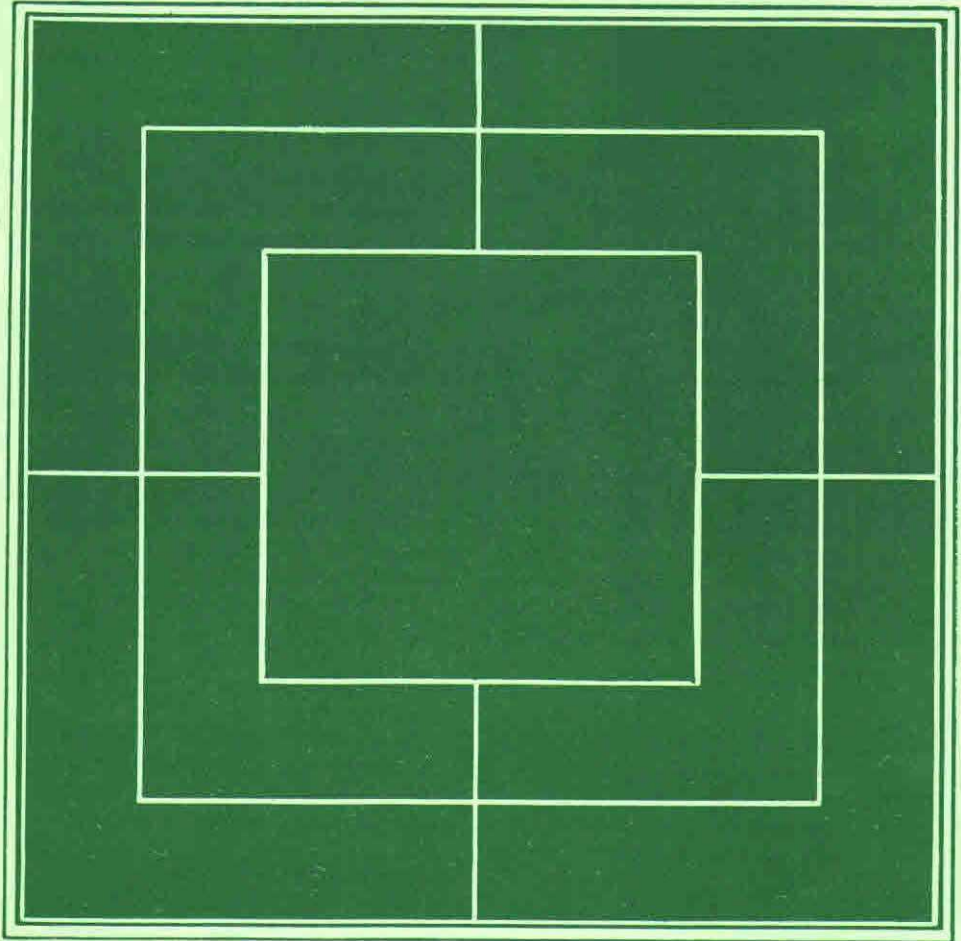


**EDUCATION  
OTHERWISE**

**Newsletter 122 — June 1998**

*Research 'Water Years' P37*



## The Next Issue

The Editor of the Next Issue is:

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The Deadline for Contributions is:

**1st July 1998**

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;

**Autonomous Education**

Belinda Reid, The Old House, Station Rd, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0BU  
August '98, deadline, 1st July

**A More Structured Approach**

October '98 issue, deadline 1st Sep

**Special Needs**

November '98, deadline 1st Oct

Please share your experiences and expertise with other members and send your contributions as soon as possible to:

**Michael Allen**

71 Belgrave Rd, Loughor, Swansea  
West Glamorgan SA4 6RF

**Disclaimer**

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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 **June '99** issue onwards.

**If your newsletter does not arrive,** check with Janet Wilkinson, who maintains the database.

## EDITORIAL

Hello **HOMEDS** all!

I'll keep the **Editorial** short so as not to wear out your attention too soon, you'll certainly need it later! There's an epic number of letters in here in response to the new **Guidelines**.

As it's such an important issue, and to be debated at the **Open Council Meeting**, Sunday 28th June, during the **EO National Gathering** I have included all the points raised in letters so far. Editing was absolutely necessary, I fear, but I believe no point of view was lost.

Thankyou to all contributors!

And thankyou to all those who sent their good wishes.

Also, many apologies to **FOE** for not including your brilliant "Tower of London" piece. There just wasn't room. There's a treat in store for everyone when it's finally printed!

About us - we've been E.O ing for 11 years on and off as Rosemary (17) and Elizabeth (12) have weakened immune systems, caused by pre-natal Scans our homeopath tells us. A blessing in disguise, though, as they have had the chance to find their special talents - singing, art, dance, embroidery, cooking, creative writing. It's not been easy as we have all had M.E., Rosemary and Elizabeth's allergies ruled our lives - much better now - Rosemary has a form of dyslexia and Michael was redundant for 3 years. **BUT** - "*Suzy's Word of Wisdom*" - Being at home together can be days of wine and roses. I've come to believe that the secret of home education is to keep finding ways to enjoy each other and what you do each day; from this will certainly spring what is best for you all.

Whatever your home education 'method' and circumstances, I wish you contentment in doing what you know is right.

signed: just me, *Suzy*

Michael, Rosemary and Elizabeth  
said they were too busy.....

"Lilacs", Love Lane, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7NE

and they were

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\* Congratulations **Charlton Green** on passing your **MATHS GCSE** aged **9** \*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

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COVER \_\_\_\_ **NINE MENS MORRIS** \_\_\_\_ see how to play in "Games" supplement

## GUIDELINES

### National Lottery Grant for new E.O. Guidelines for L.E.A.s

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Priscilla Park-Weir has got the date for taking up the grant extended to April 1999.

This topic will be on the agenda of the meeting in Kent at the end of June. Members have also asked for a slot for a more lengthy discussion during the gathering. If you want to contribute and cannot attend, please give your feedback to someone else who is going, or send it to **Lucy Charlton**, general secretary. (See inside back cover for address.)

We hope to set up procedures for postal voting at the next meeting. Perhaps this issue will form the subject of our first postal vote.

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During seven years' membership of E.O., I have always considered it to be a democratic association which allowed its members time and freedom to discuss any issues that might affect them. What a surprise then, to read in the April magazine that Neil Taylor has decided to allow members only one month during which to make comments on the proposed L.E.A. guidelines, this being a month which included the two weeks' Easter holiday. Not only that, but many members don't receive the magazine until half-way through the month, and others have not received the magazine at all because of problems with the direct debit scheme. This simply is not good enough.

The L.E.A. guidelines have a very direct and challenging tone which may well be counter productive, and I want more time to think about them and discuss them with our members in Berkshire. It is particularly important in this county because it is just over a year and a half since the L.E.A. wrote to all home educators warning them that the then E.O. co-ordinator had a conviction for indecent assault on a child. This has inevitably caused problems, and we are certainly not in a position to challenge them. We have to recognise that society has given L.E.A.s a protective role towards children, and whilst they are capable of misusing their powers there are also children who don't go to school, who are abused within the home and who do need their help.

There are many aspects of the guidelines which need airing .... More time, please.

*Pat Connor.*

2 Whitegates Lane, Reading, Berks. RG6 1ED

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....."While I agree with the substance of the draft document I am concerned about the tone of it, especially the section 'LEA duties'. In my long experience as an EO co-ordinator I have been in continuing communication with our LEA. My purpose has always been to establish a good working relationship with the LEA and to see that they adopt rational policies and procedures in fulfilling their duty under section 7. What has worked well is my position of regarding th LEA as allies of home educators, rather than enemies. Home-educating families have difficulties with LEAs because LEA representatives are ill informed. The draft guidelines provide a means of remedying such a situation, but what is helpful is to present information to LEAs in a way that indicates an expectation that they will co-operate, but does not antagonise them. If the draft document were presented to this LEA in its present form I feel sure that it would antagonise them and that damage would be done to the good relationship we enjoy with them.

Keith Charlton, 2 Wislow Rd., Newton Harcourt, Leics., LE6 9FT

---

Just a minor point, which is that in the section on 'Deregistration' there is no mention made of children being removed from private schools in order to be educated at home.

While I realise that this document is for the information of LEAs and that private schools do not come under LEA responsibility, maybe LEAs should nevertheless be made aware that unlike the proprietors of state schools, proprietors of private schools do not have any legal responsibility to inform the LEA if a child is removed from their attendance register. They should also know that parental responsibility in this situation is however the same as for a child being withdrawn from a state school, that is, parents do not have any obligation to take the initiative in informing the LEA of the situation.

The Guidelines are excellent; congratulations to all who have worked on them!



Sheila Walton

103 Cromarty, Ouston, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, DH2 1JU

## What's wrong with the 'guidelines'?

In the April newsletter the draft text of a document appeared under the title *Elective home education: guidelines for local education authorities*. The plan is to send copies of it to all LEAs in England and Wales. But first, criticisms and suggested alterations are invited from EO members.

Despite the enormous amount of work that has gone into compiling and revising this document, it still contains a number of low-level flaws and is not good enough for external distribution. But this is missing the point. In the first place we need to ask, 'Is this what we really want to say to LEAs?' In our view the answer is no.

First, the title. The use of the word 'guidelines' has been criticised for implying that the document aims to tell LEAs their job. Whilst we do not wish to be unduly submissive, we feel that 'notes' or 'information' would sound less presumptuous and be more appropriate.

Turning to the content, this consists almost entirely of a summary of the law relating to compulsory education, school attendance and (at disproportionate length) special educational needs. This law does not apply specifically to home education, so one would expect senior LEA officers to be familiar with it already in connection with their normal duties. This is not to say that a handout for LEAs should not tell them anything about the law. But without a detailed commentary from our point of view such a statement is pointless, serving merely to suggest that we think LEAs are ignorant. It may be seen as arrogant and insulting.

But why have we ended up with this document anyway? Why can't we tell LEAs some useful things about home education? Things they would readily acknowledge that we know far more about than they do? The

reason for this is negative. If you stick to the law, what you say is likely to be objective. If you start to tell LEAs how EO (as opposed to the law) thinks they ought to behave, the result is liable to be contentious.

This is exactly what happened. An earlier draft contained material of this kind. Some of it was felt to be misguided. The solution was to take it all out. A more worthwhile, if admittedly difficult, approach would have been to work at it until it said something that most of us were reasonably happy with. Then we would have had a practical guide for LEAs. Instead we have a useless, empty shell.

So where did these 'guidelines' come from? How did we get to be where we are now?

Some years ago we discussed with various people in the then DES the problem of what to do with LEAs who don't respect our rights. We were trying to get the Department to produce a circular telling them to behave themselves. But they reckoned this was a problem that would never rise to the top of their in-trays, and if it did the outcome would be too mealy-mouthed to satisfy us.

The DES suggested we would do better to collect our own 'examples of good practice' around the country. From them we could create a user-friendly document which was largely LEAs' own words, and which would make them feel good. (For contrast we could include the odd example of bad practice too, 'which of course most of them wouldn't dream of, would they?')

The document should be concrete, about LEAs' actions, as described in the best of their own local guidelines. Starting from where they're at, with the assumption that, like most people, they are of goodwill and

wish to do a good job. Short, readable, practical. Not philosophical. Answering the questions that the friendly ones ask us, such as 'How often should we visit?' Helping them do their job, but without patronising them. Picking up the issues that have actually created problems, in the legal group's experience - the more subtle oppressions than the simple legal mistakes (which are easy to deal with). Something aimed at the people on the ground, as several senior inspectors had asked for, to help them train their staff. Underpinned by the law but not too dry.

So that was what the meeting asked us to do. We collected lots of LEA literature, but other problems took precedence, and we didn't get it done. We would have been happy enough to hand the job over to someone else who could produce a good document. But meanwhile some 'guidelines' did appear from another quarter, based on material originally put together for a different purpose, with garbled and outdated legal citations. It transpired that copies of this document had been sent to LEAs in the name of EO without being brought to a meeting at all.

Some time later, thanks to Priscilla Park-Weir, EO succeeded in obtaining a National Lottery grant towards the cost of producing copies of a revised document and sending them to all education authorities in the UK. This was a great achievement. As is often the case when someone else is paying, it also held a danger. We were now under pressure to produce something in a hurry, before the deadline for using the grant arrived.

A great deal more work has been done by Neil Taylor and others, resulting in the version which appeared in the April newsletter. But what we have now is still not the right document with which to do an unsolicited mail drop. It is not attractive, does not make friends or invite the reader in,

is not easy to read and does not offer anything. In particular it misses an opportunity to offer an LEA the sort of practical support which would encourage an ESW or inspector to tuck it into their file and remember it was there when they had to visit home educators. At best, it will be binned or put on a shelf and forgotten. At worst, coming out of context and without any consideration of their relationship with local families, it will alienate LEAs and make them more hostile or defensive towards us.

We have already had such complaints, from LEAs and from EO members. There is strong feeling from some members that the 'guidelines' should not be sent out over their heads. And it would be wasteful to spend hundreds of pounds having the text vetted by a barrister, when this has already been done for David Deutsch and Kolya Wolf's *Home education and the law*. This paper is aimed at a similar audience, but arguably with more courtesy and subtlety (although at the time of writing it isn't clear to us whether a current edition exists).

Perhaps no single document could be sent out to all LEAs uniformly, without causing problems. Some prejudiced individuals may need something formal and legalistic to bring them up short. But there is no point in being confrontational with those LEAs who keep to the law, who treat us with respect, and who appreciate the value of what we are attempting, or at least are happy to let us home educate with minimal interference. The same facts can be communicated in a more positive way, as a leaflet which could be a useful support for many LEA people who have responsibility for an EO family, and may be at a loss about how to handle it. Such a leaflet could help set the tone for relationships between inspectors and families that are equal, informal, supportive and enjoyable.

As for the child welfare issue, we agree

with Neil that it is wiser not to address it in a document of this kind. This is not in fact a new anxiety among LEAs, although it would be true to say that in previous generations they were more concerned with economic exploitation of the child than sexual abuse or physical violence.

There are two new types of pressure on LEAs which are potentially much more significant to us than fears about abuse. One is from adults who were home educated, who feel that they were sold short, and who are suing their LEA for having failed to safeguard their education. The other results from cutbacks on local government which have amputated huge chunks of each LEA and left them limping badly. They can no longer assimilate extra demands smoothly within their administration because they have little spare capacity. If we simply refuse to cooperate in home visits, for instance, and they experience us as adding to an already impossible burden, we may force a reaction out of all proportion, simply because they are under such pressure.

On the other hand, if we offer them ways of fulfilling their responsibilities more easily, they may be glad to accept them. This was one of the main issues we hoped to address in the original concept of a leaflet for LEAs: our interpretation of the law in action, allowing them to satisfy themselves in a way that is minimal and flexible enough to accommodate variations among EOers, and yet can be shown not to neglect our children.

In the process of arguing these issues out, perhaps a variety of documents will be produced by members, extending our range of leaflets. One possibility that comes to mind is a leaflet for parents to give to head teachers, addressed specifically to them, explaining their powers to allow flexischooling without reference to their LEA. And a member asked recently for a form letter to head teachers for parents taking their children out of school - perhaps that should be incorporated in a leaflet reminding heads of the limits of their responsibilities in this situation. Another leaflet might explain to LEAs why they should not call their department 'Education Otherwise.' Another might be more generally addressed, explaining only that 'school is not compulsory', for members to send out routinely whenever they see the law misquoted.

Perhaps rather than a mass mailing we should publish several different papers about the relationship between LEAs, schools, and home educators (including an updated *Home education and the law*), for coordinators and others to use as they feel is appropriate to their situation - because EO has always been about empowering each other to do what we choose, within reason, not about 'us' doing it for 'them.'

Anne and Rob Wade

London - Middlesex

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....."The Guidelines themselves seem great, however I am concerned that a national posting to all LEAs will cause national publicity and raise the E.O. Debate into an impersonal forum where it is difficult to defend against the mass of 'public' ignorance....."

"I would favour a mailing to all co-ordinators allowing them to work with individual LEAs, therefore reducing the national impact and increasing communication on a local level. This would also allow the membership flexibility and a voice in how this important document is used."

Carters Stables, Upton Cross, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 4BP

A. R. Morley

\*As far as I can see, the guidelines are *not* an attempt to state the law as it is, but rather as EO would like the law to be. There is quite a difference!

Whether we like it or not, LEAs *do* have the right to inspect people who don't want to be inspected; and many many people in society and in Government would say "and so they should" . . . .

I think this is a very dangerous venture, which risks rocking the boat, and destroying the freedoms we have.

## Henrietta Turnbull

---

"As a member of Education Otherwise I am, therefore, responsible, by association for any guidelines or other documents sent to my L.E.A. I think it right, therefore to outline why I do not feel that these guidelines have been written 'by' or 'on behalf of' myself.

....."Most of would probably prefer to be left alone, but it is not a problem to accomodate the L.E.A. for a few hours a year."....."These guidelines could set back the co-existence of many L.E.A.s and their home educators by years."....."I could understand them finding both tone and content arrogant and officious.

This raises another worry for me; that the adoption of a more confrontational attitude in this specific may well damage valuable communications between EO and other local authority bodies. I am thinking particularly of the child protection area."..... as the report of the EO Child Protection Information Group in Newsletter 121.... "states 'many of the issues are complex, with no simple answers' - all the more reason to be in a position to accept help and advice from other agencies. This will not happen if EO has been labelled as confrontational or alienated from other bodies. The C.P.I.G. presently fosters valuable links with local authorities.....'one L.E.A. warned us usefully about one man's conviction; similarly we warned the L.E.A. in another area about another man'. Such dialogue should not be undermined. You may think this a very separate issue which should not be discussed in this context, but it is relevant to the future status with which local authorities credit Education Otherwise.".....

"I feel that there is so much to discuss before these guidelines go anywhere near L.E.A.s; I would urge all members of Education Otherwise to take a step back and consider their implications carefully.

  
Cathy Irving.

'Clay Cottage', Hundred Lane, Old Newton,, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 4EX

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"I have read the draft of the LEA guidelines several times and I would like to say that I feel you have got it just right.

I can understand why some people feel that 'sleeping dogs be left to lie', but I agree with you that we should assert our rights.".....

....Well done Neil and Joyce and any others who have put in all the hard work.

*Stella Hawden*

Grimsby, N.E. Lincs

---

....."I attended the September '97 Council meeting where Neil was asked to collate ideas and produce a draft document, but I wonder, with hindsight, whether we could have given more consideration to what the purpose of the guidelines would be and what effect they may have on LEAs which seem to vary a great deal in their attitude to home education. I think there is a range of situation where Education Otherwise material could support the needs of co-ordinators and families when dealing with their LEA, but perhaps encapsulating all that needs to be conveyed in one booklet has disadvantages."

..... "it is also worth bearing in mind that the DFEE is currently producing a draft document of its own which will refer to all children who receive education outside mainstream school, including our own. While it appears that no major changes about home education by parental preference are being planned, it would be worthwhile waiting until the DFEE draft document has been published and finalised before Education Otherwise finalises its plans.

It might be possible for Neil's information to be presented as a range of leaflets" ..... "These could then be available to, and used as appropriate by, co-ordinators and families to support them in particular circumstances. Subjects might include children with Special Educational Needs (this is often a thorny area with our LEA" ..... "could we have even more on that?); a brief description of the range of approaches to education, including positive quotations from, say, John Holt and Roland Meighan," ..... "anecdotal accounts and examples that encourage good practice within LEAs and help to establish good relationships with families; and specific aspects of both Statute and Case Law that affect us. Neil refers in the guidelines to "Home Education and the Law" (Deutsch and Wolf), which I have used successfully in the past with the LEA and which I think could still have a great deal to offer" E.O. " members if it were updated..."

*Christine Adey*  
*(Council Member)*

## Refusing home visits

One of the most contentious issues around the 'LEA guidelines' has been home visits. We were grateful to read the contributions on pages 14 and 15 in the last newsletter: they capture so well the mixed feelings we all have about how to handle the pressure we sometimes experience from LEAs.

In *School is not compulsory* (4th ed., page 51), we suggested that whilst parents were not legally obliged to allow access to their children, home visits were generally accepted as the easiest way of satisfying an LEA. This stance has been criticised as tending to marginalise those who choose to demonstrate the effectiveness of their provision in some other way. So should EO be saying that families can allow home visits if they want them, but that they are not the norm? Or is there a danger that such a statement might give members a false sense of security, encouraging them to defy their LEA naively?

It is useful on occasion to say to an LEA that of course they have no general legal right to visit. We have helped local groups organise 'strikes', and these have been effective in making the LEA cooperate over problems such as moving an oppressive officer off home education, or rewriting their literature in cooperation with EO. Good preparation is essential, and the whole group has to hold firm. It is a powerful weapon, but it should be used sparingly and judiciously, with a light touch. It is usually enough just to mention the possibility, while continuing to negotiate in a friendly way.

We have supported a few families who chose to refuse home visits individually, where they were able to present their case well and handle the fallout over a prolonged

period. We refused visits from one inspector ourselves, for quite specific reasons, although otherwise we had good relations with our LEAs. The pressure and stress can sometimes be considerable, and it is rarely a good alternative if your only reason is that inspections are stressful - better to work on changing that, as we have helped people do for so many years.

But also, it is not an absolute fact that an LEA has no legal right to visit. If they can show that individual circumstances necessitate it, as in the Tweedie case, a court may hold that a particular family has been unreasonable in refusing access. We have advised some families that *if they refused home visits they were, in their particular circumstances, putting their children at risk of care orders; and when they have ignored our advice, we have been proved correct*. To say that children cannot be taken into care any longer for not going to school is true only in a similar way to saying you cannot be knocked down on a pedestrian crossing. All sorts of individual circumstances may alter the situation.

We are giving too much away if we suggest that home visits are unquestionably the norm, but we may also be making trouble for ourselves if we announce too stridently that they are unnecessary. If we want to be left alone, we have to be seen as reasonable people. It is not a question here of 'use it or lose it'. It is fatuous to trumpet our rights on the basis that the law does not say something. Not only are we putting vulnerable families at risk if we encourage this over-confidence. But also, if we give them the impetus - if it appears to them that significant numbers of home educators intend to refuse home visits

routinely - the LEAs could get together and insist that their powers over us are inadequate.

They could ask for an intermediate step between abdicating control of us and taking us to court. If they present a sensible package, and if they can show the government it is necessary, they are likely to get much of what they ask for. Most people would see it as obvious that home educators should be monitored, and if we bring their attention to what they will perceive as a loophole in the law, their response will be to change the law - and while they are at it, to tidy up other bits.

It would be very easy for some minor regulations to be included with a batch of education law. They would seem trivial to most people and could be devastating to many of us. It might well be argued, as has already happened in some American states, that each child should take a SATS test annually; that we should not only be inspected every term, but that we should be required to pay for it as a condition of home educating; that each child should have an annual medical examination; that monitoring by social services should become routine; that referrals to educational psychologists should become a mandatory consequence of low grades or 'concern' over emotional development... We have always refrained from publishing such possibilities for fear of giving the authorities ideas, but it seems to us that some of the current ideas among our members are in danger of wrecking EO if we do not speak out plainly.

We are basing our statements on twenty two years' personal exploration of the issues around home education, and on fourteen years' experience of working with EO's legal support group. We have had plenty of opportunity in that time to make many mistakes ourselves, to see every possible

combination of mistakes made by other people, and to learn what the consequences of various actions are likely to be. What the law actually says is only the tip of the iceberg. How it works out in practice is much more subtle and complex.

If we simply assert the letter of statute law and refuse to cooperate in home visits, we are liable to generate a violent backlash, and children are going to get hurt. We prefer the slow, unexciting way of working that some of us have been quietly pursuing for years: we would rather work to convince each LEA officer that most home educators are doing a responsible and reliable job, that most families require only the most minimal contact for the LEA to satisfy themselves, and that the (expensive) option of visiting is only necessary in situations where anxieties have been raised; and that in such circumstances, EO can often play a helpful role in facilitating communications.

Home education is an anomaly in most people's perception. Much of the prejudice against it is simply because we fail to fit tidily into their mental boxes, and they find this uncomfortable. EO has done an enormous amount to change the public perception of home education into a healthy, ordinary choice. Many of our friends and relations have slowly changed their minds about it, and have said that although they would hate to have to do it, they are glad to know that as a last resort, if school gets too intolerable for their children, the option exists. In the long run, this public perception of EO as a normal right, which they might one day be glad of themselves, is our greatest safeguard against any authoritarian efforts to tidy us into our proper boxes.

**Rob and Anne Wade**

*London - Middlesex*

....I cannot be alone in feeling that you are not fairly representing those of us who manage to satisfy our inspectors at the same time as giving our children the education they deserve. I will be most distressed if I find that when our inspector visits in July, his attitude towards our situation has changed as a result of being presented with your guidelines. I can't help thinking that Sue Hutchin is right when she says that the LEAs will simply move to change the law if it suits them, to obtain more power and surely that would be a regrettable state of affairs for all of us.

If this draft is to be a complete representation of all the views and aims of the membership of Education Otherwise and what we stand for, then we as a family will seriously have to reconsider our own membership on a matter of principle.

31, Sloethorne Gardens,  
Arnold,  
Nottingham,  
NG5 8NX.

*Susan J. Stairs*

---

My wife, Teresa, wants to home educate our 16 month son and, for this reason, we have been members of EO for nearly a year. I am less enthusiastic, mainly because I dread the thought of having to deal with LEAs on a sustained basis.

It was, therefore, with enormous interest that I read the draft guidelines in the April magazine. I much appreciated their clarity and succinctness, and feel their publication will greatly assist people like me who will benefit from a clear cut definition of who is responsible for what. At least I now know our rights!

Nonetheless I wonder if in achieving the above, the guidelines aren't in risk of antagonising the very audience they are meant to educate, and thereby create almost as many problems as they solve? Whilst I have limited time for LEAs even I appreciate that they have a role to fulfil and - perhaps more importantly - they think they know what that role is. In that context aren't the 'us and them' approach likely to stiffen rather than soften resolves?

I don't suggest the guidelines be changed in any way but I wonder if they could not be extended with a Good Practice conclusion whereby the need to understand both the expectations and fears of both sides is spelt out, and how the two can interact positively for what, like it or not, is going to be a continuing relationship throughout a child's home education.

14 The Green  
Lyndon  
Oakham  
LE15 8TX

David C Deeson

It appears that the National Lottery money and, subsequently, the new Guidelines have precipitated a clarification of general policy within Education Otherwise.

For me, I see E.O. as an organisation worthy of respect and support by law and the educational establishment. Member parents are prepared to give themselves to the utmost intellectually, emotionally, financially and creatively for our children's education - often when what the State has to offer is not suitable or has caused damage. Educationally, we are like a seed bank, keeping alive ways of relating to our children which have been lost since the time when children learnt what they needed to know from parents, relatives, and the community.

For these reasons I think is important to use our knowledge and energy in seeking to be more closely linked to changes in government examination of education, offering the D.F.E.E. a strong, clear definition of home education in its many forms, and asking to work with them in the forming of educational policy. To achieve value and respect in educational circles would go a long way towards influencing the attitude of LEAs.

A lot hangs on our decisions, for our own children, and many to come. All of us who pray - we need clear vision and guidance into the right decisions

Suzy

In the April issue Sue Hutchins ends her response to the Guidelines "No inspections? - No chance."

Whilst I appreciate that Sue has a fear of losing rights, it seems to me extra-ordinary that whilst a judge (Lord Parker) from outside the Home Educating community can state, ".....an education authority should not, as a matter of policy, insist on inspection in the home as the only method of satisfying themselves that the children were receiving full time education....." members of EO are prepared to give up fundamental legal rights on the chance that if they don't give them up they may have them taken away!

There seems to be a whole stream of thought within EO that we should do anything for a quiet life, and that anyway the odd visit (yearly, six monthly, quarterly, six weekly - all are the desired practice of various LEAs) cannot do much harm, and we would be being over-sensitive or unreasonable to object. If such a stream of thought is accepted it effectively re-defines EO as a support group ONLY for those of a certain group of educational styles and persuasion. It effectively makes policy the opinion that EO is ONLY for those who have no problems accomodating a certain kind of status quo with LEAs. To make the point in the Guide-lines that visits are not compulsory is to allow families their legal choice. Those who prefer visits are in no way compromised by this. We can go on as before with a range of options and support for all of those options. To remove this assertion of rights from the Guidelines would, on the other hand, have a devastating effect on those of us who quite reasonably, quite legally, and from educational philosophy, do not welcome home visits as a means of satisfying LEAs that education is taking place. It is my educational philosophy that visits under-mine education. They insert an artificial and intrusive style of monitoring that is inimical to autonomous education. They also subject HEers to an intrusion that no other families would be expected to tolerate. (Rights of entry into homes are severely restricted under law in this country.) If our children were in schools then inspection, such as OFFSTED would be routine, but this does not provide a comparable situation. Schools are places where several/hundreds of parents have delegated their responsibility for education to an organised body. Schools also consume public money, and this is the justification for inspection and accountability. Homes are not in this category, and have an entirely different and appropriate legal status. LEAs also have a duty to oversee schools under their control. LEAs also have a duty to make enquiries about HE children who they have REASON to suspect are not receiving education as set out in the most recent act. They are expected to accept "reasonable evidence", and such evidence at no

point in law or case law includes home visits. There are those who seem to think that if HE children are thriving educationally, then there's nothing for parents to worry about in having a home visit. However it really is not that simple. "Thriving educationally" may require (for some families) that the emphasis remains on process not on product, and that requires that no outside assessment intrudes on this. Beyond the worry of how such visits undermine education there is the more fundamental worry about giving away legal rights that all other sectors of the community enjoy without question. Inspectors have no legal rights to see H.E. children. They can make enquiries. If they are not satisfied, they can make further enquiries. Inspectors SHOULD be able to relax and do their jobs effectively by sticking to the law - if they can't do that then they have a problem, not the H.E. families who are only exercising legal rights. I am not suggesting being unreasonable. I am merely suggesting that it is quite reasonable to hold a particular educational viewpoint and to be able to communicate that viewpoint, giving ample evidence in a co-operative manner that does not include home visits. It is not, either, a matter of being defensive or over-sensitive, it's a matter of legal rights, sound educational philosophy and a particular theory of morality. You don't have to adopt mine - I don't have to adopt yours - the law allows for both, but if members of the H.E. community do not advocate for both, then the erosion of these rights is not inconceivable. Sue suggests that if we refuse home visits then we lay ourselves open to charges of suspected abuse and involvement of social services. Neither home education nor the refusal to sacrifice legally enshrined rights, articulated with reasonableness and a clear intention to co-operate with educational law are prima facie grounds for suspecting abuse. Social services are not equipped to make enquiries about education. Not wanting a home visit is NOT a grounds for suspicion, so there is NO reason to involve social services because of it. To argue that it might be, is to argue for an incredible narrowing of liberty.

Sue goes on to voice a concern that if we do not give our legal rights away then they will be taken from us, along with other rights into the bargain. This is frankly, speculative scare-mongering. It is true that the current educational climate, fuelled by what seems to be a sadly authoritarian approach from the government is hardly radical. However the level of liaison and work that would be required for the LEAs to lobby for draconian powers, knowing that they would not be given any increased resources to carry out increased responsibilities, but would of course be held accountable for them, seems to me to be a more than unlikely turn of events. There may be individual authorities, and certainly, individual officers, who will balk at having to follow the law as it currently stands, and who will even try to intimidate families because of their dislike of the Guidelines, but those are precisely the situations in which the Guidelines are needed and in which EO should be offering support. Sue is quite right that we should stand firm against any instance of abuse of power, and that is just what these Guidelines do. They in no way compromise those who wish to go on receiving visits, and I do not expect to belong to a support organisation that compromises my alternative stance. I will always co-operate and give reasonable evidence of education, but what I won't do is put my children on display, or sacrifice our legal rights.

"The Guidelines set out that choice and the freedoms that come with it, and it seems vital to" me "that EO stands by those legal choices. There are those who are wary of standing by all of these rights, fearful that exercising them may lead to more restrictive legislation. However a right that we abdicate, for fear of a backlash from using it, is no right at all and for EO to suggest anything less than the rights it has summarised in its proposed Guidelines would be to abandon all those families who follow an unschooling or autonomous approach of any description. It would be to cave in to" a "school mentality' without a backward glance at" an 'education mentality' and all struggling to follow it against the norms of society."

**Jan Fortune-Wood**

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First, thank you Neil Taylor for producing these. I am sure it is the right approach to keep it as plain as possible, just referring to the essential legal position.

For years, as a local Co-ordinator, I have been assuring people that they do not have to accept a visit from the LEA, and a few (including myself) have successfully parried it. However, this has involved an inordinate amount of angst and letter-writing. I know that many parents would have preferred not to have a visit, but felt too vulnerable to risk upsetting the LEA by refusing one - all too often this has led to an adverse report, requiring lengthy negotiation to sort out. Those who have resisted have felt pressured to undertake all sorts of administrative work (writing programs of study, keeping records etc) for the benefit of the LEA rather than their children.

After years of long letters explaining and giving examples of autonomous education, I eventually agreed to meet my local LEA official in the pub. He was interested and open-minded, and 'approved' me without quibble. But I think it's unfair that so much should depend upon the individual 'Adviser' and Education Authority, leading to very inconsistent treatment of home-educating families in different areas.

I understand Sue Hutchin's concerns that this document may be seen as a challenge and lead to LEAs attempting to make changes in the law. However, I have always felt that the best way out is through, and I'd much rather have the battle out in the open, subject to the full glare of public scrutiny and media coverage, than hidden away in the front rooms of isolated, vulnerable, individual families. I think it would be the education authorities who found they really had something to hide, not those families who, all too often, have been forced into home education by problems associated with school which the authorities are unwilling to address.

My reading of the current educational situation (as a teacher as well as a parent) is that many, many people are dissatisfied with schools and would welcome debate which might make the educational establishment sit up and take notice of the real wishes of their customers (rather than serving their own need to lever themselves up those damn league tables). I have also noted, through my studies for an MA in Education with the Open University, that the front line of educational research seems to be swinging very much back towards child-centredness; there are whispers that maybe the sixties weren't the dark ages after all, Bowlby has been updated rather than discredited, and perhaps Plowden was right.

I wanted to end with a quotation, something like "*There's nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come*" but I can't find the source. The nearest I can get is Victor Hugo: "*No stand can be made against invasion by ideas*". Anyway, I think we've got the right idea here, at the right time. If Education Authorities want to be more involved than the strict letter of the law would indicate, perhaps they'll consider being useful and providing information, facilities and constructive advice to support home educators, rather than intimidating us as they often attempt to do at present.

*Anne Rix, Silver Birch, Firgrove Road, Cross-in-Hand, Heathfield, E.Sx., TN21 0QL*

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Of the dozen or so responses I have received to the publication of the proposed guidelines in the April newsletter, they have ranged fairly evenly between unqualified enthusiasm and outright rejection, and points in between.

I have tried to respond to all who wrote individually, but inevitably there have been insufficient hours in the day and I apologise to those of you still awaiting a reply, and hope that you will find your concerns addressed here. There is insufficient space here to respond to every dot and comma correction, or even some more substantive suggestions. Suffice it to say, your comments have been appreciated, and incorporated wherever possible. I will try to address the main points which recurred amongst most of those of you who were unhappy with this document. Sue Hutchin's letter really articulated the main concerns, which many of you echoed.

Although the guidelines are about much more than just home visits, this has emerged as the central issue.

Firstly I want to address the question of the legitimacy and necessity of upholding our right to resist home visits for those who are genuinely oppressed by this extra legal practice, because some have tried to undermine these concerns in a 'blaming the victim' kind of way which I found unedifying and could never support. The question shouldn't be one of who is right between those who think one LEA inspection visit a year is reasonable and those who don't, because everyone's situation and feelings are different, and some LEA visits can be extremely oppressive and undermining, especially of educational approaches furthest removed from the transmissive, coercive school model. It is not consistent with respect for a more autonomous, non coercive way of educating to expect a family to produce artifacts for inspection such as timetables, curricula and work books, which have nothing whatsoever to do with their chosen educational approach. Since home visits are at the discretion of parents, those who are happy with them can continue to have them, but should not be seeking to impose them on those who are not. I don't believe the attempt to define a single reality here is legitimate or necessary. There should be room for both sets of concerns and preferences, and I see no necessary conflict here.

This leads me to the point that EO, as a national charity supporting home educators and defending their rights under the law, should not be seen to be partial over which rights they wish to defend, especially where such inconsistency will inevitably cause hurt to some families. I think the idea that we should be in the business of voluntarily handing over some of our rights to appease government so that it will look kindly on us or not notice us at all, betrays a bully/bullied perception of the relationship. To the extent that it is like that, then experience shows that only standing up to a bully effectively stops the bullying, whereas appeasement is perceived as weakness and exploited. At the level of individual families, it is a commonplace that those who let their LEAs take the lead in making demands often find the number of hoops they are expected to jump through increasing, as does their distance from the ground. I accept that this does not characterise all relationships with LEAs, but it does describe all too many. Invariably withdrawing cooperation from such a dynamic stops the game. Confidently asserting one's rights in the face of misinformation and intimidation in the first place, also most commonly gets a family left alone. The authority can see that you are articulate and confident, and this in itself should be sufficient reassurance that you are not likely to neglect your child's education. Their legal duty is fulfilled.

Those relationships which are more mature and reasonable, even where bought at the price of parental concessions to extra legal practices, should be unaffected by these guidelines. It isn't the 'good' LEAs who are going to feel threatened or resentful of these guidelines if any are, since they are going to be the ones with least to change. In a recent meeting between members of EO and representatives of a number of LEAs, upon hearing the account of the law outlined in the guidelines, the overwhelming majority expressed relief that their duties were less difficult and time consuming than they had thought. They are overworked after all! Where child welfare concerns were expressed they arose out of a misunderstanding of the LEA's role in this regard, and this is something best addressed by the

government's own guidelines making their proper role clearer. LEAs have no CW investigative role, only social services and the police do. They merely have a duty to be vigilant and report any concerns they may encounter in the course of their work as members of the child protection teams.

I need to say more about child welfare concerns here, because these have been raised as a point of real concern and one I fully share.

The fear that if we resist home visits the LEAs will turn this into a social work issue and send in the SSs and police are very real, because this is already happening in an increasing number of areas. It is a most serious abuse of the Children Act where this occurs, and precisely the kind of excess the government say they recognise has and does occur, and seek to address in proposed changes to the Children Act and its associated guidelines. This is why, simultaneously with this guidelines initiative, I have been urging EO to respond positively to the DoH invitation to voluntary organisations to let the government know what our particular concerns, needs and ideas are. This is an opportunity to communicate these concerns and put flesh on the bones of their admissions that bad practices have in the past 'traumatised' families. If EO lets this opportunity slip past and does nothing to make our concerns known, and to avail itself of the opportunity to become part of the child welfare teams rather than be seen as suspect in child welfare terms, then I believe it will be a serious failure of our organisation. Home education should not be seen as intrinsically suspect or deficient in child welfare or any other terms. Where this, in effect, attempt to criminalise our legal right does occur, it should be stopped decisively, and ideally by the government's own guidelines to local authorities to which we have made constructive input. I believe this is the way forward, and strongly believe that voluntarily handing over rights to freedom from intrusive visits and monitoring will not best address these legitimate concerns. Worse than that it would collude in the misdefining of home education itself as somehow intrinsically suspect, by accepting the legitimacy of the 'need' to subject just us to a level of intrusive surveillance not suffered by the rest of the population. Let's not forget that local authorities are public servants, paid by us to inspect schools, for the purpose of reassuring us that these institutions are carrying out their responsibilities towards our children which we choose to delegate to them. In this context home inspections make no sense, which is probably why the law has never specifically legislated for them.

It should be clear from the above, and the fact of already existing erosions through abuses of legislation, that a keeping our heads down, not rocking the boat approach is not without its risks. I accept there are possible risks to asserting our existing rights where these have fallen into disuse, but I believe that what is risked by not doing so is an inevitable steady erosion of our existing freedoms, and that this can be demonstrated to be occurring now! Furthermore the desire expressed by the government for increased surveillance of and by the population towards the welfare of children, tempered by our informed consent and active participation in the process of legislation, will I believe inevitably result in a worse time for home educators if we don't make our concerns known. We may fear being trampled by an authoritarian government by asserting ourselves, but I believe it's a foregone conclusion that we will be trampled underfoot by default, if our very existence isn't even noticed!

The covering letter is being re-written since many were unhappy with the tentative draft. The 'aggressive tone' some perceived is being looked at to see if it can be softened without lessening the impact of the essential message. The intention was, and is, the same confident assertion they use with us, but without the misrepresentation! We are equals, and should feel no need of undue deference towards public servants.

It has been suggested that these guidelines should not go out to all LEAs, but that local coordinators could choose whether or not they wished their LEAs to have them. I would far rather bring coordinators on board through this process of consultation, and addressing their concerns. Since the mix of families seeking to HE must have similar needs and aspirations around the country it seems only right that consistent conditions obtain as far as possible everywhere. Hopefully any 'discomfort' perhaps experienced to the 'good' relationships which exist will be only temporary, and a small price to pay for defending everyone's rights.

Also, individual complaints against an LEA tend to improve the situation for that particular family, but usually make no difference to the persistence of bad practices in any area overall. Far better surely to address the problems at source through a nationally recognised initiative, than have to wear ourselves out in an endless succession of individual cases, which change nothing for the next family. If all LEAs receive copies regardless, and know that to be the case, there is no implied criticism of any one in particular. The intention of the document is to make life easier for all, including LEAs by addressing problems which need never arise if, in the words of Lord Justice Donaldson, "it could not have appeared to a reasonable LEA, correctly directing itself as to what matters were relevant, that the parent was in breach of his s 36 duty."

It is in the spirit of p.2 of School Is Not Compulsory that this document has been produced.

Neil Taylor

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AN  
**OPEN COUNCIL MEETING**

of Education Otherwise will be held at GLOVERSBRIDGE FARM, Headcorn, Kent on

**Sunday 28 June 1998 at 10:00 a.m.**

preceded by an

**informal discussion meeting on Saturday 27 June.**

All EO members are welcome to attend either of these meetings, but the Sunday meeting will be strictly for business, and we anticipate that much of the necessary discussion will have taken place the day before.

If you have an item for the agenda, please send it in good time to **Lucy Charlton**, general secretary.

For information about the venue, see separate notice, or contact **Sue Hutchin**, newsletter coordinator.

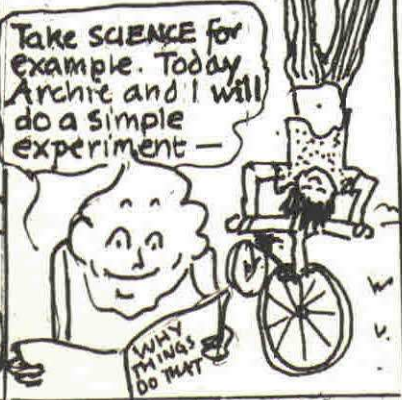
*For addresses, see inside back cover.*

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# EDUCATING ARCHIE BY SEG

LESSONS OUTSIDE FOR THE HAPPY DUO!



Thanks Ryan + Life Group

READERS! Due to an EDITORIAL MISCALCULATION, ARCHIE had to be SACRIFICED from the April issue. BUT - loyal fans who send a SAE to SEG can get a copy of the ARCHIE the world did not see!

## GAMES FOR PEOPLE TO PLAY

There's a special bond between those who have played

"Who can spit grape pips furthest?"

Often the first concepts which spring to mind when playing games is mentioned is of a peripheral activity, competition, and the possibility, at worst, of **UNCONTROLLED DISCORD**.

### NOT SO!

Playing games is just as much part of our human make-up as eating and sleeping, a doorway into greater possibilities, and to deny ourselves the chance of playing is to limit ourselves. (See books by Edward de Bono and his game packs) As an adult, to forget pressures and work for a while and wholeheartedly play with your children on their terms gives a unique feeling of **rightness**.

If games generate elated winners and bitter losers then they can be altered, and playing the right games can change one's attitude to games so that the important thing really is the **FUN** and **CHALLENGE** of playing together. "Playing to win, regardless" all through life can be very damaging to relationships and to present another attitude to a child can avert a great deal of unhappiness; it's better to face up to it round a "Snakes and Ladders" board than later.

Take a moment to look back and remember the deep satisfaction you experienced when playing games in the past; and what you learnt, or rather absorbed, at the time. If the memory is negative, then playing more of the right games can heal the wounds.

### Games are not trivial

in playing games we shift out of ordinary thinking and relationships and tap into a whole realm of different facets of thought, movement, emotion, imagination, learning, relationships and skill.

### Games have a unique value to offer

to just-born babies through to 90 year olds, anywhere, anytime.....

Just think of the enormous possibilities of "Round and Round the Garden Like a Teddy Bear" played on a child's hand or tummy ..... an immediate and very special closeness, a sharing of an out of the ordinary relationship for a few moments, physically, emotionally and mentally; security with surprise, shared laughter, language development, expression of love and acceptance of love, deep nourishing satisfaction, maybe a breaking of tension putting things back on a happier footing.....

Healing through games can tackle really deep issues. For instance a friend, girl of 10, had leukemia and at the same time suffered a great deal of cruelty at school, she now just loves to play "**SARDINES**" especially in the **DARK**, (one person hides, the person to find them joins them in their hiding place, and so on until there is only one finder who finds them all squashed up together). A lonely person can experience being part of things and the give and take of people dependant on each other through team games. I guess this is so because ordinary barriers drop when everyone is "in the same boat" and it's not an everyday situation. This includes barriers of learning. Any information gathered during the game has to be immediately and personally made use of, with everyone starting from the same position, it's a short term situation with a definite end in sight; and there are twists of

**LUCK, SURPRISES and FUN.**

So there's also the finding out of the value of using information, being aware of how to pinpoint what you need to know, and this in relation to everyone else involved, sometimes in quite complex situations. If the game is chosen well there will be an increase in confidence in knowledge, self-reliance, sociability, friendship, skill.....

The most important starting point of any game is that it should be adapted if necessary to suit the players

.....unless the players accept that they should adapt themselves to suit the game....

If you start playing a game and find a **problem** in the game or in the players, then identify the problem and **MAKE ALTERATIONS TO DO AWAY WITH IT** - discuss this between the players until all are in agreement. Reaching a compromise through taking others and a situation into account is also an excellent skill to be learnt through playing games!

Part of the problem of *losing* is that the game ends before you're ready for it to do so. A good adaptation is to say that you'll keep on playing until everyone has won.... so you'll have a **"FIRST WINNER"**, **"SECOND WINNER"** and so on, even in games where the last player plays on by themself - **"SHARES AND LADDERS"** for instance. With card games which need shuffling, it's good to say that the winner shuffles, or with other games, the winner puts away the equipment!

**Choosing a Game** Someone might be desperate to play a certain game, humour them if at all possible! Otherwise, if it's "What shall we play?" then consider:

**WHO IS PLAYING** where you can play

is a quiet, concentrated game suitable, or is everyone needing to let off steam

should it be factual or imaginative *a game you know already or one made up specially?*

It's worth giving this a bit of thought as it's no use playing if someone is reluctant, or not in the mood, and if you don't choose the right game it can fall **FLAT!** Usually the right game choice happens intuitively anyway.

Make sure any new players have the rules explained to them clearly, allow that it will take them a couple of games or more to really grasp what's going on, and have a practice game for their benefit.

#### THE VERY BEST GAMES

are made up by the family or are family adaptations of well known games.

Here are **SOME OF THE GAMES WHICH WE HAVE PLAYED**, plus a few more. Obviously the age divisions are to be taken with a pinch of salt; in a few places you'll think I'm teaching Granny how to suck eggs; and I will have left out some of **YOUR FAVOURITE GAMES**, (as there were **no contributions** sent in for this supplement!

- Younger E.O.ers - what about sending in details of your favourite games to the "Children's Pages", or make up games which can be played by post with your pen-friends - chess is good for this

There are a lot of games included which everyone knows, but then there are a lot of 'GOLDEN OLDIES' maybe tucked away forgotten at the back of the cupboard. Some E.O. families will **definitely not** want to play some of the games, and I **do sincerely apologise** for causing any offense .... PLEASE try and take out the good bits and ignore the bits you don't like .....

'Baby Games' The enjoyment of games starts here ! **LOVE**, hugs, tickles, chuckles, surprises.

### GAMES FOR QUITE LITTLE PEOPLE Imaginative! Repetive! Intense!

Unfortunately these games come just when you're in demand day and night anyway, with lots of chores to do, but to forget it all and play can be "**MAGIC**", a never to be repeated time. Children of this age love familiar stories, situations, objects or people, and words are an important, maybe long or unusual. We once saw a Granny waking a "**SLEEPING BEAUTY**" - child lying on the ground pretending to be asleep - with a kiss, after chopping her way through giant brambles, plus running commentary ..... over and over again. If there's a tiny player likely to be an interruption they could be included in the plot or be an **important helper** for the adult.

If you're feeling totally shot, then "**HAIRDRESSERS**" comes in handy - adult sits on comfortable chair, child has comb and brush. "**DONKEY DAD**" (or **MUM**, of course) - parent pretends to be a donkey, on all fours, and gives Donkey Rides, "eeeeeeeeaaaaaws" obligatory. "**MONSTER DAD/MUM**" - normally loving parent does realistic impression of rampaging Gorilla, or the Robot from Outer Space, out to **get YOU!!!** "**BOOING OUT**" - invented so that Mum could have Sunday afternoons off wandering around National Trust gardens - one person wanders, the others hide on their predicted route and "**BOO OUT**" as they go past. You have to be sure that you "**BOO OUT**" at the right person, though!

GAMES WE ALL KNOW - "**HIDE AND SEEK**" on familiar territory, "**TREASURE HUNT**" - clues are hidden about the house and garden, one leading to another - older person reads out the clues until reading starts - finally leading to an edible **treat**; readers and writers can make up their own for each other or parent(s); "**PAIRS**" - picture cards are placed face down and players take turns to turn up 2, trying to turn up a pair, which they keep; start with only a few cards; "**1.5PT**" - make sure that everyone has a go at choosing regularly - a constant winner can be persuaded to give their turn to someone else. "**WHAT'S THE TIME MR. WOLF?**" - child(ren) follow '**Mr. Wolf**' asking 'him' what the time is, 'Mr. Wolf' turns around occasionally to say a time, and if 'he' says "**Dinner time!**" he runs to catch his '**dinner**'. It's more exciting and frightening if an adult plays '**Mr. Wolf**'. "**RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT, YELLOW LIGHT**" Child(ren) move around according to what the '**traffic light**' says - a person standing with their back to the others - "**green light**" means 'run', "**yellow light**" means 'walk' and "**red light**" means 'stop'; when the '**traffic light**' calls '**red light**' they suddenly turn round and if anyone is moving they are 'out' until the next "**red light**".

INSTRUCTION GAMES - can't think what else to call them! Our children loved to play games where they **OBEYED INSTRUCTIONS**, (yes, I know.....!) they were asked to **fetch** something .... (one or more) blue, or red ....any colour, something tiny, something flat, soft, round etc. etc. The big **DRAWBACK** with this is the putting away afterwards. Out on walks they enjoyed 'Run and touch .....a.....a... **TREE! etc.** Also on walks they asked me, let's get this straight, to pretend that they were dogs, telling them to '**fetch**' a stick or stone, '**sit**' and '**give**, including **pats on the head**, and '**Good dog!**' or horses - '**gallop**, '**jump**, '**walk on!**, '**trot**, '**whoa!**

BALL GAMES with no rules, including starting to catch, throw and kick.

A Bit Bigger developing and sharing skills, imaginative

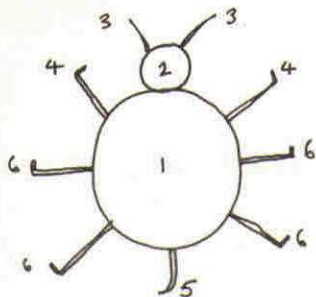
Ball Games with rules, **YOUR OWN** are **BEST**, starting to use bats and racquets.

"Dressing Up" - collect clothes, hats, shoes from Jumble sales, give everything a wash before adding it to the bag or it will all soon become very nifty.

**Running Games** I can't remember the names of these two games which we played in the playground at school so they'll have to be "Wall Catch" and "Dangerous Catch", although in Lincolnshire in the 50's we called "Catch" "Tiggy" pronounced "Tiggeh". "Wall Catch" one person stands against a wall with their back to the others who watch them anxiously and are ready to run at any moment, the person turns **SUDDENLY** and runs to catch somebody who then joins them at the wall, they then **SUDDENLY** turn together and run to catch more.....and so on. "Dangerous Catch" - it really can be, but it's exciting to play - 'It catches someone and they hold hands and run to catch someone else who also holds hands....and so on, (oh, I think it might be called "Chain"), the **DANGEROUS** part is when you are one of the last to be caught and you are swung at high speed on the end of the chain as it changes course.

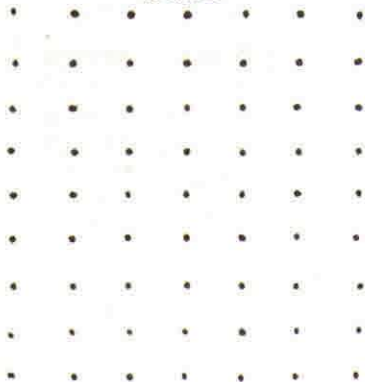
**Card and Board Games** "Snap" - if who shouted first is in doubt then either put the cards in dispute in another heap and shout "**Snap Pool!**" when they match, or with younger children deal the cards out to all players when one player has run out of cards. "Lotto", "Housey Housey" or "Bingo" adapted to the stage players are at, with numbers or with pictures on the cards - particularly good if you know the names for the numbers - 'Legs eleven', 'Top of the House 99', 'All the twos, 22', '13 Lucky for some', '66 Clickety click!.....; remember to **keep playing until all cards are full** and everyone has had a chance to **SHOUT**. "Donkey" and "Happy Families" (remember **winner shuffles/deals**), worth buying a couple of packs with different pictures, and if some players find it difficult to hold the cards, they will have to **hide behind the settee or a chair or a big open book** standing in front of them on the table or floor. "Snakes and Ladders", and "Ludo" (remember to **keep playing until all have finished**, and have '**FIRST WINNER**', '**SECOND WINNER**' etc.) Bought board games we have found to be expensive!!!! and the novelty usually wears off quickly in relation to the price, although it's worth buying them **second hand** or in **Jumble sales** - that's the way we came across "Off to the Tower" which we played a lot. It's also worth buying **INTERESTING LOOKING CARD GAMES**, which aren't so much of an investment..

**Games on Paper** - Taking it in turns to add a detail, make up a zoo garden, aquarium etc. "Boxes" - prepare the paper by making rows of equally spaced dots, maybe 8 x 8 and large sized to begin with; take it in turns to draw a line joining 2 dots; when a complete "**Box**" is made write in the initial of the person to draw in the last line; winner has most **boxes**. "Dots" - draw dots randomly over the paper and take it in turns to join them with straight or squiggly lines, lines must **NOT CROSS**. (See next page)

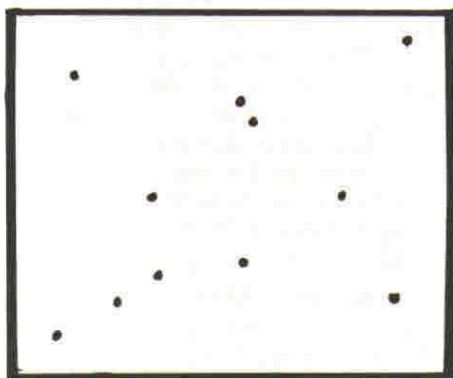


"**Beetle**" any number of players, paper and pencil each, a die. In turns shake the die, and according to the number, draw in a part of the **Beetle** - the body must be drawn in first.

### Boxes



### Dots



"Battleships" - squared paper each, with a number for each line of squares across the top and a letter for each line of squares down one side; decide where you will hide your boats by drawing crosses on your paper (keep your paper hidden) - usually **BATTLESHIPS** cover 4 squares, **DESTROYERS** 3 squares, **SUBMARINES** 2 squares, plus **ROWING BOATS** 1 square; take it in turns to find out where the other player(s) have hidden their ships, by naming a square by letter and number - the player questioned answers 'yes' or 'no'; players must work out a system of recording what they have found out; last player to have their boats sunk wins. OR hide **ANIMALS IN A RAIN FOREST**, or **TREASURE ON AN ISLAND**. This game can use 5 x 5 squares to start with, and 2 players. We had a craze, one holiday, for 20 x 20 squares, a lot more boats and 4 players - games took **AGES** but were very satisfying.

Car games - "Making up a Story" - one person starts a story, ending at an **EXCITING MOMENT**, the next person continues. It will probably be necessary to find some way of limiting the time each person can take. "Car Colours" - front seat passenger needs a piece of paper and pencil, each person chooses a car colour and it is written down, then everyone shouts "FROOOOOOOOOOM **NOW!!!!**" and from that moment cars passing on the opposite side of the road are watched to see which colour appears first, the person who chose that colour wins a point, set a number of points to aim at, 10 or 15. Alphabet games - go through the **ALPHABET** taking it in turns saying boys' / girls' names, birds / dogs / animals, Christmas / party / shopping objects. More difficult - repeat what has already been chosen before you think of the next. "Code" - one person secretly chooses an object - decide whether it is something which all can see all the time, or something seen on the journey - they also think of a **CODE**, maybe scratching their knee, crossing their feet - the others ask questions with a **'YES'** or **'NO'** answer to find out what the object is - if the person is speaking in **CODE**, scratching their knee etc., they give the wrong answer.

Ball games catch, try 3 way catch, cricket, tennis and football - try 3 way football with 3 goals! Adapt to the site and players, even better if you **DO NOT PLAY WITH THE CORRECT EQUIPMENT** and **MAKE UP YOUR OWN RULES**.

Board games - draughts, chess, **MAKE UP YOUR OWN!**

## BIG

**BOARD GAMES** - Cluedo, Monopoly adapted, Scattergories

**BALL GAMES** in teams, with rules. **YOUR OWN ARE BEST** **"SQUASH FOOTBALL"** - we have a little patio called 'the courtyard' as it has a house wall on one side and a high garden wall along the other - or any **ENCLOSED SPACE** will do where no damage can be caused - use a **FOOTBALL** (ours is tennis ball size). Two teams - if there is more than one in a team then the goal keeper changes every time a goal is scored, work out what will be the goal at either end; start by throwing the ball into the middle; when a goal is scored, teams go back to their ends and the scorer kicks the ball in; the rest's a general melee where you try not to stand on the ball, but try **surprise sideways shots**, bouncing the ball off the walls.

**CARD GAMES** - **"CASINO"** as played by Jane Austen - 2-4 players, a pack of cards, a piece of paper and a pencil. Set a score to aim at, maybe 10, or a time to stop. Deal 2 cards to each player (kept hidden) and the centre of the table (face up) twice. The person on the dealer's left starts, trying to 'capture' cards from the table by matching numbers or court cards - e.g. if they hold a king they can 'capture' a king from the table and this is the same with the numbers; but if they hold an eight, for example, and there are 5 and 3 cards on the table they can 'capture' both, or 3, 2, ace and 2 etc. 'Captured' cards are placed face down and cards used from the hand are placed face up in front of the player. If a player manages to pick up all the cards on the table it is called a **'SWEEP'** and they win a point which must be recorded as it happens, not left 'til the end of the game. Also, if a player holds a 9 and a 5, for example, and there is a 4 on the table, they may put the 5 on top of the 4 and say 'Building nine', on their next turn they must capture the nine - if no-one has captured it already, or if no-one has added an ace to build a 10! Also, if a player has two 3s for example, and there is a three on the table, they may put one of their 3s down on it and say 'Pair of threes'. They must capture them on their next turn, (these wouldn't count as a 6 the way we play it). If it is not possible to 'capture', then the player puts a card on the table and says 'Trail'. When players have no cards there is another deal of 2 cards each, twice, but no more cards to the table. This will happen a third time. On the third deal, the person to make the last 'capture' takes all the cards left on the table. Now for the scoring. Apart from points for 'Sweeps' points are given for these 'captured' cards - 10 of diamonds **"THE GREAT CASINO"** 2 points, 2 of hearts **"LITTLE CASINO"** 1 point, the **MOST SPADES** 2 points, the most cards 3 points. The player to the left of the dealer is the next dealer. Keep playing until someone reaches the score decided, or time runs out. (There are other versions of "Casino")

**"BLACK MARIA"** 3-6 players, a piece of paper and pencil, a pack of cards (with the 2 of clubs removed if there are 3 players, 2 cards removed if 5 players, 4 if 6 players, so each player has the same number of cards). Deal all cards face down, players look at them and pass on 3 to the person on their right, which may be looked at only after passing on 3. The player to the left of the dealer starts by leading a card, and in turn all follow with a card of the same suit if possible with either a higher or lower card - if it is higher then that player takes the 'trick', picks up the cards and keeps them, and leads next. If someone cannot follow suit then they may 'throw away' any card. **But** the winner of the game is not the person with most tricks! **THE WINNER IS THE ONE WITH THE LEAST SCORE.** To win any heart counts as one point, the Ace of Spades is 7 points, the King of Spades is 10 points, and **'Black Maria'** or the Queen of Spades is 13 points

**"SLAM"** Fast and furious! 2 players, half a pack of cards each. (The cards will be spoilt!)



Each player deals their cards as above, top cards face up, others face down; place remainder of cards on X face down. **START PLAYING** - turn over the top X and place at O - taking cards off the heaps, try to use up your cards by placing them in consecutive order on O, going up or down...e.g. if O is a 10 you can place a Jack on it or a 9.... If both players get stuck, both turn over an X card. When a player has used up all their cards either player **SLAMS**! by putting their hand on the smallest O heap and saying "SLAM". They pick it up + their own X heap + any of the dealt cards which might be left. The other player picks up the rest of the cards. **DEAL AGAIN** and play until one player has only enough cards to deal, plus 1 extra, or fewer cards than this. They put one of their cards on X - that is the **SLAM CARD**. If they do not have enough cards for the deal heaps, they take an X card from the other player. **PLAY AGAIN** but don't use the SLAM card. When one player has used all their cards either player **SLAMS** on the SLAM CARD.

**"RUMMY"** a good game for 2 especially for long journeys, needs a surface to put cards down on, a piece of paper and a pencil, a pack of cards. Each player is dealt **10 cards**, the rest are put **face down** between them with the **top card turned up**. In turn each **take a card** - the face up card or the top face down card and then **'throw away'** a card from their hand - put it on the face up heap. Players try to **make sets of 3 cards** of the same number or court card or a 'run' of cards of the same suit - e.g. 5, 6, 7 or 10, Jack, Queen. Ace counts as one. **Twos 'float'** - they can be used as any card. When a three is made the player **'goes down'**, places their three face up on the table. As soon as a player makes a three they may **add to any threes on the table** - e.g. if they have a 7 and there are three 7's on the table they may add their 7 when it is their turn. When one player has no cards left the **other player's cards are scored** - ace 1 and so on, with Jack, Queen and King 10 and recorded. The **next hand** is two threes - you must have 2 sets of three before you can 'go down', then one four, two fours, one five, two fives. Take it in turns to go first on each hand. The winner is the one with the **lowest score**

#### PARTY GAMES PARTY GAMES PARTY GAMES PARTY GAMES

It is not necessary to have competitive games at **PARTIES**, and if you do there can always be a **NICE SURPRISE** for the losers. For instance, **'MUSICAL CHAIRS'** - as people are out they can operate the music for a turn, or take away a chair, and everyone can receive a **LITTLE PRIZE**, maybe a Smartie. **'MUSICAL HATS'** is also good if space is limited. **'SWAPPING ROUND'** - all sit in a circle with one person as 'IT', they go round giving names to everyone on a theme e.g. salads- their must be 2 people with each name, 2 lettuce, 2 tomato, 2 cucumber etc., they then call out **"LETTUCE, TOMATO"** for instance, and lettuces and tomatoes must **SWAP PLACES** and 'IT' tries to sit on an empty chair - the person without a chair is the next 'IT'. **Parties** for tinies can include lots of **SINGING** - arrange chairs in bus formation for "The Wheels on the Bus", children **'get on and off'**, say **"The bus is about to start! Hold very tight please! Ting! Ting!"**. We've found **'DONKEY DAD'** went down with almost everyone, and even he enjoyed himself really! **'MUSICAL CARDBOARD BOXES. HUNT THE TEDDY. PLESDTIC FLY.** a general **bashing about of balloons** is

good with some cheerful pop music - called a **'DISCO'**. "Make The Party Last" by James Last is excellent music, if you can find it. Prepare to the last detail in advance.

**'STATUES'** is a good game for children old enough to have good balance and fast reactions - one person stands against a wall with their back to the others but can **TURN ROUND AT ANY MOMENT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME**, all try to creep up and touch them but if they are caught moving they must go back to the start. Adjudication will be needed as to who moves, and **A LITTLE PRIZE** for all participants. Also **'RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT'** and **'WHAT'S THE TIME ME WOLF?'** **'SHOPPING'** (not a very exciting name) makes a virtue out of Swag Bags. A tray with little **GOODIES** is prepared with 'prices' in **stars or blobs**, and **stars or blobs** are stuck or hidden in odd places; as guests find them they go to the tray to exchange them for **GOODIES** to put in the Swag Bag with which they have been provided. Queuing has to be involved at times so as to keep it fair. **'PASS THE PARCEL'** can be adapted to any age, but always have something in the middle which everyone can share - could be party poppers - either actually in the parcel, or a clue where to find it - stampede for under the settee or the washing machine! Each layer can have a written **FORFEIT**, 'everyone sing a nursery rhyme', 'everyone touch their toes', 'everyone change places'...or for older children, 'make a face like a fish', 'tickle your next door neighbour', everyone shout "Silly Sausages!" It's worth saving used Christmas and birthday wrapping paper and ribbon for this. We had a good **'PARENTS VERSUS CHILDREN CHRISTMAS PARTY'** where the **PASS THE PARCEL** forfeits, were worth a point each, and could be passed to another member of the team or to the other side, and were things like "Waggle your ears", "Flex your nostrils", "Play a tune on your teeth", etc. **'CHINESE CHICKENS'** Everyone takes off a **SHOE** and these are laid out in a line with spaces between; take turns to **HOP** along the line, **PICKING UP** your own shoe, **HOPPING ROUND THE END** and then **BACK**. **'BAFFLING'** (our name for it) - a person sits **blindfold** in the centre of a circle with a **key-ring full of keys** close by and a **rolled-up newspaper** in their hand, the others try to **creep up** and **take the keys** but the **'Baffer'** lays about themselves with the newspaper if they hear a noise and anyone **'Baffed'** must go back to the start. **'FUNNY PEOPLE'** (our name) a 'golden oldie' always goes down well, simple though it is - all have a piece of paper and pencil; everyone draws a **head** on the first section, folds it so that only the very bottom lines can be seen, and passes it on to the next person who adds a **chest and arms** and folds the paper, it is then passed on for **legs** to be added. The papers are then unfolded and are usually a **GIGGLE**. **'CHEESE BISCUIT FOOTBALL'** is a riot, ideally it is played with one of the spherical **CHEESE BISCUITS** which come in some selections, but any very light and tiny ball will do, a **PARTY TOOTER** each of the type which shoots out a long paper tube when blown, plus spares, a flat surfaced **RUG** or chalked off area of floor. Mark goals with masking tape or chalk lines. Two, four, or more people can play, depending on the size of the 'pitch'. Starting from the centre, the 'ball' is pushed by the tooters to score goals. Slight problem that players tend to lie on the pitch, sometimes **HELPLESS WITH LAUGHTER**. This can also be played with the remains of a boiled egg shell - the top removed, the rest whole - and concertina-folded paper fans

We have had some super **PARTIES** where everyone either brought a game, a plate of food, or do a **PARTY TURN** - sing a song, recite a poem, do magic tricks ..... everyone's names are written on slips of paper and are pulled out of a hat, by the person who had the last turn.

## **WIDE GAMES**

A wide game is an imaginative adventure game played over any wide area, day or night, involving one or more of these basic elements.

### **TASKS TO BE PERFORMED**

#### **TRAILS OR CLUES TO BE FOLLOWED**

##### **STALKING**

Games can, of course be invented by children for adults, by adults for children, by children for children.

The game can end in the success of one team or player, but it should be so well structured that each person finds the game itself challenging, exciting, fun, and satisfying whether they win or lose. A game can be repeated, maybe with changes or improvements introduced after discussion.

First of all decide on the area to be played in, taking into account the age(s) of the players, then choose what the imaginative basis will be. Maybe "The Quest for the Holy Grail", "Stopping the World from being Blown Up" - game to be completed by a certain time OR ELSE! - person about to press red button to be found and incapacitated before alarm clock goes off,

"Preventing Invasion by Giant Insects from Outer Space" - find and destroy their eggs (chocolate) "Raiders of the Lost Ark", "Detective Squad" - out to catch a criminal, after first finding out who the criminal is....., "Board a Spanish Galleon and Take the Treasure" - after first finding the Spanish Galleon, "Steal Back State Secrets taken by Spies" - Secrets are closely guarded, enter their headquarters using the secret password discovered during the game

### **TASKS TO BE PERFORMED**

Will hopefully spring to mind considering the above, here are some ideas

- \* make a shelter (to pass a night in a storm/under attack from wild animals.....),
- \* cook a meal (using limited equipment - needs an adult in the offing if fire or wild food used),
  - \* find water and boil it ..... (also needs adult)
  - \* burn through string 1 metre from the ground ( " " " )
  - \* heat invisible ink to read a secret message ( " " " )
- \* make a raft, bridge, sculpture, natural art work (a la Andy Goldsworthy), garden, miniature house.... (Ask permission if not in your garden.)
- \* signal to someone a distance away (remember night as well as day)
- \* carry a precious object unharmed through the game (could be raw egg in poly bag) - must be held at all times - (could be bomb which would explode if dropped, or the egg of an endangered species of bird being returned to a nest in an extremely secret location to be hatched.....)

### **TRAILS OR CLUES TO BE FOLLOWED**

- \* At least 6 places or landmarks are needed where clues can be hidden without being spotted by the general public. Can be in own house/garden or lead to friends' / relatives/houses / gardens, or played over a much wider area, maybe involving bicycles or public transport. (Will an adult be needed to help with crossing roads etc.?)
- \* Clues could be guarded, having to be removed secretly, or could be coded, or be parts of a jumbled sentence, or anagrams with letters to be discovered one by one, (remember to follow the imaginative theme).

For children learning to read, use words within their vocabulary or new words which might be guessed. End with a little hidden treat or at a 'treat' place - swimming pool.....etc. Use familiar landmarks, involve friendly people (could be shopkeepers.....), and accompany, of course.

Energetic older children can use a wider area - maybe slip the final clue into one of their pockets to be discovered after hours of hunting!

\* Trails can be made of spent matches, stones, scratched sand or earth, twigs, garlic or onion rubbed onto trees / buildings. If signs are used, they could be agreed in advance or discovered on the trail, (one type only as it would be too difficult), - a match pushed in and out of a leaf, rice, flour, torn leaves .....and at night - cooking foil, night-lights on saucers (with caution in woodland!), flashing torches

More advanced trail followers can use a compass, local knowledge, travel by car etc.

### STALKING

This is based on the stalkers staying hidden from the stalkee(s) - finding them without being seen. This is really good for two children, or a child and parent(s). Can be played in a room with the furniture covered in sheets etc.

The aim of the stalking could be to collect an object, or objects without being seen. If caught, the object could be returned and the player starts again. In summer it could be a bucket of water which has to be surreptitiously emptied, the water carried to another bucket.

This part of the game could come at the end of a trail of clues, or lead to the trail. For instance the trail clues could say, "Make a container for 'The Heart of the Ocean Diamond' and take to safety in your bedroom.....Beware! It is guarded!" The 'guard' could be someone with a washing-up liquid bottle of water ready to squirt.

### INVENTORS OF GAMES ..... THINK THROUGH YOUR WIDE GAME FROM THE PLAYER(S) POINT OF VIEW

.....  
"101 Best Family Card Games" Alfred Sheinwold Maggie

"The Pan Book of Card Games" Hubert Phillips Pan Books

"The World of Games" Botermans, Burrett, van Delft and van Splunteren - games from all over the world temptingly illustrated and explained clearly. Order through your Library, fill in 'where seen' on the order card, Kent County Library, Folkestone; your Library will obtain it from Folkestone. This costs 45p at Libraries around here.

"Wide Games" Ruth Black Obtain from 'The Guide Association', 17-19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W OPT Was £1.50. Could be a Scout equivalent.

.....  
"**Nine Men's Morris**" (Board on Newsletter cover) was very popular in Britain during the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, such a craze that monks are said to have played it in chapel! You will need two sets of 9 pieces looking different from each other - stones, shells, counters - and the front cover of this Newsletter. The aim is to **try to remove your opponent's pieces** from the board by moving pieces from point to point along the lines of the board. **To begin the game**, take turns to place a piece on the board, trying to place 3 pieces in a straight line - as soon as you have done this, you can take one of your opponent's pieces which is not in a line of 3 unless there is no alternative. **When all the pieces are on the board**, take turns to move a piece along the lines from point to point, still trying to get 3 in a line and taking an opponent's piece if you do. If you move a piece out of a line of 3 in order to stop your opponent from making a line, you cannot move that piece back and make a new 3, you must move another piece into the space. Eventually, when a player has only 3 pieces, they start jumping one piece at a time to anywhere on the board. **Finally** one player will make a line of 3 and take one of their opponent's last 3 pieces. (Winner has to put the game away.)

### Book Vouchers

We would like to thank Paula Fielding Bell for all her hard work in obtaining the £1 book vouchers that were sent out with the last newsletter. When she heard they were becoming available for school children she negotiated for us to have them too. We had to receive them early to get in the newsletter and the Fielding Bells drove them over to our printer in Wales so they could be included.

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### HOW TO ARRANGE A VISIT TO AN ENGLISH HERITAGE PROPERTY

1. Telephone 0171-973-3434 or 01604-730320 or write to English Heritage Customer Services dept, PO Box 9019, London W1A 0JA explaining you belong to Education Otherwise and request a **teachers pack**. Request a free events and concerts diary. (Military displays, re-creations of life in days gone by, re-enactments of famous battles to family entertainment could coincide with your visit.)
  2. Inside the pack is a form. **Photocopy** the form (so you can visit more than one site)
  3. Complete the visit details on the form and send it to the relevant Education dept.(there are six different regions) Giving at least two weeks notice of the intended visit.
  4. The Education department will then send you a permit to visit the desired English Heritage property on the specified date.
- 

Dear All Home Educators,

I thought you may like to know of a fabulous arrangement we have thanks to our school inspector. We have joined the **Schools Library Service**. Normally this costs £60 per year based on a 20 book minimum exchange, and for this they will deliver. As we only have one child, 20 books is a lot more than we need at any given time, so they have agreed that we can have a 5 book exchange contract for just £15 per year (much better). We can keep all or some of the books for an indefinite period of time to suit ourselves and I must call in to exchange whenever we want within their opening hours. Their resources are phenomenal. I gazed in awe up and down aisle after aisle of bookselves full to way above me of books upon books upon books.

I hope this conveys how useful an arrangement like this could be to all of us, and also hope your county will do the same for you.

Helen Donalson, Domus, Crossheads, Colwich, Stffs. ST18 0UG 01889 882043

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### PLEASE NOTE

**All Regional Diary entries should be sent to Sue Hutchin, Newsletter Co-ordinator.**  
(see inside back cover)

**All contributions taken from already published material must be accompanied with permission to print, from the publishers.**

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## FORTUNE - WOOD ..... DIARY

It doesn't seem to matter how many times we tell people that we don't follow a curriculum, or have a timetable, or divide our life into "education" and "not education", still visitors and neighbours and people we get talking to in the street persist in asking us, "Do you follow school holidays?" "Do you have set hours for schoolwork?" "How do you know that the children are keeping up with schools?"

There seems to be very little "education mentality" and an enormous "school mentality" abroad, such that it's difficult to enable people even to hear that there is life without terms, curricula, targets and monitoring.

That's why one of the things that Mike and I have given a lot of thought and time to over the past few months is the production of E.O.s Guidelines for the L.E.A.s, through discussions on the U.K. HomeEd list. We are in the wonderfully fortunate and enviable position of living in a place where the law, both written and case law, supports home educators and their children in making real choices about not merely the content, but the very meaning of education.

And while Mike and I have been engaging with some of the theory of what we are doing as a family, the children have been getting on with doing it.

Rowan has ordered himself an eagerly awaited chemistry set, which no doubt will become part of the special effects unit for a film he is currently masterminding with assistance from his sisters and a home educated friend. The planning of the soon to be shot film has involved a lot of discussion, writing, lego modelling and gathering a host of likely and unlikely props. Rowan's other current major interest is money - which has sparked a mammoth piece of research into the history and development of world trade.

Tamsyn is getting back into pottery and she and Mike are planning lots of full day expeditions to the studio. She's also involved in Rowan's filming enterprise and has just joined Girl's Brigade where she is practising how to remain uncoerced in a uniformed organisation.

Cottia has also joined Girl's Brigade and has an off relationship with the filming. She's searching for a gymnastics class and using every spurt of warm weather to be in the garden scaling trees.

Seth is constantly rehearsing his part as a robot in the film and spends hours riding his bike, shooting his brother with every conceivable shape of toy gun, watching videos and drawing.

Drama classes have changed to Saturday mornings which has meant a more civilised venue in an arts centre and library where Seth can find things to do beyond sitting in a dark car and waiting. We've also recently added bowling to our family pursuits, giving us a great extra indoor activity for wet days and massively boosting the egos of Tamsyn and myself.

Chemistry, filming, research, pottery, Girl's Brigade, drama, art, videos, bowling and lots of time playing and messing about are not suggestive of timetables, curricula and terms. They're the activities of the moment to be constantly developed or replaced as the children direct. They are possible because we have a level of freedom enshrined in law, even if not in the public imagination, that allows us to swim against the stream, pursuing the education mentality.

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**SHARON BUNN** wishes to say 'Thankyou' for the kind letters and  
'phone calls.

She apologises that she is unable to write a Diary  
for this Newsletter

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## THE CAT YEARS

I just realized that while children are dogs -- loyal and affectionate -- teenagers are cats. It's so easy to be a dog owner. You feed it, train it, boss it around. It puts its head on your knee and gazes at you as if you were a Rembrandt painting. It bounds indoors with enthusiasm when you call it.

Then around age 13, your adoring little puppy turns into a big old cat. When you tell it to come inside, it looks amazed, as if wondering who died and made you emperor. Instead of dogging your doorsteps, it disappears. You won't see it again until it gets hungry -- then it pauses on its sprint through the kitchen long enough to turn its nose up at whatever you're serving. When you reach out to ruffle its head, in that old affectionate gesture, it twists away from you, then gives you a blank stare, as trying to remember where it has seen you before.

You, not realizing that the dog is now a cat, think something must be desperately wrong with it. It seems so anti-social, so distant, sort of depressed. It won't go on family outings.

Since you're the one who raised it, taught it to fetch and stay and sit on command, you assume that you did something wrong. Flooded with guilt and fear, you redouble your efforts to make your pet behave.

Only now you're dealing with a cat, so everything that worked before now produces the opposite of the desired result. Call it, and it runs away. Tell it to sit, and it jumps on the counter. The more you go toward it, wringing your hands, the more it moves away.

Instead of continuing to act like a dog owner, you can learn to behave like a cat owner. Put a dish of food near the door, and let it come to you. But remember that a cat needs your help and your affection too. Sit still, and it will come, seeking that warm, comforting lap it has not entirely forgotten. Be there to open the door for it.

One day your grown-up child will walk into the kitchen, give you a big kiss and say, "You've been on your feet all day. Let me get those dishes for you." Then you'll realize your cat is a dog again.

----- From: San Francisco Chronicle



Angie Pullin

I'm a home educating Mum and have been an E.O member on and off the last 3 1/2 years.

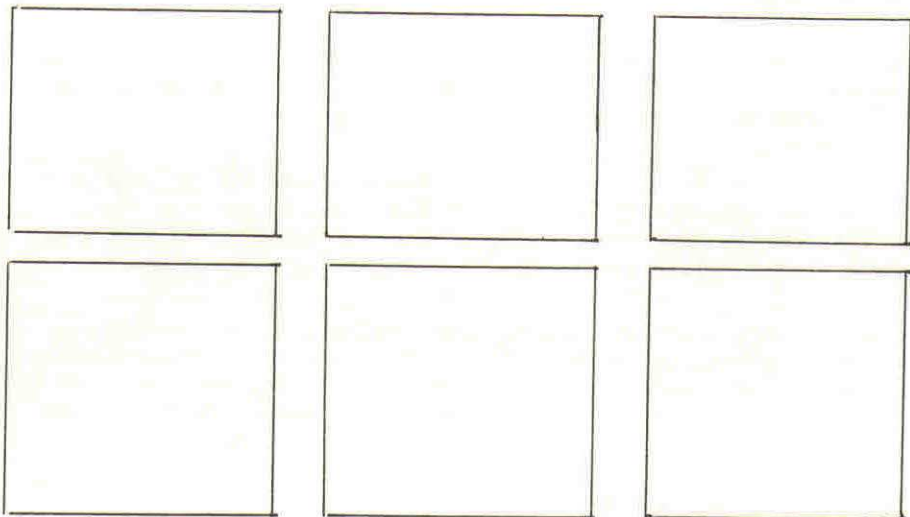
I stumbled across a novel idea to encourage my eldest son Oliver to write when he was very reluctant.

From time to time I buy Oliver (8) and Oscar (5 1/2) comics, including "The Beano", "Spiderman" and "Thomas the Tank Engine". I've cut out spiderman pictures, and drawn some, sticking them into a scrap book. Then I drew thought bubbles and word bubbles which Oliver has been quite happy to write in.

This idea can be adapted to include a few sentences to "set the scene". Conversations between 2 or more characters work well, adding more scenes, building it into a story week by week.

Older children could draw characters from cartoons or "The Beano", cutting them out and cutting out word bubbles from plain paper.

They are lovely to keep and look back on. A big plus is the boys don't view it as "work", so are quite happy to do it!



6 Lady Lodge Drive,  
Orton Waterville,  
Peterborough, Cambs. PE2 5EP

If you are a "letter  
writer", I'd love to  
hear from you.

Would you like to make up a cartoon?  
You could send a copy of it to "The Children's Pages".

Rachael x

**The Non-Stop Reader**

"A Complete Guide to Reading for both Parent and Child"

By Maurice Pope, Helen Morrison and Selena Codd

Zoe and I came across this book at a friend's house, and both of us wanted to try it. It comes with cards for playing a number of different games. Being busy I skipped the instructions, and Zoe and I started reading. Which means I can't tell you anything about the instructions - sorry.

Zoe is 8, and usually says she can't read. I think she means she can't read fluently, and that that means she can't read. She wants to be able to read, but doesn't have much time for **learning** to read, and she's not very confident about her reading abilities. We've tried various methods and schemes, but hadn't hit on one that really works for Zoe.

The pictures in the Non-Stop Reader are inviting, which made both of us want to look at the book more closely. It starts very simply, with a single letter repeated, but with pictures that turn it into a little story, so it doesn't seem like an exercise. There are a lot of funny bits in the book; 'aeroplane', with her broom and hat trailing behind - which may not sound very funny, but it keeps us amused enough to want to continue.

And continue we did. I noticed some signs of impatience in Zoe after some time (longer than usual), but when I asked her whether she'd had enough and wanted to do something else, she said with unexpected fire "No!". We probably read for an hour, when mostly 20 minutes will see Zoe eager to do something else. And even then we only stopped to let Jonathan, who's five, have a turn. He obviously wanted a piece of the fun too.

We enjoyed the games too, although the instructions muddled me a bit at first. I think they will help Zoe sort out the difference between upper case, lower case and 'joined up' letters - which she uses jumbled up together at the moment.

Zoe says the book is great, and it's helping her learn a lot. She's eager for more - which is recommendation enough for me.

*Elsbeth Campbell*

123 Station Road, Wigston Magna, Leics., LE18 2DN 0116-257 1879

.....  
I received a nice surprise packet yesterday from 'LION' publishers - being Editor has its priviledges! There were three books:

**"The Very Hungry Lions" - "A Story of Daniel" by John Ryan**

This is as delightful as John Ryan's books always are, (and I'm not biased as he lives here in Rye!). Daniel's story is told by Granny Leah to her grandchildren and it goes back to when she was a little girl in the palace of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, peeping round the curtains at the fateful feast, and helping her father with the lions in their den. Being John Ryan, you can imagine the pictures are charming!

**"No More School" by Meg Harper**

It's all about US! Flora has eczema and migraines .... guess why!.....but I won't tell you what happens! A good read, home educated children will be sure to feel 'this is me', and it has mystery and an exciting end.

**"Fleabag and the Fire Cat" by Beth Webb**

You'll have to read this for yourselves as I didn't have time! Looks good, though. I'm giving them to Rye Library so you will be able to order them through your own Library *SJY*

### A.D.H.D. in Hampshire

I would like to make contact with other families who have had to educate children at home because of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. My son Alex is just 6 (he has a 3 year old sister called Katy). Alex has been at home since Feb. '98 so we are just starting down the E.O. 'road'.

Any other E.O. family (even if they have no A.D.H.D. experience) please get in touch.

Fran Lorrner

Cob Barn Cottage, Upper Clatford, Nr. Andover,  
Hants. SP11 7QS 01264 450768

Dear E.O.

Is there anyone out there with 'middle aged' children i.e. between about 8-13 who are being home educated? It would be especially good if you are in the South Manchester area but I'd love to hear from anyone. We seem to be the only ones with a secondary age child out of school in this area. Everyone else seems to have moved away, gone to school or has dropped out. Our interests include animals, plants, LEGO, bike riding, computers. We do about half and half academic stuff and having fun, we try to make the academic stuff fun too!! Please get in touch.

Gill Wilson on 0161 442 8723

Dear E.O.,

My children are 3 1/2 yrs. and 6 weeks old and I would like to let them learn outside school. My ideal is to co-operate in this with a group of local parents with a similar outlook so that each parent cares for the group of around 5 children (or 2 parents for 10 children?) one day a week. This would give parents time for other pursuits and give children a larger social group to play with and learn from. I'd very much like to hear from anyone who has tried anything like this and found that it does or doesn't work. Thanks

Venetia Terry (VENETIA TERRY)

16 St. Georges Mews, Brighton, E. Sussex, BN1 4EU Tel: (01273) 607378



**Pen Pal Club**

for parents, mums, nannies and children  
to write to each other for support, fun and  
friendship

My daughter and I have made good pen-  
friends but my son age twelve nearly has  
lost touch with his. His interests are foot-  
ball, computers, swimming, pop music,  
currently art & cartoon drawing. Boys of  
11 to 14, it would be great if you could  
write to Jonathan. My daughter Sophie  
& I look forward to hearing from others  
keen to join the club too.

Ms Theresa Mercer.  
23 Northgreen, Bullbrook, Bracknell  
Berks RG12-2NY

We are a vegan home-educating family  
who have recently moved to East London.  
We have been to meetings in East and  
South-East London but so far we have  
not met a family who lives very close to us,  
(East Ham).

**We would love to meet families nearer us,**  
and with children of similar ages - ours are  
Liam, 5, and Kira, 2. We are interested in  
get-togethers at each others' homes, out-  
door activities, days out etc.

If this is the sort of thing you are interested  
in, please contact us:

Alison Hartley  
12 Wall End Rd  
East Ham  
London E6 2NR

Tel: 0181 548 4396.

My name is **Alison**

I'm 16

and I would like penpals,  
of the same age, male/female  
anywhere.

I enjoy  
reading

watching films

(I collect info. on movie stars  
of today and of the past)  
period costume dramas on T.V.

U.F.O.s

time travel etc.

history

most types of music

Please write to

*Al. Beighton*

Alison Beighton. (Miss).

21 Cherry Tree Avenue  
Belper  
Derbyshire DE56 1FR

*BETTERS BETTERS* Request for assistance from other members. *BETTERS BETTERS*

We have joined Education Otherwise because our eldest son has experienced distressing problems with bullying in school. We are also dissatisfied with the standards of education, discipline and behaviour generally in the school our son attends. As there does not appear to be an acceptable alternative in the area, we have decided to take our son out of mainstream education and teach him ourselves.

My interest in Education Otherwise is therefore very much on a personal level, and I hope that we may gain support and information from other members. However, as a Social Anthropologist, I also have a professional academic interest in the fact that more and more parents seem to be disaffected with the mainstream school system and are choosing to home educate.

For this reason, I am currently researching a paper which I shall submit for publication in one of the professional anthropological journals, probably Anthropology Today or the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. I should welcome any comments, etc. from members as to their own personal experiences/reasons which led them to chose to educate their children themselves. **Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence, in the form of "case studies" and no names or addresses will be used.**

Any assistance that Association members feel they can offer would be greatly appreciated. I believe that the school system as we have known it over the past 100-150 years or so is very much in decline and should be the subject of serious study by academics, politicians, and perhaps even more importantly - parents. The sooner we can bring these issues into the public arena, and promote open and clear discussion, the better.

I look forward to hearing from members.

4 Briar Drive  
Buckley  
Flintshire CH7 2AN

*Sandra Bognar*

Telephone/Fax: 01244 548066

Sandra Bognar, BA, MA(Econ), FRAI

*BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS*  
Dear Education Otherwise

Thankyou for your last newsletter (april), I found it very helpful.

I am now being made to put my son back into education .I withdrew him from full time school on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1997. The inspector made his first visit on 23/1/98, he never sent me a report of the visit, but I had a letter from education welfare saying I was not doing certain subjects and that the inspector would be coming again on the 9<sup>th</sup> march 1998, I am waiting for the attendance order to come. This consists of three options 1) put him back in the school of which I withdrew him.

2) any main stream school of our choice providing they would accept him and we pay transport costs.

3) A place in Ely called the Lighthouse which I believe is run by Christian Fellowship, but that is three days a week 2 hours per day.

We are looking into option three because they say we are not doing enough .

I have just written to the inspector asking for a copy of his reports as we have never received any .

At the moment I am willing to go to court as I feel my son is happier more confident and working well with us.

I have also found out that the inspector is a golfing friend of the teacher I have had to see at the school. How am I expected to win ?

I have been battling with the welfare and school for two years I am tired of this I would love to hear from anyone who has had the same problems. I could write a lot more but that is just the outline of things.

Yours sincerley

*Sheila Couzens*

44 QUEENSWAY  
SOHAM  
CAMBS  
CB7 5BX

01253 720268 *BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS*

Our son Jonathan developed School Phobia in January 1997, due to the fact he was being bullied by a whole class of children. He was in the first year of his GCSEs and obviously we were very concerned. He was so badly affected by this, that at one stage he barricaded himself into his bedroom, when a visit to school had been arranged.

In March 1997, we made the decision to withdraw Jonathan from school, as we felt that the school really did not want to acknowledge that there was a problem and the powers that be, would not listen to Jonathan and also would not give him time to recover.

Since then Jonathan has been studying home correspondence courses through Mercers College. After an initial visit to the college by Jonathan and ourselves, it was decided that Jonathan would study 6 subjects under the International GCSE system. (This is an alternative to course work.) It has not been an easy option. It has taken Jonathan quite some time to settle and on many occasions all of the family have been known to sit for an evening trying to sort out a problem. Mrs Green, the Director of Studies at Mercers has been very supportive over the last year and is always willing to help.

What we would like to tell everyone is that, when we wrote to the school to withdraw Jonathan, we stated that Jonathan was to receive a Private Education. (We have had to pay for the course through Mercers College.) The Local Education Authority asked for forms to be completed on which the above was stated and we also stated that the right was reserved to alter the timetable as seen fit. Since then we have not had any visits from the Local Education Authority. - This is because they have no jurisdiction over private education.

Since Christmas this year, Jonathan has decided that he wants to take 3 of his GCSEs this summer and has also applied to a local college for entry in September. The college that Jonathan has chosen, has a School Phobia group with counsellor support. These decisions, he has made himself and this just goes to show that sometimes children like Jonathan need time to recover from School Phobia - he would not have been able to make these decisions a year ago.

We still feel very strongly that there are many people, including some within the education system that believe School Phobia does not exist - from real experience we know that it does. We thank our lucky stars, that there were folk that we could talk to within EO and we were able to do something to help Jonathan, before he decided to take more drastic action. So a **BIG THANK YOU** to all at EO.

By telling everyone of our experiences with the LEA, hopefully others may be able to use the information above and if at any time we can be of help to anyone, our number is 0181 868 1925 after 6pm.

With best wishes

*Janet and David Mann*

202 Torbay Road  
Harrow  
Middlesex HA2 9QI

*BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS  
BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS*

"There is no school equal to a decent home and no teachers equal to honest, virtuous parents."

Mahatma Gandhi

Spotted in 'The Times' 29.4.98

Mr. D. Deeson, 14 The Green, Lydon, Oakham, LE15 8TX Leicestershire

Hello, my name's Wendy and I live on the Isle of Wight with my son Richard, aged 9. My other son Rob is 15, he lives not too far up the road with his Dad.

I fought with Rob a lot to keep him going to school, but over the years he became a refuser and finally dropped out about 6 months ago. The Schools here have been no use to me or to Rob. I wish now I'd kept him at home but he was such a stressy personality that I wanted the break.

Richard is one who likes a lot of company and he's easy going so I thought he would be different, but at 9 he's finding a lot of trouble with reading. His confidence was getting so low that I decided to take him out of school as well.

It's a strange floaty feeling when you just do it and I've been thinking about what we'll do next.

Ideally I think we should join a community of like-minded people. The Isle of Wight is too cut off if you have no money. So if you know of, or are in a community of, home educators then please write to me, I'm a good gardener and mathematician and Richard is an excellent skateboarder. If you're not part of a community then please write me as well, I feel in a letter writing mood.

Flat A, Vernon, Dudley Rd., Ventnor, I.O.W., PO38 1EW

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS  
LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Dear E.O.,

I am hoping to start an anti-sexist parents' network. Letterbox Library (the multi-cultural and anti-sexist childrens' bookclub) do not know of one. I do hope there are some other home-educating feminists out there - none of my friends who had children in the 70s or 80s would have dreamt of not using schools however much they complained & however much they were busy setting up feminist alternatives to everything else.

Anyone interested can contact me at:

52, Hill Top Mount, Harehills, Leeds LS8 4EW Tel: (0113) 2491711

.....  
"LEARN RECIPE FOR GOOD LIFE"

Prue Leith: 'Cooking actually teaches children exactly the life skills that everyone says you ought to have.

These are nothing to do with food and are quite apart from the fact they will be able to cook economically and look after themselves when they leave home.

What it really teaches is things like working in a team, creative thinking, problem solving, meeting a deadline and budgeting.

All the other things like nutrition, maths and physics, come into it too. But what kids really get out of it is a feeling that they have achieved something.'

Leith is keen on making cookery fun and says the key to getting kids interested in food is to start them young."

"The Universe" May 3 98

BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS  
BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS BETTERS

I have been an area co-ordinator for about 5 years. At one time a family had to approach the L.E.A. to inform them they wanted to home educate. Often a family would receive a reply telling them that it is up to the authority if the child's name could be taken off the register; the family must do a full day's work, 9.00 'til 3.30; follow the National Curriculum subjects, plus more; the parents must be qualified teachers, or hire a tutor; often slipping in the letter somewhere that a school attendance order will be issued to get the child back to school if the parents don't comply with the wishes of the authority.

Myself, like many other co-ordinators, have campaigned tirelessly over the years to help the L.E.A. to understand that we are genuine people, just doing what is our legal right, in home-educating out children. Having the right, often fought for by families in past years who were taken to court to prove that there is no short and fast rule to choose which approach suits the individual child's needs.

Yes, the membership is £15, sadly a sum which some can't afford, but if you go to a solicitor for help, do they help you at no cost, without restricting the time you are allowed to speak to them? The co-ordinator gives all their time freely. As long as there is a telephone at hand we are willing to listen. Day or night, meal times, bed times, family times and rest times. We spend hours writing letters, or talking on the telephone, to put the wrongs to right, or just to carry on to make E.O. heard.

I have gone to L.E.A. meetings at members' homes, always taking my son. I have had up to four hours' travelling, for a meeting that has only lasted 30 minutes, sometimes cold and hungry whilst waiting for transport. I have willingly done this to show the L.E.A. we are a dedicated bunch. We are not people who will eventually crawl back into the woodwork and leave them in peace to do as they want.

Recently an L.E.A. in my area actually acted on what I have been shouting about for 5 years. The L.E.A. sent out letters to homes asking families to come to their centre. Inviting families to send, or take in details of their work to illustrate what the family are doing. Inviting the families to bring a friend along, and giving out my details so I could attend if wished.

I did attend with the families who asked me. One morning I had to leave the house at 6.45 to get to a meeting for 9.00. The L.E.A. were not perfect, they tried to give every family 30 minutes to talk about education, they did ask if the families wanted to send their children back to school, but it was a far cry from the inquisition that happened in the past.

However, all was not well. A lot of families who received the letters did not even bother to reply to say they could not attend for one reason or another. Due to that fact the L.E.A. have informed me they won't be asking or inviting families in the future. They will be ordering and demanding. This has upset me greatly.

If any family, anywhere, receives a letter from their L.E.A., before putting it in the bin, think about your co-ordinator. Would your action result in a lot of years of hard work being thrown away? Then will you still expect help when you need it?

We co-ordinators are not perfect, but we act on your behalf, sometimes to the extent that our own families miss out. Think about what we do, and with the help of others, what has been achieved in the last 21 years. If you have no hassles, then thank those who help.

Have you done anything to help others lately?

Lesley Conway

18, Howdon Rd., North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE29 6TH

0191 2578259

## NO SCHOOL DAYS

Morning would come and I'd get up and slowly prepare for school  
Would I have a good day today? Or would the children again be cruel?

"You're fat"

"You're slow"

"You're not very good"

Taunts and shoving would be the rule.

I hated every moment and asked for help from the teachers and staff

"Run away" "Don't bother us" "Grow up, you're old enough"

Mum was mad and took me home and said it would be better.

She spoke to dad and he agreed. They wrote the head a letter.

"My daughter's had enough of

hurt

and

pain

and

yearning

She's coming home to stay with us, and hopefully restart learning."

We hunted for a shining path,

and there before our eyes,

the lovely path of carefree joy,

the group "Education Otherwise".

The help they gave, helped us through, the advice was sound and good,

To think, we don't need schools.

Leave! Everybody should.

What is E.O.? I hear you say. I'll tell you what is what!

You can learn just as well at home.

Now what do you thing of that?

My parents are not teachers, no qualifications have they got,

but I am learning better things than school and all that rot.

I passed my first assessment with praise, and lots of encouragement from Mum and Dad

My poor dashed hopes have been raised, and I no longer feel so sad.

I lift my head up to the skies

And thank the founders of "Education Otherwise"!

By Mrs. F. O'Connell, 327 Dagnam Park Drive, Harold Hill, Romford, Essex RM3 9ED

01708 701463

## GWERSYLL DEWI SANT

### Pembrokeshire Summer EO Family Camp



Wed 17 th to Wed 24 th June 1998

In the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park , close to St. Davids , West Wales  
Campsite , with showers & shop , some caravans available

200 metres to beach

Dramatic coastal scenery , surfing , boat trips , RSPB reserves , Leisure park

Beach party Saturday 20 th



For details send SAE

(with extra 80 p in loose stamps for admin.)

Yvette Hartley

17 Maes Inqli

Newport

Pembrokeshire

SA42 0TE

Tel: 01239-820968

A castle in open grassy parkland with cows, sheep and rabbits. A river in a wooded valley, wild moorland and Hadrian's wall nearby. Open fires and friendly faces. Animated discussion and intimate conversations. Music and dancing, workshops and trips out, fun and games and sharing.

Come and join us.

## Featherstone 1998

A national E.O gathering

**3-10 September**

For more information and booking form send S.A.E. to :

Lucy Charlton, 2 Wistow Road, Newton Harcourt, Leics, LE8 9FT

## REGIONAL DIARY

EVENTS ORGANISERS PLEASE REMEMBER, WHEN GIVING FULL DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES, THAT THE NEWSLETTER CAN BE READ BY PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF EO

*All regular meetings listed below will now be automatically included in every issue. Please notify the Newsletter Co-ordinator of any changes.*

### BATH

**Hedgehogs** meet every Tuesday and Friday for a wide variety of outings and events.

Contact: Jo Ball & Andy Hannen,  
25 Larkhall Place BA1 6SF  
Ros 01225 471253

### BERKSHIRE

**Wednesdays** - Ice skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell, 1.30pm - 4pm (lesson 1.30 - 2) £1.50 including lesson & skate hire. Close to M4, A329M.

**Fridays** - Indoor and outdoor activities at Woodford Park, Woodley, Reading, 1pm - 4pm, £3 per family. Table tennis, kite flying, model boats  
Contact: Pat Connor 01734 662123  
2, Whitegates Lane, Reading  
RG6 1ED

**Home Learners Group** every Monday for visits, walks picnics etc & alternate Thursdays at Legoland  
Contact: Liz 01344 420235

### BRISTOL

**Alternate Mondays** - Ice skating  
**Alternate Tuesdays** - Swimming at Bishopsworth Pool, 1.30 - 2.30  
**Fridays**, Totterdown YMCA, 10.45 - 2.00, term time only.  
Contact: Kathy Nott 0117 966 8265

### BUCKS (SOUTH)

Fortnightly meetings in a church hall, crafts and other activities, £2 per session.

Contact: Trish 01494 783 398

### CAMBRIDGE - NEW GROUP

Regular meetings, visits, outings, etc including (from September);  
**Fridays** 1.30- 2.10 -Music Group  
5-8 yrs £2.50.

Contact: Penny Kouzarides 01223 322703

**Alconbury Christian Group** open to everyone.

Contact: Audrey Hill 01480 219881

### CLEVELAND & DURHAM

**Last Wednesday of the month**

Contact: Pauline 01642 55 628

### CORNWALL

Contact: Anna Wheeler 01209 890378

### DERBYSHIRE

**Wednesdays** - 11am-3pm.

1<sup>st</sup> Wed Watermeadows, Mansfield (swimming), 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed, Atlow nr Ashbourne, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed, Matlock area, 4<sup>th</sup> Wed Long Eaton area.

Contact: Trevor Denyer 01629 56609

### DEVON

Contact: Sammy & Nick Vidal-Hall  
01548 830716

### DORSET (BOURNEMOUTH)

**Weekly meetings and visits.**

Contact: David Dowl 01202 763688

88 Westcliff Rd Westbourne

Bournemouth BH4 8BG

Send SAE for details

### ESSEX

**Essex Epicycle** gives details of all events. £2.50 for 4 issues.

Contact: Sandie Cottee 01268 73325

17 south View Rd, Rettendon,

Chelmsford CM3 8DX

### FIFE

**Outings & get togethers**

Contact: Karen Spy 01337 830976

## HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

**Second Wednesday of each month**  
at Yvonne Rowse's house, near  
Kidderminster.

**Last Wednesday of each month**  
Jane Charles and Chris Harper's  
house near Malvern.

Contact: Yvonne Rowse 01209 400750

## ISLE OF WIGHT

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month**

gathering/workshop  
**Weekly activities** at Newport Youth  
Club 10am - 1pm

Contact: Rachel 01983 872997

Alison 01983 563862

## KENT

Regular meetings & activities:

**Canterbury -**

Contact: Anita 01227 722140

**Bishopsbourne -**

Contact: Hannah 01303 892417

**Barming -**

Contact: Jean 01622 820206

**Dartford -**

Contact: Angie 0181 3007238

Events list available.

Contact: Send sae to Amanda Mackenzie  
16, Brambletree Cotts, Borstal  
Rochester, ME1 3TN.

## LEICESTERSHIRE

**Monthly meetings** at Friends Meeting  
House, Leicester plus meetings at  
homes, visits, newsletter etc.

Contact: Lucy Charlton 0116 2592118

## LONDON

**CHOICE**- newsletter covering events,  
info, views in London & SE £4.50pa

Contact: PO Box 5, Belvedere DA17 52U

Angie 0181 300 7236

Andy 0181 306 0168

<http://choice.memail.com>

<eochoice@memail.com>

**Mondays (alternate)** Hubert House,  
Temple Hill, Dartford. Playing,  
games, projects, garden, hall & art  
room.

Contact: Angie 0181 300 7236

Andy 0181 306 9999

**Tuesdays** - 11am Chissold Park  
playground.

Contact: Charlotte 0171 254 0419

**Wednesdays** - Honor Oak adventure  
playground.

Contact: Keith Hertog 0181 776 859

**Fridays** - 11 - 2, Dartford Hall.

Garden, art room, dining room.

Contact: Mary or Andy 0181 306 0168

## MANCHESTER

**Bi-weekly** at Peel Moat Sports  
Centre, Stockport. Sports, games, soft  
play, gym (over 16's). £1.10 per child.

**Monthly Art Classes** at Stockport Art  
Gallery and meeting at Friends

Meeting House for older children.

Contact: Gil Wilson 0161 442 8723

## NORFOLK

**NEON** gives details of all events. £1  
plus four large saes.

Contact: Ali Willer 28 Cozens-Hardy Rd  
Sprayston, Norwich. NR7 8QF

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**Tuesdays** (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>) at Kingsthorpe  
Community Centre, Northampton +  
visits & outings.

Contact: Gloria & Geoff Weighill  
01604 713816

## OXFORD

**Fortnightly meetings** - St Margaret's  
Institute, Polstead Rd, 11am - 3pm.  
Philosophy for over 9's & French.

Contact: Wendy Plested 01865 514973

## SUFFOLK

**Meetings every 3 weeks** with grant-  
aided professional workshops.

Contact: Sarah Guthrie 01379 783678

## SURREY

**Fridays** - Ice skating at the Spectrum  
1.30-2.30, £2.35 (+65p for group  
lesson).

**Tuesdays**- fortnightly visits, walks etc  
around Guildford. (SAE please)

Contact: Penny Meader, 11 Thompsons Ct,  
Pirbright, Woking GU24 0JG

## SUSSEX

There is something happening nearly every day.

Contact: *Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178*  
*Anne Rix 01435 862794*

### Tuesday Club at Lindfield

Contact: *Liz Evans 01444 414058*

**Monthly Newsletter/ Events List** - £8pa or £4 for 6 months, cheques to ESEO please.

Contact: *Lyndon Pugh, The Barn,  
Mongers Farm, Barcombe,  
Lewes BN8 5BQ*

## TAYSIDE

Lots of different activities each month.

Contact: *Catrina Morrison 01382 864930*

## WALES

**Mondays** - Newport area, meetings & outings

Contact: *Anne Pope 01239 710905*

**Monthly meetings** in Llanelli/

Swansea area.

Contact: *Sue Haggerty 01269 861902*

**Weekly meetings** in NE Wales /

Borders area.

Contact: *Genny Bove 01978 757489*

*49 Westminster Rd, Moss*

*Valley, Wrexham LL11 6DH*

*£2 for a year's listing*

## WEST MIDLANDS

### • Birmingham

**Alternate Mondays** - 10am - 4pm, St Paul's Venture, Malvern St (A-Z, p90, 2B). Grassed playground, urban farm, football pitch, indoor space. £1 per family plus 50p per child. Drinks (tea, coffee, squash) provided, bring packed lunch.

Contact: *Rod Drury 01384 349064*

*Dee westbury 01527 452329*

**Last Wednesday** of each month 10.30 - 12.30, Centre for the Child, Central Library. Three multimedia computers.

Contact: *Rod Drury 01384 349064*

### • Dudley - Wolverhampton

**Third Friday** of each month, 10.30 - 3.30, Cotwall End Nature Centre, Dudley (A-Z p41 5H). Twenty acre site with walks, play areas, ponds. Wildlife, heated room. £1 per family plus 50p per child. Drinks provided (tea, coffee, squash), bring a packed lunch.

Contact: *Rod Drury 01384 349 064*

### • Walsall

**First Thursday** of each month 1.30 - 3.30.

Contact: *Penny Clarke 01922 745465*

## YORKSHIRE, NORTH & EAST

**Younger Age Group** 29<sup>th</sup> April, 27<sup>th</sup>

May at Meraylah's house. Music, drama, playing in the woods - bring wellies. Other events via telephone tree.

Contact: *Meraylah Allwood 01904 448643*  
*jemergam @ zetnet.co.uk*

## YORKSHIRE - WEST

**Outings & activities.**

Contact: *Diane 01484 846946*

**Third Friday** of each month at Community Arts Centre, Chapel St, Bradford. **CANCELLED**

Contact: *Trish 01274 788938*

**First & third Wednesdays** 10.30 - 1.00, Ground Floor Centre, Hebden Bridge. Other activities arranged.

Contact: *Katherine 01422 844459*

**Last Thursday** of each month 11.00 - 1.30 at the Civic Centre, Huddersfield.

Contact: *Diane 01484 846946*

*Clare 0113 2690061*

**Second Friday** of the month, 1.00 - 4.00at Moortown Baptist Church, King Lane, Leeds. £2 per family.

Contact: *Judith 0113 2265515*

*Clare 0113 2690061*

**Tuesdays** - 10.30 term time - swimming at Shipley.

Contact: *Julia 01274 487182*

## EO Jobs Vacancies

**SMALL JOBS CO-ORDINATOR.** Person needed to maintain register of members willing to undertake small jobs such as organising a mail out, telephoning to check contact details, writing reviews. The job entails periodically advertising for volunteers in the Newsletter and then matching people to the task required. If you feel you can help, please contact, Valerie Gommon, 19 New Rd, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes MK19 7EH 01908 511247

**ADVERTISING/MARKETING TEAM.** Now that EO is on a sounder financial footing we should be looking at how we can make our name and the right to home educate, more widely known. We need some proactive people to liaise with our primarily reactive publicity team. At the next meeting I shall propose that we make a budget available for advertising over the next year and it would be up to those in the team to decide how to spend it, finding out the cost of advertising and trying to get free ads. Anyone with ideas and/or willing to help, please contact Priscilla Park-Weir (Treasurer)

**PUBLICATIONS.** Chris Harper urgently needs help. Anyone with a little storage space for a stock of books and a willingness to get orders out the same week, please contact Chris on 01886 884740

**MEETINGS SECRETARY** needed to take minutes at meetings, and type and distribute them afterwards. Travel expenses paid. Contact Lucy Charlton, General Secretary 0116 2592118

### Co-ordinators Update

The Following Co-ordinators are standing down:-

Fiona and Rob Brookes	Devon East	
Mark Hinton	Coventry	Janet Wilkinson - London West
Cheryl Martin	Gwynedd	
Catriona Morrison	Tayside	

The following are offering themselves as new acting co-ordinators:-

Linda and Paul Hitchman	Devon East	(p12)
Dee Westbury	W.Midlands	(p23)
Bernard Smith	Cheshire	01244 678482
Clare Greenhouse	Hereford	01432 355462
Angela Pullin	Kent West	(p28)
Katrina and John Fenston	Wiltshire	(p61)
Jane Davies & Caroline Harris	John S Glamorganshire	01222 514721 & 01639 844796 ( alter p72 )
Dawn Kirch	C. Antrim	01232 832630
Diane Berry	Notts,	01909480793

NB Heather Twidale is happy to support social events but does not wish to be the Humb. co-ordinator

Future new members would be very grateful if those holding the contact lists could indicate the above information in some way.

NB Trevor Denyer will be away until mid July. Wendy 0115 911 4312 will cover for him.

### Areas Seeking a Co-ordinator

Bristol; Cambridgeshire; Hertfordshire; Humberside; Isle of Man in England. London West  
Argyle & Bute Tayside and Grampian in Scotland.  
Cardiganshire, Gwynedd and Pembrokeshire in Wales.

Please contact me if you are interested in finding out more about the role of co-ordinator.  
Isobel Bogucki (Co-ordinators Secretary)

**School is not  
Compulsory**

**T-shirts now available!!!**

Features EO kicked open triangle logo  
£5.00 adult & £3.50 child (plus p&p)  
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Please send large stamped SAE  
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**To subscribe**, send a cheque (payable to TCS) for £8 for 4 issues or £15 for 8 issues to TCS, 46 Latimer Grange, Latimer Road, Oxford OX3 7PH, UK Telephone: 01865 761817 Email: SL@enterprise.net

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 Yet more (23) Paper Dolls £3  Primary Learning £9

<http://members.aol.com/wiseowlsw/index.html>

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Tuition in Science, Mathematics, Technology and Business Studies.  
Well qualified tutor (and home educating parent) experienced with children of all ages and abilities.

Available Hastings/ Eastbourne area weekdays  
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### Stepping Stones Housing Co-op

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#### looking for new members

We are currently looking for properties in the Wales/S.Wales areas though anywhere considered.

We have a vision of a vegetarian/vegan community, living and working ecologically, child friendly (1 home ed. 3 children), with some communal space, some individual/family space. Rural based.

I am particularly interested in finding other home ed., fairly "autonomous minded" people to join with us in creating a wonderful space for children to grow in freedom and love.

If you're interested, please contact Emma at Brambles, 80 Andover Str., Sheffield S3 9EH  
0114 2731978

#### "Brambles housing co-op is currently looking for new members.

We have 2 houses in inner city Sheffield and are part of a thriving wider community.

We are vegan, communal, income share, try to live ecologically, grow

our own food, home educate...

Interested?

Contact Emma or Alan on 0114 2797164  
or write to 82 Andover Str., Sheffield, S3 9EH

Oh we like to have fun too!

#### **NEWSLETTER FOR JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WHO HOME EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN**

For a sample copy, please send four  
20p stamps and your address to:

Louise English  
41 Queens Road  
Horley  
Surrey RH6 7AH

**DON'T FORGET...  
EO GATHERING, CAMP,  
25-29 JUNE, KENT, ALL  
WELCOME, LOTS TO  
DO, SEE APRIL ISSUE  
FOR DETAILS, SEE  
YOU THERE, SUE  
01233 820008**

#### **HOLIDAYS IN ITALY**

We are an E.O. family running a small organic farm in **Umbria** near Gubbio. We offer cheap holidays on the farm all year round and we also rent a small stone farmhouse nearby July - October.

**Write:** Etani Addey, Pratale, Vallingegno, 06020 Scritto, PG, Italy  
(For the farmhouse only please call Jane in London 0181-671-6855)

Our children are Melissa, 21, just finishing a degree in London, Ben, 16, doing G.C.S.E.s - both entirely home-schooled and Camilla, 15, who went to Italian school at 10.

'Services and products advertised on these pages have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise.'

**To Place an Advert .....** 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

**Chair: Eleanor Stapelton**

63 Sweet Briar Grove, Edmonton,  
London N99LU Tel: 0181 8884 1368

**Vice Chair: vacant**

**General Secretary: Lucy Charlton,**  
Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt,  
Leics, LE8 0FT Tel. 0116 2592118

**Treasurer: Priscilla Park-Weir,**  
212 Gordon Avenue, Camberley, Surrey,  
GU15 2NT Tel: 01276 22735

**Publicity Group:**

**Anita Jamal:** 01904 645659  
**Beverly Young:** 01772 492245

**Newsletter Coordinator: Sue Hutchin,**  
Oakwood, Snoad Hill, Bethersden, Ashford,  
Kent TN26 3ED Tel/fax: 01233 820008

**Coordinators' Secretary: Isobel Bogucki,**  
20 Rusper Road, Horsham, West Sussex,  
RH12 4BD Tel. 01403 261178.

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

**Special Needs: Lesley Belgium**  
52 Camberley Rd, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 1SZ  
Tel: 0117 930624

**Research Contacts:**

**Paula Fielding-Bell** 1 Hill Top Cottages,  
Knott Hill Lane, Delph, Lancs. OL3 5RJ  
01457 872946, P.J.Rothermel@durham.ac.uk  
**Catriona Morrison:** 93, Blacklock  
Crescent, Dundee. Tel: 01382 864930

**Database Secretary: Janet Wilkinson**  
58 Brindley Close, Wembley, London HA0 1BS  
Tel 0181 998 3252  
*(subscription renewals, address changes,  
membership cards etc)*

**School Phobia: Catherine McKillop**  
Tel: 01631 565551

**GCSE Contact: Wendy Pledsted**  
Tel 01865 514973

**College Contact: Valerie Gommon**  
Tel 01908 511247

**Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator:**

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

**Membership Secretaries Coordinator:**

**Pam Bellinger:** The Wallingford Arms, 237  
Broadway, Didcote OX11 8QJ 01235 814999

**EO Stalls: Lucy Charlton,** Church Lane  
Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leics  
LE8 0FT Tel 0116 2592118

**Stationery: Pam Bellinger**

The Wallingford Arms, 237 Broadway,  
Didcote, OX 11 8QJ 01235 814999  
*EO stationery, re-use labels (£2.50 per 100)  
leaflets, posters, membership forms, car  
stickers and are available from; (Donations  
towards postage & printing welcomed)*

**Publications: Chris Harper**

For details of EO publications, information  
leaflets and back issues of newsletters, send a  
SAE to; Badgers Holt, Birchwood, Storrige,  
Malvern, Worcs. WR13 5HA ( 01886 884740)  
*If you have had your publications list for a  
while, ring Chris to check on the availability of  
the items you want before ordering.*

**Council Members**

*If you have a problem, contact your nearest  
council member;*

**Christine Adey** (Dorset)  
**Andy Archer** (Leics)  
**Jude Ashley-Walker** (Isle of Wight)  
**Pam Bellinger** (Oxon)  
**Isobel Bogucki** (Sussex West)  
**Lucy Charlton** (Leics)  
**Jill Fisher** (Leics)  
**Val Gommon** (Bucks)  
**Sue Hutchin** (Kent)  
**Priscilla Park-Wier** (Surrey)  
**Gary Podmore** (Yorks)  
**Eleanor Stapleton** (London-North)  
**Anne Wade** (London Middx)  
**Bruce Wallace** (Highlands)  
**Janet Wilkinson** (Midddex)  
**Beverly Young** (Lancs)

# 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 50p per minute at all times. Recorded message,  
average call length; 1- 2 minutes)

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<[e\\_o@netlink.co.uk](mailto:e_o@netlink.co.uk)>

