

EDUCATION OTHERWISE



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The Next Issue

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The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st May 1997

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;

Science at Home

June '97 issue. Deadline April '97

A Typical EO Family

August '97 issue. Deadline June '97

Special Needs

October '97 issue. Deadline Aug '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:

Michael Allen, 71 Belgrave Rd,
Loughor, Swansea, West Glamorgan
SA4 6RF
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All contributions (including adverts) have been accepted in good faith and have not been in any way endorsed by Education Otherwise which cannot be held responsible for the consequences of responding to any of them.

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Editing the Newsletter

The Newsletter is edited by volunteers. If you would like to know more, please contact the Newsletter Coordinator. We currently need Editors from the **October 97** issue onwards.

If your newsletter does not arrive, check with Barbara Edwards, who maintains the database.

EDITORIAL

Hello to everyone at E.O. My name is Linda and my daughter Stephanie, is nearly 14yrs. We have been with E.O. since February 1996.

I do hope you find this months newsletter brimming over with articles of interest, as I've tried to get as much in as possible. I've even included a recipe for Easter Biscuits as its nearly Easter, maybe your children may like to give them a go.

Unfortunately Steph's computer decided to blow up three weeks ago, so we've been using a manual typewriter, but we got there in the end, after quite a lot of retyping.

We hope you all enjoy this edition and the children's pages, and believe it or not I would actually do it all again, (I'm a glutton for punishment).

Happy reading and Happy Easter, until the next time (hopefully)

Best Wishes, Linda, Stephanie and (Jeremy my cat)
asleep as usual.



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READING.

We are a family that believes reading to be the most important part of anyone's education - I would almost say the most important part of one's life as an element of our civilisation! Books will give you the information to make more choices and tell you where to go to get more information in any direction; they are also to a large extent the transmission method of our culture - as opposed to the ephemeral or recent 'culture' transmitted by television or other media. Furthermore a good book can teach the enquirer almost as well as a 'real live' tutor on any subject (and sometimes better!). We do realise that some people are unsuited to this method of learning but I think that inability to read or enjoy books is often due to damaging teaching-of-reading, or lack of it. Both my husband and I were early and avid readers who had free run of adult libraries from about age eight; our eldest child is now nine and has done the same - reading fluently to himself from two to eight hours a day (truly!) since he was about 6 1/2. Our just turned five year old is just taking off as a 'Dr Seuss' book reader, and reads lots of notices, signs in the street, etc. We don't use reading schemes any more as they are all apparently tedious - but do a lot of reading to the children, including poetry, and classics at bedtime, also we use as varied an approach as possible, spelling and phonics and rhyming words and sounding - out - each - letter, etc. I am convinced that any normal child can be taught to read by a literate parent in about twenty sessions aged 5 and up, provided the ground work and love of stories has already been laid.



A favourite activity of both children from about 3 - 6 years has been to write stories themselves - by asking the available adult (or older child in the case of the younger) to spell each word, and later the 'hard' words or those they remember are not easily sounded out. We don't stress spelling unless asked at this point, 'imaginary' spelling is fine, and much less limiting - if you read enough it is self-correcting to a great extent. I would suggest to anyone teaching their child to read - start alphabet songs etc. and pointing out signs such as 'BUS' and 'TOY SHOP' at two or so, encourage 'letters to Grandma' etc. throughout - not as a chore - and ask relatives and friends to respond by sending the child his/her own mail (printing or block capitals only!). When interest in reading surfaces at 4 and up (as it will if the child sees you read and write) use entertaining books such as Dr Seuss, limericks and poetry for children - and do some reading twice a day whenever possible. Once reading is established (voluntary and silent) keep on reading to the child to introduce new authors and genre - some children are very conservative about what they'll read until thoroughly caught' by the plot of the book. Supply lots of children's classics, and extra material e.g. find locations of stories in the atlas, National Geographic Magazine, other library books, etc. Our family has particularly enjoyed 'tape stories' or audio books, and the children have become interested in books for older children they could not have read themselves that way.

Our favourites are: At ages:

A.A.Milne.	all
Arthur Ransome	all, or 5 + up
Dick King-Smith	4 - 8
J.R.R.Tolkien	6 + up
L.Frank Baum	4 - 8
Alan Garner	6 - 8
C.S.Lewis	6 - 8
Maurice Sandak	2 - 6
Dr. Seuss	2 - 6

I am sure I haven't said anything many others wont say, reading isn't revolutionary after all - but it is liberating - and can give a child his first route to freedom from parent's or school's way of thinking - by reading each of us is free to turn himself into whatever he chooses.

Other very valuable 'tools' are Scrabble and Lexicon games, I-Spy-Something-Beginning-With- (playable with many three year olds if you use sounds not letters and are not too rigid), Grandmother's Trunk type games, etc., which we must have spent four hours a week playing, on average, for the last six years!

Mandy Thody-MacDonald.
Cowes. Isle of Wight.

I am Daisy Wrightson, aged 8. During the long time it took for me to learn to read I have tried many ways. I shall be telling you the most successful.

The problem as I see it, is that I was set down a lot by the three schools and many nurseries I went to.

The books I used to improve my reading skills from the state they were in were the Willard Price adventure series, Ladybird Books, The Hobbit and Lord of the Rings.

yours in friendship

Daisy E. Wrightson. 15 Kensington Close, Batley, W.Yorks. WF17 7RL.

My daughter Tia is nearly seven and I started teaching her to read with flashcards at the age of 2 1/2, very much inspired by *Glen Domans* book 'Teach your Baby to Read'. By the age of 4 she had started to read *Peter and Jane* 2a. We didn't bother with the 1a,b, or c books as they were too easy. Now she reads anything and everything. Her reading level is that of a 10 year old.

My son Oliver is just four. He started the same way as Tia, with flashcards at the age of 3. I didn't feel he was ready before as his attention span was not as long as Tia's. However, he started to read Peter and Jane books at the age of 3 3/4. I started him on 1a because I felt he would be more confident if it was easier and he could do it. If he had found it too difficult he would have backed off. However, he really enjoyed it and 3 months later at the age of 4 he is on Peter and Jane 2b and doing well. Tia got bored of Peter and Jane at level 8. By then she could read well enough to choose her own reading books, so that is exactly what she did and from then on she went from strength to strength.

I bought a lot of second hand Peter and Jane books because I was only going to use them as a basic teaching scheme. It was well worth it so I kept them for Oliver.

I feel reading is a key to knowledge and therefore essential so the sooner you start the better. I think any similar reading scheme would work equally as well, it is the concentrated, individual attention and help they receive that is the most important thing.

Once a child has learnt to read well the world is their oyster and a door to learning everything else is opened.

Coral Smith. 50 Maisemore, Yate, Bristol.

Reading and Writing.

When it seemed that Molly learnt more from her homework than all her lessons I realised I could teach her myself. I missed 2 years of exciting moments where it suddenly works and the next step is grasped.

Now she is reading and writing fairly well so the literary world is open. Lots of reading should improve her spelling, punctuation and grammar on its own. We do use work books: "At Home with English", for 5 - 7 year olds, by Oxford University Press has been good (also Maths and Science ones), and a "Test Yourself" book for spelling (A Ladybird one), which she enjoyed enough. We've concentrated on one digraph or letter combination each week from "Look and Read" BBC 2, which they both like. On certain pieces of work we make corrections, usually concentrating on one area, such as capital letters. I assume reading alone must improve one's vocabulary and ability to spell and read new words. Reading aloud must be better for that but up until now she'd had quite enough of that at school.

A friend of mine who home educated said just read loads of books to them and you can't go wrong.

My five year old Basil has been slower to learn the letter shapes and sounds, but now he is nearly there. We haven't followed one reading scheme, partly because of the expense and partly due to the huge choice. He's had a bit of this and that, courtesy of the charity shops, from where I get nearly all of our books. We are following 'Words and Pictures' BBC2 and found the teacher's notes worksheets useful. 'Ant and Bee' have lent a hand, Usborne's 'Cat, Mouse and Bear', Richard Scarry's workbook 'It's Fun to Learn' is good. Now we're trying Ladybird's 'Peter and Jane' that I learnt with. Ladybird have two other reading schemes as well. He's so pleased to be able to read something. I've made Flash Cards using mostly three letter words that make sense phonically, feature frequently and that he likes. He seems to need phonics to focus properly on the word and he can't use 'look and read' recognition until he knows a word very well - only a few so far! Soon he'll have a much, much wider range of words that he'll be able to recognise anywhere and will have the methods to work out new words. We do about an hour or so of formal work about half the time, but we're usually up to something.

The children at school seem a little further on with their reading, but I think diversity and enthusiasm are very important things and there's no great hurry. However, once you've learnt to read and write the world really opens up and you can find out about nearly anything. What a brilliant skill!

I often look through workbooks to get ideas. Examples:

Ring the odd word out:

dog dog cat dog
ant bee ant ant

Match the first word with another:

car : cat bee car

I am finding home schooling to be good fun and very educational. Sometimes they need rather a lot of persuasion to get down to 'work'. What about 'discipline and incentives' as a topic? I get fed up explaining why we need to practise things. I suppose a routine, advance warning of less desirable tasks and the faith in my reasonableness should win through.

I'm still looking for a family interested in buying the nearby barn, with similar aged children approx: G 7-9, B 4-6, B 2-3, especially with alternative views on health, life and gardening - ever hopeful!

Best wishes,

Chloe Bruce, Clugston Mill, Kirkcowan, Newton Stewart, Galloway, DG8 0DB

Useful Addresses:

BBC Educational TV,
PO Box 234,
Wetherby,
W.Yorks,
LS23 7EU.
Tel: 01937 541001.

Channel 4 Schools,
PO Box 100,
Warwick,
CV34 6TZ.
Tel: 01926 433333.

Ladybird Books,
Beeches Road,
Loughborough,
Leicester,
LE11 2NQ.
Tel: 01509 268021.

A QUICK REMINDER!

The 'Special Section' in the next newsletter is **Science at Home**
Articles are needed now! So put pen to paper today and make the next
newsletter a bumper issue!

Dear EO,

When my eldest son was a toddler I started my reading on the subject of the nature of learning, and most particularly on the learning of reading. Like a woman possessed I read anything I could find, using the bibliography of one book to find the next. In the process I found lots of good ideas, lots of wacky theories, but over all the assumption was that children need to be taught to learn to read. At the same time I fell in love with the ideas of John Holt (I think I have read every one of his ten books, some of them several times). I think that the most fundamental conclusion that he came to was that teaching does not make learning, and where reading is concerned the uninvited teaching is not only unhelpful but can be positively harmful. My son Lewis' (now nearly 9) experience is a perfect example. At age 4 1/2 he chose to go to school and was started on a *Look and Say* Scheme from which, in six months, he learned the word 'look'. I was disappointed because I felt he was really ready to read. He came out after a few weeks in Year 1 and I left him alone where reading was concerned for some months. After Christmas I tried using a phonic book with him but he was very resistant, so I just left it. When we moved house he returned to school in Year 2, basically a non-reader, and was started back on the same scheme he had used at age 4. This time he sped through it and by the time he did his SATs at the end of the year his reading was average for his age. I felt very strongly that the second time round he was really ready, that he was more self motivated and ready to accept the teaching that was on offer. My twins (now 6) have gone through basically the same process, starting a *Look and Say* scheme, not getting much from it and they are now out of school and not doing much voluntary reading.

The reason why schools start teaching reading at 4 1/2 is that all school learning is dependant on being able to read and write, since in order to 'learn' something children have to read about it and then write it down. The learning my children do is much

more verbal, I read things to them, or we talk about things, or they listen to tapes or radio or watch television. Learning takes place inside their heads, not on a piece of paper, and I never ask them to prove they have paid attention to something by intrusive questioning. I have read to my children vast quantities of stories and information books over the years, and I have also always tried to read things which are just beyond their level. Over the last year of home educating we have read such classics as the *Narnia* books, *The Silver Sword*, *The Secret Garden*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Chronicles of Prydain*, and lots of *Roald Dahl*. My concern is that because of this they are less motivated to learn to read; the level of the books they enjoy is so far in advance of their reading skills that it is easier to just have me read to them. I don't mind reading to them and will continue to do so for as long as they need me to, though I feel sometimes that they are more limited because they have to rely on me. I do suggest from time to time that they read to me and with some coaxing they will all tackle something comfortable and familiar. So I leave it at that and feel sure that if I pushed them to read more they would resent it and that developing their skills at their own pace and their own time is the only real learning.

I try hard not to consider them late readers, and to remember that now they are at home they don't have to learn to someone else's timetable. I would love to hear from both parents and children who have taken this route to reading. I appreciate that what stops most parents from teaching such important business to their children is the fear that they will never learn without being forced. There is no way to overcome this but by trusting your children more to know what they need at any time and letting them find their own way. If you provide an environment full of interesting things to read (you don't have to own them, libraries are pretty amazing places) and just let them choose for themselves the rest will follow in good time.

With many thanks for the support I get from the newsletter and EO itself, your friend,

Martine Archer, 1 Westminster Avenue, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 0AN

Re: Ladybird Key Words Reading Scheme.

Having always read stories to our son as a baby, James showed an early interest in learning to read. Having both learnt to read ourselves at an early age using the Ladybird Key Words Reading Scheme (Peter and Jane), we thought we would try to use it to teach James (at the time three years old). The scheme consists of thirty-six books; 1a - 12a introduces new words, 1b - 12b repeats these newly learned words using a different story line, and 1c - 12c provides a link with writing and teaches phonic 'rules'. The story lines may be considered a little old fashioned by some as they have not altered since the 1960s when they were first published, but it introduces words gradually and repeatedly and it really does work. James read his first book (1a) at three years four months old. James has just had his fifth birthday and is about to start reader 10b and has just completed the comprehension book 10c, which means he now has a 750 word reading vocabulary and in addition because he has learnt so many of the phonic 'rules', can work out many more new words for himself.

We have never pushed James in any way. He has shown the interest to read and does so because he wants to and he enjoys it. Since starting the scheme James has read a little from his books every day, and is now at a stage where he can pick up any book written for children 2/3 years older than himself and read it almost without assistance.

As I stated before, some may consider this scheme a little out-moded, but it does work. The books are currently £1.50 each and have proved very good value for money to us. It's a scheme that has been teaching children to read for over thirty years now, and I'm sure it will continue to successfully teach children in the future. New reading schemes come and go, but if you find something that works stick with it!

Susan Baker,
The Conifers, 152 Siltside, Gosberton Risegate, Spalding, Lincs.



Thoughts on Reading.

When we began to consider home-education, I decided that I would try to teach my three year old to read. If I could not teach him to read, then in all likelihood I could not be a competent home-educator. I deliberately started with him while he was young, so that if things went horribly wrong, we would have time to consider other options before he reached the all important "September following his fifth birthday".

I began using flashcards and the look-say method. He could soon recognise a few words, but I realised that I needed a more structured approach. I bought a couple of Ladybird phonic reading books - "Ben and Jenny" and to my dismay he could not make head or tail of them. Baffled, we persevered but he could not master *any* phonics. Determined that there must be another approach I scoured book shops and found Peter and Jane, also by Ladybird. He started Book 1a when he was three and four months, and (missing out the c phonics books) he finished the whole series less than eighteen months later, by which time he was a fluent reader. I started off doing a page a day with him, progressing to three pages a day. We ploughed through it fairly mechanically, not concentrating on the content of the stories, but on the words and their pronunciation instead. Often he was reluctant to do it, but after Book 7 we noticed a real improvement in his concentration and ability.

I do feel relieved that he has mastered reading so painlessly, and I do feel that to be able to read competently is one of the major step-in-stones in learning. He is able now to read for information whatever he wants to know, when he asks "What is a volcano?" I can give him a book on volcanoes.

I do not think, however, that all children are able or ready to read at that age, or that the look-say method is necessarily the "best" way to learn. All children are different. I guess I know a lot more about teaching children now. I would be far less ready to criticise parents who allow their children to take longer to learn to read - children do differ, and caring parents are the best judge of what their children can do and when. I would certainly NOT say that to be a competent home-teacher you have to teach a three-and-a-half year old to read! I have learned a lot from teaching my children, and most of my rigid, pre-conceived ideas have been swept away or watered down. Now, a few years on, I realise how little I knew then!

The one thing I would suggest to all home-teaching parents (and home-learning children) is that if something does not seem to be getting through, or an approach is not working, then change it! There are many, many ways to present reading, number work etc., and finding the right approach can make the world of a difference.

Henrietta Turnbull, London.

Learning to Read.

No.1. Child.

0 - 3 years

Parents read a lot to him. He saw us, the parents, read a lot. We had television until I read of its negative effect on literacy, sold T.V. when he was 2 years old (we'll get it again later on).

3 - 4 1/2 years

Often looked at books by himself. Read to him many books a day. Alphabet table mat given to us. Initials written on his paintings and wellies. So, slowly, following his interest the alphabet arrived in our lives. At 4 years old Letterland and an alphabet tape became great favourites. One of his toys was an ASDA truck, he recognised the sign on the shop and could spot 'P' is the road sign for 'pee' on a long journey!

5 1/4 years

I felt he was ready to start reading. We did the first 40 lessons in Mona McNee's book 'Step by Step' (£5). This took 10 minutes a day, with either 2 minutes or 5 minutes preparation the night before. We managed 4 - 5 days a week - such consistency nearly killed me! There are lots of games which we thoroughly enjoyed. And he was chuffed as can be to read his first book 'Fat Tom' from Montessori. I bought four of this series because it is very difficult to find purely phonetical books for this first stage.

5 - 6 years

We used GINN and LONGMANS reading schemes out of the Teachers Resource Centre, and read a lot of toddler books from the library i.e. one line of words per page. I tried to have him read to me daily, but am pretty undisciplined myself. He continued to pick up all sorts of books and had lots read to him. He began picking up print from cereal boxes, supermarket signs etc.

6 1/2 years

Doing a lot of reading by himself. I decided he was ready to read more complicated words. Finished the last 60 lessons in the Mona McNee's wonderful, simple book. 3 sessions a week, 10 minutes each. Less than 5 minutes preparation. Picking it up easily.

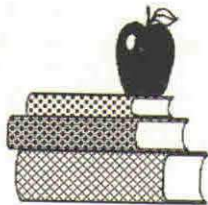
7 years.

Reading Beano and Asterix - does literacy need to go any further?!

7 1/2 years.

Now gets told "put that book down!" Can read National Geographic when he chooses to. I sometimes suggest a new direction of author or subject. Still loves being read to.

p.s. NO interest in writing, and this continued to be so.
Have to squeeze every letter out of him!



No.2. Child.

I have always said re: potty training, tantrums, feeding, etc. having two children stops you thinking that the bits that turned out nicely in No.1. child were your own brilliant parenting. My No.1. child learnt to read so easily I now realise. I have applied the same technique to No.2. child and ended up hating myself for shouting at a child I'm supposed to be helping to read.

Once again we did child led learning i.e. he said he wanted to learn so, even though I didn't think he was ready, we started. Only to discover that he would like to read, not learn to read (I feel the same about speaking French!). He makes an incredible fuss about practise, and has progressed very slowly.

I have now called a halt to teaching him, having tried for one and a half years. He can read cat, mat, is, etc. but no more. My reasoning is that he is doing very well in maths, is way ahead of any age appropriate curriculum in history, has a wide general interest and pores over books for hours!

When we start again I'm intending to do far more look and say - which I think is a dreadful method! - and lots more games.

No.2. child has taken to writing with far more interest and ability 3 years earlier than his older brother. Interesting to note, No.2. child has also always been good at pencil control for drawing, No.1. child is only just beginning to draw, though has always been good with plasticine and clay.

For a one page catalogue of Mona McNee's books write to: Mona McNee, 2, The Crescent, Toftwood, East Dereham, NR19 1NR.

Claire Young, Middleton Park, Irvine. KA11 1NA

Dear EO,

There is no educational achievement half as important as learning to read, preferably at a young age. As the mother of four children who also gives private reading lessons to non-reading schoolchildren, I have found reading schemes very mixed.

The worst one available is the OXFORD READING TREE. It is popular with schools, and is marvellous at teaching children to guess words and learn a simple story by heart. It has exciting pictures and a few words. The children look at the pictures and say the words from memory, but do not learn to read, unless teachers or parents show them separately. I know - I am paid to teach these children (by parents who are desperate when, after three years at school their children cannot read at all).

The best sort of reading scheme is the LADYBIRD KEY WORDS SCHEME (the old Peter and Jane books). It works by introducing a few common words at a time, repeating them in different sentences, until they have become automatic; and then adding a few more words. So the children learn to read gradually and thoroughly, without relying on 'picture clues'.

The Ladybird scheme can be taught by anyone to any child who knows the alphabet, in about six months. My own children used it, and could read most children's books by the ages of 3 1/4 and 3 1/2. It has been accused of being sexist (poor Jane does nothing but make tea and watch her brother admiringly), and it does show happy two parent families as normal - but it teaches reading, which lots of schemes don't.

Beverley Atkins Smart, 43 Downend Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5UF.

Simply Reading.

Different people have differing views on when you should start to teach reading, some thinking that the earlier it is done the better, others believing that it should not be started too soon as the concentration on one area of learning inhibits the child's natural processes of learning by exploring the world around. Some feel that it should be left to qualified teachers when the child starts school, others feel that they should teach the rudiments at least before their child starts school. This last sentence does not, of course, apply to those who have predetermined that they are going to home educate.

In our case, my wife Cherry and I had not predetermined to home educate, originally intending to send our son William to the local primary school, starting the term after his fifth birthday. The authorities were determined that he should start the term before his fifth birthday, however, but we would not concede to their pressure, and it was this that determined our timing of when to start teaching reading, as we did not want William to be behind the others when he started a term after them. As it turned out, the authorities refusal to reserve a place at our chosen school for the following term and their off-hand, unhelpful attitude about the availability of a place for William at that time finally (though there were other factors) led to our decision to home educate, one which we have never regretted. Incidentally, amidst confusion between different people at the council, they did finally offer us a place at our chosen school, but we refused it as we were happy as EOers by then.

Thus it transpired that we began to teach William to read just before his fifth birthday, not a philosophically chosen time, just the time that arose by chance due to the above mentioned circumstances. I do not know if we would have started earlier or later if we had intended from the start to home educate; all I do know is that it must have been all right, as William learnt fast. A contributing factor may be that by not starting earlier, he had a wide active spoken vocabulary, which must have been a good grounding, making words familiar when he learnt to read them.

We had been reading to him prior to this time, of course, so he was used to seeing the printed word and could recognise the odd word. He already knew the alphabet, too, so letter recognition was already there. He knew the letters by their proper names (ai, bee, cee, etc.) - we do not subscribe to the sound-based theory (ahh, bhh, khh or however they are transcribed!) as few letters have one static value so we feel it can only be confusing. I know some people disagree and do things perfectly well their way; that's fine, but our way suited William very well, as it has done millions of children over the decades.

So, what system did we use to teach William to read? Which reading scheme did we follow? Which computer software did we employ? Easy - none.

I have the advantage of having been a schoolmaster, but I taught 11 - 18 year olds, never basics to primary age children and I had never intended to do so. Consequently, I had done no reading or research on the topic. All my teaching life, however, I believed in keeping things simple and straightforward, using myself rather than gadgets to teach with, even when I was alone against the sweeping tide of innovative, expensive - and transient - materials of all sorts to which education, like so many other areas of life, succumbs according to the latest trendy idea which, with the passage of a little time, becomes discredited and replaced by the next wonder discovery.

So I approached the notion of teaching reading for the first time in my life with logic and simplicity: take things a step at a time, be sure a few letters are understood, then move on, whilst constantly revising what has already been grasped.

I am sure that many will be aghast at what follows, believing that everything should be done with expensive materials ('only the best is good enough for my child') and that children's interest can only be retained with 'exciting' stimuli. Others will realise that any materials can be exciting to young children - how many people I have heard bemoaning the fact that the expensive Christmas present was left aside while the child played happily with the cardboard box in which it came - whilst yet others, whatever their preferences might be, simply are not sufficiently affluent to be able to afford expensive teaching materials. I have good news for the latter in particular - expensive materials aren't necessary; you can often use things that otherwise you would just throw away. Indeed, reading can be taught for free. My method was devised in the spur of the moment as an experiment; it worked so well, I simply continued with more of the same.

All I did was this. Using a coloured felt tip pen, I wrote a few words on the back of a used envelope that had come through the post as so many do every week and are thrown into the rubbish bin. The first envelope had "bun, bus, bud, but", each word written twice, once in capital letters and once in lower case letters so that William could read whichever he felt happiest with whilst seeing the others at the same time so as to get used to them, too. Each pair, e.g. bun BUN, was separated from the next pair by a line, so that the list looked like this:

bun
BUN
bus
BUS
bud
BUD
but
BUT



Having learnt that the last letter can change, William now learnt that the first could change too, as the list on the envelope had "bun, sun, run, fun", laid out similarly and using a different coloured felt tip pen. Then there were "pen, hen, den, men, ten", and "bat, cat, rat, fat, sat, hat, mat, at", and "pig, big, wig, dig, fig", and "dog, log, jog, fog, frog, bog", each list in a different colour for variety, though inevitably once all the colours we had were exhausted they got repeated with later lists.

These six lists had covered all the vowels and most of the consonants, so the next lists introduced other things; one was "ball, boot, hoot, zoo, room, foot, football",

introducing both "oo" and a longer word "football" composed of short words on the list, whilst another introduced magic E with "tap, tape, mat, mate, fat, fate, Sam, same, scrap, scrape".

Various mixed lists followed such as "food, kiss, tummy, cuddle, bed, Fred, them, then" and "bucket, kite, bite, bit, kit, exit, entrance, engine, spade, cricket" and "cow, bull, calf, sheep, lamb, horse, foal, goat, kid, piglet, duck, duckling" and "could, should, would, wood, white, when, where, while, wild, shoe, shoo, who" and "quick, quack, quite, squeeze, squirrel, quarrel, quiz, equal, inquire, quilt" and "buzz, jeep, zigzag, yellow, tea, beach, us, cup, spoon" and "blossom, geranium, television, book, coffee, biscuit, strawberry, raspberry, Noddy, boy". Others covered such things as "ph" or "gh" or "tion", others were themed (clothes, colours, insects, seaside, makes of vehicle, shops etc, things met on holiday and so on).

Maybe it was my inexperience with teaching reading, but I was surprised how quickly and easily William learnt to read these lists. He was always wanting another list, so that I was having to do a new one each day and, indeed, he regularly wanted to do the next one without waiting for the next day and we were on to several each day in next to no time. Sometimes William created another list by copying one of mine on the back of another envelope, sometimes he used different words copied from things around the home or from a book; this was entirely of his own volition and reinforced the learning as well as using writing in a practical way, so that the latter just came naturally. He did also practise copying letters, initially under guidance, and later sentences from books, but most of William's writing has come naturally and for practical purposes.

The reading of long words was introduced quite early. This was deliberate policy, as I had read somewhere in an EO magazine, I think, that children could be confused if they only encountered the odd long word and think all long words are the same word! Anyway, again I was surprised at how quickly and easily they were accepted, and such words as greengrocer, convenience, dandelion, aeroplane, photograph and xylophone were all familiar within three or four months.

By now I was writing the odd simple sentence on the back of one of the envelopes and William was looking at simple books with a picture to illustrate each noun, his favourite early on being "ABC Food" (he loves his food!). He quickly moved on to books with simple sentences, some our own but many borrowed from the library. No scheme was used; we just used what we had or what attracted William in the library. Some early ones were "My Dinner", "My Truck", "Miffy at Home", Spot books and simple versions of familiar fairy tales among others. These were quickly followed by Beatrix Potter, Postman Pat and Thomas the Tank Engine books, which remain firm favourites, and all sorts of others such as Mr Men books, books about animals and some other non-fiction books; Rupert books, Foxwood Tales and numerous individual books that he has been given or have taken his fancy in the library, some of them containing many stories and many of them quite difficult.

So the method of teaching William to read may be considered by some to have been pretty crude, but it was certainly effective. He learnt fast and the result is that he enjoys reading and in the eighteen months or so since learning he has read over 170 different books, many of them read a numbers of times. I'm sure that there are other ways of doing it, but all I can add is that if we have another child, I'll do exactly the same again. And William agrees.

Barry Spencer, 32 Seaway Court, Seaway Lane, Torquay, TQ2

Reading.

Being an avid reader who is married to another avid reader and being convinced that stories make the world a better place, and that access to information gives us control and choices, I really want my children to be able to read well, with discrimination, intelligence and pleasure.

However, being of the opinion that children should not be coerced into learning what they don't feel ready for, or simply don't have time for, and having learned from my children that their best learning is done when they want it to happen has meant that I have sometimes needed to restrain my eagerness.

Most of the learning which goes on before 'school age' happens spontaneously and most parents have confidence that it will happen. Young children learn to move around and talk and do all sorts of marvellous things just by being themselves, by watching others and by being part of family life. Yet when children reach the magic age of five that confidence that children will go on learning skills like reading and writing and numeracy so easily evaporates in the face of society's dominant ideology that these skills are too difficult to pick up in the course of family life, and need to be taught by experts.

When our confidence has been weak we have fallen for that line. So our oldest son, who is now ten, spent a disastrous year at school between the ages of five and six learning how to be bullied and that reading was 'hard'. He's been out of school for four years now and I have no idea what his 'reading age' is, but I know that he likes books and wants to read, even when it's an effort.

With the others (aged 9, 6 and 2) we have gone in for an 'apprenticeship' model of reading. They see lots of books and hear lots of stories and learn to read because it is the natural thing to do in their environment. We sometimes lose confidence and get 'teacher-like', but by and large we believe that reading happens just like speech happens. It needs more or less support depending on the child and its pace varies with sudden leaps forward and long plateaus when we wonder whether we are 'doing it right'. But ultimately it does happen and it happens because the children want it to, which hopefully will mean that they too will become avid readers just like us!

Jan Fortune-Wood,

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I would like to tell you about a book which I found invaluable in the teaching of reading to my own children. The book is called 'The Phonics Handbook' by Sue Lloyd and published by Jolly Learning. It is a large A4 220+ page, photocopiable resource, which my children have thoroughly enjoyed learning from.

The book teaches reading through phonics and each of the 40+ sounds in the English language is dealt with in an exciting way. Each sound has an accompanying story, a picture to colour, letters to trace, a hand action and a list of words. The book also contains Flash Cards, word lists, spelling lists, word activity sheets and games.

I have found this book so thorough in its teaching methods that it is the only reading teaching resource that I have ever used. I bought it out of desperation when my eldest child, then attending school, was having difficulty reading. Once we started using this

book she never looked back and now reads six library books a week. As the learning approach is fun I found that progress was quick.

The book, when I bought it four years ago, had a hefty price-tag of £19.95. If anybody would like some sample pages of the book before buying a copy, I would be happy to send you some on receipt of a SAE.

Happy Reading.

Angela Smith. Burnt Walls Farm, Coanwood, Haltwhistle, Northumberland.
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Is Early Reading Always a Good Idea?

I began to teach Alex to read when he was three. He was keen and co-operative and made quick progress. I have always detested reading schemes, although I did have a few *Puddle Lane* books. They have good stories with an easier version of each page for the child to read and nice illustrations. Generally we wrote new captions for favourite books which we placed over the text.

When he was five, Alex went to school, where for three terms he was made to plod through a dreadful reading scheme and flash card system. None of this had any appreciable impact on his reading but after leaving school, he discovered comics and immersed himself for weeks in the adventures of *The Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*. It was these comics which really developed his reading stamina; by his 6th birthday he was starting to work his way through my childhood collection of Puffin books - *The Narnia Books*, *101 Dalmations*, etc. He is now 12 and still an insatiable reader, **always** fiction and mostly fantasy (*Tolkein*, *Eddings*, *Le Guin*) and has a huge comic collection.

One day, during a walk on the cliffs above Dover, Scarlett, (who would have been 2 1/2 at the time) became enthralled with the numerous FOOTPATH signs. All day she read F O O T and we wrote letters in the dusty path. I was delighted, it was like living a scene from the newsletter digest.

I tried over the following months (and then years) to introduce her to the idea of reading, but she was absolutely uninterested. By the age of 6 she had taught herself the letters of the alphabet and could sound out really complicated words. She was fascinated by the natural world and would sit for hours with an animal encyclopaedia, and then announce 'This one's a ring tailed lemur'. But she could not recognise even the simplest word; if I asked her to read she would laboriously sound out *it* or *on* and then struggle to do it again a minute later as if she had never seen it before.

When she was 7, I began to find her sitting deeply absorbed in *Asterix* books and within only a few weeks the comics had worked their magic a second time. She was a fluent and voracious reader, consuming more books in a week than her library ticket would allow. Her greatest help during this period of rapid learning was her brother Alex, 5 years older, who was usually on hand to be asked difficult words. Neither her father or I were asked for very much input and we had already learned that there was no point in offering advice.

I would not deny any person the immense joy to be had from reading. I still read every evening to the whole family. We have read and re-read most of the children's classics (*Lord of the Rings* took me 9 months to read and put me off the book for life!) and have moved on to more challenging books (currently Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea*

Trilogy). I obtain so much pleasure and information from reading that I was convinced that early reading could only enhance a child's life. My observations of both my children have now led me to doubt this and I would be interested if other EOers share my views.

My daughter, who could not read until she was over 7, has throughout her whole life spent hours and hours pouring over photographs in books, sealife, marsupials, tribal peoples. When travelling, she would look out of the window and really notice things. She acquired, during that period of her life, an astonishing amount of information both from books and from the world around her and developed powers of observation that far exceed mine.

She is now nearly 8, and for the last 6 months I have hardly seen her open a work of non-fiction. When we set out on the shortest journey she, like her brother, immediately begins to read. I have given up trying to talk to her as we drive and put the radio on for company.

Reading, however useful, is only a means of conveying ideas, not an end in itself; there are many other activities which are stimulating to a young child. If I were responsible for the first few years of another child's life, I would read and read and read to them but be very cautious about encouraging them to learn to read too early. Life is too exciting to spend it with your nose stuck in a book.

NB Comics Rule!

**Sue Hutchin,
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Reading for Life.

Since early childhood I have taken great pleasure in reading and more recently I've started to share something of that pleasure with my children. My husband and I have two children: Andrew, who has just celebrated his second birthday, and our four-month old daughter, Olivia. We recently joined EO and, although our children are not of statutory school age, we have already acknowledged that we are responsible for their education from the very start. We intend to enjoy having them at home rather than send them to a pre-school group.

Before having children I taught for ten years in 'first schools'. I became convinced that many children fail to become 'readers' not because they are unable to master the mechanics of reading, but because they simply do not read, thus not practising or developing their skills. As a mother it is my desire to pass on not only the reading skills so necessary for the world we live in, but also a love of books - a pleasure for life. I would like to share some of the experiences we have given our small son, and hope that these might be an encouragement to others.

Soon after Andrew was born we read simple 'board' books to him. During these sessions we would do as much talking as reading - relating the situations to his own life, encouraging him to join in and respond, building up a wealth of shared experiences. Long before he could fully understand, we read him nursery rhymes and simple poetry. Like all children he loved the sound of the language, the rhythm of our voices, the actions and, of course, the laughter that goes alongside. Soon after his first birthday, he began to enjoy more complex pictures, pointing out the fine detail. Also at

about the same stage, alphabet and number books became great favourites to be looked at again and again. More recently he has begun to enjoy simple stories, particularly those with repetition and sounds such as "trip-trap, trip-trap over the rickety bridge". As we read these books we add our own individual touches, altering the volume of our voices, putting on 'voices' for different characters, adding suspense, excitement, happiness and sadness by our own renditions and replies. Andrew responds enthusiastically, and to our great joy, we often find him 'reading' alone, adding his own style to a much loved book.

We usually visit the library about once every two or three weeks and take out seven or eight books. In this selection we choose some for Andrew to 'read' on his own (as well as with us), and some just for us to read to him. As repetition is so important at this stage we do not really need to visit any more frequently. When books are particularly successful we occasionally buy our own copies to add to his growing library. We have also found cheaper, but very enjoyable books, at some of the supermarkets.

We aim to read to Andrew most days. When time allows we might have three twenty minute sessions spaced over the day, other times just twenty minutes before bedtime. We are fortunate in that many of our visitors are prepared to read with him, particularly as he firmly believes everyone loves his books as much as he does. He has his 'own' bookshelf on the bottom of our bookcase where he stores many of his books, and he is often to be seen sitting on the floor enjoying them. Other more expensive and special books we store on a higher shelf, to be read with an adult, or at least under supervision. As he has grown older, with our example and encouragement, he has learnt to take great care of books. Even when he was very small and into 'chewing', no book ever became greatly damaged.

We also both read a lot ourselves and Andrew sees what books mean to us. We often read little snippets aloud to each other, ranging from the Bible to books, magazines, recipes, letters, lists and so on. Simply from being present at such times we hope Andrew will see the many functions of both reading and writing. We have also decided to limit our children's television watching - we encourage him to select programmes and turn the television off promptly at the end.

What has Andrew learnt from early reading, you may ask? Well, for a start, he has a wider range of experiences than 'real life' can offer him, and an array of special moments now meaningful and unique to us as a family. He understands which way up to hold a book, to start at the beginning, how to turn the pages and to distinguish between pictures and text. Through the alphabet books, with almost no 'tuition', he has learnt the sounds of all the letters. But most importantly of all, he is learning to love books and is on his way to 'reading for life'.

Fiona Phillips. 23 Salterns Road, Poole, Dorset. Tel: 01202 734332.

Why I don't teach my son to read.

Reading is one of the learning areas most 'pushed' by primary schools from four or five years old. Yet many children still have literacy problems by age eleven, six years later! The results of this year's National Curriculum tests published recently show that a third of eleven year olds leave primary school with a reading age of two years or more below their calendar age.

Rudolf Steiner schools do not introduce books and reading until age seven. Most children learn quite quickly at this age, however; there will still be some children who are not ready.

A child may be ready to read anywhere between three and nine years old. There is an easy way to introduce reading, which is also natural and fun; read to your child whatever your child likes to listen to. Try different kinds of books; picture books and stories without pictures, factual books, comic-strip books, books chosen by the child from the library. You'll soon know what your child wants to hear.

Young children have many pre-occupations and learning to read may not be one of them. I think it is important to bring books into children's lives, to share them and to have available simple books which they can 'read' with you. Beyond that, children make their own progress. They do not need to be 'taught' to read.

Pointing to the text as you read will start some children reading themselves. As will repetition of favourite stories, which they will learn by heart. Or cassettes with accompanying books. I know one home-educated child who was sparked off by the Oxford Reading Tree scheme because the stories appealed to him. My son liked the Red Nose Readers and Funnybones books by Ahlberg because of their humour.

Reading together is a pleasant family activity, in which everyone can join. To encourage my son, who is seven and finds reading laborious, we take turns. I read the current storybook, then he reads to me from a book he can manage. Reading together like this in bed or on the sofa is a very different experience from that in a classroom environment. It can be something shared to look forward to.

I have tried to read regularly with my child, however, at times I would do all the reading for several months, then my son would be inspired by a new book and have another go himself. He still does not feel confident enough to try to read alone, but he likes to read with me and genuinely enjoys it. I am careful to be patient, as my husband was pushed and made to read, it made him hate reading and he has always been a reluctant reader.

Finally, perhaps the hardest thing about reading for home-educators is that friends tend to ask "how is the reading going?" as if that is all a young child has to learn. All it shows is how they have been brainwashed by the school system! While reading is a necessary skill, not everyone is a natural bookworm, especially young children. My reply to my friends is that my son is concentrating on a lot of other things besides reading.

I hope that my observations and experience is helpful to some of you. A quick note on resources: The public library is of course a lifeline. The 'beginning readers' section gives lots of choice. My library also stocks book and cassette packs. I used the Letterland ABC book and the storybooks (more or less one story based around each letter character), which happily combines letter familiarisation with listening to stories. Some picture books are also nice to share with older children.

Rosie Benson-Bunch, Basement Flat, 57 Montpellier Terrace, Cheltenham.

SCIENCE AT HOME

Can it be done? If you have managed to cope without a school laboratory, write and tell us how you did it.

Send all articles to: Mike Allen, 71, Belgrave Rd, Loughour, Swansea. SA4 6RF

Learning To Read Without Teaching.

I am an avid reader, our house is full of books; as Christians, the Bible plays an important part in our lives, and I work with written material. For Katherine, who will be five in April, and James, 2 1/2, an environment full of books is normal. I have not pushed or 'taught' Katherine to read. When she was not yet 2 she started to spot 'her letter', and the difficulty was ours - trying to work out where she had seen it so we could respond appropriately! It was even harder as she did not speak very well at the time, and so could not explain where it was. James, on the other hand, is much more fluent in speech, but is not particularly interested in finding letters.

Both of them are very enthusiastic about stories and trips to the library. Katherine can read some books, especially if she knows them well, and she likes to write. Within the last week she has mastered writing her full name (we have had variants, with increasing numbers of letters, for a few months now) and can also write *James*, *Mummy* and *Daddy*. I mention writing because I believe that the two skills are complementary and neither can be learned without the other.

Some of our favourite books are by Shirley Hughes (*Alfie* and *Annie Rose, Lucy and Tom*) and Jill Murphy (*A Piece of Cake*, about the large family of elephants). James very much likes Noddy, Pingu, Postman Pat and Fireman Sam. Katherine also likes Topsy and Tim (which I do not find very interesting - they are formulaic 'teaching' books), but has a very wide taste in library books. At the moment we have a book of stories for 5 year

olds and a miscellany of other children's books.

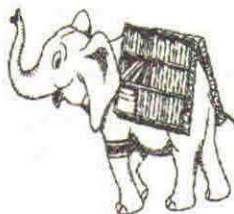
As well as reading real books, we tell a lot of stories and make up songs. The children spend a lot of time playing stories about their favourite characters - we have a great many fires and cats stuck up trees in our sitting room.

Next week we are going to the theatre with a group of EOers to see a production of Alfie stories. We also write to a number of people (grandparents, penpals and sponsored children in the Third World). At the moment Katherine is asking 'what does that say?' very frequently, and sometimes she asks questions such as 'why does that say "No"?'.

Courtesy of a grandparent, we have a subscription to the BBC magazine *Learning is Fun*. Katherine enjoys its activities very much. I record some of the BBC Education TV programmes, and we use them infrequently. Katherine likes Words and Pictures, and will write with *Magic Pencil*.

I am very happy to let them continue at their own pace, learning to read and doing many other interesting things as well.

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BOOKS (recommendations)

LEARNING IS FUN MAGAZINE

This is a relatively new magazine from the BBC (the first issue was in September 1996). It is £2 per month (available from newsagents as well as by subscription) and is divided into subjects as per the National Curriculum. Unfortunately, the subjects are not very well integrated, but other than that the content is good.

It is designed for 5 - 7 yr olds (that is, Key Stage 1) and includes notes for parents, to explain the learning points. Some of the Maths and English activities are beyond someone just learning to read and add, but each section has activities at a variety of levels.

The Geography section always includes an appropriate recipe, and a story in the appropriate language (all European, so far). The Music section describes an instrument and the life of someone associated with it, and gives a simple piece of music.

The February issue includes:

"News reports and drama."

"Experiments with heat and cold."

"The history of writing and Braille."

"France and French (and chocolate croissants)."

"Fractions (of chocolate bars) and tables."

"The piano, Beethoven and part of Ode to Joy."

"A cat and mouse game to play outside."

"Mardi Gras and a papier mache shaker."

There is also a 'problem page' at the end for parents, and this month it discussed home education in reasonably positive terms. I think it is very good value for money. Katherine particularly enjoys the science experiments and the history and geography sections.

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FUNCTIONS OF THE BRAIN

Is this old hat? If you want to stretch your thinking further, dip into any book by Tony Buzan.

Mind Maps are an invention of his, and I think a great thinking tool. Tony Buzan quotes them as being used to remember facts (to pass an exam on 2nd World War History), problem solving (about whether to move house or not), and for creative thinking starting from scratch. I've used them, amongst other things, to condense the curriculum requirements for maths and science. Tony Buzan is adamant they should be done in colour and as pictorially as possible. It has helped my 8 yr old daydreamer to see that he could successfully tackle money, measurement, pattern, time and positional movement. (Through play and real life, for child led learning!) "Wow! Aren't you brilliant" says I. A look of some surprise on his face as he begins to see himself as 'Good at Maths.' "Now all he needs to get better at are numbers and problem solving." It has made a difference to both our attitudes. So I highly recommend:

"Making the Most of Your Mind." by Tony Buzan. Published by PAN 1988.

It cost £5.99 when bought in 1995. It has 10 chapters, amongst them is Creativity, Numeracy and Family and Group Study.

From: Clare Young, Scotland.

Home Education and Post Industrialism

1

Over the last couple of months I have been considering why home education is becoming more popular. I understand that home education is rising at the rate of around 1000 per month and I find it difficult to accept that such a large trend is solely the result of recent changes in educational policy. There are probably a number of reasons. But, I am beginning to think that there could be an underlying social trend. There are those who suggest we are in the throws of a social change as fundamental as the industrialisation of the 19th. century and are now moving away from an industrial to a post industrial economy. I felt the need to clarify my thoughts on this subject and I have not seen any popular literature examining the impact post industrialism could have upon education, hence this article.

Industrial society is characterised by large scale manufacture centred upon factories employing large numbers of workers who, due to restricted access to transport, live and play in close proximity to their place of work and each other. Such communities possess a high degree of homogeneity in behaviour and belief. The work on offer requires a moderate level of education and that, therefore, is what is provided for the mass of the population. Individuals who deviate very far from a variety of norms are ejected from the community perhaps by a shift in their class status or straight forward ostracism.

Post industrial society is characterised by much smaller units of production. Often requiring a high level of technical education. Concepts such as self managing teams and home working become common. Individuals rarely live close to their place of work and even more rarely close to their colleagues. Work becomes fragmented and less hierarchical. This radically effects the concept of community. The "local" or "neighbourhood" community holds less significance. Individuals relate more to a matrix of like minded individuals scattered throughout a large geographical area. Contact is maintained through telecommunications and quality transport. For the first time in human history community ceases to be centred upon a geographical location ultimately expanding to the virtual communities of the world wide web. The power of the nation state may even come under threat. (perhaps reflecting the EEC concept of interlocking communities).

Individuals are no longer tied to belief systems regulated by an homogeneity of life experience. Rather post industrial society is characterised by an explosion of new beliefs and attitudes to go along with the explosion of new or different experiences

and opportunities and a break down in the restrictions placed upon individual thought and expression. The concept of multiculturalism could extend to include not only those of differing ethnic backgrounds but those of the same ethnicity whose world views are so radically different as to describe them as being culturally divergent.

Not all of society participate in the change but only a significant proportion in the same way that Britain still has large rural areas and can yet be classed as industrialised (in fact the definition adopted by most economists is more than 50% of the population as living in cities). The process is anything but complete. But in the same way that 10% of anything is a market, 10% of a population is a movement. When that 10% are no longer isolated individuals thinking the unthinkable, but part of a large minority who have the power to communicate they expect the right of expression and the freedom to follow their chosen life style.

The question is: if such a transformation is underway what effect might it have upon education? The education system reflects industrial culture. The education debate of the mid 19th century centred upon keeping young people off the streets, freeing their parents to work in factories and preventing them falling into immoral practices. Education (that is the three R's, plus Religious instruction, geography and history) was almost incidental. Indeed, for the usual reasons, there were those who objected to the very idea of education for the masses. The primary point of education was socialisation and in the early days the education system was run by church boards controlled by the Church of England and non-conformist churches. Much of so called education centred upon the Catechism (Church doctrine). The very structure of schools reflected life in a factory, large classes, a rigorous code of discipline and strict hierarchical structure. School was a microcosm of society and a foretaste of the future for its alumna. Later the 1944 education act created Grammar, Technical and Secondary schools whose intakes were roughly proportional to industry's needs at the time, and later still Calahan's white heat of technology debate again aligned education with industry. This has reached its final expression with the department of education being joined with the department of employment. While for the rich, public school education was seen as a good in itself education for the masses was always justified by the needs of industry.

Home Education and Post Industrialism

2

A large part of educational effort still has nothing to do with the overt curriculum, but rather with the hidden curriculum; the socialisation of the young and the teaching of those mores and attitudes which give society its cultural identity. But what identity can a post industrial society possess? How does a school teach social attitudes and mores (other than the very basic like, "murder is bad") in a society where few people agree upon anything? Divergence rather than homogeneity is the theme of the day.

What is the likely reaction of parents faced with schools teaching attitudes etc. with which they can no longer identify. It seems to me that traditional mass education aimed at creating a more or less homogenous society will be rejected by more and more parents as they feel themselves more and more at odds with the values of the education system. My guess is that as a home educating parent reading this you are probably not employed in an industrial occupation (nor is your partner if you have one).

The relationship between education and work has not escaped at least some managers either. The director of one company now working on a home working model draws directly upon the current education system to explain what his company is *not* about (BBC's "20 steps to better management 9.2.97).

Even those parents who would subscribe to traditional moral values will have difficulties within the mass education system since schools themselves will drop the most traditional policies in favour of more "relevant" attitudes. Examples that come to mind are the difficulties some Christian parents now have with the style of religious education and the concerns felt by those parents who are concerned about discipline and the rejection of corporal punishment by schools. Disaffection will therefore come from both (or rather all) ends of the political spectrum. Indeed many of the problems faced by EO have been due to the diversity of thought of its members pulling it in different directions.

The very idea that teaching young people in groups of 30 or more (let alone schools of up to 1500) is an acceptable preparation for adulthood will fall into ridicule as it becomes more of an anomaly. Even now there are fewer and fewer situations outside the education system where people work in groups of more than a dozen or so.

The Government of the day will need to make some hard and radical decisions. Not only does the education system face the social tensions of a transforming society but also a rapidly changing technological base. I am sat at a computer bought as "cutting edge" two months ago. Last month Radio 4 announced the introduction of a new Intel chip which makes it utterly obsolete and now I understand that a break through in bio-logic technology, using DNA for components, will lead to computers the size of a tear drop possessing the memory of all the worlds current computers working at 1000 times the speed of the fastest super computer. Schools, like large scale industry, cannot keep pace with this change. They cannot be expected to retrain thousands of teachers year on year to keep up with new technology while maintaining huge buildings and infrastructure costing tens of millions in which to house it all.

Perhaps reforms similar to those currently being mooted within the health service could be the future. There is a suggestion that the hospital system should be abandoned. Rather we should adopt small scale specialist units scattered throughout the country combined with a highly responsive community care system paid for by the savings made from not having to maintain huge hospital buildings. Perhaps the open university and open college systems may be used as a model and of course the Internet is fast becoming an important tool in education e.g. distance learning. Already as we know a large minority of parents and children are opting for home based alternatives to schooling in addition to which schools are abandoning ever growing numbers of children as "unteachable". The exclusion rate is growing so fast that even the government is beginning to recognise it as a crisis and despite the exclusions many schools are being labelled as disrupted and failing.

Education has always been a microcosm of society and the problems of today's education system reflects the fragmentation of belief within society. Whatever the future of education I believe we will live to see the end of the use of schools comprising traditional classes for mass education which in Britain has had a history of a mere 150 years in any form and only 50 years or so in its current form.

I would be interested to hear the views of other parents on this subject. If you think my thoughts are complete twaddle please let me know.

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Tel: 0121 7703972

EDUCATION ON A HUMAN SCALE

As the education system in Britain deteriorates more and more families are looking for alternative ways in which to educate their children. The number of children who are being educated at home is thought to be well over 10,000 and growing rapidly. There is also a rise in the number of parents who are looking for ways to work in co-operation with other families to educate their children. Many of these families have rejected school, for a wide range of reasons, but so also are they concerned about the possible isolation of home education. The number of parent/teacher run schools and educational resource centres which are a half-way house between school and home is consequently growing.

Human Scale Education is a national educational charity which was established 10 years ago to advise and support parents wishing to set up such schools or learning resource centres. There are now around 15 small parent/teacher run schools connected with HSE around the UK and many more are in the pipeline. These schools are all different. Some are primary, some secondary, some are urban, some rural. At one, there is an emphasis on parental involvement to the extent that parents do all the teaching. Another has an overt commitment to environmental values and sustainability. One or two cater particularly for children with specific educational needs. All have a strong community focus.

The philosophy on which Human Scale Education is based comes from Schumacher (of *Small is Beautiful* fame). We believe that children learn best in small scale settings where there is a commitment to:-

- establishing meaningful relationships between teachers, parents and children
- a holistic approach which encourages the creative, emotional and spiritual development of the child as much as intellectual and physical development
- participation in decision making about the content of learning and the organisation of the school by children and parents as well as teachers
- active rather than passive learning
- environmental values at the centre of the curriculum

We support and advise groups of parents working to set up new educational projects and campaign for state funding for these projects. We are also working to promote human scale values

in mainstream schools; for example, by encouraging large schools to find ways of breaking down into smaller units.

We are currently in the process of compiling a database of different initiatives around the UK - to enable us to give people up to date information about new initiatives in their area. If you are part of a learning group, home education group or resource centre we would be very grateful if you would send us details to add to our growing list. Similarly, if you would like information about different projects around the UK - please let us know.

For more information about our work, or to submit details of a project with which you are involved, please write to:
Human Scale Education, 96 Carlingcott BATH BA2 8AW
Tel/fax: 01761-433733.

Fiona Carnie



human
SCALE
education

LETTERS

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN

I have two sons who are now almost 15 and 10. They are both Home Educated, but it has not always been easy. I am writing this letter because when we first began E.O. with my son, who was 11 at the time, our relationship deteriorated rapidly. It occurred to me that my experiences might be quite common, and that to share something that had helped me, might help others. When my sons were at school I had at least 3 hours each day to get things I had to do done, undisturbed. When my sons came out of school, bang went my undisturbed time. I could no longer guarantee being able to clear the floor space let alone the work surface. De-schooling was very difficult for all of us and my oldest son was approaching teenage.

As a single parent I had still managed to maintain some calm in my interactions with my sons despite trying to do the job of two people. However that calm seemed to go quickly down the pan when they left school. So I kept a lid on it, but I desperately needed help if things were going to get better. That is when I met Helena.

Helena Eastwood is an independent Child Care Specialist. She is trained in many areas, including Montessori, care of children with challenging behaviour and autism. She has spent lots of years developing her own thoughts and feelings concerning child development and growth, integrating the reflective listening techniques of Rachael Pinney and some of the Parent Link Skills.

Helena's creative parenting helped me enormously to understand better what is going on with my children, and has rescued me from the endless repetition of instructions and requests for help (nagging) and the tiresome explaining again and again the rational reasons behind why I am asking certain things of them. In place of these, Creative Parenting has given me more honesty in my interactions with my sons, more calm, more fun together, more trusting and has helped us all regain our friendship.

For the sake of clarity here is just a small example of a time consuming and patience testing game I'm sure we all have played at some time, for some considerable amount of time. It's the coat game.

"When your child is very small you take their coat off and hang it up. When they are a bit bigger they want to take their own coat off, you let them, but they can't quite reach the peg, so you hang it up for them. When they are bigger still you encourage them to be independent and they come indoors into the living room and take their coats off and drop them, you can see they are tired or busy so you hang them up. As the years go by you are slowly but surely getting fed up with the coat game.

By the time the coat game is 10 yrs old the vexation, the habit and the resentment is pretty well entrenched. "Please will you hang your coats,"

"If you hang them up you will know where to find them."

"Do you think you could hang your coats up boys?"

"When will you two learn to hang your coats up?" on and on for years getting nowhere, being endlessly patient talking, explaining and being polite but not honest, because what you really want to do is what I did.

I have a window on the first floor above my street. One day out of the blue I just picked their coats up and dropped them out of the window. No nagging, no anger, no resentment and no guilt. The boys were speechless, but went quickly downstairs to pick them up, when they returned they hung them on the coat peg without a word from me. It didn't take long.

What I had spent years trying to encourage and train them to do, took only about a week or so. Pick the coat up, open the window and drop. Great just like that. Not polite, but honest, in actions, the language they understand.

LETTERS

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN (cont)

Creative parenting is based on honesty and trust and showed me things in my sons I had not recognised previously. We have managed to cut out nearly all the nagging. I talk at them a lot less, but talk with them more and our Home Education has become a lot more fun since I learned how to listen to them.

I hope this story is found mildly amusing, but also very helpful. If anyone would like to talk to me about any aspect of Creative Parenting or make a comment, please don't hesitate.

Helena Eastwood can be contacted on: 0181 4290336.

Best Wishes,

Linda, Jimi and Reuben. Tel: 0171 2073304

Dear E.O.

I would like to take this opportunity, as the West Midlands co-ordinator, to thank a lot of people.

The West Midlands now has 3 separate meetings per month regularly, and a good local newsletter. I could not have organised these by myself, so I would like everyone across the country to know that Rod, Julie, Joy and Penny are my crutches. They feed me wonderful ideas to act upon, and they too go out of their way to make things work.

Many, many other members of our local group do things to make the West Midlands a thriving home educating area. All those that have helped in any way, I thank you.

If any local members of E.O. do not know whats happening here, feel free to give me a call or drop me a line. All ideas and suggestions for the area are gratefully received. All the best.

Paula Turner, 79 Kingshurst Way, Kingshurst, Birmingham. B37 6EB.

Tel: 0121 603 8673

Dear E.O.

In answer to Mr. W Moss's letter in the E.O. Newsletter Dec. '96, No.113 Pg 22. I believe to ask any government or LEA for financial assistance is asking for trouble. He who pays the sinner, call the tune, E.O. would become just another school, having to work as a school, not as individuals. Freedom will fly out of the window. From Mrs Sharp. (anon)

VACANCIES FOR ENQUIRY OFFICERS

Applications are invited from anyone who would like to become an enquiry officer, for both postal and eventually telephone enquiries. The work is varied and interesting, every letter or call received is different. 'Out there', as some of you know from your own experiences, most people have troubles and many are desperate, finding themselves in situations which they feel are unresolvable. They all need help, guidance or reassurance. We are endeavouring to set up a 'bank' of telephone enquiry officers who could operate on a rota system, thus considerably lightening the load of the present team who are very overworked! If you could help in any way please contact: Eileen Wilson, Enquiries Co-ordinator, 39 Tatenhill Lane, Brenton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. DE14 3JZ.

Tel: 01283 532547.

LETTERS

Dear E.O.

I have since April 96 been teaching my 12yr old son at home, and my other son 11yrs also my daughters aged 7 & 8yrs since May 96. I had wanted to do it for years, ever since my eldest son's awful troubles right back in Reception class. Things grew worse and worse until I had a suicidal school phobic 11yr old on my hands. I'd not removed him from school sooner because the EWO assured me my "application" would not be accepted by the LEA because with four children they would'nt consider it. I was told that they would'nt accept that I could teach each child whilst caring at the same time for the others. Anyway my fear of what the authorities would do to us, was not as great as my fears for my son's sanity, and eventually I did the deed. Ever since my poor boy was 4 I beleived I would'nt be allowed to teach him at home. All those years of mental and physical pain that I could have spared him! I try not to regret the past and just try and concentrate on the now. We can't go back, can we?.

As for home teaching not working with four children! I have watched each of them growing in confidence and ability. I have the pleasure of their company everyday. I have the satisfaction of seeing my boys ride off on their bikes after lunch to explore the marshes or common when other children are still sitting at school desks. We go out when we want to without having to hurry back because of school times. I watch them swim for two whole afternoons a week. We have found the right kind of system that suits us, and all four children finish every single piece of work set for them, knowing that once they've done it they are free. The only thing we've lost is all the space that our educational resources fill. There's so much to choose from isn't there! The younger three children still have their old best friends who come to stay often, especially during school holidays. The eldest however has not yet gained enough confidence to socialise as the others do. We are very isolated here in Bungay as there are no E.O. groups this side of Suffolk, and Diss is too difficult and expensive for us to get to, so we remain alone. The only place we can get to regularly is Norwich by bus, but only on Wednesdays when the fare is cheaper at £7.15. Otherwise the fare would cost double that. It would be nice to see some other E.Oers to exchange ideas, worries and a cup of coffee or a meal with. The children would like to get together with other E.Oing children to form new friendships with others like them. They are all very happy friendly children, and the three younger ones are very outgoing, active and energetic. If anyone with children near the ages of mine would like to come to visit and go for walks over the common or along the Bigods Way and have a plate of pasta with us, then please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

Zenia Indelicato,
4 Beccles Road,
Bungay,
Suffolk. NR35 1HY
Tel: 01986 893349

EO FAMILY DIARY

I have been overwhelmed by the response to my request for two families to write an ongoing account of their EO lives. There were far too many letters for me to be able to reply personally to you all. I eventually chose two families, not because they were in any way better than the others, but because between them they have a range of challenges to meet and I hope most readers will be interested by at least one aspect of the lives of at least one of the families.

Thank you very much everyone who volunteered.

Sue Hutchin, Newsletter co-ordinator

IMPORTANT NOTICE - RETRACTION OF ARTICLE

Reference: February Newsletter (P.10) under the heading, 'WARNING' written by Wendy Knight (enquiry officer). This was published without prior knowledge of the Enquiries Co-ordinator.

The Kent Consultancy Service Agency are employed by the Kent L.E.A. and have been operating successfully for many years, many other L.E.As also make use of such agencies in order to cover their inspectorate duties.

During the last six months there have been instances whereby families have been very upset and disturbed by their 'inspection visits'. Some time ago after diplomatic investigation with the parties involved, I discovered that this was due to the over-enthusiasm of one of the Agency's consultants and not the Agency as a whole. Therefore I contacted the Manager of the K.C.S.A. and subsequently he arranged a staff meeting during which correct procedure and methods were reiterated and reinforced. Also a copy of the L.E.A. Guidelines was sent which has proved very useful to the Agency. I have now received reports from some of the families after subsequent 'visits' from the official concerned and it appears that everything is now in order.

I trust that the liaison established with the K.C.S.A. will ensure that there is no further cause for alarm.

Eileen Wilson, Enquiries Co-ordinator,
39 Tattenhill Lane, Branston, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 3EZ.
Tel: 01283 532547.

MY E.O. DAY

I've been nagged into writing this, "I can't do it, I'm still waiting for a proper E.O. Day, just isn't acceptable as an excuse any longer.

Well, today started as most do, with hubby Roger bringing me a cuppa in bed - yes I know I'm lucky and I do appreciate it. It isn't long before Hannah (4) joins me and I decide I may as well get up. We are just in time to see Daddy off to work, then Hannah goes and rouses 16yr old Andrew as he also has to go to work. Yes he did get a job after being home educated and no he had no formal qualifications.

By 9.30am those who have to leave have gone and Hannah, Heather (12yrs) who is much more loathe to get up than her sister and myself, are all breakfasted and ready to start work.

While I am helping Heather with Maths, Hannah creates a lovely collage from all kinds of paper and card scraps. Unfortunately an awful lot of glue gets spread around and so while she puts half of her creation to dry near the fire, I attempt to remove the other half from the table, maybe it could become a permanent feature.?

We then do a bit of a 'swop around, and Heather works on her own at History (The Tudor Reformation) and R.St (The Life of Jesus) while I work with Hannah.

She does a couple of pages of her workbook, learning two new letters and then I read her the relevant stories from 'Letterland'. She then does some colouring, "Oh a striped sheep, how nice!" Apparently she understands that wool from sheep is made up into jumpers, perhaps she hasn't yet realised that the dye process occurs after the wool has left the original owner.

We are interrupted from our early lunch by the arrival of a large

parcel. It's the E.O. Stationary, as I have just taken over as the Membership Secretary for the West Midlands Region. I organise that then we quickly get ourselves together and catch a bus into Walsall where we go to the Children's Library to join in the regular E.O. monthly meeting. Its great to be able to chat to other parents who don't dismiss grumbles about the occasional bad day with suggestions of sending the girls to school. They also all seem to have such good helpful ideas, and I for one, really appreciate their support. Our fellow members are E.O.'s greatest resource! The girls enjoy their time there too, they meet friends, read/have stories play on the computer and pop along upstairs for a tour of the museum and art gallery. By 3.45pm we are on our way home and I'm wondering what to cook for tea.

While I make the preparations for tea, Heather goes off to practice on her clarinet, she has a lesson this evening. I hear the scales she is supposed to be learning for her Grade 4 exam, replaced by the songs she is playing with the Church music group - oh well its all practice, isn't it? Hannah meanwhile, is now catching up with a bit of T.V. and having a very one sided argument with her Barbie doll!

We all have tea together and then poor old Dad (being the only one who drives) turns out to take Heather for her lesson. Hannah goes along for the ride, while Andrew and myself get ourselves off to our Church where I help to run a Youth Group for teenagers of 15+.

I get back at around 10.15pm to find both the girls are in bed (I'm really quite surprised by this) and hubby is watching T.V. I flop on the sofa and reflect on the day. It's been a good one, they aren't all. Sometimes one of us is ill or in a bad mood, or it pours with rain and we miss the bus, Hannah just wants to watch cartoons and Heather decides she wants to be the first

MY E.O. DAY

cont:

under-age teenage drop out. We all get days like that sometimes but one of the advantages of home education is that we can be more flexible, put off the complicated stuff for a day or two and spend an afternoon wandering around the park or just around the local museum or even reading a book.

Our E.O. days are sometimes good, sometimes bad, often hectic, but never boring.

Joy Beasley, 65 Station Road,
Aldridge, West Midlands

If you have an E.O. Day to share
send it to: Paula Turner

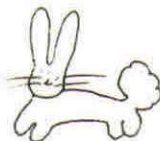
79 Kingshurst Way,
Kingshurst, Birmingham.
B37 6EB.



Recipe for Easter Biscuits

makes 8 - 10

3oz Margarine
3oz Castor Sugar
6oz Plain Flour
2oz Raisins (optional)
1 egg (beaten into submission)



Cream the margarine and the sugar, then add a drop of vanilla essence, then add the sifted flour, mixed spice and raisins, mix together, then add just enough beaten egg to bind the mixture to stiff consistency, similar to shortcrust pastry.

Roll out to about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness, and cut with a bunny cutter, press out and place onto a greased baking tray.

Bake for about eight minutes or until golden brown.
Allow to cool, then decorate to your hearts content.
Happy eating.



From Linda Parsons (York)

Children's Pages Extra

Facts on Star Trek from Luci Bambridge.

- 1) Lieutenant Worf was born in 2340 on the Klingon Homeworld and is 33yrs.
 - 2) The Cardassian name for Deep Space Nine is Terok Nor.
 - 3) A Starship travelling at full impulse speed crosses the solar system in 44 hours, at Warp one, the same distance takes 11 hours, at Warp 6, it takes 2 minutes and at Warp 9.6 it only takes 21 seconds.
 - 4) The Enterprise NCC-1701-D has a maximum speed of Warp 9.6.
 - 5) Captain Jean-Luc Picard has had ten amours, between 2327 - 2371.
 - 6) On the U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D, the primary sickbay is on deck 12.
-

IMMUNISATION

I was informed recently that children who are educated outside school are not recorded on the local Health Authority's files for immunisation. Therefore, it appears "Educated Otherwise" families will have to make their own arrangements for this.

On contacting my local hospital, they requested details of our own doctor for the purpose of obtaining the children's medical history, etc. When the necessary all-clear was issued they then gave us an appointment for the appropriate immunisations.

From Sue North, 'Quince Cottage' 30 Oswald Rd, Moordown, Bournemouth, Dorset.
BH9 2TG. Tel: 01202 525011.

AN APOLOGY

EO is very sorry that GWENT and GWYNNEDD were missed out of the contact list !! The missing page has been included with this newsletter, please attach it to the contact list.

CHILDREN'S PAGES EXTRA

DARK WOOD

Dark Wood,
Branches waving rhythmically,
A single twitter andsilence
but not quite -
Twigs cracking,
Shadows creeping,
An owl is calling his mate,
Is that a badger shuffling in the leaves?
A slight ripple from the pond.
Perhaps a fox - thirst has brought him here,
A scurrying mouse maybe bringing food for a hidden family.
Dark cat breaking through the bracken.

Later, breaking the sleeping silence,
The birds awake for the new day.

By. Ruthie Thomas. aged 9 (Devon)



HAMSTER POEM

My hamster is like a wisp of flame as she
skitters along the ground,
My hamster is like a velvet cushion with
black beads for eyes,
Her twitching nose is like a blade of
grass whiffing in the wind,
Her felt-like ears are satiny pink rose-
petals,
Alert on her haunches, she looks like a
meerkat in the desert,
Snuggling into her nest, she fluffs her
bedding into her corners of the cage
just like me on a wintry night.

By. Meriel Vincent. aged 10 (Herts)



Hey Girls!

If you are between the ages of 12 - 15 then you can receive the new
book called Some Girls for 50p.
It is home made by me, who has a lot of experience, this book is about
growing, 12 - 15 is a difficult time isn't it?
The first 5 orders I receive will get a free poster of your favourite
person. (Please quote who you would like)
Enclose an SAE with a stamp and send it to me at:
Some Girls, 3 Mitten Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, E. Sussex. TN40 1QL.
P.S. Don't forget! Future is Female.

RE: QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE FEBRUARY 1997 NEWSLETTER

I would like to thank all those who have replied to the questionnaire that accompanied February's newsletter. I urge those, please, who have not already returned the questionnaire/and or written to me, to do so, since all replies, whatever your comments, are contributions that will go towards forming what I hope will be a comprehensive report on home education currently in the United Kingdom. I appreciate the time that families have taken/are taking to reply to the questionnaire. Future newsletters will contain a summary of the study's conclusions.

Several member's of E.O. have commented that they have not filled in the questionnaire because they did not know what information I wanted. How individuals interpret and answer the questions, is the information I am seeking, since it is those personal interpretations that will help to explain home education. If the questionnaire seems long then please answer it according to what you interpret the gist to be. If it seems complex then I apologise and hope that you will nevertheless attempt to answer it. If you no longer have a copy then please write and tell me about why you home educate and what home education means for you. I am keen to have replies from as varied a cross section of home educating families as possible, whether they are experienced home educators or not.

Space and time precluded an explanation of my study in last month newsletter. My research, based at Durham University, is concerned with home-based education for children aged up to 11 years, and seeks to investigate the education of those children whose contact with school is minimal, and of those who have no experience of school at all. My work seeks to extend on the studies of, Lowden (1993), Petrie, (1992), Webb (1988) and others, endeavouring to broaden the definition of home education to include those people who have not been the subject of previous research, that is to say, it will refer to all who home educate for some or all of the time, whatever their reason for doing so, concentrating particularly on children aged up to eleven years.

The study is to examine what is happening in home education, its merits, its place as an alternative to school, and the implications home education has for education generally, particularly as greater choice in education becomes accessible. I will also be looking at studies from overseas.

The relevance of the project lies in the growing importance that home education has within society, the inferences it has for schools and on the schooling system. Home education is illegal in some countries of Europe and research can assist in maintaining our right to a choice. Essentially my work looks at children's development and how they are affected by the different experiences of home education in the light of current research into children's development both at home and in school.

If you know of any home educating families who are not members of E.O. but who would be prepared to fill in the questionnaire or take part in this research, please let me know.

This research will continue with the final conclusions written up in 1998/1999.

If the postage seriously poses a problem for you, then, rather than not send in the questionnaire, please do so and ask me to return a stamp to you.

Thank you

Paula Fielding-Bell at 1 Hill Top Cottages, Knott Hill Lane, Delph, Lancashire OL3 5RJ
telephone: 01457 872 946 e-mail address: P.J.Rothermel@durham.ac.uk.
(re: postcode - there was an error on the questionnaire. The postcode related to my PO Box. number.)

CONTACTS

We are new to E.O. and have just moved to Cornwall. We have one son nearly 4 years old who we have decided to educate from home.

I am interested in meeting others (perhaps with child/children of the same age) and would love to have news of any events, meetings etc in my area.

Karen Roberts, Court Cottage,
St Kew Highway, Bodmin, Cornwall.
PL30 3DP.

We are a family living in rural West Northumberland and would like to make contact with other families living in the local area, (25 mile radius of Haltwhistle). My children are Sarah 8½ and Christopher 6. We live on a farm and are fairly isolated so it would be nice to meet occasionally with other families who have children of a similar age. Hoping to hear from you soon.
Angela Smith, Purnt Walls Farm,
Coanwood, Haltwhistle, Northumberland.
NE49 OPS.

We are Celia and Richie, currently home-educating Oliver 10, Thea 8 and Peri 3½, following an 18 month spell in a local primary school. We would like the children to be introduced to a wider variety of skills, as well as helped to follow their own interests and initiatives. Also importantly, opportunities for group work such as games, dance, drama, music etc.

We envisage some kind of flexible small school incorporating a childrens council into the structure, and would like to meet other families with school age children who would be interested in a project along these lines. Our inspirations include:- John Holt, Rudolph Steiner, A.S. Neill and Montessori.

We live currently in rural Herefordshire and have 6 acres of land with space for you to visit and camp or caravan. We will be here during mid to late June and look forward to meeting any of you who may be able to come. Please get in touch in advance by phoning us on:
01544 327057.

Celia Kibblewhite and Richie Cotterill.

I am planning to start up a newsletter/journal for fathers which focuses on parenting- and particularly fatherhood-issues. I am writing to ask if any of the readers of E.O. would be interested in either contributing and/or subscribing. If interested contact:
Richard Harvey, 35 The Marles,
Exmouth, Devon. EX8 4NE.
Tel: 01706 819385.

PUND RAISING

In West Yorkshire we are currently looking for fund raising ideas to cover the costs of room hire, visiting speakers workshop leaders, paper & glue type resources and educational outings.

We would love to hear from any members who have successfully raised money (small or large amounts) for their local group activities. All ideas will be appreciated. Please Contact:
Judith Shalowski, 121 Otley Old Road, Leeds. LS16 6HH.
Tel: 0113 2265515.

Interesting Pressure Group:

Full Time Mothers
P.O. Box 186
London.
SW3 5RP.
Membership is €5

Wanted/Help Urgently Required

I am trying frantically to improve my knowledge of French with cassettes and a CD rom programme-is there anyone out there that could help me?

Someone maybe to correct my letters or even speak to me in French-that is if you can make sense of what I'm saying!

Please Contact:
Marian Damen & Family
7 The Planes, Chertsey, Surrey.
KT16 8LE.
Tel: 01932 566619

CONTACTS

WEST MIDLANDS

West Midlands H.E.L.M. is the newsletter for E.O. members and other Home Educators in the West Midlands. It is published monthly and gives all the local, up-to-date news on the Home Education scene in the West Midlands. There's news every month from the local E.O. Co-ordinator, news of the local meetings, trips, gatherings and events. Children's pages, jokes and jests, penfriends, rhyme and (no) reason, the wall and crosswords, wordsearches, puzzles, interesting articles, things in the pipeline, ideas, notices, swap shop controversial cartoons, allsorts of information and really anything else we can develop.

If you live in the West Midlands or neighbouring counties and you would like a complimentary copy then send an SAE (A5 size) to the address below. If you wish to subscribe it costs 20p a copy. Including postage it is £4.80 for 12 months, £2.40 for 6 months or £1.20 for 3 months. Make payments payable to H.E.L.M. and send it to:

5 Haig Road, Dudley, West Midlands.
DY2 7QP.

Tel: 01384 233497.

I am a seventeen year old unschooler. You may/may not remember my newsletter Self-Schoolers Network News which I sent to HSE a couple of months ago. I am planning a trip to Europe this summer and I thought that your organisation would be a good place to start to look for people with whom I could stay while in England in June. This will be my first trip to Europe. Any help that you could give me would be most appreciated. I don't have any definite plans yet. I'm trying to get in touch with as many people as possible to see where that leads me. However, I'm thinking that I'll be in the UK for three weeks beginning in late May. I'd like to spend some time in London of course (I definitely want to see the sights)

but I also want to have a chance to see the rest of the country and to meet people that I could stay with for a few days so that I can experience the cultures more intimately from a real point of view (rather than seeing everything as a tourist). Contact: Zoe Blown-Ledoux, RR1 Box 452, Lisbon Falls ME 04252 USA 207-353-5454.
E-mail: memoirs@ime.net

My name is Rebecca Mawson. I am 6 yrs old and I would like people to send me a postcard, because I would like to find out about lots of things. I would like to find out about different places in the U.K. So send the postcards to my address: 40 Wilson Marriage Road, Colchester, Essex. CO4 4DG.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

I read a short article recently in another publication, written by a 15 yr old boy who has been home educated for the past 4 years. He wrote briefly about his experiences before and since home educating. I thought that this type of article in our newsletter would be very interesting for other families and their children in home educating, especially those just starting out. I thought I'd appeal in the newsletter for young people to write in and share their experiences and if any would be willing to do so that would be wonderful.

The I considered that lots of young people find the process of putting it all down on paper quite boring or difficult and so they may not respond. I am therefore offering to receive and transcribe tape recorder messages I would of course check that the transcript met with their approval before submitting it to the newsletter and return their tapes. For anyone who is publicity shy, so

cont.

long as your name and address accompanied the recording it would not have to appear in the newsletter, you could use an alias or remain anonymous. Some points of interest may be: Age, Why you started being home educated, when you started, how you felt about it then, and how you feel about it now. What you find good and bad about it and the best educational thing that you've done since EOing.

If this idea interests you, send your tapes to:

Clare Murton, 27 Sandhill Crescent, Leeds. LS17 8DY.
Tel: 0113 2690061.

I know that there are many readers who would value and enjoy such contributions. Real life is so much more interesting than theories!

CHILDREN'S PENPALS

Hi, My name is Mary Skeys and I am 14. I would like a M/P penpal between 14-16. I like going out with my friends, reading, all kinds of music, T.V. and loads of other stuff. Write to me at: Hazeldene West, Earls Croome, Worcester. WR8 9DA.

Hello. My name is Tia. I am nearly 7. I would like penpals aged 6-9. My hobbies are Cooking, Horseriding, making salt dough, swimming and riding my bike. I would like same kind of person to write enclosing a photo. (Jehovas Witnesses) Tia Smith, 50 Maisemore, Yate, Bristol. RS17 4UP.

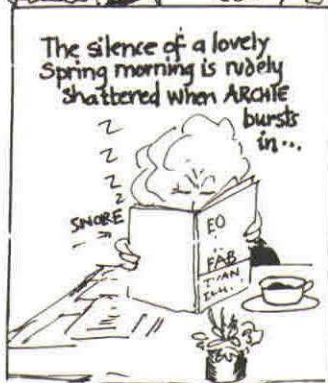
My name is Scarlett, I am 6. I have a sister called Jessica she is 9. My hobbies are piano, choir and singing and ballet. I love horses. Please write:
Scarlett Pares Landells, 149 Sturton St, Cambridge. CP1 2QH.

Calling all 8 - 12yr olds, who like to write in code (if you don't want I don't mind) I like computers, animals, reading, writing and also riding my bike and drama. I hate oop groups/stars but I don't mind if you like them as long as you don't go on about them. Please write soon (send a photo if possible) I will reply to all letters.
Miriam Davies, 68 Cornwall Road, West Sussex, Littlehampton. BN17 6EQ.

Hi, My name is Andrew, I am 14, and I left school in September 1996, and joined E.O. I would like penpals aged between 14-16yrs M/P. I like computer games, writing letters, playing darts, also snooker and watching T.V. I also like going on outings with other E.O. members. Please write to: Andrew Ledwold, 32 Riddings Road, Sheepridge Huddersfield. HD2 1HL.

Hello, My name is Sophie-Louise, I am nearly 9 at the end of March. I love my dog Sarge, my rabbit Bobby, and my dolls. I like the Spice Girls music and Ice-skating, I'm hoping to go skating more often. Plus I like swimming. Hope to hear from you soon, any girls around my age or a little older or younger.
Sophie Mercer, 23 North Green, Bullbrook, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 2NY
Tel: 01344 485256.

EDUCATING ARCHIE BY SEEZ



To Lydia with apologies for not looking all the time

CO-ORDINATORS UPDATE

I still have a number of copies of the 4th edition of 'School is not compulsory' Free for Co-ordinators when you send me an A5 55p SAE.
Do Not Delay - Send For It Today!!

NEW ACTING CO-ORDINATORS

TAYSIDE	Catriona Morrison	Tel: 01382 510356
PIPE	Karen Sny	Tel: 01337 830976
PEMBS	Tom Harpur	Tel: 01348 875460
GWENT	Diane Gould	Tel: 01495 301896
CLEVELAND	Pauline Butterworth	Tel: 01642 550628
COUNTY DURHAM	" " " "	" " " " " "
N.IRELAND	Isobel Kuzma	Tel: 01504 264938

NEW AREA NEEDING A CO-ORDINATOR

East London, Jackie Mason is offering to take over, but is anyone else is interested, please contact me:
Isobel Bogucki - Co-ordinators Secretary
Tel: 01403 261178

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL NEWSLETTERS

Come on you local newsletter editors out there, we know your there because you've told us in these very pages.

Simply send a piece in telling us about your newsletter, the area it serves, the contents, the history, anything that would be of interest to people in your local area and EOers nationally.

Just think how many new subscribers and friends you could gain.

Even if you've only just started one and it is in a basic written sheet, still let everyone know how you hope to grow it.

Simply send your article to me, Rod Drury, and I will print it up in a regular form and liase with each editor so to have a regular spotlight on local newsletters around the country: each issue.

Send it by the 21st of the month preceding deadline to -
5, Haig Road, Dudley. West Midlands. DY2. 7QP.
Telephone: 01384-233497.

CO-ORDINATORS CORNER

PAULA TURNER (WEST MIDLANDS)

Hello from the West Midlands. I am Paula Turner, and have been the Education Otherwise Co-ordinator for approximately 2 yrs. When Sylvia Jeffs resigned, I naively enquired what a co-ordinator had to do. A meeting was set up with interested parties. After a discussion of Sylvia's role, I was the only one left willing to take on the whole job! I thank Sylvia for the legacy she left me in the West Midlands. No education authority was without the Education Otherwise contact number, and a few of them had regular contact with Sylvia.

I have maintained contact with the L.E.A.'s but only as the need has arisen. However, Birmingham L.E.A. has maintained a "working" relationship with myself, and I am regularly (2-3 times a year) asked to speak to the education welfare officers who are responsible for monitoring the Home Educators. Very often they ask me questions which indicate their view of Home Education is limited to their experience in schools. These are valuable opportunities to educate the "system" about the ethos of Home Education. It is a goal of mine to develop this kind of relationship with all of the L.E.A.'s in the West Midlands, of which there are seven including Birmingham.

My main role as co-ordinator concerns talking to new contacts, and old. My children groan when they hear me say... "yes, it is". Inevitably someone new wants to know if I'm the 'department' that can give them information about Home Educating. The children know I probably won't be available for the next 30 minutes, or more! Our answer phone is usually switched on the days I really must complete that project with them, or when we have no clothes left to wear, and I really must iron. Other phone calls that take ages are my good friends. Our first meetings, after I became co-ordinator were simply at Birmingham's Central Library every month, it was accessible and free. We stayed here for a whole year and people came to socialise, share experiences and talk. Julie Gibson (then W.M. E.O. Membership Secretary) started in August '95 a local information sheet, just charging postage and photocopying. In May '96 our newsletter went "upmarket" with Rod adding pages, and printing it in colour on his P.C. It still only costs printing and postage, but is an invaluable tool for communicating with all the Home Educators in the W.M. area. Our second meetings were started in October '95 at Walsall Library and still take place on the second Thursday each month.

Because of Sylvia's contact with the L.E.A., I was asked to speak at a day conference organised by N.A.S.W.E. (National Association of Social workers in Education) North Birmingham branch. Their theme was education otherwise than at school. A number of participants from inside the L.E.A., as well as many from outside were attending. This provided more opportunity to explain the positive influence of Home Education, but also mention the discrimination, the lack of understanding, and the lack of resources, funding etc. The feed back from attendees was most encouraging, especially for a first time public speaker!

It was as a direct result of this conference, that the head of an independent charity school approached me to talk about the resources we needed.

Of course, meeting/activity space was the first item. Dr Halliday kindly introduced me to their opposite side, a community project. The people at St. Paul's Venture were very kind and Dr Halliday had a great deal of influence in getting us the use of a self contained out building. It is heated, has a kitchen and toilets; outside there is a large sandpit, wonderful climbing frame, grassed area, and a hard surface football pitch. Added to that there is an urban farm on site. Yes the goats have escaped into the building, but only once!

The second item, and we are still working on it... free entrance and sitting of G.C.S.E.'s. If the school gets grant maintained status by September the outlook is positive. When the details are finalised, I will let you know in the newsletter.

A lot has happened in the West Midlands since I have become co-ordinator. Not many of the "doings" are mine, but I have been willing to be a facilitator and communicator. One of these have been regular trips to such places as: a Paper Recycling Plant, International Airport, Ambulance Control Centre, Royal Mail Sorting Office, Football Stadium and other places we can't get access to individually.

If your area isn't as active, phone your co-ordinator and offer your help or suggestions. Just DO something, it will encourage more people to DO, and your group will then grow. Plus, E.O. will then be active again, throughout the country. Or why not offer to co-ordinate?

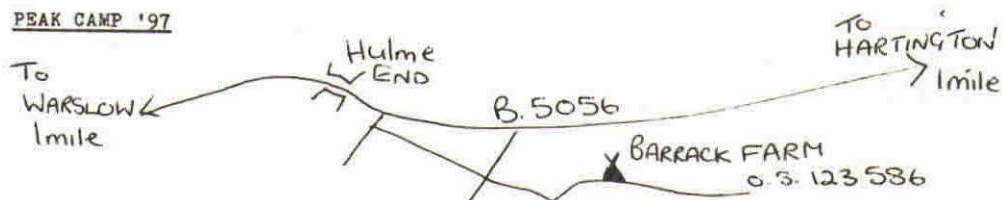
Finally, if you're in the West Midlands (or further afield) you will be warmly welcomed at any of our three meetings a month, or on any of our activities/trips. Simply call me or any of the people on the diary page - Paula.

Come on all you Co-ordinators, send in your "Co-ordinators Corner" today! If you'd send you're articles to me, I'll keep them in a similar style and format, and forward them on to the editor of that month. If we do it on a first come first served basis it will keep it fair. Then I'll use them in order after contacting you for any latest news you want included.

Please send them to me by the 21st of the month preceding deadline. All the best, Rod Drury.
5, Haig Road, Dudley, West Midlands. DY2.7QP. Tel: 01384-233497.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

PEAK CAMP '97



The camp this year will be from Friday 20th June to Saturday 28th June, at the regular venue, Barrack Farm, Beresford, Hartington, Nr Buxton. There is no need to book. The site is suitable for tents/touring vans, and has shavers and washing up facilities (20p). Also a shop selling milk and sweets. For further details, contact: Ian Bennett, 79 Wellcarr Rd, Woodseats, Sheffield. S8 8QP. Tel: 0114 2817466.

NATURAL NURTURING NETWORK (Open Day)

The Natural Nurturing Network (NNN) is holding a national Family Open Day in the Conference Centre at Ryton Organic Gardens in Coventry. The day is planned for May 5th and will provide a wonderful opportunity for parents to find out more about a range of natural nurturing options. The organisation has now reached the stage in its development where it is looking to spread the word. Says Elspeth Campbell, founder of the network. 'The NNN is for parents who practice attachment parenting. We see children's needs as legitimate and believe it is damaging for those needs not to be met. That's why we breastfeed on demand, have a family bed, carry our babies in slings and don't enforce separation.'

A range of discussions and workshops (balloon modelling, juggling, crafts) will be available for adults and children, as well as information about NNN and other organisations which have an ideological or practical overlap with NNN. There will be a 'fashion-show' of many different kinds of baby-carriers (most models will be for sale) as well as book-stands with books on parenting breastfeeding, birth, etc and children's books for sale. Breastfeeding advice and support will be available in a private setting.

La Leche League, the Informed Parent, Education Otherwise and other support organisations are all expected to take a stand.

Ryton Organic Gardens is an ideal setting for the Family Open Day, with its 10 acres of gardens. Light organic lunches will be available. The entry fee will be £2.50 per adult (£1.50 concessions) and the day starts at 10am.

For more details contact: Paula Rice on: 0118 9735219.

Gwersyll Dewi Sant - EO Camp in Wales - June '97

Camp or hire a caravan by the sea at Pencarnan Farm, St Davids, Pembrokshire. For more details contact Sue Hagerty, 4 Eclipse Terrace, Five Roads, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire. SA15 5YS Tel 01269 861902

Sculpture Adventure

The Fallen Fossil, a symbolic sculpture, is one of the most lasting images at Tout Quarry. It stands over 2M in height and is carved out of a rock face by Stephen Marsden, a sculptor, and Skylark Durston, a retired master mason. Mr Durston, who worked on Portland all his life, is called Skylark because he sang so sweetly as he worked. Now 83, he was awarded an MBE in 1992 for services to the community.

The Fallen Fossil symbolises the quarry's theme of giving back. The rock has been taken from the land but the exercise of creating something beautiful with it has brought good to those who will see it. The great pit of Tout may be rugged and over grown and worked out, but it is there, for people to experience and to carve into.

The above extract from an article about Tout Quarry may be of interest to members. Lucy Mason, a stone mason teaching on the project, is very keen to work with home educated children. There is the possibility for about 10 children to take part and it may be possible to negotiate a group reduction in the cost.

For more information about the project, contact Linda: 0171 207 3304

Publications Update

1. Choosing your approach to home education
2. Deregistration and contact with LEAs
3. Legal aspects of home education
4. Home education research
- 5.
- 6.
7. Courses and qualifications
8. Home education and Steiner
9. Flexi- schooling
10. School anxieties

The above information sheets are now available (others still in preparation) at 40p each from Chris Harper. (see back cover) *Teach Your Own* now out of stock, reprinting soon. Watch this space.

Flexi-Schooling

Anita Jamal, Tel. 01904 945659, has experience of flexi-schooling and is happy to talk to other members about it.

POEMS

A RECIPE FOR LIFE

Sweep away your worries,
Tidy up your dreams,
Put your wishes in a box,
File together all your schemes.

When the need arises,
Take out a little wish,
Mix it with a cup of hope,
In an optimistic dish.

Then let that optimism
Simmer for a little while,
Seasons it with hardiness,
And serve it with a smile.

For dessert open
A creamy, golden dream,
Mix it with a spoonful
Of condensed, inventive
scheme.

As the scheme begins to
thicken
Stir it boldly with a plan,
Then turn it out and decorate
With hopeful cherries from
a can.

If worries rise to haunt you
You must wash them all away,
With a glass of determination
To keep the blues at bay.

Take all the bits of pleasure
That make your life worthwhile,
And cook them all together,
In a golden baked lifestyle.

QUESTIONS

What is ... a Million?

The Blades of grass growing on your
back lawn.
The people you've met since the day
you were born.
The age of a fossil you found by the
sea.
The years it would take you to reach
Octran Three.
The words you have read since you
started school.
The water drops needed to fill the
fish pool.
The hairs that are growing on your
dad's chest.

IF YOUR HANDS GET WET

If your hands get wet in the washing
up water,
if they get covered in flour
if you get grease or oil all over
your fingers
if they land up in the mud,
wet, grit, paint, or glue.....

Have you noticed, it's just then
that you always get a terrible itch
just inside your nose?
and you can try and twitch your nose,
twist your nose, squeeze your nose
scratch it with your arm,
scrape your nose on your shoulder
or press it up against the wall
but it's no good.
You can't get rid of the itch.
It drives you so mad you just have
to let a finger get at it.
And before you know you've done it,
you've wined a load of glue, or oil,
or cold wet pastry all over the end
of your nose.

BLUE MONDAY

Mondays I feel I'm useless,
That I'm no use at all
A damp November firework;
A sad, split tennis ball;
A broken-handled cricket bat;
A rain-bedraggled tabby cat;
A licuid bowl of raspberry jelly;
A single, ancient, smelly welly;
Mondays I feel just useless.

Mondays I feel I'm homeless
A pip between the teeth;
A wrinkle in the bedclothes;
The wrestler underneath;
Some summer-soft and runny butter;
A Chinese torture dripping tap;
A blocked and flooded winter gutter;
A trap that's trapped inside a trap;
Mondays I feel just homeless.

REGIONAL DIARY

BATH

'Hedgehogs' is a social group for all home-educators old and new. We meet twice weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays. Also on the 1st Sunday of each month, and for occasional seasonal outings, trips and celebrations. The amount on offer each month varies depending on what any of us have the energy to organise! but there's always something happening and everyone is welcome. Contact Co-ordinators are: Jo Ball and Andy Hannen, 25 Larkhall Place, Bath. BA1 6SP. or phone Ros. 01125 832118. Please contact us for general info, or details of 'Hedgehogs'.

BERKSHIRE

Wednesdays

Ice skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell. 1pm-4pm. We have a lesson with a very good teacher from 1.30-2pm. Cost including skate hire and lesson is £1.50. The rink is easily reached from the M4 and A329M.

Fridays

Table tennis, badminton and other outdoor/indoor activities at Woodford Park, Woodley, Reading, from 1.30-4pm. The park is on the east side of Reading just off the A4 and near the A329M and the M4.

Sunday 13th April 3-5pm

Home education at secondary level; an opportunity for parents who are home educating at secondary level to meet and share experiences, and information, problems and generally to support each other. At Pat Connors home. Please let her know by Friday 11th April if you intend to come.

Tuesday 13th May 11am

Stonehenge, Wiltshire. Group visit, therefore FREE. Pre-look with Pat Connor.

Monday 16th June 11am

Putser Ancient Farm, near Petersfield, Hants. Group visit to this replica Iron Age Farm with huge atmospheric roundhouse where you can learn to hand spin, construct a wattle fence, daub a roundhouse wall, and craft a pot or

image to take home. £3.25 each child. Pre-book with Pat Connor. Contact Pat for details, 2 Whitegates Lane, Reading. RG6 1ED Tel: 01734 662123.

DEVON

An open invitation to all home-educators, we are having a get together from 1-5pm in central Exeter on the 12th April. If you are interested in coming contact, Paul or Lynda on Exeter 498679, or Peter or Liz on Exeter 468578 for more details.

DORSET (BOURNEMOUTH)

We hold fortnightly meetings to make new friends, share support, swap ideas. We participate in art/craft work, pottery, cooking and organise interesting outings. All ages welcome.

Why not come along to our STORY TELLING/DRAMA session on Thursday 24th April?

Contact Sue North on 01202 525011 for more information.

KENT

"The 1997 Kent Camp" will be from June 5th to June 9th at 'Pennys Field', Headcorn. Suggestions, or offers of workshops welcome. For further information please contact Amanda MacKenzie on 01634 402154 or Liz Turner on 01304 367625. For a copy of the latest Kent activity list send an SAE to: Jean Searle, Parn Hill East, Barr Hill, Hunton, Kent. ME15 0QT.

LANCASHIRE

We are holding a get together on 7th May from 1-5pm in Darwen. For more details please contact: Angelika M. Wolter, 108 Tockholes Road, Darwen, Lancs. BB3 1LL. Tel: 01254 771249.

REGIONAL DIARY

LEICESTERSHIRE

Our friendly local group now has a bi-monthly newsletter as well as frequent meetings. We go roller skating and swimming together, we meet up at the Friends Meeting House, Leicester once a month and at someone's home. In the next few months we are going fossil hunting, making stringed instruments, candles and batik, visiting Farm World and The Black Country Museum, doing some drama/dance/music/singing and a science experiment day, also learning sign language and tons more.

Do get in touch if you're interested in joining us, we'd love to see some new faces. Tel: Lucy 0116 2592118.

LONDON

North Kent/SE London (Dartford Bexley, Woolwich)
Friday meetings at various venues.
Contact: Mary or Andy on 0181 3060168 or Bev on 0181 8553245.

LONDON

"CHOICE". A newsletter covering meetings and events in and around the London area. Available by sending an SAE, to "Choice" 69 Ripley Road, Belvedere, Kent. DA17 5AH.
Tel: Andy Blewett 0181 3060168.
e mail-anwett@vossnet.co.uk

N.E.WALES & BORDERS

(N.Shropshire, W.Cheshire)
We continue to meet about once a week for outings and activities. These are geared towards a younger age group at the moment, but with several older children joining us recently, we hope to remedy the situation before too long. We also have plans for a regular monthly booking of a hall in Wrexham-Watch this space!
For current activities listing, send an SAE or for at least one full years supply of listings send £3 to:
Genny Bove, Rock Cottage,
49 Westminster Road, Moss Valley,
Wrexham. LL11 6DH.
Tel: 01978 757489.

N & E YORKSHIRE

On Friday April 11th at 11.30am at Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, Leeds.

On Friday April 18th at 11.30am at Marit Tamlit's near Harrogate. "Pond day", more designing and building wildlife pond. If you have wellies, spare clothes, fishing net, white ice-cream tub, magnifying glass, please bring them!
Tel: 01765 677078.

Also every Wednesday from 11am-4pm at Oaklands Education Resource Centre, High Street, Airmyn, Nr. Goole. E.Yorkshire. DN14 8LE.
Tel: Anne Mills on 01405 720894.

SCOTLAND

Anyone interested in a free trip to Stirling Castle? Karen Straug will organise one. Tel: 01786 473702.

WARWICKSHIRE

APRIL- A visit to the Sea Life Centre in Birmingham. Contact: Jocelyne Underhill for details on 01926 400338.

MAY- Social at the home of Trish Archer on the theme of Science.
Tel: 01203 422575.

JUNE- A visit to Kenilworth Castle. Contact Charlie Martui on 01926 339697.

WEST MIDLANDS

Birmingham Central Library
Usually the last Wednesday of every month, but do phone first due to activities on at the library at the school holidays.
The library is situated centrally, so its good for public transport and car parking. The central library is one of Europe's biggest with over 9 floors of books and information. The meeting is held in the "Centre for the Child" meeting rooms. There are three multimedia computers booked for our use only and you do not have to be a Birmingham resident to join the library. If you pop along to the meeting, there are many interesting places to visit in the city centre close by, such as the Birmingham

REGIONAL DIARY

WEST MIDLANDS

(continued from previous page)
Museum and Art Gallery, the International Convention Centre, Museum of Science and Industry and Gas St Basin with restored canals, all these are free of charge.
Contact: Rod Drury, 01384 233497.

WALSALL

Usually the second Thursday of each month between 10m-30m at Walsall Library in Lichfield St, Walsall. It is easy to get to as it is in the Town Centre, just a few minutes from the bus and train stations. Free tea and squash from the kind library staff, if you are early enough. You do not have to live in Walsall to join the library either, and the computer is reserved for our use only.

Above the library is Walsall's Art Gallery and Museum which is quite interesting and child friendly. It has many changing exhibitions. Walsall Gala Baths are also just around the corner and Walsall Arboretum with it's many acres is a short walk away. If you're coming along for the first time, give Penny Clarke or Julie Gibson a call and they will be there to welcome you. Call Penny: 01922 745465 or Julie: 01922 442815.

BIRMINGHAM ST. PAUL'S

Usually the third Monday of every month between 10am-4pm, at St Paul's Venture, Malvern Street, Clifton Rd, off Moseley Road, Moseley, Birmingham. (A-Z Pg 90 2nd), it is a few minutes outside the city centre and well served by public transport. St Paul's is on a large self contained site with a fully serviced, heated building, with a kitchen, toilets, and space for indoor activities.

There's a grassed playground, urban farm, football pitch and lots of space to play and run around, as well as other activities usually happening. All the tea/coffee and squash you can drink is included. To cover costs it is £1 per family and then 50p per child who attends.

This is well attended with a regular attendance of 20 adults and around 40 Home Educated children. Everyone is very friendly and if you would like to pop along for the first time, give Paula Turner a call and she will be there to greet you on arrival. Call Paula on 0121 6038673.

KINGSTANDING

A group of E.O. members and other Home Educators meet and swim at Kingstanding Baths each Tuesday (excluding school holidays). They meet up for the period between 11.30am-1.30pm when there are no school parties; so usually having the pool to themselves. It has a wave machine, a sloping shallow end for young children and a toddlers pool. Floats are also available. There is a Cafe/Restaurant for snacks afterwards and most swimmers retire here before 1.30 arrives. Under 8's must be accompanied in the pool. The pool is situated just off College Road (A453) at Warren Farm Road (AtoZ Pg 48-3B). Why not give it a try and let your children swim with other Home Educated children and yourself meet up with other Home Educators.

Contact Pauline Healy on 0121-355 1545.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Hedden Bridge

First Wednesday of every month, from 10.30am 'til 1pm.

At: The Ground Floor Centre, Hedden Bridge. (next to the Post Office)
A meeting place for activities and support.

Contact: Katherine 01422 844459.

Huddersfield

Last Thursday of every month, from 11am 'til 1.30pm.

At: The Civic Centre, Huddersfield. (close to the bus station)

We organise activities and trips, chat, share ideas, make new friends and welcome and support new members.

Contact: Diane 01484 846946
Clare 0113 2690061

REGIONAL DIARY

WEST YORKSHIRE

Leeds

Second Friday of every month, from 10am 'til 1pm.

At: St. George's Church Community Room, Leeds. (Thoresby Place entrance, next to Leeds General Infirmary).

A meeting place for activities, and workshops and friendly support. It is £2 per family initially, but we hope that fund raising will soon cover this.

Contact: Judith 0113 2265515
Clare 0113 2690061.

Shipley

Swimming every Tuesday morning from 10.30am. For details contact:
Julia 01274 487182.

HAMPSHIRE

Relaxed Montessori group, exclusive to E.O, 3hour session every Thursday £8. Urgently seeking new members aged 3 - 8yrs. Try-out welcome. Close to the A27 - A3M.

More details from:
Cathie: 01428 642246
Kay : 01705 462305.

SUPFOLK

We meet every 3 weeks at Wetherden Village Hall for different activities and fun on Fridays at 10.30 - 2.30, £2 per family. Next meeting is on the 21st March, and then 11th April. Contact S. Guthrie for more details:
Tel: 01379 783678.

WEST YORKSHIRE

1st Tuesday of the month, 11am at Anita Jamals house. Please phone for directions
01904 645659

AN
OPEN COUNCIL MEETING
of Education Otherwise will be held at
FEATHERSTONE CASTLE
near Haltwhistle, Northumberland
on Sunday 25 May 1997 at 10:00 a.m.

All EO members are welcome to attend. If you have an item which you feel should be included on the agenda, please let me know in good time.

Rob Wade, *Meetings secretary*
19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middx, HA0 2JY: 0181 904 7155

Advertisements

Home Education Support Internet Mailing List. EO members Imelda Lund, Neil Taylor and Joyce Moore are starting a mailing list on the Internet for UK home educators and their children. For subscriptions info and details of this free public access list, please email Imelda at: cinn.Lund@btinternet.com

Comfortable Mobile Home, Lyme Regis, Dorset, set in its own orchard with good views. Sleeps 6, with space for camping too. Interesting local walks, beaches, fossils, galleries and museums. Home educating families nearby. For details, contact Lisa on 01297 445685

Wanted - Educational Books, Workbooks, Equipment appropriate for ages 5 - 9 years. If you want to get rid of such items, please contact me and we can negotiate prices etc. Any subject considered. Hayley Walton, 90 Rochester Way, Crowborough, E. Sussex TN6 2DU

Unwanted. The following material is available for postage costs only;

- Bath Science, Key Stage One, teachers manual and most of the books (cost £70)
- Nelson *Design and Make*, design and technology introductory booklet (cost £20)
- Early Years Maths Activities, Scholastic (cost £10)

If you are interested, please write to: 43, New Rd, London, E1 1HE

Unwanted

- Lett's Educational Books Key Stage 3, 11-14yrs in, History, Geography, Maths and Science.
- Paperbird Books (colourful and informative) 11-14yrs on, the Georgians, Tudors, Stuarts, Middle Ages, Saxons & Normans, Romans.
- Eye Witness Science Guides, How Science Works, The Body Atlas

The above, plus a few other educational books, are all in good condition and offered free to any one wishing to collect in North Wales. Contact Mrs Janet Jones Tel. 01490 412512

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.

Adverts should be limited to 50 words and sent (with any donation) to the editor of the next issue. Advertisers who wish to discuss larger ads, should contact the newsletter co-ordinator.

**SERVICES AND PRODUCTS ADVERTISED HERE HAVE NOT BEEN
ENDORSED BY EDUCATION OTHERWISE**

INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTOR

Award winning publishers of books and CD ROM, offers ideal part time earning opportunities for home educating parents. A business you can operate from home, choosing your own hours. For a free information pack, phone EC member and home educator, Sharon Emmott, Tel: 01227 830630 or 01727 648836



Creative Parenting

A fun community-workshop for families, children & friends, exploring new perspectives of parenting and childcare. An alternative, nurturing programme of togetherness sharing and learning

Tel: Helena on 0181 429 0336

En Famille in France is a small family-run organisation dedicated to providing French language courses within a home environment. We offer individually tailored one to one courses for all ages and abilities, or self catering family accommodation with tuition. For details contact:



EN FAMILLE IN FRANCE

Mrs A. Buckley, 135 Hameau Tranquille 50270 Surtainville, France. Tel: (Fr) 02 33 52 11 97.

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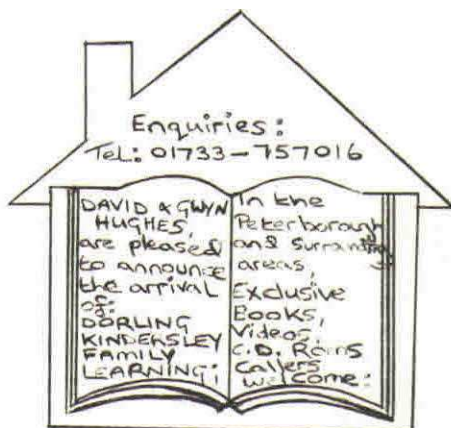
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EO stationery, re-use labels (£2.50 per 100) leaflets, posters, membership forms, car stickers and are available from;

Margaret Thompson, 2 Charleville Rd, Hockley, Birm. B19 1DA

(Donations towards postage & printing welcomed)

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For details of EO publications, information leaflets and back issues of newsletters, send a SAE to:

Badgers Holt, Birchwood, Storridge, 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.

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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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