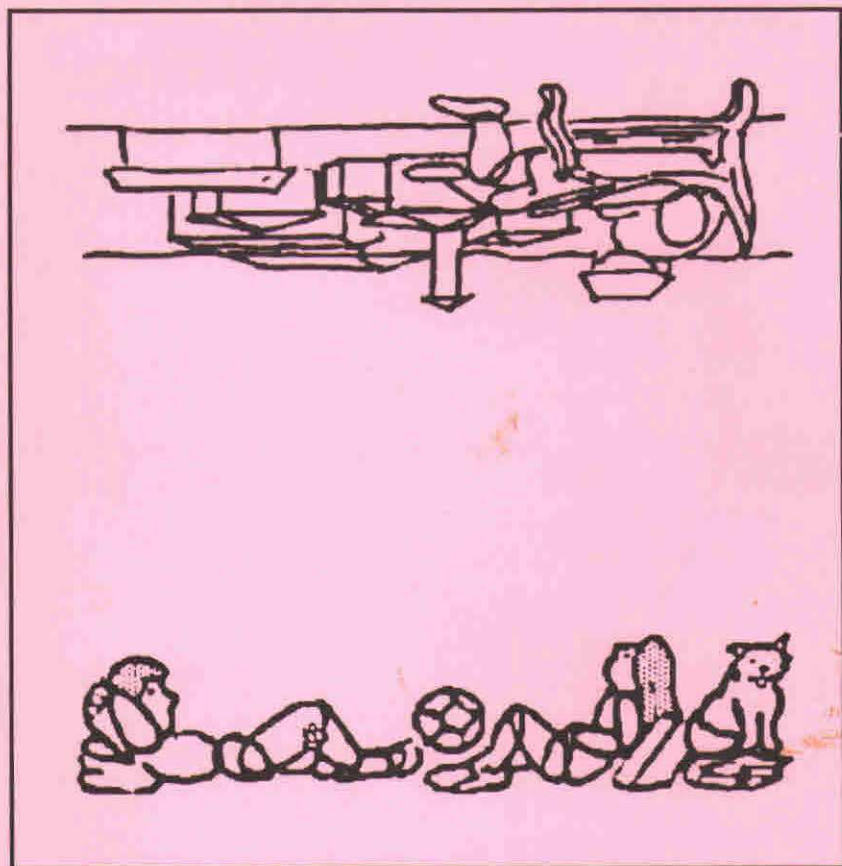


EDUCATION OTHERWISE



FEBRUARY '96

NO 108

The Next Issue

The Editor of the Next Issue is:

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The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st March 1996

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:

GCSE From Home

April '96 Issue. Deadline 10th February '96

Overcoming Isolation

June '96 Issue. Deadline 1st April '96

Special Needs

August '96 Issue. Deadline June '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

Disclaimer

The opinions 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.

All contributions (including advertisements) have been accepted in good faith and have not been in any way endorsed by Education Otherwise which cannot be held responsible for the consequences of responding to any of them.

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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 October '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.

EDITORIAL

The last time we edited the EO newsletter was about 15 years ago. Dick Kitto and I and various helpers huddled over a table in my daughter's bedroom laboriously typing and pasting up the contributions. (That was the birth of the famous cry: "I've lost a bit of Sandie Cottee!") Nowadays more and more of us have access to a word processor and the job is much easier. EO, too, has moved on: lots more regional activities and lots more contact one with another. May 1996 be a happy and creative year for us all - even Archie. And a special thank you to Brian for doing so much of the work. We'll do another in 10 years' time, shall we dear?

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Urgent notice

Would the family who offered to edit the **June newsletter** please contact Sue Hutchin (newsletter co-ordinator) as soon as possible as she has lost your address.

Pre-16 college admission

I would like to thank those people who responded to my request for information on this subject in the last newsletter. Can I encourage anyone else with experience in this area to get in touch. I will report back in due course.

Valerie Gommon

Please note: the inserts carried with this issue have been paid for

Craft and Practical Skills

A new section of inspiring articles and ideas

"ON THE SUBJECT OF CRAFTS" - Di Standen

Hum. Write a piece on crafts, well that's not so easy I think, as I rack my brains for some useful contribution. It's one thing being a practising craftsperson, another to make suggestions about what is going to be potentially useful for parents and children working at home ... here is a compilation, mish-mash might be more appropriate, a collection of observations and suggestions gleaned from 20 years work in textiles, teaching and parenting.

Where better to start than 'At the beginning'. Nothing I believe is more potent in inspiring and encouraging 'creative' endeavour in a child than from the earliest years being surrounded by and observing adult activity, be it cooking, gardening, the everyday basics or more specialised interests, woodworking, sewing etc. Ultimately it comes down to the child being able to witness and gradually participate in simple processes and activities which often have the added delight of an end product, the cake, the doll, the potatoes which magically appear in abundance. Whatever the 'craft', the activity, there is great value in the young child watching and participating in the ongoing 'real' work and sensing in the adult an absorption, skill and knowledge which has value. All these I appreciate are easy sentiments on paper but how are they applied in practice? Patience and good humour help, giving unpressured time contributes and a degree of fore-thought and planning is sometimes necessary. So, for the young child, and here I mean 0-3 years:

Consciously make time each day to undertake some work of a physical creative nature that gives you pleasure and place the baby alongside you in a situation where you can interact, sing etc. The passive stage isn't going to last long - by 9 months they'll be reaching out for the materials and by a year physically launching themselves among them! This has the potential to be the most trying and difficult time and it's going to last 12 months at least. Lower your expectations, don't expect to achieve much personally, distractions will be rife. Re-design your workplace or activity so that potentially dangerous or fragile tools or materials go out of young arm's reach. Bring in materials for them alongside yours and keep them simple, better still keep them natural. Few educational 'toys' can present the variety of challenge, exploration and transformation offered by the simplest of materials.

The rural 'idyll' is great when it comes to that exploring stage and nothing beats the basics, water, earth, sand etc, but few are lucky enough to have that environment now and it needs conscious thought and organisation to introduce those opportunities into an urban environment. When my children were young I utilized the bathroom. A piece of formica board over the bath created two areas, a worktop and 'boundaries' for their activity. Stripped down to the basics for warmth and with suctioned bath mats in place to prevent them slipping, they spent hours of play (this is work!) with what often seemed the entire contents of the kitchen, not to mention plastic tubing etc. When interest in water waned I beat up a soap mix (1 tbsp lux flakes beaten with a whisk until doubled in volume and 'peaking') which with its smooth and creamy texture could be labelled, spooned, 'cooked', or smeared as paint over tiled surfaces and themselves. Providing areas in the home like this gives them the freedom to explore and you the opportunity to pursue personal activity (whilst keeping an unobserved eye and ear on the situation).

At the same time you need to find ways to involve them in the work of the home. Amusements and toys seem a poor substitute for a child when there is interesting work going on. Get them in on the cooking. Avoid the pitfalls - a bowl of flour alongside a young child is a potential disaster. Arranging, counting, and invariably eating raisins alongside you is a better first introduction. Accustom them to working alongside you, letting them watch and learn by your activity is going to be one of the most useful 'lessons' they ever undertake. Increase their responsibility, respect their contribution and move them on as they're ready to undertake weighing out ingredients, beating etc. A word of warning at this stage - to learn from you, movements need to be slow, clear and verbal instructions kept to a minimum. Its not only your movements they observe, it's you! Relax, enjoy the work and don't over-react to the inevitable disasters. If they occur simply give the child the opportunity to help remedy the situation, sweep the floor, wipe the spill. Help the work along when interest flags with a song or rhyme.

As a textile artist my vision of heaven on earth is a workroom hung with wools and fibres, heaps of table space and every conceivable tool to hand. I've never achieved it, reality is a collection of baskets and work that constantly threatens to overwhelm the house. When children move on to their own work nothing is more important than well-organised and accessible materials and good quality tools. When my children got to the stage when they wanted to cut, draw and produce I moved small tables into our main room, the kitchen. These personal areas were the focus of their creative endeavours over many years. During this time they moved away from working alongside me and instead spent many hours engaged on their own work, although working in the family area was important - I was on call for conversation and help. With materials and tools easily and readily accessible there was no artificial 'let's do something'. They invariably gravitated to their tables at various points during the day and there was always something which had inspired them to a drawing, a new design of plane, a model and then later a story or poem. Their output was overwhelming at times, there had to be general agreement (no dictated agreement!) that some order needed to be restored at the end of each day. Tools and materials were always basic and simple but good quality. They brought a lot of 'found' materials in, stones, feathers, whatever, and incorporated them in their work. Sometimes they turned to me for suggestions or advice, but invariably they 'created' from their own ideas. They gained more satisfaction from this than any 'adult' projects could often give.

It took me many years and a much wiser person than I to point out 'genuine' ways of reacting to and potentially encouraging children's artistic work. Like most parents, praising their efforts seemed to be the best reaction. In reality this is somewhat artificial. Also adjectives flag "that's good" or "isn't that nice?" begins to have a hollow ring after continued use. If I attempt it now with adolescent children they wearily exclaim "You always say that" and I suspect that at five years they were having a similar non-verbal reaction. Rather than praise try positive reaction, statements like "I see red in his corner" will lead to more detailed explanations and conversations about their work than the possible erroneous response of "What a lovely sun"!

Looking back on this piece I can see I've barely moved on from the early years. It merely reinforces my feeling that the early years are crucial in forming creative endeavour. Activity by adults inspires children, opportunities to work with adults teaches them basic skills. Exploratory materials that can be transformed, re-formed and provide experimentation are their next need, and then materials and good quality tools plus adult and assistance finally set them on the path to becoming 'craftsmanlike' in their own areas and endeavours.

BATIK - by Kelly Ashford, age 11, Wales.

Hi, my name is Kelly and I am home-educated. I really enjoy Art and Craft and one of my favourite crafts is BATIK. Batik is where you can create really great designs on fabric using hot wax and dye. If you would like to try this fascinating craft here are the instructions to make a simple flower design.

YOU WILL NEED

A piece of cotton fabric (preferably white or cream in colour) washed and ironed to remove any dressing or creases.

An old saucepan.

Some candles (beeswax are best).

A long-handled paint brush for applying the wax.

Brushes for applying the dye.

Water soluble, iron fixable fabric dyes (Colour Run by Dylon are very good).

Plastic beakers or jam jars to store the dye ready for painting.

Newspaper (lots of it!)

An apron and old clothes.

REMEMBER BEFORE YOU START

Hot wax can BURN, take great care when near it and have an adult help you to heat it.

NEVER LEAVE THE SAUCEPAN OF WAX ON THE HEAT UNATTENDED!

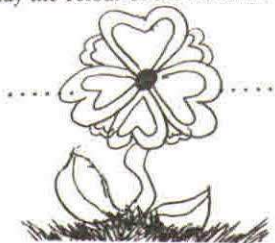
Tie your hair back if it is long and wear old clothes.

Cover your work area and the floor with lots of newspapers.

METHOD

1. Mix up your dye according to instructions and have it ready for later.
2. Think of a simple design. a flower or fish for instance.
3. Have your cotton ready on layers of newspaper next to or near the wax.
4. Melt the candles over a slow heat in the saucepan until they are liquid.
TAKE CARE THE WAX DOES NOT OVERHEAT.
5. Using the wooden handled brush paint on your design with the wax. Everything covered by wax will stay the colour of the material underneath. See diagram below.

paint blank areas with dye



All the black lines are wax

6. Let the dye dry (this may take up to an hour).
7. When absolutely dry place fabric between several sheets of newspaper and iron over the newspaper with a very hot iron. The newspaper will absorb the wax and when all the wax is removed by ironing your batik is finished.

You can now make bags, cushions, t-shirt designs, wall hangings and lots lots more.

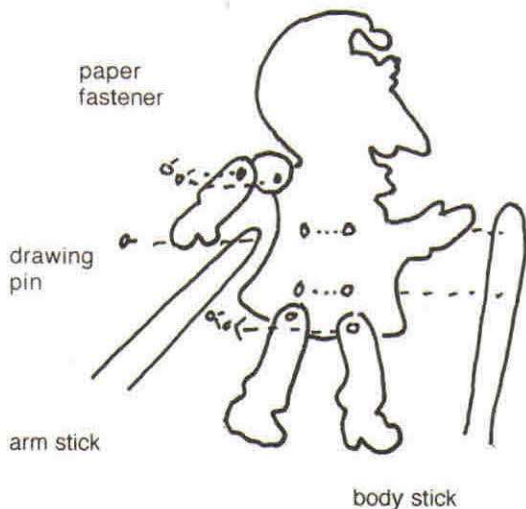
MAKE A PUPPET

You need:

- _____ paints, felt tips or coloured pencils
- _____ scissors
- _____ sticks
- _____ drawing pins, tape or glue
- _____ paper fasteners

Before you colour in the puppets please have a good look at them. If you colour in the back as well, you can make your puppet walk forwards and backwards. Put your puppet together, you can use string instead of paper fasteners (like they do in Turkey). Attach one stick to the body with two drawing pins and another stick to the front arm. This arm needs to be able to turn so use a drawing pin for this. You can also make the puppets out of clay or paper mache.

And please make a theatre for them. A cardboard box with a hole cut out will do. The open front should be at least 30 by 45 cm. You could make curtains. And use night lights for light. Make some music (drums) or sing. Give a shadow performance using a lamp, a sheet or a white wall.





Krishna

Important figure in the Mahabharata, a story about good and evil.

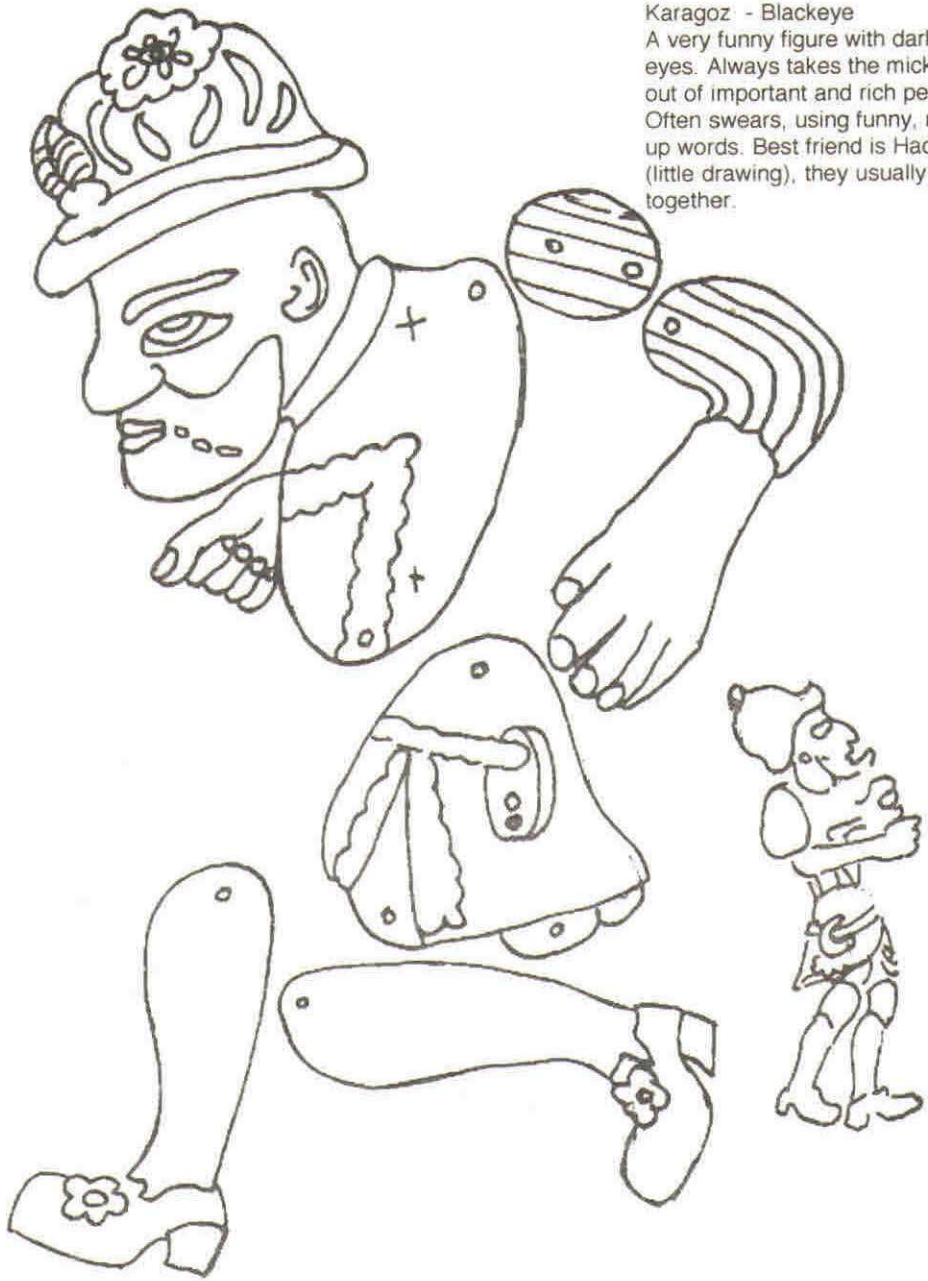
He has divine powers.

His face is green or dark blue, so you know that he is good.

The evil ones have red faces.

Karagoz - Blackeye

A very funny figure with dark eyes. Always takes the mickey out of important and rich people. Often swears, using funny, made up words. Best friend is Hacivat (little drawing), they usually play together.



FESTIVALS

Many of the year's festivals have specific crafts linked with them. Here are some suggestions for some festivals approaching...

Chinese New Year

Dragons! Boatraces! Masks!

Make facemasks of the animals from Chinese years (this coming year will be the year of the Rat; other animals are; Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Hen, Dog, and Pig) and decorate. Different colours have different meanings. For more information, ideas and for the story giving the reason for every year being known by a different animal, contact Dianne Shuker of World Wise Books, 60 Holgate Road, York, Tel 01904 647340 who can send you a (cheap) pack full of ideas for Chinese New Year (and other festivals). It includes instructions on how to make a kite, a lantern, dumplings, a dragon and of course masks.

Carnival

The immense costumes of Trinidad's Carnival Kings and Queens Mas Players take all year to make, but most people "play Mas" (dance and masquerade) in very simple costumes. Wear a swimming costume or leotard as a base and then with imaginative use of a belt, headband, wire, ribbon, flimsy scarves or remnants of netting, construct a colourful costume depicting anything you like! This year's carnival at Notting Hill had Roman soldiers (some riding "horses"), bowls of fruit, hibiscus flowers, Olympic rings...

For some authentic Calypso music to dance to and inspire your own compositions look under the off-putting title of "world music" at any large record store for music by Sparrow, Lord Kitchener or David Rudder, turn up your heating and organise a Carnival Jump-Up!

Easter

Decorating Easter eggs has become increasingly popular in our house since discovering a method involving FIRE! Light a candle and carefully hold a wax crayon so that one end of it starts to melt in the flame, then place this melted end against your egg. Do this several times with different colour crayons until your egg has several blobs of wax on it. Then hold the egg above the flame so the wax melts again and runs over the egg creating unexpected patterns. Budding arsonists love this!

Another method of decorating eggs is to tear crepe paper into small pieces and put each colour in a separate saucer of water. Then cover the egg with pieces of wet crepe paper, some overlapping. Leave to dry until the following day, then peel off the paper and see what happened!

The eggs of course need to be either hard boiled for pacing (rolling down a grassy slope until they crack) or blown for hanging on an Easter tree. To blow eggs, make a small hole with a needle or pin at one end of the egg and a slightly larger hole at the other. Blow through the small hole and the yolk and albumin will come out of the other end. Rinse the egg out and after decorating, push a knotted piece of wool through one hole and hang the egg on a branch of your Easter tree. This can be a couple of branches of something flowering or budding, depending on when Easter is and what looks nice at that time. Kids enjoy discussing why eggs are a feature of Easter - and who knows, one of them might come up with a logical reason for the Easter bunny!!?

Marit Tamlit, N Yorks.

CRAFTS

Have you tried any of the following?

feltmaking
simple weaving (plaiting, cordmaking)
stained glass
dyeing (from plants, vegetables)
fabric painting
tie dying
batik
enamelling
rugmaking
candlemaking
knitting (including crochet, French
knitting and finger knitting)
sewing (patchwork, embroidery, collage)
papier mache
plaster casting
papermaking
clay modelling
paper quilling
carving (wood, soap, ice, salt, dry clay,

plasticene)
dough sculpture
marquetry
dollmaking
corn dolly making
screen printing
silk painting
mono printing
jewellery making (beads, friendship
bracelets, rings and brooches)
hat making (see felt)
costume making, dressmaking, simple
clothes and shoes
puppetry (see this newsletter)
badge making
photography (including pinhole camera
making)
calligraphy
lino cutting
marbling



INSTEAD OF CARDBOARD

An excellent way to make educational games and materials which are very durable and keep clean - Buy packs of self-adhesive vinyl floor tiles from a DIY centre - approx. £2.99 for a packet of 6 tiles, 12" x 12" each - and a roll of clear sticky-back plastic such as Fablon. Anything you might normally draw or glue onto cardboard for longer-lasting use, instead you can put your design onto a piece of paper and stick it on the back of the floor tile by peeling off the backing paper and replacing it with your piece or pieces of paper (BEWARE the tiles are very very sticky and the paper needs to be placed on very carefully, once stuck it stays!). Cover the paper with sticky back plastic, and then cut the whole lot into shape, floor tile, paper, plastic and all, with scissors. Draw your design onto paper if you are really creative, print from a computer or even cut pictures from a magazine or book, or use stickers ... whatever your imagination can create. For my three year old I have made letter/ picture/ word cards (from a sticker book), number cards with the numeral and the equivalent number of coloured circles to put coloured counters on. I intend to make various matching/pattern games for geometric shapes and solids, bead-threading, peg boards, silhouettes and pictures, etc. An NES Arnold catalogue or equivalent, and numerous board games should give plenty of further inspiration for all ages.

Anne Mills, N Yorks.

useful tips.

- _ have a cardboard box somewhere for keeping things like bits of wire, old toothbrushes, light bulbs, wool corks matchboxes. Soon it will be a treasure chest
- _ buy a cutting mat
- _ use very good quality tools, and look after them. sharp scissors, good glue etc. Opitex (tel. 01703 446515) have good quality tools for a very reasonable price.
- _ allow time
- _ don't underestimate how difficult things can be
- _ small children enjoy watching how things are made often more than making it themselves; this is how they learn.
- _ keep unfinished projects, sometimes you want to finish them a year later

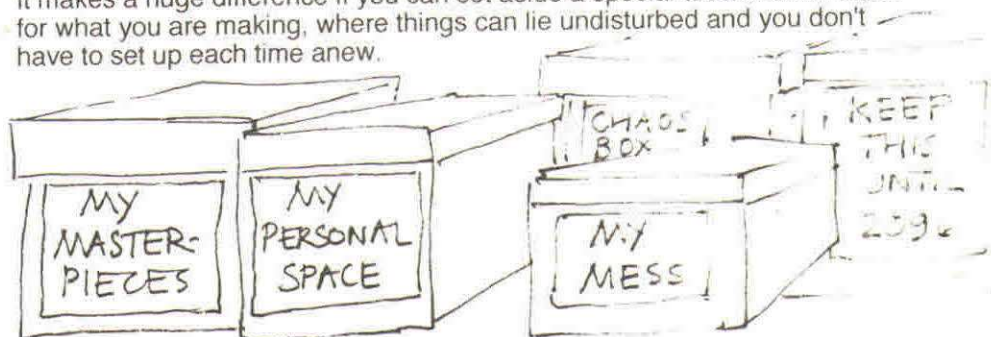
And further tips

- o Don't be afraid to make a mess: creativity often comes out of chaos.
- o Keep a plastic sheet for the floor and an old vinyl tablecloth within easy reach.
- o Invest in some good quality paper
- o Have a box for natural objects such as fir cones, moss, bark, beech butts, shells, pebbles, sheep's wool, etc.

Last words from a professional designer:

o don't feel precious about what you create. If it doesn't please you, let it go; make another.

It makes a huge difference if you can set aside a special area or even table for what you are making, where things can lie undisturbed and you don't have to set up each time anew.



ACCESS TO FURTHER EDUCATION WITHOUT GCSEs.

We are a family with seven children, living in an old farmhouse in Wombourne in Staffordshire. I am Ann, a former occupational therapist, and my husband Guy, is a product designer and manufacturer who works from home. Together we have educated our three younger children mostly at home.

We began our careers in home education in 1988 when our fifth son, Owen, was 12, Barney was 9, and Grace our only daughter was 7. Owen had done half a term at the local comprehensive school, where our four older children had all been students. We learned a good deal in our first year, mostly discovering what not to do! After much discussion, we decided that we would try to develop in the children an eagerness to learn, an interest in the world around them, and to try to form their characters so as to give them the stability which will enable them to make their way in a world that is experiencing rapid change in many areas. High hopes! We felt that the usual school approach to education, of covering a wide range of 'subjects' in preparation for exams at pre-determined ages was not necessarily the best way of fulfilling our ideals.

Although we believed that such an approach would be an effective way to educate our children, we were somewhat apprehensive that it might not prove acceptable when it came to going on to higher education. Now, seven years later, with Owen at College studying for a degree, and Barney at a sixth form college, we have greater confidence and we believe that we shall be equally as successful with Grace, who is now 14.

As most home schoolers tend to do, we have drawn on our family's own skills and resources in educating our children. Guy has a well equipped workshop in the cellar of our home, and a design office in another room on the ground floor. Ann has been at home since marriage, and does all the usual household things, plus a few that are not so usual, like making bread (thirty loaves a week when all the children were at home!) sewing the family's clothes, making and selling salt pastry models, teaching Esperanto, making and enjoying music, and lots besides. Therefore, a wide range of practical skills have been available to the children as they have grown up. As members of a large family, all of them have had plenty of experience of teamwork, and are regularly involved in the work of the household. Being at home has meant that the youngest three have been much more involved in Guy's work than was possible for the older children. They have been able to follow various projects through from first ideas to delivery, often helping practically and coming up with new ideas. This has given them valuable insight and developed new skills. The following extract from our report for the LEA Advisor in 1992, illustrates the point:

'Guy has been responsible for the design and construction of a granny flat over the last six months, and Owen has taken a keen interest in the project. He built a 1/50th. scale model of the building, working from the actual construction drawings, to show the elderly client what her new accommodation would look like. He has made a large number of site visits, including attending the contract signing meeting, and has gained a good understanding of the requirements of a building contract of this type. He has taken photographs of all stages of the work, and is currently writing an illustrated report on the project.

Owen has continued his robot hand project, and has produced some very good practical and written work, including detailed drawings of his design and of the anatomy of the hand. The project has included a study of the nervous system as related to muscular function.

He has been involved with Guy in the design, manufacture and promotion of the Ultimate Woodblock Set, an educational construction set for children (and adults!). He now works part time in its production as orders come in. In addition to gaining an insight into commercial photography by being one of the models for the brochure, he has given valuable assistance on a number of demonstrations. The Construction Careers Service were very impressed with him, and having bought two Woodblock Sets, they asked if Owen would give their members of staff a day's tuition in the use of the sets for a fee of £50. Owen met this challenge with maturity and was complimented on his efforts.

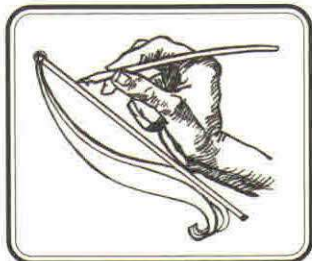
He has been cooking and supplying individually packed frozen meals for an elderly lady, which has improved his culinary and business skills.

Together with his friend, he has continued his interest in circus skills, and under the title 'Jugglitis', gives regular public performances for which he gets well paid.

This year, he joined the Wolverhampton Astronomical Society, and during the winter he spent a lot of time making observations. He investigated the possibility of making an astronomical telescope, and carried out a number of interesting practical experiments.

Recently, he climbed Ben Nevis in aid of the Cystic Fibrosis Charity, which involved getting a £150 sponsorship before the trip. He successfully completed the fund raising, which gave him good experience in approaching people and communicating, and he thoroughly enjoyed the climb to the top.

Owen continues his involvement with the Staffordshire Youth Recorder Ensemble, and went with them on tour to Italy last summer. He has continued his studies with Mr. Davies in Birmingham, and has now gained his Grade 7 exam in practical recorder. He is currently enlarging his repertoire, and will play a concerto for recorder with a string group from the Wolverhampton Music School in July. He continues with his piano lessons and will take Grade 3 this month.



He has started to make a lute, and the editor of the 'Woodworker' magazine, who wrote the book on lutes that Owen is following, has taken a personal interest in the project and has asked Owen to document his work for inclusion in the magazine.'

As Owen approached 16, we began to think of his further education. He had by then outstripped my knowledge of music theory, having gained his Grade 5 exam, and we felt we needed a college that would take him part time, to allow him to continue his music lessons and other outside interests. I found a leaflet in the library about Rowley Regis sixth form college, which is about 10 miles away, and which looked promising. We had previously tried the local comprehensive school, but they would not consider taking Owen for a part time 'A' level course, and they said that without GCSEs behind him, he would not be able to go on to higher education. However, we took Owen for an interview at the college, where he was very well received. He passed all the test set by the music tutor, and the maths tutor, on hearing what Owen had done at home, accepted him for a one year GCSE course. He was set an assignment by the English tutor, and returned the following week for an assessment and interview. He was told that he was already at GCSE standard, and that he therefore did not need to attend lessons, but only to complete his course work under the tutor's occasional guidance. This freed curriculum time, so he decided to do an 'A' level in Design. The design tutor was doubtful at first about accepting him without GCSEs to recommend him, but when he saw his 'Granny Flat' and 'Robot Hand' projects, he changed his view completely, and asked that Owen be included on *his* course, rather than on that of the other tutor's!

Owen made very good progress at the college, and at an early parent's evening, it was suggested by the design tutor, that he consider a career in design. The music tutor likewise, suggested a career in music! At the same evening, his maths tutor told us that she was impressed, not so much with Owen's knowledge of maths, but with his ability to think, a quality which she explained, was often sadly lacking in today's students. Mr Haliwell, the senior tutor, expressed his surprise and pleasure at the way that Owen had settled into College life. To quote his words: 'Owen walked onto a college of 900 students, and within a day, it was as if he had always been there.' We were particularly encouraged by this remark, as it bears out our view, and that of many other home schoolers, that home educated children are not at a disadvantage socially when compared with school children. Our further experience with our children at Rowley confirms that a home education can in fact develop better social skills than is possible within the school system.

Owen decided, after a week at the Dartington Summer Music School, that he wanted to study music *and* design at degree level! He found that the Summer School had greatly encouraged his interest in musical performance, having spent a week with other young people whose main interest in life was music. He decided to combine his interests by looking for a course in musical performance and musical instrument making. Tutors from Rowley personally telephoned all the colleges that offered a combined course covering these subjects, and produced a list of those who would consider him. For his application, they produced such a glowing testimonial, that we suggested that Owen should frame it!

Owen gained B and C grades at 'A' level, and B and C in English and maths GCSE, and was accepted at Bath College of higher education, where he is now in his second year.

We have continued our contact with Rowley Regis College, as Barney, who is now 16, is doing a GNVQ, higher level, in art and design there. At a recent parents evening, the senior tutor told us that after Owen's initial interview, several of the staff were doubtful about accepting Owen, never having had a home educated student before. Their decision to accept him has been vindicated, and has proved to be very encouraging, both for the college, and for us, and paved the way for Barney to be accepted, also without any GCSEs. They have already offered Grace a place to do her 'A' levels when the time comes.

The Advisors from the LEA, when they visit, appreciate and accept what we are doing, but still tend to ask us to try to 'keep up with the National Curriculum 'so that they will be able to go on to higher education'(!) Needless to say, we tend not to follow their advice too closely. Indeed, Barney found maths so difficult, that he did the bare minimum, using a book called 'Maths for Life' which we found at W.H.Smith's. He completed this with difficulty, and has since done no more maths! Rowley have not insisted that he should do any GCSEs, and have recognised his considerable artistic and musical skills, and are prepared to concentrate on those instead. We are confident that they will be equally supportive when it comes to finding a college of higher education for Barney as they were for Owen.

Barney also studies 'cello and related subjects at the Birmingham Junior Conservatoire each Saturday, and he is interested in doing a similar H.E. course to Owen when the time comes.

Our experience of success in the face of the critics has given us, and all our children, great encouragement. We feel that we have done what we can to fit our children for a world where one job for life is no longer an option, and the portfolio man, to quote Charles Handy, is the norm, with a wide range of marketable skills.

Guy and Ann Morse-Brown,

Mill Lane Farmhouse,
Mill Lane,
Wombourne,
Staffordshire,
WV5 0LE

Tel: 01902 893683



WANTED
PERSON
WHO CAN
MAKE
THINGS

"WHERE ARE THE ARTISANS TO REALISE ALL THIS CAD?"

* Craft Art and Design (Ed) *

Clothing designer, Jill O'Connor, who is a member of a designer-makers' co-operative in Northumbria, has noticed how many teachers are pursuing second careers, post-retirement, in the arts/crafts, whether or not that was their previous discipline. Does this say something about the lack of opportunities for the personal satisfaction obtained from *making and doing* within the too-restrictive National Curriculum?

Ten years ago, she worked in two inner-city schools in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, setting up and supporting teachers in innovative Fashion & Textiles courses. Local businesses were amazed at the achievements, which enabled those young people who wanted to work in the clothing trade in the region to be multi-skilled and creative, and so fit in more easily to the new systems of team-working in the industry. Other students who went on to become graduates had first-hand experience of working with a practising designer-maker, and one ex-student actually returned to Newcastle to set up her own business. *Copies of the article Jill wrote about this work in schools are available upon request.*

What worries some Art teachers in the state system is that everything is being done on computers, and that unless something is done soon, there will be no artisans to realise all these designs, in short, no end products, a trend which is already leading to criticism from parents and sponsors of a local CTC. Perhaps the alternative systems of education that are growing throughout the country will be the means of retaining the valuable practical skills that enrich our lives?

Jill O'Connor, 3 Falstone Way, Hexham, Northumberland
(01434 604790)

Some good books

Children's Year: Crafts and clothes for Children and Parents to make

A clear and simple compendium of over 100 different things that you really will want to make, and keep, based around the seasons of the year. Ideas include mittens, a dolls' house, patchwork, candleholders, wooden rattles, a beanpole den....will suit a range of ages and capabilities. Published by Hawthorn Press at £9.95. ISBN 1 869 890 00 0.

All Year Round What shall we do at Midsummer? Make a gold spiral? Hanging suns? A bee from sheep's wool? Or shall we sing the song of the midsummer sun? Examples of the range of ideas from this companion guide, listing all the festivals of the year. Stories, poems, songs and very clear instructions for dozens of seasonal activities and creations. Published by Hawthorn Press at £12.95. ISBN 1 869 890 47 7

(A further title from Hawthorn Press is

Festivals Together (A Guide to Multi-cultural celebrations) £12.95.

FLORIS Books produce a series of enticing craft and activities books such as dollmaking, toymaking, felcraft, and tissue paper craft. Their seasonal craft book series, each costing £5.99, offer simply made decorations for Christmas, Easter and Harvest (how to make corn dollies and autumn garlands). Catalogue: FLORIS, 15 Harrison Gardens, Edinburgh EH 11 1SH (0131 337 2372)

LETTERS



Dear Education Otherwise

We would like to extend a special thank you to every family who offered us accommodation during our visit this Fall. The response we received was overwhelming and very touching. As each letter arrived, we were excited and amazed at the extent of people's generosity all over Britain. We only wish we could meet each of you personally. We are currently relocating to Wisconsin but would love to do some hosting of our own when we are settled. Thank you again. We wish each family the very best!
Sincerely,

Greg, Kelly, Gemma and Nolan
Veldey, 6708 Pomona Rd, Boise, Idaho
83704, USA

Dear Education Otherwise

My 3-year-old daughter has hypoplastic (incompletely formed) teeth. Her teeth began to crumble before she was two years old. One dentist has told me that hypoplastic teeth have become increasingly common since the 1980s. I want to find out what is causing this. In my search for information I have found more questions than answers. I have compiled a questionnaire. If anyone is willing to fill this in, please contact me and their information will remain confidential. Results will be available to anyone filling in a questionnaire.

Diane Brown
40 Hall Street, New Mills, Stockport
SK12 3BR
(01663 746099)

Dear Education Otherwise

I taught in primary state schools for 20 years. I resigned. Cannot stand it. I would like to live in UK, work, practise English, teach Spanish. Interested? Please contact Carmen Pintero Garcia, c/oHnos Perez Lledo 9, 3 D, 03110 Mutxamel (Alicante). Phone (96)565 65 85. Soon to change (?) 96 595 15 95

Dear Education Otherwise

I have four children, two in school and two out. My eldest son is at sixth form college taking A levels and hoping to go to university eventually. He had a busy social life and is fairly independent now. I have a daughter of eight, home educated and school hating; a little boy of three, and finally a daughter of 14 (Sarah) at secondary school. My problem is that I worry because I seem to give most of my time to the eight year old as her education is my responsibility. We are always going to EO groups and meetings.

I try to talk to Sarah in the evenings, but she often has a lot of homework and of course does the usual teenager-in-her-room loud music and private thoughts. I have a good relationship with her; we talk to each other. I try to support and help her, especially with lifts as we live rurally. Her main reason for staying in school is social: her friend live eight miles away and she says she would miss them. She's happy at school, in top sets and popular, so I shouldn't worry should I? Any ideas to make her feel her education is as important to me as her sister's? Anyone else coped with this? Help please.

Debs Puttick, 8 Crossgates, Amberley
Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9NS

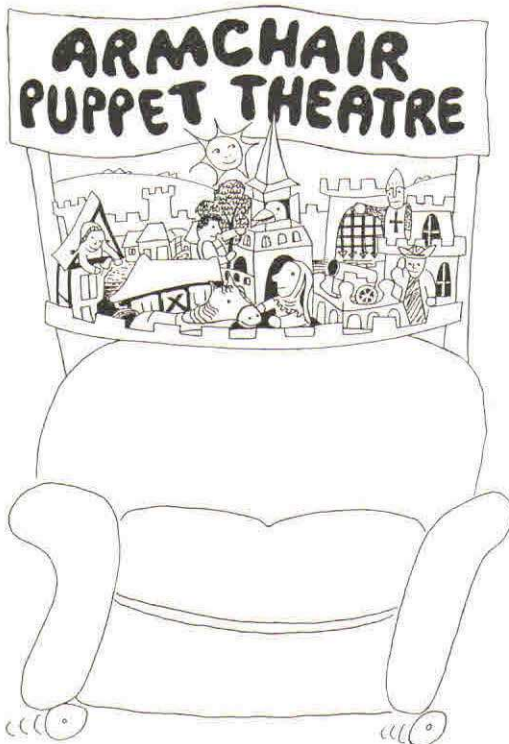
Dear Education Otherwise

Since I took my son out of school and we joined EO 18 months ago, the difference in Daniel is remarkable. No longer is he afraid of meeting children from the school. It took a lot of patience till he could talk about it himself and I took a lot of 'should he be in school?', 'make him fight', etc. Even his grandmother is against us. But why should Daniel be turned into a bully? They didn't see his face or hear his screams or have to undo his hands from the bed, his legs covered in bruises (which he said were caused by bumping into a table) or the headaches and stomach aches which Daniel used to say he had. Which turned out to be true. He was punched in the stomach going into and

coming out of class, his head banged on the playground floor.

The teachers turned a blind eye. (I've since found out that they couldn't say anything in case they lost their jobs.) Nor said anything against the head because of who they knew. Only one stood out and eventually left after 25 years. But these same 'teachers' would totally ignore my son for whole lessons. This is mental cruelty and it makes me angry. But thankfully we talked when Daniel was ready and now he is the happy, cheerful, considerate child he was, again. And we both send our heartfelt thanks to you.

Pat Brogan, 15 Moss Street
Salford M7 1NF



Dear Education Otherwise,

We are writing to thank everyone for their support and encouragement during our autumn rehearsal tour of our new puppet show, *Small Wonder*. In all, we were able to perform it 16 times during our 1,800-mile journey that lasted five weeks. We enjoyed meeting all the different groups and getting to know the various local coordinators who kindly provided us with accommodation. Since returning home we've been finishing off the details to the 11 glove puppets and the medieval town theatre set, ready for bookings in the New Year.

Love from

Ken, Jill, Melissa and Saffron Beagley
Oranges, St Clement's Terrace,
Harverton, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7SN
(01803 867140)

WELL, WHAT IS GOING ON OUT THERE IN THE WORLD OF EO?

Away from the demands of educational advisers and the curiosity of well-meaning friends, what really happens in the average EO home?

Our Education Correspondent asked ten parents to name one EO-type activity they'd done the day before. Confidentiality was assured, so they should have been able to be completely honest.

' We actually went and studied local material at the town archives. We looked at a copy of the 1810 Enclosure map, among other things ... and it led me, at least, to look at the background to enclosure via a visit to the library. In case this should lend too rosy a hue to our EOing, I will confess that yesterday also contained a fairly major row (heated debate?) over a computer game... '

' J (aged 3) insisted on "writing" down all the names of her friends while we were on the bus. As we got off for our stop, she dropped the pens all over the floor and under all the seats.. '

' We did some English on the computer with M (8 years). At the same time I was trying to do the church accounts, the baby was crying and the breakfast things were lying there unwashed... '

' I was looking at the alphabet with my 3 year old, and we did some number jigsaws which he then enjoyed breaking up, leaving me to figure out how to put it all back together again. '

' We studied India to a certain extent - didn't do much else. I went to a coffee morning, as a matter of fact, cos I needed a break! '

' We walked on the heath and discovered birds' nests, and later on the children all rollerskated in the barn ... '

' Well, I traced 16 diagrams of solar systems in preparation for our local group meeting while B (aged 10) made a cellular phone that he could take into a pyramid and be able to call his Daddy rather than his mummy ... '

' We (my 10 year old and I) had a long discussion on why society is founded on money and whether it needs to be. We also looked at the excellent *Letts Science Guide* (Key Stage 3) - expensive but highly recommended. '

' M (7) was copying an idea he's seen on the Christmas science lectures: trying to make craters by dropping stones into dry and wet mud, while I was helping D (9) bake a cake. I was flitting between the two with the flour because the mud wasn't working very well. '

' D (7) still has the occasional nit. She's getting fed up with the constant hair combing so last time I got her to spell out every word she could think of. We've also been doing a chart of how many get combed out each day. It has the potential of being made into a graph but I think I'm getting a bit sick of it ... '

OUR EO FRIENDS IN THE NORTH

by Wendy Knight (Thurston, Suffolk)

I recently attended the Northern Region Conference, and I'm feeling very motivated and inspired. This was the first event of this kind I had attended and I was rather apprehensive. I needn't have worried; I met lots of people in various situations who, for all sorts of reasons, were home educating, which in itself was reassuring.

First, we had two excellent and thought-provoking talks by Roland Meighan on why home education is so successful. Then we heard John Adcock on what we should have instead of the current school system. The questions after this became a discussion which lasted the rest of the day! Lunch came next (very good catering by EO members, I might add, who'd also laid on a range of activities to keep the children happy throughout the day). Then there was a presentation about the Internet - very informative; made me long to get 'on line'!

We then broke up into smaller groups for workshops. I went to the legal one which cleared up a few grey areas. Tea followed, and a barn dance, but I couldn't go as I had to head home. I could hardly stop talking about it all as we drove. I'd like to thank all the people I spoke to who made me feel I had made the right decision and boosted my confidence about my capability to do it. Thanks must also go to Gwen Baldock and her helpers who organised the whole event so well.

Wendy Knight, 12 Partridge Close
Thurston, Suffolk IP31 3QL

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jackie Fearnley, one of the original members of Education Otherwise, would like to know what has become of the following EO names from the past (that is, from the late seventies). If anybody has heard of them, or any other families dating from the very early days of EO, could they write and tell Jackie, who suggests we could make it into a regular feature, with names and news gradually being added. But to start with, is anyone still in contact with:

- o Serena and Nigel (?) from the West country, who had children called Crystal, Madren and Alethea (How's that for recall? Ed)
- o the Pickering family with daughter Zoe, who lived in a coach in Shropshire
- o the Windass family from Oxford (Stan was one of the founders of the Centre for Alternatives, which gave rise to Education Otherwise)
- o Iris Harrison and family, Tenbury Wells
- o the Taylors, who lived in Devon and had about 4 boys.

Answers please to Jackie Fearnley,
Brereton Lodge, Goathland, North
Yorkshire.



FLEXIBLE EDUCATION

Kate Oliver on her research into - and personal experience of - flexi-schooling, flexi-time schooling and flexible education

Flexi-schooling was defined (eight years ago, by Roland Meighan of Education Now) as 'the part-time arrangement whereby school and family share responsibility for the child's education in an agreed contract and partnership'. That is now more accurately described as *flexi-time schooling*.

Flexi-schooling should mean complete parental and children's choice of how, when, where and with whom. It would amount to the democratisation of learning, the demise of coercive teaching; a radical reform, with schools becoming flexible in teaching methods, roles, curriculum, parental responsibility, etc.

Flexi-schooling could ultimately lead to *flexi-education* - the flexible philosophy applied to all aspects of education including aims, powers, and organisation. Schools could become open centres for education, with teachers as tutors negotiating a curriculum to suit the individual child.

So much for the golden future. This article, then, is about flexi-time education - the temporary expedient for those who cannot wait, who for whatever reason do not want solely to home educate - perhaps because they also want to put some energy into pushing for flexi-schooling and on to flexi-education.

The basic idea throughout is that school becomes just one of many resources - alongside libraries, computers, television, etc - to be used when the child and parents

want. The amount of time spent in school may be negotiable: part of each day, so many days a week, perhaps a block of weeks.

The law and the money

Flexi-time schooling is, according to EO legal guru David Deutsch, perfectly legal, 'provided that the net effect is to provide proper education for the child (and the LEA must satisfy itself that this is so). However the school in question must agree to the arrangement ... the child is a registered pupil at the school and is deemed to be "absent with leave" under sections 39(2) and 39(5) of the Education Act 1944 ... when ... being educated away from the school.'

The 1993 Education Act (Part 4, subsection 298, no 4) confirms this. All schools - maintained and independent - can allow flexi-time, but can refuse on any grounds or none. Permission has to be granted by the headteacher and governing body (according to section 199 of the 1993 act). (Universities, too, can admit school-age children part-time or full-time if they have reached the necessary academic standard.)

At the school my children attend on this basis, they are recorded as *educated off-site*, which, because it is classified as *authorised absence*, means the school is funded exactly as for a full-time pupil.

→ → → *continued*

Practical arrangements

Once the head and governors have agreed the principle, a statement of intent has to be agreed. This specifies what education will be provided at home - in national curriculum terms, even if the children reach this standard in their time at school. An LEA inspector may visit the home, as they may with ordinary home schoolers. In practice, at key stages 1 and 2, most of what a child does at home will reach one target or another.

A contract will also need to formalise things like:

- o the details of school attendance
- o attendance at special events at non-school times
- o the same access for flexi-parents to school records, teachers, etc as for full-time parents
- o access to LEA reports on the home element of the deal.

Our experience, with a five and a seven-year-old, is that the authorities are not over-concerned with what we do at home - as long as the children are progressing and learning.

Pros and cons

The advantages of flexi-time over full-time schooling are obvious to any reader of this newsletter. Its advantages over full-time home education you can judge for yourself. As a package, it can provide a good combination of the individual and the group, of democracy and authoritarianism, of parental independence and co-operation with the school.

From the LEA and school point of view, the pros (which you may have to argue if you are trying to persuade them) include:

- o a beneficial change in ethos - towards

- partnership, for example
- o more motivation for a child spending shorter hours at school
- o potential cost savings.

The significance of potential disadvantages you can probably judge for yourselves, but it may help to be aware of the arguments against flexi-time schooling that you may have to counter:

- o that your child will be seen as eccentric at school and out of it
- o friendship ties at school may be uncertain
- o project work and other elements of school may be interrupted
- o there may be discrepancies between educational standards at home and at school
- o children may need individual attention at school
- o keeping tabs on what happens at home may demand extra work by the LEA and teachers.

A national trend?

Four years ago there were barely any recorded sightings of voluntary flexi-time schooling for children without special needs. Two years ago I wrote about in in this newsletter and as a result have had 16 inquiries from parents interested in pursuing it. Last September the *Sunday Times* carried an article about it; ten radio programmes picked it up. Radio 4's *PM* programme decided not to deal with the subject on the grounds that it did not amount to a 'national trend'. My response was simply 'yet'.

Kate Oliver, 21 St Mary's Crescent
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 1JL
(01926 427332)

A FLEXI-SCHOOLING "VENTURE" IN YORK

"Venture" is an independent, part-time educational initiative for adolescents (14+) which arose out of the expressed wishes of two youths, their parents and some of their teachers. We are now in our second year, with 9 students who do two days of examination courses at the local technical college with their peers and three days in Venture.

We all felt we had worked creatively together in York Steiner School and unanimously wished to continue to work with Steiner's educational insights, adapting the Curriculum for particular circumstances. York Steiner School is housed in a large ex-state school and has developed one wing of the premises as a business centre, renting rooms to small businesses. We have our office, classroom and workshop there. This has enabled us to become a viable offshoot, forming our own independent roots whilst maintaining a living connection to the school community. New students have been attracted for a variety of reasons. Some opted out of the state-sector because they preferred our style of studying. Three found their way to us from Germany and Sweden. The rest joined after leaving the main school.

We have so far selected themes which we then study from many angles; biological, anthropological, social, historical, psychological and spiritual. This involves the students in individual research as well as group lessons and ensures that the direction and final outcome of the work relies as much on their enthusiasm, initiative and commitment as it does on the teachers' forward planning. We began last year with the nervous system, senses and brain, soon realised that the human experience of TIME was a 'white area of the map' (by no means fully researched and plotted), conducted an extensive survey and found we had the material for a publication (Our book "It's About Time" is available for £2 plus 50p p&p cheques payable to Venture). This year we are studying identity and individuality and will decide soon whether to conclude with an exhibition or another book or both.

We offer both the History of Art and History of Drama, subjects which as well as affording young people deep insight into the evolution of consciousness, provide a perfect basis for journeying; one of the leitmotifs of Venture. Because of the constraints involvement with examinations places upon us, we can only travel and offer performances in Britain for most of the year, but in Summer we can take to the road! Last year we took a 'two character' play on tour in Germany. This year's students are performing a variety of plays in Yorkshire, London and Germany, as well as leading improvisation and mask workshops at an International Youth Conference in Poland. The third major area of work is Nature Science. The students are building a hut they have designed which, once complete will house a greenwood turning lathe and forge. In Spring they will make charcoal to use in forging. Eventually they envisage making both tools and craft items and earning some of the money necessary for the journey abroad.

It is essential to note that our entire programme is, out of choice and necessity, adaptable. This means we are able to develop our study to incorporate individual interests which often involves the students in teaching and learning from each other.

We have recently devoted a morning to imagining how Venture might look in the future - our students are convinced education for adolescents must increasingly move in the direction they have experienced at Venture; in particular providing opportunities for young people to participate in educating each other. We would welcome ideas from home-educating families to explore ways of developing the initiative in mutually beneficial ways. For further information/ feedback, contact:

Linda Fryer at Venture, Danesmead Wing, Fulford Cross, York, YO1 4PB.



EO AT THE GRASSROOTS

Have you thought about starting a local EO newsletter?

If you are part of a local group, you might like to consider putting together a news sheet or children's newspaper. There are a surprising number of them around the country, and this feature cannot do justice to all of them. But here are some examples

Newsletter for Home Educators in Sussex

A monthly 4-page newsletter of what's on. Lets news, ads, reviews and children's contributions costing £3.50 for 6 issues. Cheques (to ESEO) to Lyndon Pugh, The Barn Mongers Farm, Barcombe, Lewes, BN8 5BQ

EO NEWS

Started by Patience Elliott in Norfolk, this impressive publication grew out of the lively EO group that met at Hindolveston (now closed). Running to as much as 12 pages, it was typed up in columns and put together by the children at the group, full of info, sports news, illustrations, puzzles games and recipes. Photocopied and sold for 20p, it remains a valuable archive of education otherwise 'at the grass roots'. There is hope for its revival.

Also out of Norfolk comes

NEON

Norfolk Education Otherwise News is a regular (4 times a year) news sheet which has been going for over 12 years. It keeps local EO families informed about what's on in East Anglia - museum trips, exhibitions, local get-togethers and so on. It costs £1 plus 6 pence, from Rosemary Charles, 6 Bridewell Street, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0AR.

Tic Toc

Newsletter of The Otherwise Club, a lively EO group which meets in North London. Compiled and edited by a 14-year-old EOer, Sam Pay, it was started in 1994 and is an internal paper. It has minutes of meetings and anything else people want to put in. Now they're hoping to start a TOC-based magazine for EO children of 10 and over and are trying to raise money for a computer to print it on. To be called THE OTHERWISE TIMES, it should be a good read if the current editorials are anything to go by - they're gems of relaxed and funny writing. More info from Leslie Barson, 1 Croxley Road, London W9 3HH.

ESSEX EPICYCLE

Newsletter for the Essex group edited by Sandie Cottee, it's a nicely printed publication of everything that is happening in the area, plus contacts, resources and future events. There's a lot of interesting stuff going on in Essex, and you can read all about it in the *Epicycle*. Families pay £2 for their name to go on the mailing list and this covers 4 issues. Subs from Sandie Cottee, 17 South View Road, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8DX.

EDUCATING ARCHIE by SEZ



STAND UP TO THEM

Alison Morley argues for a positive approach

We recently sent for national curriculum tests for English, maths and science. They were a real eye opener. I set them for the children - Annie (six) and Ruth (four) - neither of whom do timetabled work. We have got work books and do the occasional project, but on the whole the seam between life and learning is invisible.

Annie turned out to be key stage 3 level 2 and above in maths, key stage 1 level 2 in English; Ruth at stage 1 level 1 for both; both children were stage 2 level 2 for science. These children are not geniuses; they just enjoy problems (as anyone does). They have not had their time wasted by play groups and school and to all intents and purposes they play all day. We do discuss things like hot and cold bath water. But really it is an insult to every parent and the basic intelligence of children to assume that we have to send our children to school to learn what is living and not living and hot and cold. What they are learning at school they already know, and if they don't, then my next revelation proved to me that they never would in school.

I recently watched a tv programme about a class of 35 children doing science. Each of the 15 children in the science group spent maybe two minutes with their hand in water of different temperatures - and 20 minutes watching and waiting. Some of the children, because of the chaos and obscurity of the questions, answered wrongly. The rest of the class were finger painting and wandering around chatting. I have no objection to all this, but schools

shouldn't have the arrogance to believe that children won't do this, including the experiment, at home.

The point is that we must stand up, be seen, stop believing that maybe 'they' have a point. Primary age children could well be wasting their time at school. It's time to go on the offensive. There are some things that we, as EOers, can all agree on. There are parents overcome by the weight of the 'fraud of school' but longing to be shown an alternative. Let us help them. I believe that if we are brave and clear in our vision we can one day change this system for the benefit of all our children and generations to come.

Alison Morley, Carters Stable, Upton Cross, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 4BP

'You cannot make children learn music or anything else without to some degree converting them into will-less adults. You fashion them into accepters of the status quo - a good thing for a society that needs obedient sitters at dreary desks, standers in shops, mechanical catchers of the 8.30 suburban train - a society, in short, that is carried on the shabby shoulders of the scared little man - the scared-to-death conformist.'

AS Neill, writing in *Summerhill* (published 1962)

FREDERICK, a story by Leo Lionni.

Frederick is a mouse. All the mice in his community are busy getting ready for winter, collecting food, straw etc. Frederick isn't doing anything, or is he? He collects sunrises, colours and words and they prove vital to survive the winter. Fantasy is a very important aspect of life.

A book like this can inspire you to sit down and talk to children about work. What is work for you?

Make a list of words the child comes up with, for example, cooking, cleaning, making your bed or cutting your hair.

When you work, you use objects. Another list: iron, mop, football.

Football? Yes, when you are a professional football player, you use a football to work.

After this you can ask children to describe an activity **exactly**, this emphasises the real action. The language that is used is strong and meaningful and expressive.



In schools, after you've read a book or story, teachers often ask you to write about what you've read or to make a drawing about it. Why? Why write an already beautifully written story again? or draw it again?

There are so many subjects in a book, so try to get out of the book and into your own story.

The mice collected food and bedding, Frederick collected words and colours; what do you collect? what do I collect?

A few suggestions:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------|---|
| collecting | ----- | talk and write about own collections |
| keeping | ----- | what do you keep because you can't or won't throw it away?
(plastic bags, photo's)
exhibition |
| names
Possible | ----- | Frederick is the only mouse in the story with a name.
names for the other mice & why |

- summer places ----- the mice had a good time in the summer. Where do you go in the summer?
- blushing ----- Frederick blushes in the story. Talk about blushing, shame. When do you feel nervous. How to overcome it. Read your own story.
- telling stories ----- The mice in the book tell each other stories about stupid cats and silly foxes. What kind of stories would they be? Make up your own story and exaggerate it. Do you find it exiting?

I think it is important that children are stimulated to use their own language. They should have pleasure and confidence in their own language. It would be great if we could find activities in which children express themselves using their own words.

Clara van der Zwan.

NOTICES

There's no business like show business...

If you live in Cumbria, be sure to visit the **Rose Hill Theatre** in Whitehaven. It puts on theatre workshops for and with children aged 5 and above, as well as doing excellent productions. They would like to know what kind of demand there is for theatre among EO families, so if you're interested please contact the theatre (01946 692 422) or Penny Cox (016973 22102) and they'll tell you more.

Pen pals

My name is Katie Ford. I'm 13. I would like male or female friends. I have recently joined EO. I like swimming, circuit training, and enjoying life. Anyone in Herts or Beds, write to me at 218 Nevells Road, Letchworth, Herts SG6 4US

(see also International PenFriends Club under ads)

Congratulations

EO friends would like to congratulate Maxine Griffiths and family on the birth of **Shannon**. Best wishes to them all (message sent from Bev Young, Preston)

SOCIAL ISOLATION

The question most frequently asked of home educators is probably 'What about the social side?'

A special section in the June Newsletter will try to show all the different ways in which we try to deal with the problem of loneliness in children who don't go to school. Please write in with your experiences - they could be invaluable to other readers.

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

Deadline 1st April 1996

HOME EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

LIGHTHOUSE BOOKS

Lighthouse Books, started by EO co-founder Dick Kitto, has a long association with EO. Lighthouse currently publishes five titles of possible interest to home educators - all of them available by mail order at a special price to EO members.

TEACH YOUR OWN

A hopeful path for education

by John Holt

£5 paperback

John Holt confronts head on the common objections to home education and offers step-by-step guidance for taking - or keeping - children out of school. *TEACH YOUR OWN* is a wise, practical manual of action. It is a how-to-do-it guide in the truest sense, and much of the advice is in the words of parents who have faced the problems themselves.

LEARNING ALL THE TIME

How small children begin to read, write, count, and investigate the world, without being taught

by John Holt

£7 hardback

John Holt, when he died in 1985, left unfinished a book he described as 'a demonstration that children without being coerced or manipulated, or being put in exotic, specially prepared environments, or having their thinking planned and ordered for them, can, will and do pick up from the world around them important information about what we call the Basics.'*LEARNING ALL THE TIME* is that book, assembled by colleagues from the drafts he left, and the various parts that had already appeared in his magazine, *Growing without Schooling*.

NEVER TOO LATE

My musical life history

by John Holt

£6 paperback

John Holt's autobiographical work describes the struggle which began when he decided in middle age that becoming a skilled cellist was the goal he most wanted to achieve. The delightful early chapters tell of his very unmusical family and of his gradual self-taught discovery of classical music. Written with engaging candour and enthusiasm, *NEVER TOO LATE* should be required reading for all parents, especially those who contemplate embarking on (or abandoning) their children's musical education.

DUMBING US DOWN

The hidden curriculum of compulsory schooling

by John Taylor Gatto

£5

Twenty years in city schools have led New York State teacher of the year John Gatto to the conclusion that compulsory schooling does little but teach young people to follow orders as cogs in the industrial machine. *DUMBING US DOWN* offers a radical critique of state schooling which, despite the efforts of dedicated teachers, stamps out the self-knowledge, curiosity, concentration and self-teaching which are the hallmarks of true education. Instead of this training for robots, John Gatto suggests a guerilla curriculum of daily involvement in our communities.

HOME EDUCATION BIBLIOGRAPHY

by Amanda Petrie, 1995, £6
The fruits of Dr Petrie's 10 years of PhD studies and other work: a wide-ranging list of 170 references from the UK, Europe & USA. A unique source of information about home education research for academics and others.

All Lighthouse books are available (post and package included in the price) from Lighthouse Books, Field House Thrandeston, Diss, Norfolk IP21 4BU

EDUCATION NOW

Education Now is a non-profit-making research and publishing company - a co-operative devoted to developing more flexible forms of education and more educational diversity to cope with the expanding range of learner styles and a rapidly changing society and economy.

Education Now has for sale:
Home-based Education Information Pack (includes a research report, the book *Learning from home-based education*, and a series of information sheets
£10

The Family Strikes Back
A video
£17.50 (for non-public use)

JOHN HOLT
Personalised education and the reconstruction of schooling
by Roland Meighan
£9.50 hardback, £17.95 hardback

For more information, or to order, contact:
Education Now
113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills
Nottingham NG9 3FQ

REVIEW

Bright lights in a murky sea?

Learn five languages from home - perfectly spoken!

Home educators are in an ideal position to give their children the opportunity to learn Spanish, French, German Italian and Russian from home. LEXICON SOFTWARE has kindly offered their LinguaMatch programme at a 25% discount to bona fide home educators. To qualify, you must quote this article and give the name of the organisation you are members of to prevent this privilege being abused and lost. I am bi-lingual in Spanish And my French pronunciation is good don't take my word for it though, the dialogues have been verified in the UK by staff from the British Council, Goethe Institut, Institut Francais, and many others. Click on a phrase or picture and you have the spoken language come alive before your very ears! Pre-reading children can learn from it with only basic mouse skills and an inquisitive mind.

For the speaking versions of this software you require: 386sx or better, 4MB RAM, Dos 5.0 or later, Win 3.1 or later, SVGA display, mouse, a hard disk, a sound card and a double speed CD ROM drive with Microsoft CD ROM extensions software 9MSCDEX (version 2.2 or later).

Dos Version (EO members) £22.50 (written only)
CD ROM (EO members) £37.47 (spoken)
Prices are inclusive of VAT.

I believe this to be a genuine offer with a reasonable discount. But as with all purchases, compare this with any other packages on offer and then make your decision. If anyone has a better insight into pricing of language software, please let me (or the newsletter) know.

Further information from Lexicon: 0181 299 0067 or from me, John Paddon (01204 410723) if you'd like to know more about LinguaMatch.

EOMAIL

Or what the Internet can do

Once set up, email provides a cheap, fast and reliable way to communicate and swap documents. The Internet gives unparalleled access to knowledge worldwide. It's possible to get information in seconds from libraries, colleges and special interest groups from all over the world at a cost of a penny per minute.

More specifically for EO families, the Internet might facilitate an exchange of competence. People affiliated to EO who have a skill in a given subject which they would be prepared to make available to other home educators, could easily be reached.

Getting acquainted with the Internet

Cybercafes are springing up all over the country. These places offer an informal and friendly hands-on introduction to the Internet. My own experience with a cybercafe in Cambridge, for example, has been very good. The people there were relaxed, extremely helpful and offered their knowledge generously.

Libraries.

Guinever Pachent of Suffolk Libraries has said that she would be happy to make the library connection to the Internet available for the purpose of introducing members of EO to the technology. In principle Suffolk libraries are willing to help in other ways as well. However, their own Internet connection is not yet completely up and running. Even so, the libraries both in Suffolk and nationally should provide access to the Internet for those people unwilling or unable to invest in the necessary hardware.

In the short term

We should have a list of EO people that have an email address. The topic has to be discussed positively.

In the long term

EO ought to have an Internet site. This is an electronic address that a service provider can make available which would give round the clock access to information relevant to home schooling. This would be a permanent source for practical advice, contact addresses, and a permanent repository for relevant research results.

Peter Frolic, 3 Croft End Cottages
Sudbury Road, Bures, Suffolk CO8 5JN
(01787 227162)
vanderzwan@easynet.co.uk

Editor's note This piece echoes John Paddon's suggestion two newsletters ago that modem and fax based home educators should contact him about setting up a communications directory. His details are John Paddon, 63 Doyle Road, Bolton BL3 4SA (01204 410723)
101330.3571@compuserve.com.

 Conference 7 Files 6 Folders



Odyssey Public



Mail to ODISSEY



Odyssey Chat



Work packages



Reports



Viewpoints

2K

EO NEWS...

TREASURER'S CORNER

This is a plea from your treasurer. Please do not give up your subscription to EO just because your children go back to school, or because you find that you do not read the newsletter as avidly as you once did. Remember the help that you had in the beginning; remember the reassurance of knowing that there were others who educated their children at home - and please continue your subscription to support this small organisation which tries to keep the flood tide of misinformation at bay.

If you still to believe in the right to educate at home, please continue to support us through thick and thin. We are building up a good network of membership and inquiries secretaries, as well as replenishing our local coordinators - all of them volunteers who give their time for what they believe in. Of course we do not get it right all the time, but please help us to improve.

Office software for sale EO owns MYOB office accounting software for Apple Macintosh - which we do not use now as we have a different computer. Would anyone like to buy it? Or suggest how we might sell it?

Audited accounts Any member wanting a copy of EO's audited accounts for the year ending 30 June 1995, please send me an A4 sae.

Priscilla Park Weir - EO Treasurer
212 Gordon Avenue, Camberley, Surrey
GU15 2NT
(01276 22735)

GATHERINGS

Teenage camp

To be held at the Caldecotte Centre,
Milton Keynes

Friday 3 to Sunday 5 May 1996

The Caldecotte Centre is a modern, purpose-built outdoor pursuits centre with both dry activities and water sports (canoeing, windsurfing, sailing). There are other good facilities within easy reach - ice and roller skating, bowling, etc. The cost of the camp should be no more than £25 all in - considerably less if we are able to get county council affiliation.

If you're interested, please write *now* (as numbers will be limited), enclosing a sae. Valerie Gommon, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes MK19 7EH (01908 511247)

Sussex teenage camps

We held a third successful camp in December with 11 teenagers. We decided not to have any sporting activities, but managed a big bonfire and layed more of the path. Daylight hours were short (though it was not too cold), so it was useful to have the generator for lights. Everyone slept in the sleeping room, which now has a carpet to keep out the chill. As they were a very self-regulating bunch, we didn't need to have an adult there all the time. I was very impressed at the thorough job that was made of clearing up.

It is always an option to have sporting or other activities. Three hours of skiing, for example, would cost £9 each for a group of 12. I have also suggested that the youngsters do some fundraising for new equipment, as I think it's good for them to take some responsibility for this. We are



EO NEWS... GATHERINGS

very happy to welcome newcomers, including other adults who would like to share the responsibility with me.

Proposed Sussex camp diary dates for 1996: 2-5 February, 5-8 April, 10-16 June, 26-30 August, 11-14 October, 15-17 November

Sue Petschaft, 2 Leyland Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3RH (01892 661319)

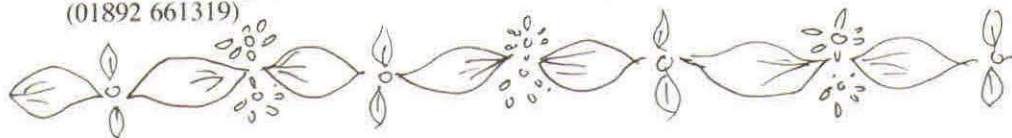
EO National gathering



Advance notice
Gloversbridge Farm, Headcorn Kent
16-19 May
For more information, send a sae to Sue Hutchin, 13 East Hill, Tenderden Kent TN30 6RL

Featherstone Castle

For information and booking form, see page 16 of the last newsletter



National Gathering at

CROWCOMBE HEATHFIELD YOUTH HOSTEL

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) is limited, so please book as soon as possible. (Alternatively you may prefer to make arrangements to stay elsewhere in the area.) For more information, send a stamped addressed envelope straight away to:

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

Volunteers needed for workshops and activities. Please contact Dineke (0114 255 3836) if you can organise anything.

The adjourned
Annual General Meeting of Education Otherwise Association Ltd
will be reconvened at
Crowcombe Heathfield Youth Hostel, near Taunton, Somerset
on Saturday 16 March 1996, at 2.30 p.m.
in order to consider the annual accounts for 1994-1995

Other meetings

We hope to hold an **informal discussion meeting** on Friday afternoon, followed by an **open council meeting** starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday. Depending on the amount of business, the council meeting may be continued after the AGM. These arrangements (apart from the AGM) may change according to circumstances.

EO NEWS...

REGIONAL DIARY



Sussex

Sussex now has a weekly drop-in club as well as many other activities. Ring Isobel Bogucki for details, or send for their newsletter (see feature on local newsletters elsewhere in this issue).

Suffolk

Meets every third Friday (Feb 2nd, 23rd etc but phone to confirm) at Wetherden village hall. From 10.30 to 2.30, a relaxed, social day centred around one activity: shared lunch. £2 per family. More details from 01379 783678

Warwickshire

February 15th: 1.30 pm 'Jungle Bungle' (soft play), Wobbly Wheel, Warmington. £1 per child under 4'9". Contact Margaret Harper on 01295 711991.

March: A series of music days over three weeks. Contact Sue Cardus: 01203 543801

April 23rd: 10 am Social at Barbara Cooper's home (01203 412477)

North Manchester/Lancashire

Proposed next meeting is *February* in Bolton. To receive local newsletter with details of ideas and forthcoming activities please send 2 saes to Jenny Paddon, 63 Doyle Road, Bolton BL3 4SA.

Kent

All welcome at Friend's Meeting House, Union Street, Maidstone, first and third Monday in month, 11.15 to 4pm, for activities, themes, social contact. Also other events. Please contact Sue Tully (01322 664373) or Amanda McKenzie (01634 402154) for details. For events list contact Jean Searle (01892 836436).

Carmarthenshire

Thursday 15 February Swansea Maritime and Industrial Museum, 'hands-on' science exhibition.

Thursday 21 March Candlemaking at the Harris's house, Pontiets, Llanelli. Details from Sue Hagerty (01269 861902)

North Yorkshire

Thursday 15 February 1.30 at Catherine Davies', Castleton, Whitby (01287 660812)

Thursday 24 February 12 at Knaresborough swimming pool

Friday 15 March 11.30 Picnic if fine, at Annie Willerton's, Scarborough (01723 501613)

Thursday 28 March 11.30 Easter activities at Anne Mills, York (01904 488088)

For further details of social activities please telephone the host or Anne Mills (01904 488088)

EO RESEARCH SECRETARY

I took over this pleasant task last September and so far I've answered around 30 inquiries, mostly from university students on vocational courses and A-level pupils. I didn't inherit any information with the post and so am as yet unable to answer all the inquiries as fully as I would like. I am beginning to compile a reference list of accessible research - especially useful if it relates to the UK. So please, if you have any information on research data (published and unpublished) dig it out and send me the details. It will help students' work being duplicated.

I cannot give students access to the contact list for questionnaire distribution, but if there are any coordinators who might be able to help with this, please get in touch. Angie Targett, 79 Wellcarr Road Woodseats, Sheffield S8 8QP (0114 2817466)

EO NEWS...

CO-ORDINATORS



Cheshire

Cheshire needs a new co-ordinator as I am retiring after 20 years. Andy and I are happy to help on an informal basis. Ring me (Diane Anderson) on 01270 664060.

Strathclyde

I have offered to fill the Strathclyde co-ordinator's post for two years. We have three young boys and have very much enjoyed, and benefited from, getting together with other EO families. Thanks to Lorna who has put many of us in touch.

I have three suggested dates for further get-togethers:

Spring - picnic at Robertson Park near Paisley

Summer - camp at Peebles for a weekend; day visitors welcome

Teenagers and parents - an evening meeting at a sports centre? I don't have teenagers - but I'm happy to start the ball rolling.

Claire Young (01294 218562 after 8pm)

Norfolk

I will be acting co-ordinator in Norfolk for the next six months, sharing the job with Karen Keys for the time being. I live in a small village between Norwich and East Dereham; my daughter Belinda, aged 6, has never been to school. If anyone has any problems, ideas, information or pots of coffee they'd like to share - please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sue McMahon, 1 Rectory Road
Hockering, Norfolk NR20 3HP
(01603 880679)



Lancashire

Bev Young (coordinator and publicity officer) has a new phone number: 01772 492245.

North Yorkshire

I am very happy to have been accepted as acting co-ordinator for North Yorkshire. Already I have experienced great fulfilment helping new members through the traumatic process of choosing to home educate, de-registering and beginning an entirely new way of life for the family. I am very moved by the elation and relief which follows the despair and pain that has often resulted from school attendance, and most of all from months and even years of not knowing there is any alternative. I feel very fortunate to have learned about Education Otherwise at university, and to be able to make this choice long before my daughter ever reaches 'school age'. I have met and spoken to various members, new and old. I hope that we can develop our local network. It has been suggested that people intending to come to a get-together telephone the host to give advance warning of numbers, ages of children, etc so that suitable activities might be arranged. *See under Regional Diary for details of forthcoming events.*
Anne Mills (01904 488088)

Areas needing a co-ordinator

Dumfries & Galloway, Grampian, Greater Manchester, Kent, Lothian, Surrey, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Tayside.

Acting co-ordinators

The following have agreed to be acting co-ordinators for a 6-month period:

Derbyshire: Hayley and Russell Walton
70 Ella Bank Road, Heanor, DE75 7HF

Hereford & Worcester: Yvonne Rowse
(01299 400750)

Advertisements

International Penfriends

The penpal club for all ages - 300,000 members worldwide. Make friends from different cultures. Helps with writing, geography and language skills. For more information, send sae to; IPF, Oakcroft, Virginstow, Beaworthy, Devon EX2 15EA

Dorling Kindersley

Award-winning publisher of books and CD ROMS, offers ideal part-time earning opportunities for home educating parents. A business you can operate from home, choosing your own hours. For free information pack, phone EO member and home educator, Sharon Emmott on, 01227 830630 or 01727 848836



Spring '96 10th of Abbey.

Creative Parenting

A fun Community-Workshop exploring new perspectives of parenting & childcare. An alternative nurturing programme of togetherness sharing & learning.

For further information tel:- Helena on 01202 885294

For sale: Letts Key Stage 3 Books in technology, French, maths, English, geography and science companion (all from WH Smith), £3.50 each plus p&p. Phone 01392 461973

Wanted, Montessori Material,

apparatus and number rods. Please send details and cost to; Hayley Walton, 70a Ella Bank Rd, Heanor DE75 7HF (01773 764843)

Experienced Primary School Teacher

available to teach children 4-12 years during or after 'traditional' school hours. Please phone Maidstone (01622) 630372, for a chat and further details.

Advertising in the newsletter is free, but if you are running a business, or hoping to profit from your advert, please send an appropriate donation (cheques should be made payable to 'Education Otherwise'). Remember that EO is run entirely by volunteers and has no income except members subscriptions.

Adverts should be limited to 50 words and sent (with any donation) to the editor of the next issue. First time advertisers who wish to send artwork should contact the newsletter co-ordinator.

SERVICES AND PRODUCT ADVERTISED HERE HAVE NOT BEEN ENDORSED BY EDUCATION OTHERWISE

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N8 9HR Tel: 0181 348 0653

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Coordinators' Secretary:

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Single Parent Family Contact:

Sarah Martin, Rose Cottage, Three Holes Bridge,
Wisbech, Norfolk, PE14 9JR Tel: 01945 772336.

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

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Angie Targett, 19 Wellcarr Rd, Woolseat,
Sheffield, S8 8QP
Tel: 0114 2817466

Database Secretary: (subscription renewals, address changes, membership cards etc)

Mark Cottee, 17, South View Rd, Rettendon
Common, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8DX
Tel: 01268 733259.

School Phobia Young People's Support:

Catherine McKillop: Scotland
Tel: 01631 565551

Hilary & David Mason: Yorkshire
Tel: 01422 202252

Elaine Slade: West Country
Tel: 01643 707535

Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator:

Eileen Wilson, 39 Tatenhill Lane, Branston,
Burton-on-Trent, DE14 3EZ
Tel: 01283 532547

Membership Secretaries Coordinator:

Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carey Park,
Polperro, Looe, Cornwall, PL13 2JP
Tel: 01503 272

Council Members

Andrew Archer (Leics)

Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight)

Gwen Baldock (Yorks-North)

Isobel Bogucki (Sussex West)

Lucy Charlton (Leics)

Val Gommon (Bucks)

Maxine Griffith (Yorks-South)

Sue Hutchin (Kent)

Dineke de Jong (Yorks-South)

Pien Maltz-Klaar (London-North)

Hilary Mason (Yorks-West)

Priscilla Park-Wier (London-North)

Eleanor Stapleton (London-North)

Anne Wade (London Middx)

Bruce Wallace (Highlands)

Beverley Young (Lancs)

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

The following books can be obtained from **Chris
Harper**, Badgers Hold, Birchwood, Storridge,
Malvern, Worcs. WR13 5HA (01886 884740):

The Abuse of Care and Custody Orders

Pat Knox £3

Troubled Children Pat Knox £3

Learning from Home-Based Education

Roland Meighan £3

Early Years £2.50

Newsletter Digest ('82 - '86) £1.50

EO Newsletters (4 back issues) £1.20

UK postage and packing £1

education otherwise

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

Our principal aims are to:

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

For further information send an A5 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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