Candidates in many subjects (excepting the sciences). The course work element (usually projects of some sort) is sent to the Moderator for "prime marking" from the examining centre, ie school. This is just as well, as the chance of the school choosing the same syllabus and Board that you choose is pretty remote!

The important thing is to find an Exam Board which suits you, get the publications list, buy the syllabus, support material, old papers, etc. Then get onto the "Private Candidates" department and check each syllabus is OK for external candidates. Be prepared to get RSI, a good phone bill and be persistent. Not all the people on the



### Letters: General

We, Deborah, Radosc, and I, are currently home educating. Radosc is six years of age, and a year and one visit later we feel like veterans. I would welcome contact with any EO'er etc in any area about anything, please write.

I am beginning research into home tutored/educated young people from 1750 to present day. Any help with this will be very welcome. Do you know any original accounts? Best wishes to all, especially the pioneers in EO.

Michael Robson, Humberside/East Yorkshire Co-ordinator, 77A Newbegin, Hornsea, HU18 1PA, tel. 01964 536267



We have just moved to Essex and would like to make contact with local EO families for visits, brainstorming, outings and perhaps swapping resources.

other end of the line know the right answers, and some are more helpful than others. Check and double check the details. Remember to get the dates for entry and closing dates for coursework! For some syllabuses the coursework is a little different for external candidates, eg English where an oral presentation replaces the oral assessment by a teacher.

N.B. the coursework has to be accompanied by a form to authenticate the work, signed by a tutor, if you have one, or some other "responsible" person not related to the candidate.

The SEG telephone number is 01483 506506.

Mrs Anne Rogers, Oakcroft, Virginstow, Beaworthy, Devon EX 21 5EA

We are: Alex (dad) - about to start a full time MEng course at Essex University; Veronica (mum) - full time mum and part time Open University student; Beth (15) home educated and working on GCSE/A level; John (13) and Rebecca (11) who have both just started school at their request after a year of home education.

Write to us at: Cottam-McConnachie Family, 12 Oak Tree Cottages, Brook Road, Aldham, Colchester CO6 3RJ



We want to get away from the "rat race" of the big metropolis. Those out there, in the rural areas, please help! We're city species but willing to learn fast. Any idea on how to grow veg., to feed chickens, to milk cows or the like? If you have a small farm site for sale, we're open to offers. Must be cheap and London commutable as we're still subject to our daughter's university. She

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**Letters: General** *continued*

was, by the way, mainly home educated thanks to the encouragement of you all.

Mrs. Gloria Bosco, P.O. Box 3426, London N1 2FH



Do any EO members still remember us? We'd love to hear from any of our old friends. I de-schooled my four children, Nick, Ruth, Katy, and Naomi Moss around 1982/3 or so, and spent about eight years at home with them. We've all learnt a lot, enjoyed a lot, and the kids are now going their very different ways. I don't consider us much of an example of anything in particular, except maybe that you can opt right out of the "the system" and back in again when you choose, very effortlessly and quite successfully.

Nick went to school till he was nine, was de-schooled and home educated until he'd done a few GCSEs, and lots of the things he liked (mostly Spanish and music). Then he went to a local sixth form college and did A levels at 17, music and French for a year, and then a degree in Latin American Studies at Liverpool. Nick had a great year in Chile, got a first class degree, and is now on a one year course based in Denmark which will involve him in teaching street-kids in Angola. His course is run by the people I work for, and Nick's loving it. He may do a PhD next year.

Ruth came out of school at seven, and was home educated until lack of ballet tuition locally made me very grudgingly agree to her taking LEA grants for boarding ballet schools at 13. At 16, Ruth went to London Contemporary Dance School and was top student when she finished her degree in Contemporary Dance last year. After a post-graduate year there, she got a full time dance job at just 20 with a German dance

company, and now works in Köln.

Katy went to a primary school for a few weeks and was then home-ed till she decided to start at a local comp when Ruth and Nick moved on. She's now 18 and doing well on a B.Tec in Child Care and enjoys working with young children. She may try working with young people. She enjoys helping with my students.

Naomi is 14 now and never went to school till she was about 10. She didn't want to be home educated once the older three moved on, as did most of our local home-ed families. She, like the others, very easily re-integrated into "the system" and has a realistic grasp of what schools offer and what she wants from them. She runs a dance group for my students, and helps at a local dance school.

I now have a seven year old and he wanted to go to school. So far, he's largely ignored the classroom "irrelevance" and focussed on his friends and playing football! As I write this I find he's just been punched in the face by his form teacher, so maybe I'll be back to home educating! My problem is that I'm a single parent with an absorbing job so being at home would be difficult.

I work at a Small School, with disturbed adolescents, and really find it incredibly worthwhile and fulfilling. Most of the people I work with live at the school and are extremely dedicated and hard working and the quality of caring offered our students quite simply changes lives. I love my work there - I'm a teacher but everyone shares tasks and the philosophy is "non-expert", so I do admin, cleaning, care-work, driving, and have been abseiling, rock-climbing, and sailing on the Tall Ships Race! Our study trips take us abroad, and I'll go to Zambia next, after Denmark and Norway and after Ireland last year. Of course, treating

Letters: General *continued*

so-called "young criminals" as human beings and helping them re-integrate into society, which our schools do (75% off crime after two years in our schools), is not popular with our present government. . . .

Best wishes to any EO families, especially if you remember us from Unstone Grange, etc. Let me know how you are!

Anne Gillespie, 140 Marlborough Ave, Hull HU5 3JX



I have recently become semi-expert in the matter of Pre-16 College Admission as my fourteen year old son gained a part-time further education college place this September and from my own investigations I have found there to be much confusion and no consistent policy.

Under 16s can attend Further Education Colleges at the Principal's discretion. Funding for this option is, however, a more complicated matter. From my investigations, it appears that some LEAs are supporting families in their choice to send pre-16s to college and are offering discretionary awards to pay college fees. Some colleges appear to be turning a blind eye and are allowing pre-16s to attend free of charge, and some colleges are asking parents to pay course fees.

It does seem that the Further Education Funding Council is not willing to pay college fees for home educated children (although it may have done so in the past) and in this case the colleges are receiving no financial support for our children. Interestingly, if children are excluded from school, I believe LEAs do pay the college to take them!

I have had various conversations with the

Department of Education and Employment, and it was suggested to me that I write asking for a judgement as to whether I/we am/are entitled to free pre-16 college places. I think I would like to pursue this, but am very aware that in doing so there is the potential to "rock the boat" for those already receiving free college places.

I would welcome feedback from any families in a similar position to myself, I would like to hear what is being offered to your children and whether you are paying or not. This information would be invaluable in compiling an overall picture of what is happening throughout the country and in deciding what, if anything, EO should do to secure funding for children in the future.

Valerie Gommon, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes, MK19 7EH



We are busy doing all sorts of exciting things in Devon. Gus (9) and Barnaby (4 1/2) are always involved in some project or other. They have never been to school, and to be perfectly honest, I don't know why they would ever want to! We encourage and support them in whatever their 'joys' are.

Barnaby's passions at the moment are making Airfix models, making magic potions out of food ingredients, building dens with duvets and bedsheets and pillows, putting on 'shows' with puppets and funny hats, making castles and robots and space-ships out of cardboard boxes, parading around the house playing percussive instruments, drum kit and Djembe (African drum).

As for Gus - playing charades, going to ten-pin bowling, rock climbing, listening to music, reading until 2 o'clock in the

... continued next page

**Letters: General** *continued*

morning, making incredibly complex lego models, going on Young Ornithologists Club boat trips - (we're very lucky because we have masses of buzzards and kestrels flying over our garden from the moors). He also walks with his friends along the River Mardle, which is at the bottom of our garden. Gus spends a lot of his waking hours inventing things - cardboard space ships and guns (we're a peace loving family, honest we are!) out of bits and bobs and string and sellotape and paper clips and wire.

We are members of the South Devon Education Group (SDEG), which is the official title of the group of committed home-educating families living around the Totnes area. There are currently 20 families who subscribe to our local newsletter and are part of our local telephone tree. The young people decide what they want to do, activities, events, dreams etc. at a bi-monthly meeting. Some of the older young people have put on the play 'Blood Brothers' by Willy Russell, working with a fourth-year drama/music student from Dartington College. They have also just taken a self-penned production to 'Campus'. A whole group of young people (including Gus and Barnaby) have recently taken part in a workshop playing Gamalan (Balinese drums), again at Dartington College. I set up a mosaicing project for the young people, to brighten up our local park. Twenty-four wonderful mosaic creations have just been erected in the play area of Buckfastleigh Park.

This summer, nearly 60 (!) people from the South Devon Education Group went on a camping holiday in a field overlooking the sea at East Prawle. SDEG members have also done an animation workshop with a professional animator making a mini-film with Plasticine models. They have also taken part in a week-long metalwork project

funded by Teignbridge District Council and a local art promoting body called 'Big hand, Little hand'. . .

When we left London I was worried about not being able to sing professionally. How would I be able to set up a jazz a cappella group in the heart of the countryside? Well, I sing in a world music 30 piece choir, I am part of a duo (African drums and voice), and I'm also in the throes of setting up a percussion/jazz vocal project. So that theory was knocked on the head! And how would I sell my pottery? No problems, so far!

We would love more like-minded families moving to South Devon. People who will have lots and lots of energy to give to the group. (People who don't mind mopping-up the spilt orange juice at SDEG meetings!) And to make my family's life 'richer', for my children to have friends, wild, fun, trusting friends, to play and live and learn and grow-up with. I believe that lack of friends is the main reason young people decide to go to school.

If more parents trusted their young people and let them decide what is good for them, as opposed to what they think is good for them, the world would be a better place! A.S.Neill Rules O.K., John Holt Rules O.K., Alice Miller Rules O.K., Liberty Rules O.K.

Education Otherwise Rules O.K. For all the problems that E.O. encounters -eg, disagreements, financial difficulties, Ltd, Unlimited, money used to correct the Children's Charter, big or little E.O. newsletter, high or low profile etc I think it does a 'mighty fine job'.

Belinda Reid, The Old House, 13 Station Road, Buckfastleigh, Glorious Devon - (01364 643343)

## Letters: Governments

Please find [below] a copy of a letter we were sent by the local MEP.

The Lawrence Family  
115 Magennis Close, Gosport, PO13 9PR

[The following letter is reproduced with permission.]

Thank you for your letter 2nd October 1995 concerning the issue of home education and the European Union.

The European Union does not have a policy on home education as it falls under the principle of subsidiarity. Each Member State formulates its own policy on education and shall certainly continue to do so for the foreseeable future. I do not therefore expect any harmonisation on this issue.

I hope that this has clarified the European Union position for you and I would like to thank you for taking the trouble to write to me on this matter.

Roy Perry MEP  
Private Office: Tarrant Farmhouse, West Wellow, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6DA



... The EU is anti-democratic and a danger to everyone, especially dissidents such as ourselves in EO. In case Brussels ever decides to create compulsory school attendance, let us prepare a contingency plan now, not leave it till it is too late like our poor fishermen did. I quote the Maastricht Treaty, Chapter 3, Article 126, Paragraph 2: "Community action shall be aimed at: Developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the member states". Chapter 4 goes on to say: "In order to

contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this article, the Council acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the commission shall adopt recommendations". As a member of the UK Independence Party as well as a member of EO I have learned to read between the lines as far as Brussels is concerned and the above reference is like a blank cheque to any fascist who dominates the European commission. The whole structure of the EU is undemocratic. Its policies are decided by unelected commissioners. . . . Given its track record it is inevitable it will interfere with home education when it realises that its aims could be better achieved by indoctrinating our young in a compulsory school system. . .

Pete, Marion, George Stewart  
8 Beaver Drive, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 8NA



Having just watched today's programme of *On the Record* (BBC1, 12.30, 29 Oct 95), I am left wondering what our future as home educators might be, given a likely future change of Government.

Jack Straw, Labour MP and presumably, as such, spokesman, was interviewed, with the subject of education arising. At one point he said, and here I quote word by word, "Schooling is compulsory, it is not up to parents whether their children go to school."

On further questioning Mr. Straw came out in favour of the police being involved in the surveillance of truancy. How, I wonder, will our children be affected by this?

I must admit that from this, and other views expressed in this interview, I regard with

... continued next page

Letters: Governments *continued*

trepidation our future rights as home educators.

Julie Freeborn  
4 North Fen Road, Helpringham, Nr  
Sleaford, Lincs NG34 0RR

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In October we had an in-depth interview with David Blunkett, Shadow Education Minister, regarding the Labour Party's proposals for home education. We also spoke at length about the problems that families of school phobic children have in securing, from their authority, the appropriate resources to help the child recover, and suitable education whilst the child has problems attending.

Whilst the bulk of Mr. Blunkett's feelings about the needs and rights of home educators is very positive and should bring easy access to a whole range of resources, I feel that there are some areas of his proposals that will need careful handling. In order to try and get things right at the point of new legislation and guidelines then we are preparing a "campaign" to have the voice of the home educating parent and child heard.

Mr. Blunkett has also asked us to work with him regarding the position and needs of the school phobic child. We are also lobbying other Members and we realistically expect to affect legislation in this field.

Work is ongoing, and if you would like to lend your weight to either the home education or school phobic campaigns or would like news please send an SAE plus one 1st class stamp (not stuck down) to me.

Pip Grocock  
Centre House, 14 Basil Avenue,  
Armthorpe, Doncaster DN3 2AT

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

In response to Roger Freeborn's request for information re GCSE exams in Newsletter 106, October 1995.

Our daughter Francesca will take GCSE exams next year, the total cost of taking the exams could reach a total in the region of £800.

With this in mind I have written to my MP [reply below]. Is your MP aware of Education Otherwise? Perhaps more Education Otherwise parents should write to their MPs to put pressure on the government of the day, so that our children will be free to take any exams without getting any raw deals.

I am awaiting a reply from my Regional MEP of the European Parliament to find out how other European Member States deal with home education, and any legislation if it exists in Brussels.

The Picek Johns Family  
2 College Cottages, 51 Clifford St,  
Chudleigh, S Devon TQ13 0LE

*[The following letter is reproduced with permission.]*

Many thanks indeed for your letter of October 23rd last which I have just received.

I suspect the short point is that schools are funded by Whitehall or the local LEA so that they do not have to disburse for examination entrance fees.

Your point, of course, is that all the funding for schools comes from taxpayers, one way or another, and that you should be no worse off than other taxpayers. I think that is a very fair point and I am taking it up at once with Education Ministers. I will come back

**Letters: Governments** *continued*

to you as soon as I can.

On a wider point, I would very much welcome the opportunity to meet you and some of your colleagues and learn something more about the motives of and indeed the experience of those who educate their children within Education Otherwise.

I am therefore asking my Agent, Mrs Warren, to contact you and I hope it will not be too long before we meet.

Patrick Nicholls MP



*At the Labour Party conference a controversial agreement between BT and Labour was announced which included, among other things, free connections to the Internet for schools. I thought it would be useful to see the attitude of the Labour Party towards EOers, so I sent the following email to the party spokesperson, Graham Allen and his reply follows.*

To: graham.allen@geo2.poptel.org.uk  
From: john@vernbowles.nildram.co.uk  
Subject: Labour Policy on Internet Access  
CC: tony.blair@geo2.poptel.org.uk

I was very interested in Tony Blair's statements about the arrangement with BT to provide free access to the Internet for schools and colleges. I hope you know that there are many people in the UK who educate their children themselves (as is their right). Some belong to the organisation Education Otherwise. As it happens it is my turn to edit the EO bi-monthly newsletter and I would like to publish this email and your reply (and Tony Blair's if he also replies).

The question is: will a Labour government provide the same free access to the Internet

for all those families educating their children themselves?

As you can imagine, many of the parents of such children are making a significant financial sacrifice teaching their children. Many organisations such as museums, English Heritage sites, etc, treat children being educated at home in the same way as children in local authority schools. Will you confirm Labour Party support for children educated otherwise in this area?

To: john@vernbowles.nildram.co.uk  
From: graham.allen@geo2.poptel.org.uk

The Labour Party's recent information superhighway initiative to provide free access to public institutions, by obliging BT to connect these institutions free of charge as they roll out their network, comprises schools, public libraries, health centres, hospitals and Citizens' Advice Bureaux. Those parents who exercise their right to educate their children at home will therefore be able to use facilities in local libraries, but we will also encourage local authorities to develop community-based initiatives such as electronic village halls and multimedia information kiosks in local areas. We would like to see a public access network developed nationally and will also explore the possibility of using Lottery and private funds to establish a multimedia centre of learning with links to local areas. In addition, BT's superhighway could reach the 96% of the population currently linked by telephone and make available educational resources direct to homes.

Have you read our recent policy document, "Communicating Britain's Future", which covers these and other proposals in more detail? If not, email your address and I will send one.

I hope you will be encouraged by Labour's

*... continued at the bottom of the next page*

## Personal

We are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Jed, full name Jacob Edwin Dominic, so affectionately known by all as Jed. He was born on 14 August 95 weighing 9 lb 1 oz.

Debbie, Steve, Tom, Joe, Rhiannon (and Jed) Lester, 19 Buttery's, Thorpe Bay, Essex SS1 3DT



We would like to say "Congratulations" to our daughter Jessica who has just started her first year of a four year Double Degree course at Sussex University. Jess was taken out of school at the age of seven years and classed as school phobic. We are all very proud of you, Jess.

Bernie & Syd Pring-Ellis, 26 Beech Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3DD (\*\*new address, sixth in 10 years)



Pat Balfe died suddenly on Sunday, 22nd October, aged 43. She leaves her husband, Alan, and two sons, Ashley and Brennan. For all of us who knew Pat, she was a lovely person. Lively, friendly, always smiling and making jokes, always willing to help others. She will be sorely missed.

Frances Ryan, 52 Boundary Road, Mountsorrel, Leics LE12 7ER

*continued from previous page . . .*  
commitment to public access for all, which should provide new and exciting stimuli for the education of children outside school.

Graham Allen MP, Shadow Minister for Media

PS You can keep track of Labour policy on media and the information superhighway via my homepage at <http://www.poptel.org.uk/labour-party/plp/graham.allen/>

## STOP PRESS! Advertisements

(Note that the disclaimer on page 19 also applies to these items.)

**Family Matters**, a bi-monthly magazine for Christian families, especially of interest to home-schoolers. Sample issue, £2 to: Sarah Matthes, 3 West View, Gents Lane, Shrimpling Street, Bury St Edmunds.

**Catalogue of Christian Educational Materials** available (please send 4 x 25p stamps) from: Mrs. T. Van Den Broek, Otterhill Farm, Rowtown, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1HD

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The accommodation is basic with mainly dormitory-style bedrooms. There is room for 70 people. The one large kitchen means that self-catering is generally not possible and we will be cooking as a group.

For further details and booking form send s.a.e. to: Hannah Bush, c/o 48 Montgomery Road, Sheffield S7 1LQ

## Co-ordinators Update

**Areas needing a Co-ordinator:** Derbyshire, Grampian, Hereford & Worcestershire, Kent, Lothian, Notts, Northumberland, Surrey, Tayside.

**Acting Co-ordinators:** The following have agreed to be Acting Co-ordinators for a six month period: *Norfolk:* Sue McMahon; *North Devon:* Sarah Sanderson; *Cambridgeshire:* Donna Simmons; *Berkshire:* Arthur Weedon; *Strathclyde:* Claire Young; *Buckinghamshire:* Georgeanne & Dave Scott; *Gloucestershire:* Mary Ann Rose.

**NB** Mary Trimble's correct address: Hillcote, Gillinggate, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4JB.

**To all co-ordinators:** Please be careful that you do not give the LEA any impression that you are prepared to "vet" families for suitability. ALL families have the right to home educate.

**To everyone else:** Might you be interested in becoming a co-ordinator at some time in the future? Please write and ask for information, even if you have an active co-ordinator at the moment. Circumstances can change very quickly so it would be very useful to have a list of families who had already given some thought to the role and might be able to take over at short notice.

**Contact List:** Have you in the past asked to be excluded from the Contact List? Would you now like to be included? Please tell both your co-ordinator AND the data base co-ordinator.

**Citizen's Advice Bureau:** I wrote to them in early August and they have just confirmed that all the CAB offices have our new central address and phone number. If you have a spare moment it might be worth checking yours!

**Finally:** There have been so many different calls on my time in the last few months that I have the feeling that some things remain undone. If you know of anything, please jog my memory!

Isobel Bogucki, Co-ordinators Secretary  
20 Rusper Road, Horsham, W. Sussex RH12 4BD. Tel: 01403 261178.

### Reasons for not going to school

1. I would like to do subjects and work that I like for as long as I like and not have to put it away half way through.
  2. I want to spell better.
  3. I'm fed up being hurt at school by other people.
  4. I don't want to be inside all day.
  5. I want to go to the toilet without asking.
  6. I want to ask more questions without being stopped and told to be quiet.
  7. I need more help with things I find difficult.
  8. I would like to visit museums, art galleries, swimming pools and libraries when they are quiet so I can concentrate.
  9. I want to play my recorder for longer during the day not after school when I am tired.
  10. I want to go and look at things that I think are interesting.
  11. I want to do more craft, painting, cooking, gardening, sports and reading in the day.
- (written at 6.30 am on a Sunday. On the Monday Sophie did not go to school, and hasn't since.)  
Sophie Puttick, aged 8, 8 Crossgates, Amberley, Arundel, W. Sussex BN18 9NS



Advertisements	
<p>Does anyone have a <b>German language</b> video course suitable for teenagers and adults they would be prepared to loan us? We could pay a small "rental" and any costs incurred by the owner. Possible purchase if reasonably priced! If you can help please write to: Family Cottam-McConnachie, 12 Oak Tree Cottages, Brook Road, Aldham, Colchester CO6 3RJ</p>	<p>Has anyone got any <b>Cuisenaire Rods</b> for sale to a good home where they would be appreciated by Joshua &amp; Sophie (and a hopeless at maths Mum!). Debs Puttick, 8 Crossgates, Amberley, Arundel, W. Sussex BN18 9NS</p>
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## The Next Issue

The Editor of the Next Issue is:

**Sarah Guthrie**

Field House, Mellis Road, Thrandeston,  
Diss, Norfolk, IP214PU.  
01379 783678

Children's Pages Editor:

**Alex Mather**

13 East Hill, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6RL

The Deadline for Contributions is:

**31st December 1995**

Please include your name, address and telephone number and mark material '*For Publication*'. 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 accept material on disc.

There will be Special Sections on the following subjects:

### **Craft and Practical Skills**

February '96 Issue. Deadline 15th  
December '95

### **GCSE From Home**

April '96 Issue. Deadline 1st February '96

### **Overcoming Isolation**

June '96 Issue. Deadline 1st April '96

Please share your experiences and expertise with other members. Send your contributions on any of the above topics, as soon as possible, but no later than the deadline to:

### **Anne Mills**

Waverley, Murton Way, Murton, York,  
YO1 3UJ Tel. 01904 488088

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### Editing the Newsletter

The Newsletter is edited by volunteers. If you would like to know more, please contact the Newsletter Coordinator. We currently need Editors from the April '96 issue onwards.

### If your newsletter does not arrive,

check with Mark Cottee, who maintains the database, that your name is still on the mailing list. If your copy appears to have been lost in the post, David Mason has spares.

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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 s.a.e. to:

P.O. BOX 7420  
LONDON N9 9SG  
HELPLINE 0891 518303

(calls charged at 39p minute evenings and weekends, 49p minute all other times.  
Average call length, 1- 2 minutes)

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