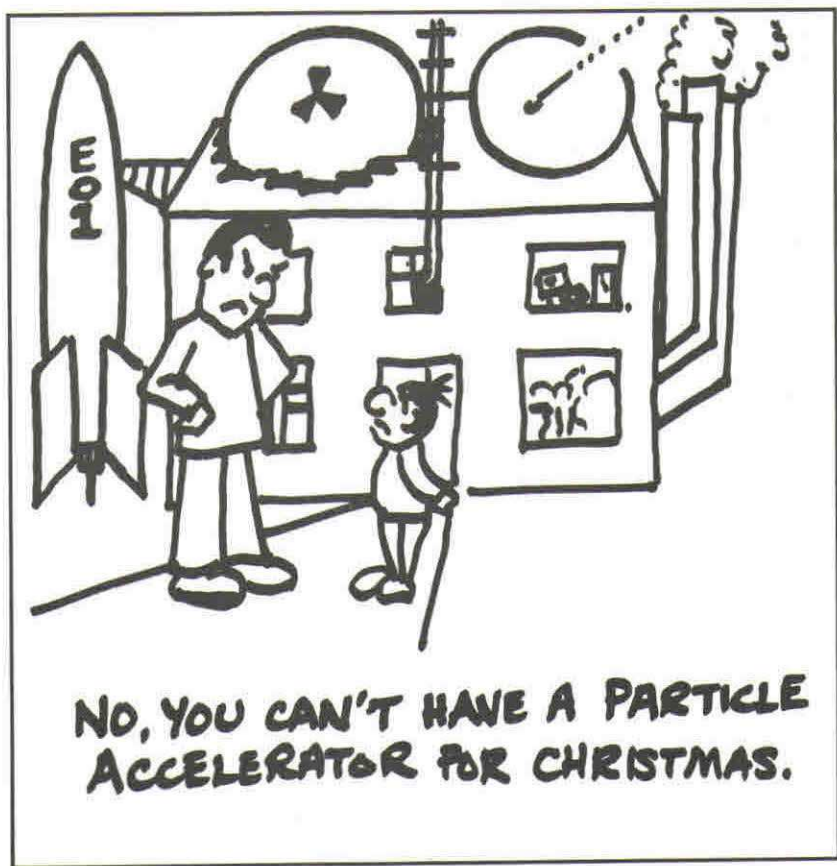


# EDUCATION OTHERWISE



OCTOBER '96

NO 112

## The Next Issue

The Editor of the Next Issue is:

**Shenar Deuchars**

206 Lavender Avenue, Mitcham, CR4 3HP

Tel. 0181 395 0209

Children's Pages Editor:

**Zoe Hertogs**

75 Kent Rd, Sydenham London

The Deadline for Contributions is:

**1st November 1996**

Please include your name, address and telephone number and mark material '*For Publication*'. Contributions are more likely to be included if they are concise and it would be helpful if they were typed. Some Editors may be able to accept material on disc.

There will be special sections on the following subjects,

**After EO - What are home educated young people doing now ?**

December '96 issue. Deadline October '96

**Special Needs**

February '97 issue. Deadline December '96

**Reading & Writing**

April '97 issue. Deadline February '97

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

**Anne Mills**

Oaklands, High St, Airmyn, Nr Goole, E  
Yorkshire DN14 8LF Tel. 01405 720894

### Disclaimer

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

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

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### Editing the Newsletter

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

### If your newsletter does not arrive,

check with Barbara Edwards, who maintains the database, that your name is still on the mailing list.

## Editorial

If this issue seems a bit thin, it's not due to excessive editorial zeal, merely to the fact that very little was contributed. Thanks to all those who did write in.

Looking through past issues for inspiration, I would like to suggest a couple of ideas.

First, many of our letters reflect the fact that we would like to meet other home educators in our locality. We could get more people listed in less space with a contact page, formatted like a Lonely Hearts Column.

Second, many letters are in essence asking: Am I doing it right? I feel we could all benefit from more articles expressing how you do it and which elements you find particularly rewarding.

Incidentally, anyone can edit this magazine - though you do need access to a desk top publishing system. It uses up a lot of time, drives you up the wall with frustration, and makes you realise how far removed you are from everyone else's view of home education.

But it does concentrate your mind on the subject with surprising efficiency and has been very useful in helping us develop the aims and ambitions we intended when we set out to home educate our children. For that reason, I'd recommend the task - once - to anyone else out there!

Carol Wilson, The Rectory, Sweffling, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP172BG

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# COMPUTERS

## A guide to computers for home educators

### EO on the Net

EO now has an email address and an Internet web site. At least one person has already printed out the "Join EO" pages. Hello and welcome to any new members who have joined us via the Internet.

EO email address is [e\\_o@netlink.co.uk](mailto:e_o@netlink.co.uk)

EO internet address is [http://www.netlink.co.uk/e\\_o](http://www.netlink.co.uk/e_o)

There is a lot more development to be done; the success of this venture depends on whether or not members become involved.

# education otherwise

## Main Index

(Designed for Netscape 2 or better; last amended 5th Sept. '96)

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Please be patient while these pages are being developed...



### Available

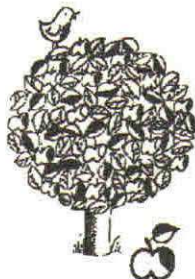
- Introduction
- Aims
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) ...or...  
"Can I home-educate?"
- Main EO Contact Address
- Contact emergency phone no.  
School is Not Compulsory
- "Later Years" Index to last edition  
(2nd edition in preparation)
- Legal Information
- List of (GB) Internet Cafés
- Publications
- Order Form
- Join E.O.
- On-line resources (under continual development)
- Feedback, is welcomed, ..so you can Add Links on a "free for all" basis, as well as Sign our Guestbook

excuses



### Under Development... yet to be done...

- Index to "Early Years"
- Other home-education and home-schooling sites
- Specific search facilities for education
- What's New
- Possibly Newsletter extracts
- Whatever else we grow toward
- The main ongoing development will be in finding useful sites for home-educators - recommendations from practising home-educators are particularly appreciated.



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This page has been visited 169 times since 8th Sept, 1996.

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To come back to this index at any time, press the



button.

# PCs - and how to get the best from them.

There are many types of computer, but this article is aimed at those who have (or are thinking of getting) a "PC". This term is generally used to describe any IBM compatible computer and is the most widely used computer throughout the world. Computers that are not IBM compatible include the Atari, BBC, Macintosh, Archimedes, Amiga and early Nimbus models.



## SELECTING A COMPUTER

PCs have been around for about 16 years; the main reason for this continued success is their ability to be easily upgraded and expanded. Today's models, although barely recognisable to the original IBM, can still run the old 1980s software (and a lot more besides!). The now almost universal use of Windows (TM), a graphically based operating system that makes PCs much easier to use, has further accelerated their popularity.

The four major parts of a PC that you need to consider are the **CPU** (central processing unit or "guts" of the machine), the **hard disk** (where your programs are stored), amount of **RAM** (memory where programs are "held" whilst actually running), and the type of **monitor**.

**CPU** the fastest currently available processor (at affordable prices) is the Pentium (TM) or 586. Most new PCs now come with Win 95, and a Pentium is almost essential for getting the best out of this latest incarnation of Windows. Go for the fastest Pentium you can afford. Of course if you are looking at the second hand market (or even better - if you have been offered someone's old PC!) then you'll be considering older models that are still perfectly OK for home use. A 486 (or a fast 386) with Win 3.1 is an adequate choice for all but the most demanding software. But don't normally consider anything slower (for example a 286 or XT) unless it's literally being given away!

**Hard Disk Space** - an absolute minimum of 500 MB (megabyte) is recommended for today's large, sophisticated programs. New PCs now generally come with 800 MB or 1GB (gigabyte).

**RAM** (random access memory) a new Pentium with Windows 95 needs at least 8MB (get 16MB if you can afford it and want to do a bit of "future - proofing"). Again requirements for older or secondhand PCs will differ, but you should have an absolute minimum of 4MB on a Win 3.1 machine. Upgrades can easily be performed at a later stage if you decide you need more.

**Monitors** should be at least 14" (15" is nice) with high resolution, colour, superVGA graphics (look for safer, low radiation models).

**CD ROM drives** are another of the latest advancements, now included as "standard fittings" along with the usual 3 1/2" 1.4MB floppy drive. CDs can hold vast quantities of information (up to 550MB). This has resulted in a surge of reference type material; encyclopaedias, storybooks, etc. This storage space permits huge graphics and sound files, allowing production of highly sophisticated games and educational programs incorporating video, speech, music, and animation. An essential partner to a CD ROM drive is a **soundcard**, this improves on the basic PC beeper, allowing programs to utilise real speech and music. Speech is a great asset to many educational titles particularly those aimed at pre-readers.

A PC that comes with a CD ROM drive and sound card is known as a **Multimedia PC (MPC)**. Certain minimum standards have been set to ensure that these machines adequately run today's CD ROM software. The original standard (MPC1) has already been replaced several times (now up to MPC level 3 I think). You should ensure that an MPC meets (or exceeds) this specification. Any good PC dealer can give you more details on this.

Other **optional extras** include **fax cards** and **scanners**. If you think you might want to add one or more of these at a later date you should also make sure that your PC comes in a big case with plenty of free expansion slots. Everyone has heard of the **Internet** (a great educational resource if used properly), if this interests you then you should also consider fitting a **modem** (this connects your PC to the telephone system).

When buying a new PC it really is worth searching for the best deal - many come bundled with a huge array of software titles that would cost you hundreds of pounds if bought separately. Buy a few PC magazines from your local newsagent and look through the ads - it is nearly always cheaper to buy mail order and this is quite safe if from a reputable company (use a credit card if possible).

by Maggie Harnew 8/96

**Maintenance.** If ordering direct it is also worth studying the maintenance options. PCs are very sturdy but if anything



does go wrong on-site maintenance can be well worth having and saves the time and expense of sending a PC back to base. Talk to colleagues or friends who already have PCs - the more information you have the easier it will be to find a PC that suits you, your budget and your family requirements. PC prices are dropping all the time and it is worth going for the best you can afford.

**Printers.** As children get older they will want to produce course work, reports, party invitations, etc. and a printer becomes a necessity. Again it's worth looking out for good "bundles" if buying a new PC at the same time. **Inkjet printers** are very popular for home use, being quiet, relatively cheap to run and giving a fast, high quality output. Colour models are only slightly more expensive and are well worth the extra investment. Children love printing their own artwork, newspapers, or letters. A bit of colour here and there, can make all the difference.

**Manuals and Books** New PCs should have guides explaining how to set up them up. Older models also have manuals covering DOS & Windows 3.1, although these are fast being replaced by online help (for example with Windows 95). The quality of manuals will vary with the manufacturer and PC novices will need a good book (a knowledgeable friend is even better!). It is well worth



investing in a book such as "Windows for Dummies". This and similar titles can be found in your local library or bookshop. You must be willing to **spend time** getting acquainted with PC basics. If your children see that you're confident, they will follow suit. The more you understand, the more useful your computer becomes and the more your children will benefit.

Within a few months I guarantee your PC will seem like an irreplaceable member of your family! Just like a microwave or a washing machine, once you've got one you'll wonder how you ever did without it.

**SOFTWARE DECISIONS**

Once your long-awaited PC is up and running you will have yet more decisions to make. First you should check out what you already have. All PCs come with an **"operating system"**, today this is nearly always Windows 95 although some new machines are still supplied with Windows 3.1 (or 3.11) and MS DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System). These themselves are worth a second look:

Many DOS commands are never used by the average user, but do make the effort to understand the basics. Can't be bothered to read those huge manuals? Just go to DOS and type HELP (DOS versions 5 upwards) select the command you're interested in and all will become clear! Even those with Windows 95 may need to know a few rudiments of DOS.

**"Check out what you've already got!"**

**Windows 3.1** includes several simple but surprisingly powerful "applets" (small applications) that are ideal for introducing children (and novice parents!) to basics. Look in the "Accessories" group

for the Paintbrush, Cardfile and Write icons. Paintbrush is a good starting point for the very young - just let them mess around and scribble with the mouse. Introduce older children to "Write", a very handy word processor, ideal for letters, homework and projects. It also accepts pictures pasted from other Windows applications (such as Paintbrush) and so can be used as a rudimentary DTP (desktop publishing) system. "Cardfile" is an ideal introduction to database principles. Some children relish keeping details such as friends' names and addresses, or their music collection, in this way. Similar applications (some have had their names changed) can also be found in **Windows 95**.

As mentioned earlier, look out for good software bundles when purchasing a PC. Personal favourites (that my own children have found invaluable) include **Microsoft Publisher and Works**



- these are all that older children need to produce stunning home work, reports or projects. Works is an "Integrated Package" that's widely used in senior schools for introducing the basics of word processors, spreadsheets, and databases. Publisher is a powerful desktop publishing program that is incredibly easy to use; even 8 year olds will soon get the hang of text boxes, pasting clip art, using fonts, etc. It's also excellent for party invitations, birthday cards, brochures, even paper aeroplanes! Both applications are available in Win 95 and older Win 3 versions. Another favourite, often bundled with new PCs, is Encarta (more on this later).

## COMMERCIAL Software.

So far so good! No extra expenditure is needed for those titles mentioned above. However the time will come when, just as they need new

books and toys, your children will want some new software. Not a decision to be taken lightly, as commercial software prices are pretty steep, and most parents will only be buying these as well deserved birthday or Christmas presents. Some of the best investments are the new CD-ROM reference titles. Microsoft Encarta (TM) is recognised as one of the best multimedia encyclopaedias. The outstanding Doring Kindersley (TM) range includes a children's dictionary, science volumes, and many other titles. Although pricey, they will be used over many years (especially if you have several children) and are still cheaper (and more fun to use!) than a set of traditional encyclopaedias.

## "Edutainment"

Very young children (2½+) will need supervision but you'll be surprised how quickly a 3 year old will grasp basic skills such as using a mouse. Children love games, and the very youngest make no distinction between learning and fun. For this age bracket (approx 3-8) there is a huge range of "Edutainment" titles that seamlessly combine education and entertainment in a single package. They can include everything from basic word and number skills, interactive adventures, problem solving games, etc. etc. Read reviews in computer magazines (several specialise in the "home market") and talk to friends or colleagues. Mail order companies have a wide selection of titles and often sell older releases at substantial reductions. Those with CD-ROM drives will find the demos given

away on PC magazine "cover disks" an invaluable way of finding out what suits your child. For example, all titles in the highly acclaimed "Living Books" range by Broderbund (TM) have fully working demos featuring just the first page of each book. After playing with one page I suspect that any child aged 3 to 8 will be clamouring for more!

## Older Children

As children develop, lines between games and education do become more clearly defined. Many titles available for the 8+ age group are designed to tie in with the national curriculum. Once children are reading well, you can introduce them to "real" applications such as DTP, the Windows "applets" and other programs mentioned previously. When they can produce something worthwhile (party invitations are a good start!) they'll be less likely to want to spend all day blasting aliens!

## "TRY BEFORE YOU BUY"

So far I have only mentioned relatively expensive commercial software - but there is also the vast untapped resource of Shareware, that many parents are unaware of.

Shareware is often coined as "try before you buy" software. The idea is to purchase a shareware program from a "library" for just a few pounds per disk. This price covers duplicating costs, postage, and the upkeep of the library; plus a small amount of profit for the librarian. None of the fee goes to the author of the program. However, if you find the program satisfactory, you are encouraged to "register".

This means sending money to the author or publisher; in return you may receive an updated version with more features, a printed manual or free technical support. Exactly what you get depends upon the

author and the program, registration details can always be found on the shareware disk.

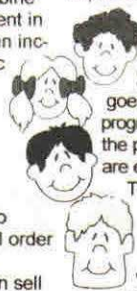
There are thousands of children's shareware programs - the problem is sorting out the good from the bad! This is where the individual libraries come in; it is up to the librarian to sort through programs, categorise them, and generally act as a "filter". Most libraries stock all types of programs; programming languages, spreadsheets, databases, games, education, etc. A few specialise in subjects of personal interest to the librarian.

## FUN FOR ALL AGES

Everyone deserves a well earned break and shareware can help here too. As well as educational titles, there are multitudes of games! If you don't want your child blasting away at aliens



(although there are plenty of these), you can choose from right across the spectrum. Traditional board games (such as chess, othello, chequers), jigsaws (no lost pieces!), logic puzzles and memory games (see picture above!) are all well represented. Graphic adventures, where commands must be typed, are popular with "Shareware Parents" as they encourage typing, spelling and lateral thinking. Colouring books are fun for 3-5 year olds - registration will bring lots of extra pictures for them to colour with their trusty mice! There are even "key bashers" for (supervised) babies or toddlers, simply press a key and something happens! You'd be surprised how soon this leads to further skills, even in a two year old.



**"Help! My PC is so old I can't find anything in the shops to run on it?"**

Don't despair - this is another area where Shareware excels. It has been around for over 12 years and there are many solid educational titles that will run on lower specification machines. Unlike your local chain store, shareware libraries can cater for all types of PC, not just the latest Pentium! If you have an old IBM with 5¼" disks and 4-colour (CGA) graphics you'd be surprised at the dozens of Maths and Spelling games that are still available. At the other extreme, many authors are bringing out new titles that compete favourably with current commercial software. Today's shareware makes full use of the latest hardware and incorporates high quality graphics, speech and music.

**Try a Shareware Library**

Why not contact your nearest library and find out just what's available? Far better than buying an expensive title in a fancy box; only to find that your child is fed up of it in two seconds flat! When you find suitable programs, they can be registered - often at considerably lower cost than comparable commercial software. Typical registration fees range from £10 to £30. If you're lucky you may also find that your shareware librarian is a bit of a PC fanatic and can help you with various problems or questions. Remember though, that detailed technical support for individual programs is generally only available upon registration.

**Maggie Harnew has run a children's educational shareware library since 1991. For more details, a free catalogue, or free advice (advice by phone only - sorry but letters take too long to write!) please telephone WISE OWL SHAREWARE on 01235 529808 or write to 32 Charney Avenue, Abingdon. Oxon. OX14 2NY.**

**A FINAL PERSONAL NOTE.** I would genuinely like to thank all the EO members who have ordered software from our library over the last few years. I have had long (and often "eye-opening") telephone conversations with many members and know a lot more about home educating since becoming a member about 18 months ago. Although my own three boys are all in school (each at different "key" stages of the dreaded NC - ages 7, 12, 15) I do feel that I can offer some help and guidance to those seeking software for children of all ages, whether home or school educated.

I'd particularly like to thank all those customers who have taken the trouble to provide feedback on programs they have found particularly helpful (or unhelpful!). This really does help me decide exactly what to include in the library. Special thanks to Olwen Watkins (who likes our maths tutorials), Judith Haydock (for her knowledge of Windows 95) and Anna Cook, age 13, who has taken the time to write several encouraging letters telling me which programs her family have enjoyed.

Most good libraries will send you a free catalogue - this may be printed or it may come on a disk. Some libraries also run "Bulletin Boards" where you can download programs through your telephone line (if you have a modem).

**IN CONCLUSION..**

Once you have a PC you should be prepared to invest in new software every so often, this keeps your child's imagination and interest going. For many parents, the ideal compromise is an initial investment in some good commercial titles; backed up throughout the rest of the year with suitable shareware titles. But please remember that the "Try Before You Buy" system **will only work successfully if you do the honest thing and register programs that you continue using.** Without this support and encouragement authors will cease writing such excellent titles and then we'll all suffer.

Once you know exactly what software is available (and where to get it from) you can make an informed choice for your child. Next time (if there's enough interest and/or space in some future issue of EO!) I'll try and cover specific shareware titles and how to get even more mileage from your PC!

Maggie Harnew. August 96.

**EO FAVOURITES 1996**

Fractions, Decimals, %s	£2
Animal Quest, age 5-12	£2
Sea School, ages 4-6	£2
Words Alive, ages 3-6	£2
Body Insight, 8-adult	£3
Googol Maths, 7+, old.	£2
Math Rescue, 5-10	£2
Neopaint, all ages	£2
Jill of the Jungle (game)	£2
Kidgames, old PCs. 4-6	£2

**CURRENT BESTSELLERS**

Kinder Carton, ages 4-7	£3
Handy for Win 3+, adult	£3
Physics Collection	£3

**A VERY SMALL SELECTION OF OUR SHAREWARE**  
**- the complete library contains 700+ disks**

**CHEQUERS £2.00**  
**INSECTA £3.00**

**NOTEWORTHY £3.00**  
**FARNSWORTH'S FUN**  
**PACK £3.00**

**RACHEL'S FASHION**  
**DOLLS £2.00**

**MAGIC CRAYON**

**KINDER CARTON**  
**PHYSICS BY PICTURES £3.00**

**EARTHWORDS FOR**  
**ALIEN DINOSAURS. £3.00**

**MAGIC CRAYON £3.00**  
**MASTERMIND TYPING £2.00**

**SCHOOL MOM (maths) £3.00**  
**POEM A DAY £3.00**

**FIRE AND ICE (game) £3.00**  
**X STITCH DESIGNER £2.00**

**GARDENING £3.00**  
**PHOTOROBOT £3.00**

**POST SCRIPT** - just as I was putting the final touches to this article I received my latest catalogue from a children's book club. Two new children's books from Usborne were featured ("Windows for Beginners" and "Projects for Windows"). These could be worth investigating, the photographs shown looked excellent.

## Shareware Review

There are many educational children's programs available now, all claim to be brilliant and all fairly expensive. You cannot know until you've got it home whether it's worth the price being asked. Shareware is the answer. Shareware is bought cheaply (approx £3), taken home and tried out for a specified length of time (varying from 1-3 months), after which time if you decide to continue using it you register by paying a fee (details of which will be on the disk) or you simply stop using the software.

The following are four shareware programs which we have tried and liked. All should run on IBM compatible PC's, 286 or above, DOS 3.1 or above, with a VGA graphics card. The following programs are available from most shareware suppliers (who will be found advertising in most computer magazines).

### Maths Rescue Apogee Age 5-10+

An exciting adventure arcade game. Retrieve the numbers that the Guzzles have stolen, answering maths problems, collecting points, and avoiding Guzzles as you go. Very addictive! Lots of maths practise, choose addition or subtraction or a mixture, with optional word problems.

Division and multiplication available when you register.

*"It's exciting killing the Guzzles. If I got the numbers in order I get more points."*  
Leanne (5)

*"It's fun looking for the numbers and destroying trucks and there's even secret passages to find."* Karl (8)

### Word Rescue Apogee Age 4-8

Another adventure arcade game. A little easier than Maths Rescue. Help reunite words with their meanings (pictures), whilst collecting letters and points (books), and avoiding the Guzzles. This

game aims to teach word recognition, younger children who are not yet able to read would need an adult nearby to read out the words.

*"I like finding the right pictures."* Danica (3)

*"I enjoy getting the Guzzles with slime and jumping streams."* Leanne (5)

### Amy's Fun 2 3 Age 2-5

Amy is a loveable puppy teaching numbers 1-10. Watch Amy count, catch, jump, swim, etc. up to the number you choose. Help Amy match a number to a collection of objects and win a hone on the fruit machine. Help Amy to repair the castle wall with numbered blocks. Watch Amy dance as you play a tune. An excellent teaching aid. Amy's such a character many older children will be wanting to play. A soundcard is essential to this game. Many other Amy teaching aids available when you register e.g. shapes, colours.

*"I like the castle game because I like putting the stones on the right numbers to build the wall. I like watching Amy throw the ball up."* Danica (3)

*"I think it's good because it's nice and easy games for younger children."*  
Leanne (5)

### Bert's African Animals, Bert's Dinosaurs, Bert's Whales and Dolphins Age 3-8+

These drawing books allow you to create your own pictures by choosing backgrounds, selecting and positioning animals and colouring them. It will also print them if you have a printer. A mouse is essential.

*"I like changing the colours of the animals."* Danica (3)

*"I like making pictures on the computer because it's quicker than drawing them and the pictures are smarter. I like the dinosaur one better than the others because I'm interested in dinosaurs."*

Karl (8)

## Computing for toddlers

We are Lindy (writing), Roger, Theo, and Dominic. Theo is nearly four, Dominic is one and a half. I am planning to educate Theo and Dominic at home, if we can all stand it. Computers are not a major feature of this plan, but they are insidiously worming their way in. Roger has an Acorn Computer, a Risc PC. (In fact he has two, there is an older Acorn model waiting for us to make houseroom for it.) Acorn is a brand commonly used in schools but is quite different from the usual "PC", as the computer freaks among you will know. He chose it for its speed, design, and good value (and its British!). In theory there are a lot of "educational" packages available for us. In practice the fact that we cannot try out software first is a major deterrent, something that seems good could be inappropriate or junk. Roger buys computer magazines often and these have useful reviews. The disk which comes with each edition contains a variety of bits and pieces, and sometimes include demos of educational (or children's) software, which is very helpful.

We bought **Fun School 3**. I had grave suspicions about it. It was "educational", it was crude, it had been adapted from some other machine and the colours were occasionally poor. (Two close shades of brown to distinguish in the shape matching section.) But overall it has been good value. There is an easy thing ("painting" a farm scene) for the youngest, there is letter matching, shape matching, counting, and words. Mostly he preferred and needed me to work with him, giving him letter names (wrong, I should have done sounds, but Sesame Street did names) or showing him how I counted. I could feed baby Dominic at the same time so it worked. He explored all its features one after another and got what he wished out of it. We have since bought "10 out of 10" pre-school package, and found it more elaborate and less interesting. (Perhaps Theo had got over his need to explore by the time we got it.)

The other big hit with Theo has been **Lemmings**. For those who don't know about Lemmings, it is a game where you have to save the lives of a lot of little lemmings who roam about a two-dimensional world on the screen getting trapped or killed. It is available on any computer. The first game was a great hit with Roger and me and other adults we knew, even complete non-computer people. Its a game of strategy with some humour. We had Lemmings 2 The Tribes when Theo started roaming the system and he found it fascinating. He couldn't do much with it, but there were a lot of different scenes at starting level and he just kept on trying until he cracked it (he would request me to show him what I did for a few minutes until he couldn't stand it and pushed me away). I think the rich two dimensional world of the Lemmings does have some "educational" value, although his obsession did worry me when it was strong. I used to lure him away when I felt he was overdoing it. Nowadays I have a time limit, though currently it is not necessary to impose it.

**Kidpix** has become a rich resource which I think will become more interesting as the children get older. It is a children's "art" program, where they can fill a blank window, using a set of tools. The tools can draw lines, ellipses, rectangles, stamp many pre-set little images around the picture, write letters or numbers, move bits of picture around, erase all or part of the picture. All the tools are great fun, they have funny features, for example, pictures can be erased in lots of different ways, such as a visual bomb or sliding away. And they make amusing sounds, for example, the letters speak their names, in different voices. Games sort of develop, one favourite was for Theo to create a train with the stamps and then I would place letters on the flat trucks to spell a requested name. The downside of Kidpix (I keep meaning to write to then about it) is that it is not kidproof, despite having a Small Kids Mode, which Theo broke out of fairly quickly. It crashes quite often, even when not abused, and tends to leave a mess, which surprises you later

when doing something different. It is also visually crude. It uses a sixteen colour mode with limited resolution (and only eight different colours) which is garish and frustrating when the machine and screen can do so much more. In spite of the drawbacks I would not be without it.

We have a few other pieces of educational software and demos. I bought some "bargains" at the last Acom User Show in Wakefield. Like other expensive toys, I find it difficult to tell what software will be appropriate for Theo, and have that magic something that makes them worth the large price-tag. Descriptions on the package are not very helpful, reviews are more helpful, but a demo on ones own computer is best. The demos I saw at the User Show didn't tell me what Theo's reaction would be at home. One rule I should try to follow is not to buy something before its needed even if it is dirt cheap. I would be happy to write or talk about the things we have to other EO people. Would a library of reviews be useful? And I think demos can be passed around legally. Dare I suggest a bulletin board or a site on the Net?

Lindy Brett, 32 Blakelow Road,  
Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 7ED

This article has been edited down from the original.

*Arts and Letters have asked us to review the following programs which they felt would be of interest to Eoers.*

*Express is expensive at around £75 but has by far the best clipart I have seen and would be a wonderful resource for a family with a serious interest in graphics.*

## ARTS & LETTERS EXPRESS

**EXPRESS** is a drawing package which has a fantastic clip-art with over 10,000 drag and drop images from Greenpeace and Nintendo logos to space shuttles,



leopards, aliens and even an anatomy section with cutaways of almost every single part of the human body (some even labeled). There is also a symbols menu with thousands of things including shapes, suns, question marks and even a few things like faces. Every one of these images can be taken to pieces, re-sized and re-coloured. There are also many backgrounds to



place these images on. Any objects (clip-art images, symbols or art you have created yourself) can be warped into to strange shapes, also any symbols or hand done art can be made 3 dimensional.



**EXPRESS** is one of my favorite drawing packages and definitely well worth buying.

Alex Mather 12

**A & L Draw** is a more affordable version of Express (around £40) with a reduced clipart and functions.



**A& L Dinosaurs** (about £25) : Any dinosaur mad child would love this. You can create prehistoric scenes from hundreds of dinosaur images and backgrounds. There is also information on 350 dinosaurs and lots of dinosaur related trivia.

A full list of products can be obtained from Deverill Business Systems.  
Tel.01202 722554 Fax 01202 735139  
Discount is available to members of EO

## More Software Reviews

We have had a PC for 18 months and despite my initial misgivings (and the enormous amount of time it takes up) I would hate to be without it now.

Our favourite software is listed below. We, unlike many other readers, have never had a problem trying out new programs. In Canterbury, both Waterstones and a local computer dealer have a PC especially set up for this purpose.

Mark and Sue Hutchin, Alex (12) and Scarlett (7) Oakwood, Bethersden, Kent

**Encarta World Atlas:** Loads of information; geographical, social, political, plus colour photos and videos and music. There is much more detail here than you could fit into a truly enormous book and the images and sounds help to give the flavour of a place. We looked at other even more expensive atlases, but thought this was the best.

**Encarta Encyclopedia:** this is a big improvement on any single volume encyclopedia but does not contain as much information as the whole of Encyclopedia Britannica. There are many interesting animations and some unexpected features such as the opportunity to listen basic phrases in 23 languages. (The children love this.) The big disappointment with this Encyclopedia is that it has been created for an American market and this has influenced the choice of entries.

**Microsoft Fine Artist and Creative Writer:** Both these programs have been very thoughtfully designed and can be easily used by quite young children. Font names, for example, are displayed in the font making it easier to select an

appropriate one - Times New Roman - *Lucida Calligraphy* - **Impact**.

**Creative Writer** is a word processing package for children which, to my surprise, really does make writing interesting. Stunning but simple to use word effects



and a tool which illustrates words as you type are just two features. Gets heavy use in our house.

**Fine Artist** is an easy way for young children to produce exciting pictures, badges, cards and simple cartoon strips but it is not a sophisticated arts package (PC Paintbrush is our recommendation) for creating original artwork.

*"Messing about with the clipart is great fun but there aren't any really good paintbrushes"* Scarlett 7



The following CD ROMs are fully narrated with videos, photographs and soundbites. My original cynicism has proved misplaced as these CDs have been a source of enormous information and pleasure to both our children but particularly Scarlett who could not read when we got them.

**MS Dangerous Creatures:** Beautiful film/photos of hundreds of animals with entertaining and informative narration

plus more written info. The most popular CD that we have.

**MS Ancient Lands:** Lots of information on everyday life religion etc in Ancient Egypt, Rome and Greece. Photos of artifacts, videos of historical sights and a few filmclips plus historical 'guides' ( eg trainee Egyptian priestess) who tell you about themselves.

**MS Exploropedia:** An encyclopedia of the natural world with features ranging from the solar system to undersea. Tad the frog in his space ship looks after you.

### **The Incredible Machine**

I know games are not what E.O parents want to see reviewed in this publication but I feel this one could be popular. You are given a number of objects such as pins, cogs, conveyer belts, motors and lots more to try and achieve a different quirky goal on each level: launch the rocket, turn on the lights, pop the balloon etc.

Incredible machine is a sort of computerised initiative test which looks like an animated MousetrapGame on the screen.

There is also a facility to use the hundreds of pieces to make your own puzzles for your family and friends to play.

### **Help!**

We have been given an old IBM computer XT286. It does work, but when we try to run it we get a display page reading *please run start up tape, settings not defined* and a line at the bottom with **SAVE, LOAD** etc in boxes.

Can anyone with a 286 help with the start-up tape. The A drive is 5 1/4" DS High 1.2M, the B drive is 3 1/2 HD DS 1.4M, and the winchester is a standard 20M.

Also can a computer this old (1986) be used for E - mail ?

We are an EO family, my wife is a student nurse and I am at home with our two children, James (9) and Simon (5 1/2)

Brian Ellwood  
27, Cam Bosavern,  
St. Just, Penzance,  
Cornwall TR19 7QX.  
01736 787419

### **Help 2**

Has any one had experience of using a flatbed scanner with Textbridge OCR ? I am having a few difficulties.

Sue Hutchin Tel/ Fax 01233 820008

If you enjoy the special sections and have any ideas for future topics, please contact the Newsletter Co-ordinator.

The themes of the next three newsletters are:

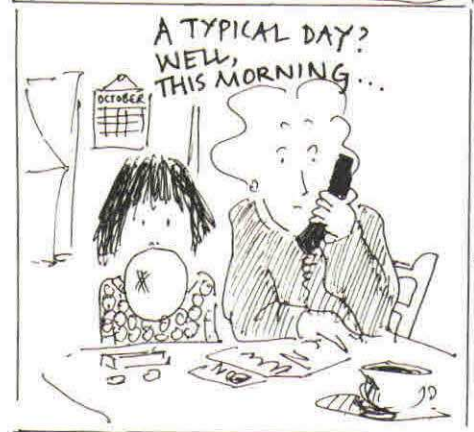
December '96 *After EO*  
February '97 *Special Needs*  
April '97 *Reading and Writing*

*Anne Mills is currently in the middle of moving house and setting up a resource centre. Would anyone be interested in co-ordinating the special sections? This involves commissioning articles from EO members on each theme to complement those sent in by readers. Contact the Newsletter Co-ordinator for more details.*

# EDUCATING ARCHIE

by JEG

Autumn! Season of many EO enquiries. Mrs G takes a call...



© JEG 96

Dear E.O. Folk,

This is my yearly letter I send to EO to tempt all you fellow home-educators to move to Delicious Devon. Where do I begin? Shall I start with the glorious Devon beaches? Swimming in the cool lashing waves with the sand trickling through your toes, the young people making sand castles and dams and climbing the rocks (Oh no!!!! "You be careful - it's never worth dying for a rock climb!" - says me. "Shut-up nagging mother!" - says them) - the coastal walks and the adventures. Exploring the moors and the coves and feeding the Dartmoor ponies and going to all the over-crowded Devon holiday attractions that tempt all those happy holiday makers down to Glorious Devon.....and that's just the Summer.....Now the winter - this is when you go to all those Devon attractions that people can only go to in the Summer because their kids are in school - Hee Hee! Winter evenings on the beach sitting next to a roaring bonfire with potatoes wrapped in foil cooking in the embers while you're watching the water pounding the rocks ...dream on!!

"What kind of childhood did you have?" "Short." - Clint Eastwood 'Escape from Alcatraz' (1979)

We are busy, busy, busy! The South Devon Education Group (SDEG) has just written a constitution because we want to obtain funding for a building of our own - a Resource Centre. Feelers

are already out....people are looking....things are happening...it's only a matter of time! Guidelines for SDEG have been written - pro children's rights, pro young people - a group where they can have a voice - a loud voice in the decisions of SDEG and their lives. These are libertarian guidelines.

What we need and want is more like-minded folk to come and be with us here. The more families with their kids out of school in South Devon means that we can do more projects and realise more of the young peoples' dreams.

*"..To give freedom is to allow the child to live his own life. Thus expressed it seems simple. Only our disastrous habit of teaching and moulding and lecturing and coercing renders us incapable of realising the simplicity of true freedom."* - A.S.Neill (1961) Headmaster of SummerHill - democratically run school.

*"Child abuse is still sanctioned - indeed, held in high regard - in our society as long as it is defined as child-rearing. It is a tragic fact that parents punish their children in order to escape the emotions stemming from how they were treated by their own parents. People whose integrity has not been damaged in childhood....will feel no need to harm another person or themselves."* - Alice Miller (1983) From 'For Your Own Good - The Roots of Violence in Child-rearing' - If you

*decide to read any of Alice Miller's books, make it this one, she's a genius!*

*"Read Alice Miller!" - Sammy Vidal-Hall - my sister, ace-one writer, papier mache/cardboard creator, mural artist, gardener, passionate art-deco enthusiast, education pioneer, Education Otherwise co-ordinators for South Devon, mother of adorable Arran and wonderful Willow, and wife of Nick (father, paint-effect extraordinaire and Homeopath).*

Can I tempt you some more.....? This is an extract from our introductory leaflet handed out to new or prospective families...Just so you know what SDEG is a bit about...

*'The South Devon Education Group is a support group for parents and their home-educated children. In common with other special interest groups, SDEG is intended to provide support for families with a common focus, in this case being together with other families whose children are not in school. The hope is to support both the young people and the adults. As a minority group in a society which is not generally supportive of alternative education, it is important to have a group where we can come together to address the uniqueness of the strengths and difficulties of being out of school, to maintain a sense of identity and of belonging.*

*SDEG came about approximately 10 years ago when a group of families*

*from all over the country decided to move to South Devon to realise a dream of having a community of out of school families living near each other.*

*The ethos of this group is one of awareness for the young people's needs and choices. The group supports them to be themselves within a respectful environment and is an integral part of many families lives.*

SDEG is an incredibly organised local home-education group. We have bimonthly business meeting and the agenda for each meeting is distributed with the previous month's newsletter and is prepared by the agreed volunteer chairperson. The main objective of these meetings are for the young people to request activities/events that they would like to organise/take part in over the coming months and appoint co-ordinators accordingly.

We also have 'Otherwise' Meetings which were set up to allow a space for SDEG members to raise and address issue that they felt uncomfortable about, this applied to parents as well as young people - this is an ideal outlet for discussion and (hopefully) resolution.

SDEG has its own funds. We have an elected Treasurer (Alan, my husband - who is also a treasure!!). We have a Bradford and Bingley Building Society share account in Totnes. The four volunteer signatories, are all young people. The funds belong to the young people of SDEG and they have the

overriding decision as to what the funds are used for.

SDEG members who would like to attend an event, but cannot do so due to financial constraints, can obtain a subsidy from the SDEG funds.

We also have a telephone tree which is a network for active SDEG families who wish to be notified as short notice of SDEG events, notices, changes etc. and provide a mechanism whereby messages can be passed quickly to all members of the tree.

Are you packing your bags yet.....???!?

Apart from organised events we also have social meetings where we chat over endless cups of tea - with cow milk or Soya milk or caffeine-free tea or coffee or fruit/herb teas or hot apple juice or Barleycup etc. (we're a wild bunch!) - and the young people run and jump and hang-out and play!

*"We cannot know, at any moment, what particular bit of knowledge or understanding a child needs most, will most strengthen and best fit his model of reality. Only he can do this. He may not do it very well, but he can do it a hundred times better than we can. The most we can do is try to help, by letting him know roughly what is available and where he can look for it. Choosing what he wants to learn and what he does not is something he must do for himself."* - John Holt (1964) - ex-teacher/Educational psychologist/

Cellist and advocator of child-centred learning.

And now to us... The Harris Reid clan... The usual life things are going on in our household...!!! - sorting out our forever-leaking conservatory (the drips keep coming from different places - we can't understand it!!!), making pots (ceramic - me), being with our lovely children Gus (9 1/2) and Barnaby (5), working on the local arts magazine (frustration, frustration - pull my hair out...aahhh), running jazz -improvisation voice workshops, computing (Alan (mostly!) - computer analyst/programmer - husband of me, Dad of them - if you see what I mean!), sorting out activities the young people have decided they would like us to set up for them (or even set up for themselves!!!) in the next few months like pottery with sawdust firings in my garden, Quad-biking, Ice-skating, rock climbing, making bird boxes, basket making, print workshops with a professional print-maker and making dens and just doing their own thing! - mostly, doing their own thing!

"Very good, very good, you've done that very well!" - My father - Ex-Captain in the Indian Army. Academic - Professor of English, Malawi East Africa. Ex-University Administrator. Retired to the Cotswolds to do The Times crossword puzzle at his leisure, listen to all his jazz records, paint the most wonderful 'picassoesque' pictures and prune his roses!!

If you have already started packing - goody-goody!

If you are thinking about moving down here, but are not sure - please give me a ring or write to me and we can talk some more!

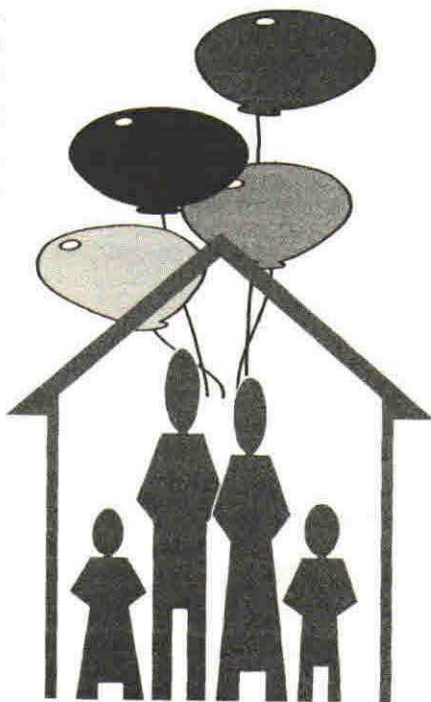
If you beat your kids daily - **and** tell them that they are bad and naughty - **and** you want your kids to be seen and not heard - **and** you don't think children should be equal to adults in society - **and** you teach your children formally from 9.00-3.30 - Monday to Friday - **and** you make your kids say please and thank-you - **and** you make them eat what you think is good for them - **and** you think kids need discipline - **and** you think your kids need certain dogmas and beliefs and religions rammed down their throats for them to be enlightened and good adults - then SDEG is not for you - Personally I think you are misguided! Very very misguided! OOOOO...AHHH. Am I going to get loads of letter saying I shouldn't say things like that in the EO newsletter?

We (Alan and I) try to be libertarians, but we fall short of our ideals daily, being perfect is not an easy task, but improvement is. What matters is not whether we are offering our young people the best, but whether we are seriously trying, within our own limitations to make their and our lives as enriching as they can be. What I would like is more adults who are thinking and are/would like to be

working with the idea of giving young people an equal 'voice' in their family unit and life - and so we journey on.....

Anyway....Love and Luck with whatever you decide. I have to finish now because my children are climbing out of our bathroom window onto the conservatory roof - ("You'll fall!" - says me. "No we won't!" says them - of course they are quite right, they know their own capabilities!!) My motto in life is 'KIDS RULE OKAY! ADULTS DO SOMETIMES!'

Belinda Harris Reid, The Old House,  
Station Road, 'Beautiful'  
Buckfastleigh, 'Dynamic' Devon, TQ11  
0BU - (01364 643343)



## EO Libertarian Support Group

Some of you might remember, many newsletters ago, that the idea of a EO libertarian support group and newsletter was suggested. Many families became involved with this and received the newsletter, which consisted of people's letters on family life, libertarianism, thoughts, book reviews and such, put together and co-ordinated by Pauline Mackay.

For various reasons, Pauline can't continue doing this, although she is still keen to for it to grow and has recently written to the families involved asking for a new co-ordinator. Nick and I are very keen for this group to continue and flourish, so we've agreed to take over with co-ordinating the project.

Pauline has sent us all the details and the £10 of left over funds. We've written to all the families who were part of the group before, but some might have moved, so if you were part of the libertarian group some while ago and still wish to be involved, please get in contact with us.

If there are any other families out there, new to EO perhaps or been doing it for ages, who are interested in a libertarian way of living with their young people, and would like to receive the newsletter and share their experiences, feelings and thinking with other families interested in children as people and the many other facets of children's rights, please contact us. We're hoping anyone will join us who believes in the goal of respecting young peoples rights and autonomy however far you may feel along the path of achieving it. Lets us know the joys and the difficulties.

We're asking families to send £5 towards photocopying and postage or £3 if that seems too much and you're unwaged/low income. We're not sure how many mailings this will cover, but we'll let you know if we run out of money. Also, it sometimes takes a bit of time for people to write in, so we'll wait until we've got a good collection of letters before we mail out the first

newsletter, please bear with us.

If you'd like to write in - and we hope you will - please send anything, however long or short, handwritten or typed. We thought a good topic to open discussion would be A S Neill's saying: 'There is never a problem child; there are only problem parents.' Any experiences or thoughts on this?

We look forward to hearing from you, please join us.

Love from Sammy and Nick

Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall, Homecroft, Brownston Street, Modbury, South Devon PL21 ORQ - 01548 830716.

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#### NOTICE TO MEMBERS

### LOCAL COORDINATOR FOR BERKSHIRE

It has come to the attention of Education Otherwise Association that Mr **Arthur Weedon** of Slough has a conviction for **indecent assault on a child**.

Where a member is convicted of an offence against a child, EO's policy is to terminate their membership. Accordingly, Mr Weedon's name has been taken off the membership database. His subscription is due to expire shortly, and will not be renewed. Please be sure to note that **Mr Weedon is no longer the coordinator for Berkshire.**

Jude Ashley-Walker	(01983 531680)
Eleanor Stapleton	(0181-884 1368)
Anne Wade	(0181-904 7155)

Child Protection Information Group

# Confused? You will be!

Before Lucy our first child was born nearly three and a half years ago, Cliff and myself, Anne, concluded that we would facilitate home-education, ie be led by Lucy's interests rather than structured and formal learning. However, I have always had certain concerns which I would like to air here, and would love to receive any constructive comments regarding these.

## 1) Isolation.

We live in an isolated setting in a rural part of South West Wales. We do not have easy access to the facilities of the big cities, nor to friends, who tend to live several miles away. I would love to read more from children being educated at home, or those who were, particularly in a rural setting. Is it a lonely childhood? From what I've read in the children's pages and some I've met in our area, I have an impression of loneliness, and of parents desparately trying to overcome this.

## 2) Language.

Being in a Welsh-speaking area of Wales I've always felt that one advantage of going to school would be the easy and early learning of

another language. By our two daughters not going to school are they missing out or, as John Holt says, should we leave it to them to learn a language of their own choice as and when they want?

## 3) Maths.

Fairly recently the media focused on going back to learning maths in the traditional way. I have also read of the Japanese method, Kumon, which is reported to give children great confidence in Maths, rather than leaving it to be learnt as part of everyday life. I am confused on this subject. I learnt in the traditional way, which has always stood me in good stead, but it does go against our feeling of it being desirable to be led by our children. Which way does breed more confidence?

*We would appreciate any comments and sharing of experiences, either through this newsletter or personally.*

Thank you.

Anne Pope,

Cnwc-y-wig,  
Pontseli,  
Boncath,  
Pembs.  
SA37 0LH

Tel 01239 710905

## Past Pupils Pupil Passes

We joined EO a few months ago because my elder daughter (Aphra aged thirteen and a half) was being bullied. My younger daughter (Caitlyn, aged eleven and a half) was also unhappy as she is a staunch vegetarian and the school cook seemed to think this consisted of eating eggs for school dinner EVERY DAY!

I informed both headmasters and my Local Education Authority that I was home-educating and apart from an acknowledgement of my letters have heard no more.

We all enjoy reading the magazine and have the following comments to make regarding No.111

In response to Lucy Trecallion's letter about pupil passes, my elder daughter was in the same position but compromised by always carrying her pupil bus pass which carries her photo, date of birth, and also the fact (where it asks for the name of the school) that she is 'home-educated' - just in case this was not enough (and in the case of one obnoxious store assistant it wasn't) I wrote her a letter to carry with her explaining that she was home-educated and any queries could be answered by phoning me at once. (I'm still waiting for phone calls).

*Pat, Aphra and Caitlyn Harrison  
12 Burwood Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE6 3SY*

## Creating Kids Who Can

Having recently read an article in The Independent on Sunday regarding unruly children / slow learners I would like to recommend a book entitled 'Creating Kids Who Can' to all parents and teachers of children from pre-schoolers to teenagers.

It is wonderful to read a book written with enthusiasm, full of fun learning ideas that work and which are easy to follow.

Written by Jean Robb and Hilary Letts, it describes a learning process that works with all children from those with learning difficulties to the gifted. There's no magic formula or special tricks, just an open and nurturing approach to teaching that helps break down barriers, removes judgemental preconceptions and unlocks potential.

*Sue North  
Quince Cottage  
30 Oswald Road  
Moordown  
Bournemouth  
BH9 2TQ*

## A Proper EO Day

Sometimes when I read the EO Magazine (which I devour from cover to cover each time it arrives - and need like no other publication! - I wish it came out monthly), I feel slightly inadequate and vaguely guilty that most of our time we don't do anything that schoolers would consider 'educational' and that more experienced EOers seem to do so easily - I still panic that I don't know enough myself to pass on to the children, but I don't intend to change anything at the moment. I trust myself and them to know how and when to evolve into a different style of learning - the children are after all only 6 (with Down's Syndrome) 4 and 6 months. By the time they are all up, dressed, breakfasted, been out to do the essential tasks and my partner and I (who job share) have changed shifts, it seems almost always to be tea-time, bath-time, story-time and bed-time!

Occasionally however we do manage what I regard as a "proper" EO day.

Sunday 7 June 1996 - A Family Support Group (local group for families of children with special needs) visit to Freshfields Donkey Sanctuary at Peak Forest, a village just outside Chapel-en-le-Frith. A pleasant and scenic route and the sanctuary set in the wilds of the Peak Forest National Park. Very windy day and pretty chilly but refreshing. Able to walk through the fields and mingle with the donkeys -

Elizabeth (4) not too keen especially as they tend to nudge you gently, but when you are only two feet high it must be pretty scary. John (6) walked well and climbed through fence into overgrown wooded area with Elizabeth and negotiated his way very well. I, of course, could barely watch as he sauntered round the rim of a deep(ish) gorge with his hands in his pockets and the grass waist high! But I resisted the temptation to go and get him - partly because I must give him the opportunities to prove himself, and partly because I was carrying the baby, having left my Wilkinet at home! Had a picnic and chose some donkey-type souvenirs. Elizabeth drew rather good donkey / people pictures and asked if donkeys have belly buttons! (they do). Then on the way home, pulled all three round the garden centre in a little truck which most people use for buying plants, which raised a few smiles from onlookers and giggles from the children. Because the plant we'd bought Colin was a present for his birthday, Elizabeth insisted on baking a cake for him as soon as we got in. John joined in for a change so ingredients were split between mixing bowls for them to stir and then amalgamated in the baking tin. Considering this, end result was pretty good. Bath, dinner, stories, and we all retire - exhausted - at 9.30pm.

*Alison Peries & Colin Blain  
69 Lundwood Grove, Owlthorpe  
Sheffield, S Yorks S19 6SR*

## LETTERS

Dear EO,

I'm writing this letter in the hope that there are other home educating families in the Wiltshire area who may like to get in touch with us - with a view to meetings etc.

We are Lynda and Harriet Jones. Harriet is 8, and has recently been deregistered after six months in a village school. Previous to this, she was completely home-educated. We are delighting in our newly rediscovered freedom, but there is no doubt that it would be very nice to meet up with like-minded people.

Please phone or write.

*Mrs Lynda Jones  
Kimberley, Hindon Road  
Dinton, Salisbury, Wilts SP3 5EL  
Tel (01722) 716730*

Dear EO,

We started home-educating our two sons, Billy (10) and Sam (8) in April this year. We would love to get to know other EO families who are within reasonable travelling distance to Spalding/Boston (i.e. 20-30 miles) to share experiences, give moral support and enable Billy and Sam to mix with other EO children.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

*Julie & Russ Truempenny,  
182 Barrier Bank, Cowbit,  
Spalding, Lincs PE12 6AC  
Tel (01406) 380045*

Dear EO

I would like to say a big thank you to anyone who contacted us after my letter appeared in Newsletter No 109.

We have had phone calls and letters from members all over the country and have met three EO families so far. Liam now has two penpals as well.

All support has been appreciated and confirmed that home education is the right choice for our family.

Please would Alison from Newcastle contact me again as I have lost your phone number.

Thanks again,

*Alison Hartley  
30 Fremantle Crescent  
Middlesborough  
TS4 3HR*

Dear EO,

Are there any EO'ers in the Bournemouth / Christchurch / Poole / Ringwood area who would like to meet up - regularly or occasionally - for social contact, to swap ideas on home education, exchange materials etc.

Would like to hear from you.

*Sue North  
Quince Cottage, 30 Oswald Road,  
Moordown, Bournemouth, BH9 2TQ  
Tel (01202) 525011*

## Education Act 1996

SCARCELY was the ink dry on the fourth edition of *School is not compulsory* than, in now traditional fashion, a new law was enacted which made it obsolete at a stroke. With effect from **1 November 1996** both the Education Act 1944 and the Education Act 1993 (among others) will be replaced by the **Education Act 1996**, an enormous statute of some 600 or so sections.

First the good news: the Education Act 1996 is a *consolidating* act, which means its purpose is to repeal and re-enact the earlier legislation without really changing anything. Now the bad news: just as we were beginning to get used to the 1993 Act, all the familiar names and numbers have once again been swept away, to be replaced by something new and strange. Worse than that, the drafting of the various provisions has been changed in numerous minor ways. This should make them more intelligible and user-friendly but, alas, it also makes them less familiar. It means that from November, if you want to quote anything, you'll have to look up the new version to make sure you've got it right.

For instance, section 7 of the new Act reads as follows:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

It was clearly a sensible idea to delete from s 36 of the 1944 Act the superfluous words 'It shall be the duty of' and to insert the helpful letters (a) and (b); but on the other hand, changes of this sort play havoc with the familiar rhythm of the original.

So what are all the new section numbers? The table opposite shows the ones that are likely to be of most interest. In some cases the new section will replace one in the 1944 Act which is still currently in force (e.g. s 7 of the new Act replaces s 36 of the 1944 Act); in others, the section has already been re-enacted once as part of the 1993 Act (e.g. s 444 of the new Act replaces s 199 of the 1993 Act, which in turn was derived from s 39 of the 1944 Act).

Numerous other acts have also been replaced in whole or in part by the Education Act 1996, but only two are of any great interest here. Firstly, **Part I of the Education Reform Act 1988** has been replaced by **Part V of the 1996 Act** (and in particular, sections 1 and 2 of the 1988 Act, which clearly imply that the National Curriculum applies to pupils at state schools only, now become sections 351-353 of the new Act). Secondly, the **Education (Work Experience) Act 1973** has been incorporated into the new Act as **section 560**.

Looking on the bright side, at least everything has (for the moment) been brought together into the same Act. At the time of writing, copies (at £36) are few and far between, but by the time you read this the Act should have taken its place in the regular sequence of statutes at large reference libraries, so you should be able to see it for yourself if you wish.

Rob Wade, London-Middlesex

## Education Act 1996

Table of equivalences with previous legislation

	Education Act		
	1944	1993	1996
Duty of parents to secure education of their children of compulsory school age	s 36	---	s 7
Compulsory school age	s 35, as modified by other legislation	s 277*	s 8*
Pupils to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents	s 76	---	s 9
School attendance orders	s 37; Education Act 1980, s 10-11	s 192-198	s 437-443
Registration of pupils	s 80	---	s 434
Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil	s 39	s 199	s 444
Education supervision orders	---	s 202	s 447
Children with special educational needs	(Education Act 1981)	s 156-181; Schedules 9 and 10	s 312-336; Schedules 26 and 27
Exceptional provision of education in school or elsewhere	s 56	s 298	s 19
Power of Secretary of State to prevent unreasonable exercise of functions	s 68	---	s 496
Powers of Secretary of State in default of LEAs or governors	s 99	---	s 497

\*Section 277 of the 1993 Act (which changes the definition of compulsory school age) never came into force, and likewise s 8 of the 1996 Act is not likely to come into force with the rest of the Act in November. For the time being, paragraph 1 of Schedule 40 to the 1996 Act applies. Its effect is to maintain the existing definition.

## **Report on the Open Council Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting at the Caldecotte Centre, Milton Keynes, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1996**

Full copies of the minutes of these meetings are available from the General Secretary; I will restrict this report to brief coverage of the important issues.

A great deal of work has been going on! The new edition of *School in Not Compulsory* has been printed. Thanks to Rob and Anne Wade for this achievement. The government, with impeccable timing, has introduced the Education Act 1996 which comes into force on 1<sup>st</sup> November. This means that references to statute law in EO publications will then be out of date. The new SINC will therefore need a supplement.

Progress on the new information sheets has been rapid; the introductory pack of four is ready and the rest should also be available by the time you receive this newsletter. The legal one will, of course, need updating in the light of the new legislation. Gwen Baldock and Anne Mills have worked hard to produce this information in such a short time.

Karen Corbel has also been hard at work gathering information on free admissions and concessions to EO members. Co-ordinators are to be asked to provide details of local concessions and free facilities in addition to the list of national London ones. It was stressed at the meeting that co-ordinators do not necessarily have to do this work themselves; they can encourage other members to do it!

The new, lower subscription will mean a considerable drop in income for EO for this financial year. People who are entitled to reimbursement of expenses are asked to minimise their expenditure.

A new database secretary has been appointed and it is hoped that she will prioritise production of the Contact List. This is an enormous task given that the work already done on it has been negated by a computer error. The meeting expressed a vote of thanks to Marc Cottee for his time and commitment to this difficult job.

Finding venues for gatherings is a continuing problem. Sue Lewis (0171 737 2954) is co-ordinating a group to deal with this. Anyone with ideas about possible venues, especially for residential gatherings, should contact her. The AGM will take place at the Friends Meeting House in Lancaster on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1997. This will be a one day meeting with no social gathering. Please make every effort to be there. Other venues booked for 1997 are Featherstone Castle (23<sup>rd</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> May) and the Caldecotte Centre, Milton Keynes (5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> September).

The purpose of the EGM was to consider special resolutions, drafted by Rob Wade, to amend our memorandum and articles of association. The reasons for these amendments were that the Charity Commissioners objected to the existing clauses and they were thought to be more appropriate to EO's aims. The meeting agreed to approve all four

resolutions. The effects of the changes were clearly detailed by Rob in the August newsletter.

I have chaired many EO meetings in the past and these were the easiest ever (in spite of my having been out of touch with the workings of EO for a couple of years). This is due entirely to the evident spirit of co-operation and clear communication between those doing the work of administering EO.

Thanks to Valerie Gommon for organising such an enjoyable weekend.

Keith Charlton

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### **Good News from the Labour Party**

The following extract is from a letter to an EO member from David Blunket, Shadow Spokesman on Education;

'The Labour Party has no plans to change the law with regard to home education or to extend the National Curriculum to teaching in the home. We are very keen to ensure that each child receives the appropriate education and respect the right of parents to teach their children at home.'

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### **Co-ordinators Update - Please Read !**

The list of co-ordinators is now available directly from me rather than from the database secretary. When you need a new copy please send me an SAE.

The following areas are looking for a new co-ordinator:  
Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Durham, Glamorganshire, Grampian, Gwent, Hertfordshire, Highlands and Islands, Humberside, Kent, London West, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Pembrokeshire, Surrey, Tayside, YorkshireWest.

#### **New Acting Co-ordinators:**

**Lincs:** Lynne Westmorland 01507 604121 / 533481

**London Middx:** Janet Wilkinson, 0181 900 2685

**Gwynedd:** Cheryl Martin, 01248 715785

**Dumfries and Galloway:** Chloe Bruce TBA

**Devon East:** Fiona Brookes, 01884 243532

## For Your Eyes Only

**In Issue 111, Priscilla Park Weir raised the question of dissemination of information. Should we help non-members of EO, and how much information should be made available to them?**

Janet Wilkinson replies:

"I believe that it is vital that we provide as much help as possible to prospective home-educators.

"I feel that this is especially important now we are a registered charity. It cannot be considered charitable to turn away a family in distress until they part with their money. The NSPCC would not refuse to help a child until it had paid its membership!

"In our leaflet 'Home or School? It's your choice', we state that "it is well worthwhile contacting Education Otherwise before going ahead" regarding the law on removal from schools. Most families, surely, would not join EO until they have made the decision, so if we refuse to give advice on the basics such as de-registration we could easily leave families finding themselves on the wrong side of their LEA before they even start.

"As a local co-ordinator I am very willing to have my telephone number passed on to new enquirers and although I would, of course, do my best to persuade them to join, I certainly would not withhold any advice that I felt was necessary until I knew they were members. I do not

begrudge giving time, help and information to anyone if it is of some use to a person who really needs it."

*2 Orchard Gate,  
Greenford, UB6 0QW*

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**Now that we are a Charity please help us that little bit more.**

If you are a basic rate taxpayer a deed of covenant means that your subscription or donation is worth more. EO reclaims almost one third from the Inland Revenue. If you pay higher-rate income tax, you can also claim back 15% of the total gift for yourself. Please help EO and fill in the forms below and return to me, your Treasurer (see back page).

The subscription is £15, but if you can afford a little more .. many thanks.

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Witness's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness's name and address \_\_\_\_\_

**STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...**

**Contact List** EO apologises for the long delay in publishing the contact list. The new database secretary is now working on it and will complete it as soon as possible.

Please send changes of address etc ( E mail and fax numbers too) to:  
Barbara Edwards, 12 Oxford Rd, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3RP 01483  
832250

**School is Not Compulsory** has finally been printed and new members should receive a copy automatically. Any long standing members who want a copy should send an SAE to: Chris Harper, Badgers Holt, Birchwood, Storrige, Malvern, Worcs. WR13 5HA 01886 884740

**Membership Secretaries** are reminded that they should not use old membership forms. New ones can be obtained from Lucy Charlton.

**Volunteers are urgently needed for:**

**Enquiries in Scotland** (dealing with enquires from the public)

**Special Needs** (supporting families with children with special needs)

Contact Eileen Wilson: 01283 532547

**Job Vacancy:** A volunteer is required to hold stocks of stationary, re-use labels, posters etc. Contact Lucy Charlton for details;  
Tel 0116 2592118

**Don't Forget** if you know any young people who were home educated please tell us what they are doing now. Contact Anne Mills

There are now new contacts for the following areas;

**GCSE:** Wendy Plested 01865 514973

**College:** Valerie Gomman 01908 511247

**STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...**

# REGIONAL DIARY

## Berkshire

Every Wednesday, ICE SKATING, 1PM at the John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell (easy access from M4/A329M). Lesson from 1.30-2pm. £1.50 per skater, including skate hire and lesson. For details of this and other events/meetings:

Contact Pat Connor (01734) 662123  
Or send SAE to 2 Whitegates Lane,  
Earley, Reading RG6 1ED

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## Leicestershire

**Leicester:** At the Friends Meeting House, Queens Road:

October  
28th MONTHLY MEETING  
To chat, swap ideas, make friends,  
plan trips, activities & get together.

November  
25th MONTHLY MEETING

Contact Jill Fisher (0116) 270 1735  
92 Howard Rd, Leicester LE2 1XH  
Send SAE for full list of events and activities.

### Market Harborough:

Every Wednesday, after lunch  
SWIMMING

Contact Pat (0116) 254 3207

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## London, South West

Every Monday, 10am-2pm  
MEETING for various activities. We aim to provide support and social contact and a space for messy or other activities which need a large room. Come along to St Andrews Church Hall, Waynelete Road, Earlsfield, SW18. We rent the hall so must ask for an attendance fee (currently £5 per family until we get more members)

Contact  
Julia Noble (0181) 947 4203

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## Norfolk

NEON, the Norfolk Education Otherwise Newsletter, which includes details of all our events, can be obtained by sending £1.00 and six SAEs to:

Ali Willer, 28 Cozens-Hardy Road,  
Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF

### December

12th CHRISTMAS PARTY, 11AM  
at Frettenham Village Hall. All welcome, please bring food to share.

Contact  
Ali Willer (01603) 401020

## South Devon

The South Devon Education Group have been taking a slower pace over the summer, but as the weather gets colder and the tourists have gone home, SDEG dusts off the sand (from the beautiful beaches) and gets lively!

POTTERY WORKSHOPS with  
sawdust firings,  
QUAD BIKING  
SKATING  
ROCK-CLIMBING  
SWIMMING on the Moors ...

Our Monthly Newsletter is £4.20 for 6 issues, cheque payable to SDEG. Send to:

Alan Reid (Treasurer)  
The Old House  
Station Road  
Buckfastleigh  
Devon TQ11 0BU

For further information,

### *Contact*

Belinda Harris Reid (01364) 643343  
Address as above

Sammy & Nick Vidal-Hall  
(01508) 830716  
Homecroft,  
Brownston Street, Modbury  
Devon PL21 0RQ

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## Sussex/Surrey

### Haywards Heath

Tuesday Drop-In Club near Haywards Heath as well as something happening somewhere on most of the other weekdays! The local monthly Newsletter has articles and comments as well as the Events Listing.

### October

14th MATHS GAMES DAY

20th PARENTING AND ANGER  
DISCUSSION

26th HISTORY WORKSHOP DAY

Come and add your favourite event/person to a IOM Tome Line and share anything that has triggered off an interest in any aspect of history.

*Contact* Isobel Bogucki (01403) 261178 for confirmation of dates and further information.

### Guildford

Tuesday afternoons, fortnightly: Get-together Group for walks and visits around Guildford.

Every Friday, SKATING, new weekly sessions.

### *Contact*

Penny Meader (01483) 481882  
Lynne Ryan (01483) 503971

## Wales & Welsh Borders

### Clwyd, W.Cheshire, N.Shropshire, N.Powys

Group meets at least weekly for socialising, outings and activities. For current listing send SAE (or £3 for full year).

*Contact:*

Genny Bove (01978) 757489  
Rock Cottage, 49 Westminster Road,  
Moss Vally, Wrexham, Clwyd  
LL11 6DH

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## Warwickshire

October

18th (Friday) 10.30am PLANNING  
MEETING

Please bring plenty of ideas for meetings in 1997.

*Contact*

Alison Cox (01926) 613619

November

One Saturday we hope to have an  
ART WORKSHOP

*Contact*

Trish Archer (01203) 422575  
Barbara Cooper (01203) 412477

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## West Midlands

### Birmingham

Last Monday of every month,  
MEETING at St Paul's Venture,  
Malvern Street.

10.30am-12.00 CRAFT ACTIVITY  
12.00pm- 1.30 LUNCH (Bring your  
own) Tea, Coffee, Squash available  
at the Centre.

1.30pm-3.00 TALK

No charge to attend, but donations  
requested towards running costs and  
resources.

### Walsall

2nd Thursday of every month:  
MEETING at the Central Library  
1.30pm-3.00. Drinks provided by the  
library staff if you arrive early!

HELM: (Home Educators' Local  
Magazine)

The West Midlands now has a great  
8 page monthly newsletter available  
for £4.80 per year (£2.40/6 months;  
£1.20/3 months; 20p + SAE single  
copies

Contains local info and details of  
trips, events.

*Contact* Paula (01210) 603 8673  
Julie (01922) 409342

## Yorkshire, West

### Huddersfield

Last Thursday of every month, PARENT & CHILD MEETING, 11am-1.30pm at the Child Guidance Centre, Civic Centre, Huddersfield. This is where we organise trips and activities, chat, swap ideas and make friends.

#### Contact

Diane (01484) 846946  
Clare (01132) 690061

### Shipley

Every Tuesday morning:  
SWIMMING

Contact Julia (01274) 488657

### Heaton

NEW Community Venture! We are setting up an EO community in rural/semi-rural location (yet to be decided) and are inviting EO families to join us. If you are interested, please:

Contact Julia Brightbart (01274) 488657  
177 Highgate, Heaton, Bradford, BD9 5PU

**Blackpool Borough Council** is compiling The Grundy Art Gallery's mailing list for all groups who may be interested in the educational activities run at the gallery.

A resource pack is available to parents in the Blackpool and Fylde area who are educating their children at home.

## Yorkshire, North

For details of social events, send SAE requesting details to:  
Anne Mills, Waverley, Murton Way, Murton Way, Murton, York, YO1 3UJ.

NB: STAMPS are essential and additional contributions for postage past, present and future are always welcome!

I have also compiled an up-to-date North Yorks Contact List. Send SAE as above.  
MEMBERS ONLY.

### Our area needs:

- \*Volunteers to organise social events
- \*Volunteers to run activity days at their homes.
- \*Someone to organise/co-ordinate a telephone tree
- \*People to help with local publicity, distributing leaflets, organising stalls at fairs, festivals, library displays, etc.

#### Contact

Anne Mills (01904) 488088

#### Contact:

Lynne Fade  
Blackpool Borough Council  
Community Services Department  
53/55 Cookson Street  
Blackpool FY1 3DY

Tel (01253) 26370

## Adverts

### Education for a Just and Sustainable Future

**new economics**

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"Environmental degradation, spreading deserts, unemployment, starvation, growing divisions between rich and poor, developed and 'underdeveloped' - the economic system sometimes seems to be stacked against the world.

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To receive a FREE fact sheet on our growing program of work on Education in New Economics, our new publications catalogue and information on NEF, write to Matthew Mitchell, NEF, FreePost, 1st Floor Vine Court, 112-116 Whitechapel Rd, London E1 1JE, quoting ref E001, or email us at [neueconomics@gn.apc.org](mailto:neueconomics@gn.apc.org)

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**NEON The Norfolk Education  
Otherwise Newsletter contains list-  
ings and contacts for social events  
and visits. Send £1 and 6 SAEs to ;**

Ali Willer, 28 Cozens-Hardy Rd, Sprow-  
ston, Norwich NR7 8QF

### READ ON

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Books for the disabled and hospital  
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Full details can be obtained from, Dawn  
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## Adverts

*'Creative Listening', 'Special Time' and 'Learner Directed Learning'*

*A practical and personal workshop for adults. Children welcome - creche available*

*Cost: 70 children 10 inclusive  
Date: November 15th (Friday eve), 16th and 17th with optional extra day Monday 18th*

*Tel. Helena 01202 885294*

### **ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL**

**Loose-leaf monthly narrative history magazine for enthusiastic readers over twelve.** Send to Orange Blossom Special, Freepost LON226, London SW8 1BR, for free sample issue.

*"Only rarely does a publication appear which is aimed at developing and sustaining a wider interest in history among children of secondary school age. "Orange Blossom Special" is designed to reach this target, and achieves it splendidly' Rob Morgan, Welsh Historian.*

*"A brilliant resource for us as home educators" Mrs White, Suffolk*

### **Jehova's Witnesses**

Newsletter for Jehova's witnesses who home educate their children

For a free copy, please send an A4 SAE (26p stamp) to: Louise English  
41 Queens Rd, Horley, Surrey, RH6 7AH

### **Redfield Community Programme of Events Autumn/Winter 1996/7**

Working weekends including, hedge laying, coppicing, permaculture, living in communities, apple pressing etc

Tel 01296 713661 Fax 01296 714983

### **Cooperative board games, books about communal living, community arts and rites of passage**

available from Edge of Time, BCM Edge,  
London, WC1N 3XX

Tel 07000 780536

E Mail 106231.4563@compuserve.com

### **Tibet Education Pack**

*72 page pack with colour photos aimed  
at 11-15 years olds. 14.95*

Tibet Support Group  
0171 359 7573

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

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

**SERVICES AND PRODUCTS ADVERTISED HERE HAVE NOT BEEN  
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## Officers

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### **Vice Chair:**

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Tel. 0181 904 7155

### **General Secretary:** vacant

### **Treasurer:**

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

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**Anita Jamal**: 01904 645659

### **Newsletter Coordinator:**

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

### **Publications Officer:**

**Lucy Charlton**, Church Lane Cottages, Newton  
Harcourt, Leicestershire, LE8 0FT  
Tel. 0116 2592118

### **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 (acting):**

**Maggie Swatridge**, 32 Carey Park, Polperro,  
Looe, Cornwall PL13 2JP  
Tel. 01503 272087

### **Research Secretary:**

**Angie Targett**, 19 Wellcarr Rd, Woolscat,  
Sheffield, S8 8QP Tel. 0114 2817466

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

**Barbara Edwards**, 12 Oxford Rd, Guildford,  
Surrey, GU1 3RP  
Tel. 01483 832250

### **School Phobia, Young People's Support:**

**Angela White**  
Tel: 01203 312461

### **Adult Support:**

**Catherine McKillop**: Scotland  
Tel: 01631 565551

**Elaine Stade**: West Country  
Tel: 01643 707535

### **Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator:**

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

### **Membership Secretaries Coordinator:**

**Maggie Swatridge**, 32 Carey Park,  
Polperro, Looe, Cornwall, PL13 2JP  
Tel: 01503 272087

## Council Members

### **Andrew Archer** (Leics)

**Jude Ashley-Walker** (Isle of Wight)

**Gwen Baldock** (Yorks-North)

**Isobel Bogucki** (Sussex West)

**Lucy Charlton** (Leics)

**Val Gommon** (Bucks)

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**Eleanor Stapleton** (London-North)

**Anne Wade** (London Middx)

**Bruce Wallace** (Highlands)

**Beverley Young** (Lancs)

## Stationery

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

## Publications

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

*The Abuse of Care and Custody Orders*

Pat Knox £3

*Troubled Children* Pat Knox £3

*Learning from Home-Based Education*

Roland Meighan £3

*Early Years* £2.50

*Newsletter Digest ('82-'86)* £1.50

*EO Newsletters (4 back issues)* £1.20

UK postage and packing £1

# education otherwise

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

Our principal aims are to:

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

For further information send an A5 s.a.e. to:

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

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

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