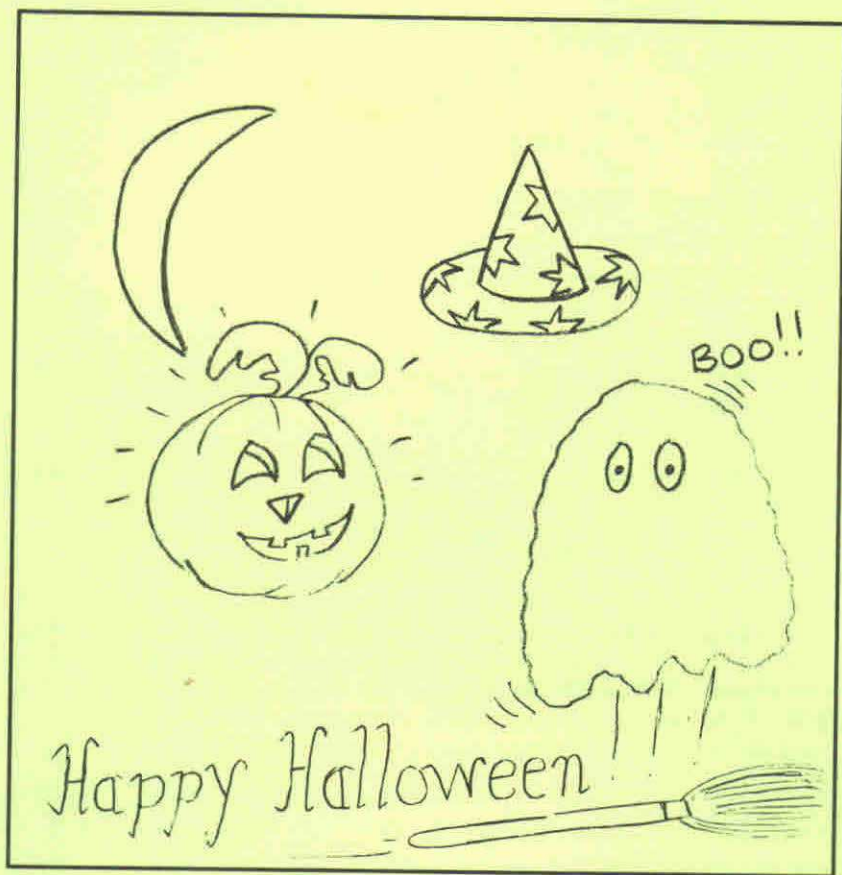


EDUCATION OTHERWISE



October '97

No 118

The Next Issue

The Editor of the Next Issue is:

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28 Cozens Hardy Rd, Sprowston
Norwich NR7 8QF
Tel:01603 401020

Children's Pages Editor:

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14 Elizabeth Crescent, Bay Vista
Whitewhaven, Cumbria CA28 6JQ

The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st November 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

Book Reviews

December '97 issue. Deadline Oct '97

Learning a Foreign Language

February '98 issue. Deadline Jan '98

The Performing Arts

April '98 issue. Deadline March '98

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
Tel 01792 898191

Disclaimer

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

All contributions (including 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 **June 99** issue onwards.

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

EDITORIAL

Well here I am again doing another newsletter, it's been a bit like panic stations this time as there seems to have been an awful lot of things to put in this issue. There has been quite a lot of 'last minute' adjustments, and articles that needed changing round or leaving out altogether, but I do hope that I have included everything that has come in, if I have forgotten anything or not got the spelling right then I do apologise. As for myself, I have been kept busy with teaching Stephanie and my work as a childminder, what with potty training and picking up from school (one of my charges has just started part time) I don't know how I've managed to fit in the newsletter, although Stephanie has helped a lot this time, (a good excuse for a break from English) and has been double checking everything, so it should be perfect. Finally we hope everyone has fun on 'Halloween and Bonfire Night', and I'll no doubt be talking to you again soon through these pages. From: Linda Parsons and Stephanie Parsons(14) 10 Rye Close, Wigginton, York. YO3 3TX.

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Special Needs Supplement.

Dear EO Friends,

As you may have read in the June Newsletter, I have taken over from Mike Allen as 'Special Needs' editor. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this Special Needs supplement, and apologise to anyone who has not made it into this issue - your articles will probably appear at a later date. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have a problem or need some information. If I can't help you personally I will usually pass you on to someone who can.

Best wishes, **Lesley Belgium**

52 Camberley Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 1SZ (0117 9530624)

Here is our updated Special Needs contact list:-

Allergies.

For advice for sufferers of allergic illnesses:

Action Against Allergy,
Mrs A Nathan Hill,
23/24 George Street,
Richmond, Surrey,
TW9 1JY

No EO contacts as yet - any volunteers?

Attention Deficit Syndrome.

Including ADD and ADHD:

Hyperactive Children's Support Group,
Mrs Sally Bunday,
59 Meadowside,
Angmering, W.Sussex,
BN16 4BW

EO Contacts:

Alison Crump (Bristol/S.Glos) 01454 -
778495

Susan Dotan (Northants) 01604 492171

Teresa Fagan (Leeds) 01274 818232

Sue Martin (Liverpool) 0151 5251043

Autism.

Including Aspergers Syndrome,
Dyspraxia and Language Disorders:

National Autistic Society,
276 Willesden Lane,
London NW2 5RB
(01451 3844/5)

Dyspraxia Trust,
8 West Alley,
Hitchin, Herts.
(01462 454986)

EO Contacts:

Janet Appleby (Tyneside) 0191 2658233

Barbara Edwards(Surrey) 01483 832250

Liz Kinnish (Merseyside) 0151 6486984

Carol Pell (N.Lincs) 0149 532308

Alan & Helen Philips(W Mids)01384 -
278789

Paul & Innys Sayers (N.Wales) 01248 -
490881

Maggie Swatridge(C'wall)01503 272087

Dawn Waddington (Bucks) 01908 -
678099

Brain Injury.

British Inst. for Brain Injured Children.
Knowle Hall, Bridgewater,
Somerset, TA7 8PJ
(01278 685573)

EO Contacts:

Lorraine Piercy(E.Sussex)01424 432527

Christine Waterman (Watford) 01923 -
464773

Bullying.

Anti-Bullying Campaign (ABC),
10 Borough High Street,
London, SE1 9QQ
(Children's Helpline: 0171 3781446)

Kidscape Helplines:
Children: 0171 4480448
Parents: 0171 7303300

Childline: 0800 1111

Cerebral Palsy

SCOPE
8 Barbaers Mews,
Neath Hill,
Milton Keynes, MK14 6DR
(CP Helpline: 0800 626216)

EO Contacts:
Catherine Salt (Wrexham) 01978 753939
Eleanor Stapleton (Lon) 0181 8841368

Cystic Fibrosis

Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust,
5 Blyth Road,
Bromley, Kent.
(01464 7211)

Downs Syndrome

Downs Children's Association,
4 Oxford Street,
London, W1.
(01580 0511/2)

Downs Syndrome Association,
153 Mitcham Road,
London, SW17 9PG
(0181 6824001)

EO Contacts:
Jean Bundred (Berks) 01734 794439
Sue Downham (Dorset) 01258 860638
Margaret Gilbert (London) 0181 9477706
Celeste Hinds (W. Yorks) 01943 602846

EO Contacts Cont:
Debra Kempt (Aberdeen) 01467 642012
Alison Peries (Sheffield) 0114 2478901
Gill Warren (Lincs) 01673 858703

Dyslexia

British Dyslexia Association (BDA),
98 London Road,
Reading, RG1 5AU.
(National Helpline: 0990 134248)

The Dyslexia Institute,
133 Gresham Road,
Staines, Middx.
TW18 2AJ
(01784 463851)

EO Contacts:
Geraldine Adams (London) 0171 2634922
Gwen Baldock (York) 01904 421982
Lesley Belgium (Bristol) 0117 9530624
Angie Cassell (Staffs) 01785 712447
Claire Dunn (Kent) 01634 726768
Ruth Durdle (London) 0181 5545889
Imelda Lund (Merseyside) 0151 5311708
Don Payne (Northants) 01604 770059
Katherine Potts (Worcs) 01242 603947
Dez Cuarrell (Shropshire) 01743 365913
Jonathon Rutherford (Lon) 0171 272456

Epilepsy

British Epilepsy Association,
Crowthorne House,
New Wokingham Road,
Wokingham,
Berks, RG11 3AY
(01734 463122)

National Society for Epilepsy,
Chalfont St Peter,
Gerrards Cross,
Bucks. SL9 0RJ
(01494 873991)

EO Contact:
Maggie Swatridge (C'wall) 01503 272087

Food Intolerance

EO Contacts:
Sue Petzsaft (E. Sussex) 01892 661319

Gifted Children

C.H.I. (Children of High Intelligence Support Society)
PO Box 4222,
London, SE22 8XG

National Association for Gifted Children,
National Centre for Children with High Abilities and Talents,
Elder House,
Milton Keynes, MK9 1LR
(01908 673677)

EO Contacts:
Anne & Barry Wrightson (W. Yorks)
01924 445608

Hearing Impairments

CHATTERBOX-child support group
Mrs Linda Webb,
58 Westleigh Road,
Southmead,
Bristol, BS10 5QZ
(0117 9249868/9591644)

EO Contact:
Lynn Hunt (Midlands) 01782 522337

Learning Difficulties

For advice and books contact:
REACH
Wellington House,
Wellington Road,
Wokingham, Berks,
RG40 2AG

EO Contacts:
Eleanor Stapleton (Lon) 0181 8841368
Christine Waterman (Watford) 01923 464773

M.E.

Action for M.E.
PO Box 1302
Wells,
Somerset, BA5 2WE
(0891 122976)

Multiple Sclerosis

M.S. Society of G. Britain & N. Ireland,
25 Effie Road,
London, SW6 1EE
(0171 3718000)

Multiple Sclerosis Society,
8 Conyge Green,
Tisbury, Somerset.
(01761 472741)

Multi-Sensory Impairment

SENSE,
National Deafblind & Rubella Assoc.
Woodside Road, Kingswood,
Bristol, BS15 2DG
(0117 9670008)

Muscular Dystrophy

Muscular Dystrophy Group of G. Britain & N. Ireland,
7 - 11 Prescott Place,
London, SW4 6BS
(0171 7208055)

School Phobia

EO Contacts:
Geraldine Adams (London) 0171 2634922
Leigh Fitton (Cumbria) 01768 341709
Alison Weir (Surrey) 0181 7733830

Speech Impairment

(A.F.A.S.I.C.)
Assoc. for All Speech Impaired Children,
347 Central Markets,
London, EC1A
(0171 2366487)

Tuberous Sclerosis

Tuberous Sclerosis Association,
3 Cleveland Road,
Failand, Bristol.
(01275 393972)

Visual Impairment

British Talking Service for the Blind,
Mount Pleasant,
Alperton, Wembley,
London, HA0 1RR
(0181 9036666)

National Listening Library,
12 Lant Street,
London, SE1 1QH
(0171 4079417)

Dear EO,

I would like to tell you about my daughter Katie (aged 15) who has a language problem. This means she has difficulties taking in information and, as she has a short term memory problem too, following instructions is very hard for her.

I took Katie out of school in September 1995, while she was suffering from stress, anxiety, and panic attacks. She had been bullied at school for a number of years and had problems understanding her lessons. When she was eight years old, I began asking the LEA for an assessment, but she was nearly twelve when she finally got a Statement of Special Needs. Help was given in the form of a welfare assistant who didn't seem to understand language problems.

When Katie was first at home, we started with craft, poems, story writing - things that she would find calming. Then it was a matter of finding the level that she had reached at school. We worked together on a one-to-one basis, sometimes reading English or Maths material two or three times until I was sure she understood it. Now Katie chooses her own topics for work, they include animal conservation, green issues and social problems.

Katie has joined many clubs, sometimes on her own initiative, to make new friends. She has two old school friends who still visit at weekends.

I think Katie has benefited from home education. She can work at her own pace, with help at hand when needed. She is calmer, relaxed and happy, and she has more confidence in her abilities. In fact, I wish we had started years ago.

Betty Ford, Letchworth. Tel: 01462 673391.

Cerebral Palsy:- Neurological condition caused before, during or shortly after birth, causing an array of problems from mild to severe physical disability, sometimes with visual or hearing problems, but rarely causing learning difficulties.

All children are different, children with disabilities are even more so.

My son Matthew has severe spastic cerebral palsy, and has been educated at home for three years, he has a brother (Michael) and a sister (Amy) who both go to the local school which they enjoy (much to my mixed emotions).

Our bid for freedom was made in April 1994 after two very fraught and unsuccessful terms at a 'special school'. We came up against few objections, perhaps because we played the game, pointing out Matthew's problems with school (FEW) rather than the school's problems with Matthew (MANY) and we accepted all the help that was offered, which turned out to be very little.

I know I must have made many mistakes, hopefully none that could not be remedied, the biggest being in the first six months where we tried to make up for lost time by cramming every second with learning experiences, whether it was interesting and enjoyable or not. Now we take our cue from Matthew, whether it's playing: 'catch the sausage', warm and greasy, the dog really enjoying it; painting, very messy but colourful pictures, perhaps it will encourage visual tracking which he finds difficult; rolling around on the floor, maybe it will benefit his physical abilities; or just sitting around chatting; using makaton, his few words or just my ability to understand the expressions on his face.

It is SO important to be listened to and understood. We do a few things every day, which can be monotonous, physiotherapy, using a stander, the computer, and his new powered wheelchair, he is lethal in it - I have had squashed toes more than once - but it is great fun.

We try to work to a fortnightly time-table, which includes the more difficult and frustrating activities, such as drawing and writing, it is so hard when your fine motor control is not up to much, but we are seeing progress, so we can battle on.

Three years later I have regained my son, an eight year old who happens to have cerebral palsy and neurological visual disturbances.

I can never pretend it is easy o home educate a disabled child, but it has got to be easier than trying to put right fifteen years of schooling.

For us the most important thing is that we have three happy children which makes a happy mum, which can only benefit the whole family. Go for it. The rewards outweigh the disadvantages by far.

Catherine Salt, Wrexham. Tel: 01978 753939

Dear EO,

I was on the bus the other day as a young man with little co-ordination struggled to get off. He walked and wobbled his way down the road, ridiculed from behind by a giggly group of school girls pointing at him. So what do we do? Build a super race of perfect people? The fact is people who CHOOSE to be different are accepted, people who are born different are rejected. Strong words. I have a son Adam, he is 13 and six feet tall. He is handsome, charming and is practically ready to shave. He babysits, and helps with the housework; he is also hyperactive and cannot read. He has a short memory span. At school he was always in trouble and regressed to a four year old's level in education.

I was told he was just slow. He has a reading age of eight years and needed to spell out every word. Since I took him out of school we have had no contact with Northampton Education Authority. Their attitude seems to be; good, that's another difficult kid got rid of, let's move on to our more worthwhile students.

You know it's not like this in other parts of the world . . . correct me if I'm wrong. When I go home I'm asked, in amazement, why do people NEED to educate their children at home? What is wrong with the system?

So, how do I manage with Adam? Well, one moment at a time, with a healthy diet, quiet and calm study time - he sets his own work. He teaches me what his needs are and how to cope. You can't control hyperactivity, you can only guide it. At 13 he has mood swings that are difficult to say the least. Sometimes he makes me cry. He has "I hate the World" moods. But we don't go out to find medical help, or government help. They tell us what we already know, or offer drugs that don't help. We learnt a long time ago that this is OUR problem, and WE need to cope with it.

He built a den in our back yard that he bangs when he gets frustrated. He goes for long bike rides. While he's away we take a deep breath.

After thirteen years I believe people like Adam need responsibility, and to be kept busy. British people do not always seem to do enough with their children. Adam vacuums, gardens, collects the children from school - a bus ride there, a taxi back - people ask how can I send a hyperactive, word blind thirteen year old on such an errand, it's simply because his brother and sister behave better for him and they all look after each other.

I think Adam has made us better people; we are more caring, we help others more, our eyes are open more, we are more educated in every way.

I heard Adam trying to read a bedtime story to his younger brother (a fluent reader). He stumbles over the words and Benjamin tactfully whispers the right word in his ear. And afterwards I hear Benjamin say, "well done Adam, that was read so well".

We would like to contact other families (non-smokers please), write or phone me. I am here to help.

Susan Dotan, 7 Hamsterly Park, Southfields, Northants. NN3 5DA
Tel: 01604 492171

Carol, one of our Autism contacts, writes:-

Our progeny are: Vicky, 7 ('autistic', enigmatic, strong-willed, moody) and Alex, 4 (negligible speech, optional comprehension, strange digestive system).

The early years were terrible: diagnosis, then ... nothing. Determined to help Vicky, then later Alex, we researched and began to home educate. Abandoning all preconceived ideas about child development was difficult, more so was developing a strategy to enable Vicky to overcome her 'autism'. Only one thing seemed to be universally agreed: early intervention was essentially for a better chance of succeeding. Our hope is that both children will be independent, responsible adults. By the time the education system had decided how best to meet their needs, we'd been at it for years.

Drawing from a wide range of therapies and cultures, and refining them to suit our individual requirements, we have established a structured, holistic approach. Our home education complements mainstream, so far a very satisfactory arrangement.

In practice, it means mental somersaults trying to think laterally and along three or four parallels, tuning in to behaviour and unorthodox language forms. Alex's combination of sign, mime and vocal vowels is a lesson in alternative communication techniques. Also being constantly aware of giving the right message, of using an economy of language and of words with shifting or dual meanings.

Once, driving behind an elderly person who performed an irrational manoeuvre, I called him a (expletive deleted). With Vicky a captive audience in the back, not a good idea. A year later, all elderly gentlemen wearing caps are (expletive deleted), and nothing will convince her otherwise. She even makes a point of telling them personally in supermarkets and Post Offices.

Another incident happened months after a conversation about growing up, getting old and dying. I was encouraging her to use the phone, so she rang her gran and told her she should be dead - no introductions, just straight out with it. One of the rare occasions when she incurred the wrath of mother. Not that it achieved anything, Vicky is still saying the same thing to her gran. Fortunately she is possessed of a sense of humour.

Sensitive areas pose a special problem - relationships, bodily functions, manners and social behaviour. Usually, with a great deal of thought most things can be made black and white.

It is difficult to keep things simple, as viewed from Vicky's point of view everything is logical. What at first seems bizarre to us becomes reasonable, especially when interpreted visually. For example, "Where's the going round and round?" becomes the walkman.

Being emotionally detached with Vicky and openly affectionate with Alex seems strange too. She has begun to tolerate affection briefly and likes to have her arms stroked. However, only her 'special people' should she seek affection from, for her own

protection. As long as we don't appear threatening or overwhelming, Vicky copes very well.

Activities which encourage social skills and self-help skills form the greater part of our 'lessons'. Role play and stories about her characters help her to make connections and interpret body language, facial expressions and likely responses. Where a concept can be presented in a visual form she understands very quickly. We encourage her to exploit her remarkable memory and to use reason where she lacks instinct.

Being 'in tune' is vital, most times a few minutes is enough or Vicky withdraws into herself and the effort is wasted. Knowing our individual limits is also important, as is having 'time out'.

The rewards are seeing Alex attempting to play 'clock patience' on his own, Vicky asking "can you talk about me?", or "want a cuddle", or seeing them helping each other. Rare and precious moments.

.....
Carol Pell, Barrow-on-Humber. Tel: 0149 532308
.....

Dear EO,

'Dyslexia' is not just another label for children who don't cope well within the present education system. 'Dyslexia' is a gift, shared by some of history's most creative people - Leonardo Da Vinci, Hans Christian Anderson and Albert Einstein, to name a few. For a refreshing look at this 'problem' why not read 'The Gift of Dyslexia' by Ronald D. Davis.

Our son, aged ten, was recently diagnosed 'dyslexic' and we were strongly advised to get him back into main stream schooling - supplemented by special classes two hours per week, at £30 per hour, indefinitely. 'The Gift of Dyslexia' opened our eyes to another way of dealing with Nathan's learning style. We were delighted to find a tutor in the UK, who worked with our son one-to-one for the thirty hour programme. Four months later we have seen our son's writing speed increase from seven letters per minute to a personal best of thirty letters per minute. Several friends, who did not know about his participation in the programme, have commented on his increased confidence, and a 'lightness of spirit' demonstrated by Nathan.

If you are interested in contacting our son's tutor, you ring Hilary Farmer on 01235 530404. She loves her work - empowering the dyslexic learner to understand and capitalise on the learning style. We feel the money we spent on this programme was, indeed, money well spent.

Howard, Anne and Nathan Askey.

.....
-----+----- **Book Reviews** -----+-----
.....

The next special supplement is 'book reviews'. We need articles from adults and children. Send reviews of books on any subject to:

Mike Allen, 71 Belgrave Road, Loughor, Swansea, SA4 6RF.

RESEARCH REQUEST - CHILDREN EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL

This note was e-mailed to EO in response to a research enquiry that we had answered:

"Your offer of placing a request in your newsletter for families of excluded children to come forward would be much appreciated. We are primarily interested in parents (Guardians) of children who have been permanently excluded from school; whether they were aware of their rights to appeal; if they did appeal - why? Did they have legal representation; their views of the appeal process - did they think it was fair; if they chose not to appeal the reasons why not etc. ? The research is completely independent, funded by an educational charity. Names will not be used. I will keep you informed of the progress of the research. Our observations of hearings will begin in September."

If you are willing to participate in the above university based research, then please inform either myself or Catriona Morrison (address on the back cover) so that we may pass on your contact details.

Paula Fielding-Bell, Joint Research Secretary

1 Hill Top Cottages, Knott Hill Lane, Delph, Lancs, OL3 5RJ Email p.j.rothermel@durham.ac.uk telephone 01457 872 946

More research studies.....

BLACKER, S. (1981) 'Case Studies in Home Education', unpublished MEd thesis, University of Sussex.

DELAHOOKE, M. M. (1986). Home educated children's social/emotional adjustment and academic achievement: a comparative study. Doctoral dissertation. California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles. Dissertation Abstracts International, 47 475A. (North American)

MOORE, R., & MOORE, D., (1973) 'Caring for Young Children: Danger of Early Schooling', *Child Development and Education*, pp37-70. (North American)

VAN GALEN., J. & PITMAN, M. A., eds. (1991) *Home Schooling: Political, Historical and Pedagogical Perspectives*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex. (North American)

P. Fielding-Bell

1 Hill Top Cottages, Knott Hill Lane, Delph, Lancs, OL3 5RJ Email p.j.rothermel@durham.ac.uk tel 01457 872 946

UNIFIED SCHOOL LEAVING DATE

FRIDAY 26TH JUNE 1998

We understand that both school and home educated children will now have to remain in full time education until the above date even if they are already sixteen. Further details will appear in the newsletter as they become available.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU BETTER

In the past the contact list had letters to stand for details about members like interests or hobbies and some people have asked for these to come back in the next contact list. In fact the space and binding restrictions make it unlikely that we will do this in the same way but we are aware that EO members have all kind of resources and skills that it would be nice to tap into and we want some way of making these known to other people.

At the start we would store this information on the database and use it to answer specific queries. In the future we might put it into some kind of directory or publish it in some other form. If there is some information that you don't mind sharing with individual enquirers but would not want published please let us know.

Answer any or all of the questions below if you would like to share this information with other members.

Your name is _____

1. Would you mind being contacted by phone...

At any particular times?

Or by post only?

2. Have your children been home educated all the time?

If not, when did they leave school?

3. Do you have any children over 16 who were home educated? What are they doing now? Would they be interested in passing on advice to younger members?

4. Is your child gifted?



5. Are you religious? Give details.

6. Do you have any area of expertise/subject skills you would be happy to offer?

7. In your adult occupation, you may discuss home education and hear other people's reactions. Would you be able to give careers advice on necessary qualifications, skills etc?

8. Does your child have special needs? Give details.

We are also considering trying to establish special interest groups to enable people with particular needs/interests to contact others:

9. Do you have any suggestions e.g. libertarians, Christians, Afro-Caribbeans etc Would you be willing to be an interest group co-ordinator?

Is there anything else you think would be helpful to other members? We are very happy to have your comments, even if you feel like writing a whole essay. Do please though use the post not the telephone. Send your questionnaire and other comments to Barbara Edwards at 12 Oxford Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3RP

FOR PUBLICATION

HOME EDUCATION IN DEVON

We wanted to let everyone know about what's happening in Devon. As many of you will know about eighteen months ago the group down here split for various unresolved reasons. Since that time, various groups have emerged, which means that Devon now has a variety of groups - some more established than others - to cater for different people's needs. There are, of course, many home-educating families in Devon who, for their own reasons, prefer not to meet up with others, in groups or otherwise, or if they do, find it preferable to do so with one or two families on a much more informal basis. Everybody does it their own way. As co-ordinators, we try and put people in contact with as many other people as possible as well as giving information about any of the different aspects of home-education including the legal issues. We've been members of EO for ten years now and co-ordinators for five years and we try and keep our finger on the pulse of what's happening especially with regard to South Devon - if we can't help you ourselves, we probably know someone who can. We are deeply committed to autonomous education and libertarian parenting, but like all co-ordinators, although we have a personal emphasis, we are dedicated to the rights of families to home-educate and hope we can be of help to all families regardless of their personal focus.

On a more personal level, we thought some EO families might be interested in the Libertarian Family Network which was set up by our family, the Harris Reid family and the Lindsey Turner family about a year ago. The foundation of the group is formed by a collection of concepts - much like La Leche League (national breastfeeding organisation) - which define the focus of the group: a deep commitment to autonomous non-schooling, the human rights of all children to be respected as full people and the responsibility of parents to fulfil the emotional need each child has for care and nurture. We're also pretty hot on dual parenting and Alice Miller.

We have had a great deal of interest in the group, including radio and television enquiries, and many families have come to our open days to meet us and find out more about us. We are not an EO group, although we are all members of EO, and we are obviously not an open group as we have clearly defined criteria for joining, but we are friendly and very willing to chat and share thoughts and ideas.

The group is based in South Devon, although we have been contacted by families from all over the country and abroad who are interested in moving to be part of the group. At the moment we are a small group - with other families at various different stages of finding out about us or joining us - and on an everyday level we meet sometimes three or more times a week to talk and play and eat, or to do things together, things the children want to do, we don't do things the children don't want to do. Recently we've swum, played badminton, watched the brilliant Miracle Theatre's open air production of Midsummers Night's Dream, played on the beach and swum in the sea, lounged about at each other's houses, played, talked, sorted out difficulties, been to a few castles to see medieval re-enactments and living history, played at adventure playgrounds until night fall, camped together in the rain and the sun and planned our next camp on the Moors in a few weeks. We've also just received confirmation that our National Lottery request for funds towards our young people's animation project has been approved and this will begin in September facilitated by a professional animator. We are all delighted.

The beauty of this group for us - and we hope for the other families also - is that although each family is unique as all families and individuals are, we all speak roughly the same language, we have an understanding of each other based on shared philosophies and the group gives us a strong feeling of belonging and support. If you are interested in the Libertarian Family Network and would like a copy of our concepts and to have a chat to find out more please contact:

Us (Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall) - 01548 830716

Belinda Harris Reid - 01364 643343

Corinne Lindsey - 01626 61856

Families might be interested in other groups in Devon - (some are not entirely focused on home education and not necessarily EO groups):

- South West Education Living and Learning (SWELL) - Please contact Anna Ambridge - 01803 867785

- East Devon co-ordinator Fiona Brookes organises events in East and North Devon and has a telephone tree for interested families - open to all regardless of where you live - please

contact Fiona - 01884 252706

- Gabi Amos is interested to hear from families with younger children out of school who are keen to get together - 01548 852692

- If all else fails, ring us and we'll try and help - 01548 830716.

You might also be interested to know about the newsletter 'To Be Free: A Radical Alternative for Children and Parents' which has grown out of the EO libertarian newsletter, which we undertook to edit. The focus is again libertarian parenting and autonomous learning outside of school, but unlike the Libertarian Family Network, it is available to anyone who is interested regardless of whether their children are in or out of school and whatever their style of parenting. It is not the local newsletter for the Libertarian Family Network, although many shared issues are discussed, and it is not based solely in South Devon, as it is sent out nationwide. We want to take this opportunity to thank all those EO families who have subscribed and especially to those who have written in to share thoughts and experiences. If you would like to subscribe then please send cheques made out to TO BE FREE for £7 (waged) or £5 (unwaged) for three issues and send to: Vidal-Hall Family, Homecroft, Brownston Street, Modbury, Devon PL21 0RQ - or if you need more information please phone us on the number above.

Lastly, we are working with the Local Education Authority for all Devon areas at present and if you do receive a standard letter, or any other letter, suggesting you need to keep to a curriculum, the National Curriculum, or requesting anything you do not feel happy about then please get in contact with us.

We do try and contact all new members when they join EO, but sometimes you're not in or you've moved or something, so if you're new to EO in Devon and you'd like to have a chat please phone us.

Best wishes

Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall.

A Typical (?) EO Family

Mike said he hadn't had any contributions from single-parent EO families - this is because we're all far too busy! However his "reminder" has pushed me into getting some thoughts on paper.

I took my son, Scott, out of school in January 1997 when he was 14½ old. This was after 18 months of having difficulties at school which were not addressed as promised. One example of this was that Scott was put into the "highest" Maths group on the basis of one (fluke?) exam result, even though Maths is his least favourite subject and his teacher had written on his report that Scott's work generally was "a cause for concern". Almost immediately Scott ran into difficulties, unhappy about being separated from his friends in his old group and unable to keep up with the pace of the new group who all "loved Maths". Very quickly it became almost a "school refusal" situation, which we had never had before. I was told by the Head of Maths that the fact that Scott was unhappy and struggling to do the work was not enough reason to take him out of that set. They were sure he had the potential and were determined he would achieve their goals (my interpretation!). It took six months before they finally agreed he could go back into the lower set temporarily, with a view to being returned to the higher set the following term. He never was!

I had been aware of the possibility of home education for some time before I suggested it to Scott, but felt I just wouldn't be able to cope with it on top of working full time as a mental health social worker. However after yet another crisis at school I "cracked" and told him it was an option. His incredulous reply "You mean I could be me all the time" said it all.

This did not in itself make it an easy decision. Home education had a lot of implications time-wise and money-wise, there was opposition from some people (especially his father) and of course he had just started his GCSE courses. In the run-up to "D-day (Decision day) I spent a lot of time on the phone to EO members, receiving plenty of advice and encouragement. I also got inspiration from my older son's history. He is dyslexic and left school at 16 years with no qualifications and even less confidence. Now aged 29 years he has just finished his second year at university studying Applied Biology. Finally, with much trepidation, I made the decision and withdrew Scott from school.

Because Scott was 14 years old and pretty sensible I felt able to leave him alone at home, and had to trust that he would do work during the day. At the beginning the work he was going to do was negotiated nightly, but now it is far more relaxed and ad-hoc and he has got into the swing of planning his own work with some help from me. He even drew up his own "time-table" because he found that helpful. It has to be said that the fear of having to return to school acts as quite a good motivator! The dreaded visit by our "home advisor" (who turned out to be someone who had tutored my older son 15 years ago!) went well and we received a satisfactory "report".

I wasted quite a lot of time and money in the early weeks going down blind alleys in my search for information and buying books and GCSE syllabuses that we don't use or need, but it was all a necessary part of the "learning curve", and gradually we both became more confident and relaxed about what we were doing. Scott himself became happier immediately and has no regrets. We had occasion to go past his ex-school for the first time the other day and he visibly shuddered. He also takes a rather macabre pleasure from seeing other children going to school in the mornings - that's when he's up in time to see them!

Scott's ambition has always been to go to Art College and after some research we have now decided on a course of action to help him achieve this aim. This September he will start a one year course at the nearby Open Learning Centre, studying GCSE Maths and English Language, and the following year will go to the local FE college and do an GNVQ in Art and Design, which will give him a portfolio and an additional GCSE. With three GCSE's and a portfolio he can apply to Art College to do a BTEC National Diploma in Art and Design, and will only be slightly older than the other students, especially as his birthday is in the summer.

I cannot finish this account without paying tribute to our Kent coordinator, Amanda MacKenzie, who has been a tower of strength. Luckily she lives close by, and has virtually "adopted" Scott into her family, taking him to all the various EO activities/visits in our area which I cannot go to because I am at work, and giving me endless support.

Six months down the line I wonder what I was so scared of back in January when I took Scott out of school! He has taken to home education like a duck to water and he and I are pleased that he is no longer subject to the negative peer pressure he had at school. He enjoys learning what is relevant to him and his interests and being free from the "petty" restrictions at school. As an EO child he recently enjoyed a game of football for the first time in his life, because it was fun and non-competitive. His ex-school friends are envious that their parents are not as "enlightened" as me, and I am confident that he will maintain his integrity and individuality and reach his full potential.

PS I enclose a copy of something Scott wrote about peer pressure just after he left school.

From:- Flick and Scott MacDowell, 10 Jasper Avenue, Rochester,
Kent. ME1 2LA.

**CONGRATULATIONS
to Eleanor on the birth of her
daughter**

EO Family Diary: The Fortune-Wood Family

Summer began for us at the EO Peak camp. Well I say summer, but I have NEVER seen so much rain in one week. The highlights were singing in the tepee (thanks Neil!), conversations with other families and breakfast at Safeway's in Buxton! The "lowlights" were arriving to find our suitcases had leaked, leaks in the tent, having to sew up the zip to the tent in the driving wind and rain and getting the car constantly stuck in the mud (thanks for the help Mike!) The children enjoyed ALL of it (once Tamsyn had come to terms with the rain and we'd been to the launderette to dry our clothes).

Then it was back to work for a week for me before we had a family holiday in Devon. We had a wonderful fortnight doing very little. We made occasional forays to buy food. We wandered around Totnes castle. We sat in the garden, ate what we wanted when we wanted, read books and relaxed. We visited old friends and dropped in on some new friends from the Liberation Family Network and EO who made us very welcome with chocolate cake.

Holidays like this always make me pause for thought. Away from the stress of telephones and endless jobs to be done we start to catch a glimpse of the things that are important to all of us and to live in a more natural rhythm. Ofcourse we have to go back to our everyday lives, but this reflective space gives us chance to make little, subtle changes - to be more relaxed with each other and to remember how much we enjoy one another's company.

August has been back to work, but it is a slow month so we have filled it with visitors. The first were friends who also have four children of similar ages to ours. I really enjoy spending time with them, but it was also interesting to observe, as it always is the tensions that schooling brings with it (all of their children go to school).

Boredom is not something our children seem to mention, but it is something that school inflicts on children. The children did play together well, but there was more conflict than we notice when all the children in a group are home educated. Our visitors seven year old boy found it hard to adjust to a group where the girls expected to play on equal terms with the boys. This meant that Tamsyn had to constantly fight not to be excluded and sometimes just gave up. It also meant that we have had some interesting discussion with our children on why we don't think the word "girl" should be used as a term of abuse.

These friends are very supportive of our decision to home educate and very open to the philosophy of autonomous education. However I always find that there is something about discussing the National Curriculum and attainment levels in SATs that is slightly unnerving. I hate the labelling of children that goes on in school - especially these friend's children who I have known since they were babies, but I also start wondering whether my children "should" know more about tessellation or have reached certain levels in spelling! Falling into the school mentality is just too easy!

Now we are looking forward to our next batch of visitors. These friends are coming from Australia with our one year old god-daughter who we have not yet met. They'll be with us for nearly a week before we go off to Glastonbury Children's Festival where we are going to celebrate Seth's third birthday. This is a favourite annual venue. All of the children love theatre, story telling and arts activities and this festival is packed with all of that. It's also lovely to camp at the base of Glastonbury Tor and the balloons, sparklers and birthday cake will add to the occasion.

To round off August and the summer we're travelling up to the North-West at the end of the month so that I can preside and preach at our Australian friends' wedding. I've just managed to finish writing the address (sermon) - so much more difficult when I'm writing for someone I've known since my teens and who has shared every major life event with me for so long!

So where's the "education" in this long summer of camps, visitors and celebrations? Everywhere! We haven't kept a diary of educational activities (though there's masses that could be extracted) because for us education is less about product, more about process. We know that we are all learning every day and that we don't have to keep measuring it or taking its temperature and that makes it feel like a pretty good summer.

Jan Fortune-Wood
St. Barnabas Vicarage,
Overgreen Dr. Kingshurst,
Birmingham, B37 6EY.
Email: D0158237@infotrade.co.uk

Beware the Curriculum Mentality

Sarah Lawrence

One of the most important duties of parents is to help their children to discover and pursue new interests, retaining the love of learning that is almost universal in young children and almost universally extinct in conventionally educated adults. Standardised curricula, and the stultifying educational hoops that school-children have to jump through, sabotage this aim. This can cause trouble for parents who have to satisfy other people (such as LEAs, or grandparents) that they are educating their children properly. Under pressure, they may slide into a 'homeschooling' mentality that distorts and damages their children's education.

For instance, they may keep diaries of educational activities or portfolios of their children's work. This may sound innocuous, but in making themselves continually aware of their children's education as education, parents are likely to convey this to the children who are then likely to start thinking about their 'education' at the expense of their own interests. Education then becomes *performance*. Children's creativity is diverted into the problem of how to be seen to be meeting the external standards implicit in the curriculum and to produce 'evidence' of 'progress', instead of solving problems that arise naturally out of their own personalities and experiences.

The more important the parents consider this 'evidence' to be, the more likely they are to exert subtle pressure on their children to perform. For many children, this will be enough to change the focus of their endeavours from genuine learning to performance. One educationist recently objected, when I made this point: "But children *like* to see the progress they have made. If parents don't keep their work, they won't be able to see

how far they have come." Yes. Children in school may indeed "like to see the progress they have made", but that is likely to be no more than a sad reflection of the focus upon performance that is the *raison d'être* of their whole 'education'.

The carrot of 'good progress' is, by logical necessity, backed by the stick of 'poor progress'. Being motivated by either is equally harmful. Children's work should remain their own *private* property, not to be seen by anyone unless they want to show it. If they do want to show it, are they excited about having solved a problem they were working on? Are they seeking criticism and help solving a problem? Or is the purpose to get affection and attention from their parents? In that case, the parents are manipulating their children by the implicit threat of withholding that affection or attention.

If you are keeping your children's work it might be worth asking yourself whether you are defining your children by who they once were. If so, they too may start to define themselves by moments in their pasts, and so be less able to grow and learn. Avoid encouraging children to look back at the history of their learning. For that matter, don't encourage them to look at their learning at all. *Learning* is one thing. *Looking at* one's learning is something quite different. □

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The full article from which these excerpts were taken is in issue 23 of the journal *Taking Children Seriously*. To subscribe, send a cheque (payable to TCS) for £3 for one issue, £8 for 4 issues or £15 for 8 issues to TCS, 46 Latimer Grange, Latimer Road, Oxford OX3 7PH.

SL@ENTERPRISE.NET ☎ 01865 761817

Information/Notices

Doing an E.O. display/stall in your local library, community centre, playgroup, etc, or at an event you are attending is a great way to spread information. There are still lots of people out there who do not know that home-education is a real option, or how much fun it can be.

At the last meeting I offered to co-ordinate resources for stalls. This is what's available so far:

- * 6 sheets (A3) of information and quotes about home-education and two of photos.
- * Big display boards (blank)
- * Leaflets, posters, car stickers etc.
- * Banners made by some local groups can also be borrowed.

If you/your group can use any of these to set up a display, or if you have display resources you'd be happy to share please let me know.

Lucy Charlton. Tel: 0116 2592118.

Alternative Schools

We are a small school specialising in individual programmes of work for children with special educational needs. We also operate a "flexi-schooling" approach for children who are being educated at home.

Where parents are not happy with the atmosphere, mores or education at the local primary schools, we offer part-time schooling in a small group of 8 children. Parents can choose which activities they want their children to join. Some want basic skills help, where we provide books and guidance on teaching, others prefer children to join in with physical activities like gardening, jogging, art or swimming. I thought the members of E.O. in this area might be interested in the support we have to offer those parents, who do not wish their children to be educated full-time in a mainstream school. Many of our children have specific learning difficulties, and I am a specialist in this field. They also have problems with loss of confidence, and we do a great deal to help them regain their confidence, and believe in their potential for achievement in all areas of life.

We are a registered charity and part of the Human Scale Education group. We are publishing a new prospectus shortly and would be pleased to send one to any parent who thinks we may be able to help them educate their child at home. For more information contact: Gillian M. Baker, Head Teacher, St. Andrews School, Lower Green, East Runton, Norfolk. NR27 9PG. Tel: Cromer 01263 511727.

DYSLEXIC FAMILY WINS £45,000

One EO family is now considering taking their LEA to court. If you are thinking about this and would like to be put in touch with other families, contact Rob and Anne Wade, Tel 0181 904 7155

Information/Notices

Bankers Orders

A number of our members kindly pay by bankers order which is much appreciated as it saves collecting and processing cheques each year, but many long standing bankers orders are still only for £12.50 or £10. Please would you contact your bank and increase your subscriptions to £15.

For those paying only £10 we feel they should only receive four newsletters, that being the proportion their membership fee would entitle them to, as well as the fact they have underpaid for many years.

As an incentive for all those who pay £15 by bankers order we will now automatically send you a membership card.

Priscilla Park Weir (Treasurer), 212 Gordon Avenue, Camberley, Surrey. GU15 2NT.
Tel: 01276 22735.

The Teenage Liberation Handbook

This excellent book on home education for teenagers has been revised and republished by Element Books. Though it is based on American home schoolers, much is relevant to those in this country. It is available through your local bookshop for £5.99.
Priscilla Park Weir, Surrey.

Financial Assistant for E.O.

Hello to all, I wrote a letter a few newsletters back about peoples views on funding and if anyone was successful in getting any.

First of all, thank you for all the letters received on peoples attempts to gain some sort of financial assistance from local councils, unfortunately with no success.

However, I have come across one possible source of funding for E.O. as a national group, or perhaps smaller groups called ARTS 4 EVERYONE - this is a scheme run by the Arts Council Lottery Cash grant, which is a new creative project provided for organisations or groups to participate in arts and cultural activities - and especially for young people to realise their creative potential.

Funding is awarded to successful groups making awards from five hundred pounds to five thousand pounds and so I think it is worth a try applying for it. Anyone interested? For more details there is an information pack available. Tel: 0900 100 344, also The London Arts Board Lottery Section. Tel: 0171 240 1313.

William A. Moss, 32 Heathlee Rd, Crayford. DA1 3PW.

Information/Notices

Urgent Notice (Flexi-schooling)

There is a meeting about Flexi-Schooling at St. Pauls, please come and discuss your needs on Tuesday 14th October, 5.30pm - 7.30pm, at Birmingham Central Library, for more details phone Paula Turner 0121 603 8673. Everyone welcome.

Teenage Camps

Teenage Camps are still going on in East Sussex. There will probably be two more before Christmas. We are a welcoming group of 14 - 19 year olds. The dates are:- Oct 3rd - Oct 6th, and Oct 31st - Nov 3rd. Please ring the Hertogs family for more details. Tel: 0181 776 8597.

Early Years - Your Help Required

E.O. publication **Early Years** (for children up to 12) is coming up for its 6th edition this autumn. Please all you families out there who have tried and tested many books, resources, ideas and things, tell me all about what you have found useful, what you didn't like, what was inspiring and any other tips you have on doing E.O. with younger ones. Don't forget: places you have been to, museums and galleries, programmes you have used, in fact **anything** that would help other families. For example, what do you do when all else fails? When it's raining? When the library is closed? When it's Monday morning? I really need to hear from you - **Early Years** is made up of parents' experiences, so write to me as soon as possible (deadline Nov 1st, same as next newsletter). Sarah Guthrie, Field House, Thrandeston, Diss, Norfolk. IP21 4BU, or fax me, 01379 783 865. Please, please, please, do it now! (You'll never regret it!).

Growing Without Schooling

GWS (the American home education movement, founded by John Holt) is 20 years old this year, like Education Otherwise. To celebrate, they held an enormous conference in Boston, home of (Holt Associates) this August. Thanks to the generosity of a private sponsor, I was able to attend. I hope to write about it in the next issue. Sarah Guthrie, Diss, Norfolk.

Information/Notices

Network for Teenagers

Trawling Compuserve's forum, I find messages from teenagers thinking of leaving school and educating themselves. Pulling out statistics from the database shows that the most common age for home educated E.Oers is 9 or 10, and after that ——— 13! So there are plenty of you! But when you go to a local group it is mostly younger children, and it is easy to feel out of place.

This led me to the idea of finding some way of linking up E.O. teenagers, perhaps through a regular newsletter or at least through a user group list of names, phone numbers and email addresses. And for those of you planning to do GCSE's there are plenty of success stories to give you inspiration and ideas.

By the way, there is a new book, 'The Teenage Liberation Handbook, How to Quit School & Get a Real Life & Education' by Grace Llewellyn, published by Element Press at £5.99 ISBN No. 1-86204-104-0.

Contact: Barbara Edwards, 12 Oxford Rd, Guildford, Surrey. GU1 3RP. Tel: 01483 832250. E-mail either 100412.2712 @compuserve.com or babedwards@aol.com

International Herald Tribune 14/07/97

AMERICAN TOPICS

WITH HOME SCHOOLING ON RISE, RECIPIENT SPELLS OUT ITS SUCCESS

Rebecca Sealfon, the Brooklyn girl who won this year's National Spelling Bee, was the first home-schooled winner of the competition. She may well not be the last. A new study has found that the number of students nation-wide being schooled at home has soared, from about 400,000 in 1990 to more than 1.2 million today, and that these students tend to excel academically.

The author of the study Brian Ray, an Oregon researcher, found home schooling to be the fastest growing educational alternative. "The movement has rapidly been gaining wider acceptance, not yet in the mainstream but no longer seen as an offbeat refuge for the deeply religious, loners, or families who consider public schools inadequate.

Awareness appears to be growing that children who get their learning at home are not short-changed, at least educationally. Home-schooled children outperform their public school counterparts on standardised tests, according to Mr. Ray. Most states do not require parents of home-schooled students to have an advanced degree. Mr. Ray said the students' test scores tend to fall between the 80th and 90th percentiles regardless of whether the parents have high school or college diplomas.

Kathleen Smith of Athol, Massachusetts, has taught her two sons at home for five years, and believes that public reaction has changed dramatically in that time. "People are more accepting," she told The Boston Globe. "They aren't as shocked by it now."

Submitted by P. Fielding-Bell
p.j.rothermel@durham.ac.uk
01457 872 946

If any home educated young people aged 12-17 would be interested in taking part in an ITV documentary on Teenagers, contact:

Pippa Healy on 0171 494 1884

Raising Public Awareness

Following Clare Murtons' article about raising public awareness, in the August newsletter, I thought that I would share the ways in which I have tried to raise public awareness locally and which other members might like to do. After all as Clare so rightly said, raising public awareness helps others make informed choices, increases membership and consequently benefits us all.

I compiled 'Home-based Education' information files, consisting of the E.O. trifold- 'Home or School? It's Your Choice! 'Education Now's information sheet 'Home-based Education-Basic Questions', some home education facts and figures taken from 'The Freethinkers' Pocket Directory to the Educational Universe', an E.O. publications order form and an E.O. membership form. I then asked three local libraries and two local citizens advice bureaux to display an E.O. poster (on which I added a note referring to the location of the information files) and keep an information file for reference purposes.

I also compiled information files (but excluded the E.O. publications and membership forms) to be displayed at two local health clinics, and two local doctors surgeries, as well as displaying E.O. posters at several other venues (again with a note referring to the location of the information files).

Also, last year I wrote a letter to the local paper about home-education and they were so interested that they asked to interview us and do an article about home-education, which they were very positive about and did very well. So why not have a think and see how you could raise public awareness locally? Every little helps.

Julie Truepenny, Lincolnshire

Resources

Does anyone know of anywhere, where the public can gain access to computers and the internet, in the Lincolnshire/Cambridgeshire areas? Also, can anybody recommend any 'textbooks' or publishers who specialise in textbooks?

Contact, Julie Truepenny, 182 Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 6AL.
Tel: 01406 380045.

LETTERS

The Otherwise Club

The Otherwise Club (TOC) will be five years old in February, 1998. We have changed and grown in the last five years but still maintain our original ideas. TOC provides a venue for families who are thinking of home-based education or have begun home-based education. They can discuss their worries and problems with others who are more experienced in home-based education. The whole family can make friends with other home-based educators. This support from friendships is invaluable to those choosing home-based education.

The club meets two days a week at the moment. On Thursday, open to all those with at least one child of school age out of school, it provides the space for workshops and activities for families. What happens at TOC is chosen by those attending.

Aside from the three regular workshops, drama, pottery and a science group for the younger children, we run a number of other activities. Past workshops have been very numerous including country dancing, visits from police dogs and their handlers and talks by various experts in different areas relevant to the group, i.e. maths, home education and health. Recent workshops have included African Drumming at several different levels, 'A Midsummer's Night Dream' workshop and trip to the play and making a video with the older home educated young people. We made two trips with some of our older home educated young people rock climbing in the Peak District in October 1996 and May 1997. TOC has a small cafe which serves a vegetarian home made lunch, and cake, as well as tea, coffee and crisps. This provides a small amount of funds for TOC and serves as a focal point for the community. TOC also keeps a small lending library about alternative education, and a large amount of information about activities and exhibitions in London.

Plans for the coming year 1997-8 include the making of two quilts, one by the children to enter into a competition and a traditional quilt made to raffle to raise money for TOC. We will also have a bread making workshop, a portrait drawing class and the science group are entering a project run by a Trust to help save endangered species. We plan our usual trip to an organic farm twice this year, in February and July. We have two day trips planned for the autumn term 1997, one to the Tower of London and another to Cadbury World.

On Wednesdays, TOC runs a group for the 8 - 14 year olds that studies one topic, chosen by consensus for that year. In 1996-7 we studied the Thames, finishing the year with a four day trip to Windsor. This group was formed with the intention of enabling home-educated young people to meet and work together on a regular basis.

We are very concerned to offer older home-educated young people activities and social life, to remain out of secondary school if they so choose. With this in mind one of our members is training as a Duke of Edinburgh Award leader, and some of our young people are beginning the Duke of Edinburgh Award in September 1997. Some of our other young people, not yet old enough for the Duke of Edinburgh Award are beginning the Adventure Challenge Scheme.

TOC has a resource library which includes items that are too expensive for our members to buy, such as a microscope, an aquascope, large detailed maps of Europe and the world, and camping equipment. For a small fee members can borrow any item in the library. In the long term TOC is searching for a building which it can purchase, with the help of private investors. We can then expand our activities to include more daily workshops, a larger cafe and weekend meetings for those interested to know more about home-based education. Times will be set aside for different age group activities.

LETTERS

We can hold more workshops for all ages, a toddler group for those interested in alternative education, and be able to have a larger library and resource centre. We have recently become a company limited by guarantee and hope to be a registered charity by the new year. We are launching Friends of The Otherwise Club this autumn. A friend of The Otherwise Club will be kept in touch with our activities and be invited to several events throughout the year.

Fund raising is a constant worry, we charge £100 a year per family and some of the workshops must be paid for separately. We held a jumble sale in May 1997 to help with our rent payments, and hope to raise money toward the expenses of buying a property, by holding a concert in September 1997.

If any of E.O. members would like more information about TOC or about becoming a Friend of The Otherwise Club please contact: Leslie Barson, 1 Croxley Rd, London. W9 3HH. Tel: 0181 969 0893.

Attention Single Parents

I have received the following assurance from the 'Dept. of Education and Employment with regard to the 'Back to Work' initiative. I feel members will be reassured by this news, but if there are any residual concerns do relay them to me.

Reply from the D.E.E.

I appreciate your concern that the Government's proposals may result in lone parents being pressured into taking work against their wishes, and that this would affect members of your organisation who have chosen to educate their children at home.

We have no intention of forcing lone parents into work, and the help available through the New Deal for Lone Parents is being offered on a voluntary basis. We value the stability of family life and recognise that this is vital for the healthy development of children and for society as a whole. Clearly, many parents of young children want to spend as much time as possible with them in the home and we have no wish to criticise or punish this decision. Our approach is to offer to all parents the opportunity to combine work, family life and education in ways that best meet their needs.

I hope that this answers your concerns and will be of reassurance to your members.

Sarah Martin, Rose Cottage, Three Holes Bridge, Norfolk. PE14 9JR.

Tel: 01945 772336.

Local Networks

I have recently taken on the role of acting Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire co-ordinator and am desperately trying to start up a local group/network and would welcome information/tips from established local E.O. groups/networks as to how they first started, how they decided on where to meet and how they developed the group into what they are now-the established groups sound great, any information will be greatly appreciated! Contact: Julie Truepenny, 182 Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 6AL. Tel: 01406 380045.

With reference to the advertisement for a community in Avon on page 47 of the August issue of the newsletter:

Education Otherwise does not recommend this community

Open College of the Arts

The O.C.A. is affiliated with the Open University and is a sister to the National Extension College. It runs various correspondence courses, which can be started at any time of the year, with or without telephone/postal or personal tutor support. Their courses include drawing, drawing in colour, painting, sculpture and photography to name but a few. There are no lower age limits for courses and if you choose to have your work assessed, this is done purely on the submission of a portfolio of your work (i.e. not through written work or exams), which will be assessed for higher education credit points, i.e. university level (again there are no lower age limits for this). On completion you can go on to more advanced study with the O.C.A. perhaps working towards an O.C.A. and Thames Valley University Certificate of Higher Education. Obviously these courses require hard work and a lot of parental support (what's new!) but if your child has an interest in the arts, the O.C.A. offers a brilliant opportunity to study the arts in their own time, in their own home and gain nationally recognised qualifications. Contact: Open College of the Arts, Houndshill, Worsbrough, Barnsley, South Yorks. S70 6TU. Tel: 01226 730495.
Julie Truepenny, Lincolnshire.

Newsletter Suggestions

Whilst thinking about the newsletter and like many other E.O.ers how much I look forward to it's arrival, I began thinking about whether it could be improved and if so, how? I thought of two ideas. What about including feedback from the educational advisors/inspectors visits, and also to move a step forward from 'a typical E.O. day', why not include personal approaches to education and the rationale behind the approach, whether theoretical or anecdotal and why you feel it works for you. What do other members think?

Julie Truepenny, Lincolnshire. 182 Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 6AL.
Tel: 01406 380045.

LETTERS

Spread the Message

There are still lots of people who do not know that it is legal to educate your children at home. YOU can help spread the message. Do you know somewhere that will accept some leaflets or a poster-are you prepared to make follow up visits? Is the poster still up? Do the leaflets need replenishing? I suggest you put your local co-ordinator's name and address on the poster. You can obtain leaflets and posters from Pam Bellinger (see inside back cover).

Better Still contact your local paper and ask them if they are interested in doing an article on home education and offer your family as an example. Ensure they include E.O's name, address and phone number. This is the time of year local papers begin to think of articles on education. It is a great educational experience for your children too, and usually they love to see their photo in the paper-my children did!

Priscilla Park Weir, Camberley, Surrey.

Why Home Education Is Best

Being educated out of school means you don't have to be away from your family for hours of every day. Instead you can see each other all the time. It also means that you don't have to be in massive groups all the time, so there are less quarrels, and no teachers to tell you what to do all the time. I think that home educated friends are nicer and don't bully each other, and you can make friends with who you want. At home you have a choice about what to eat, and if you are a vegetarian you don't have to smell meat. At home we don't have to be told what to learn and we can do things when we are ready for them. We can go to places when others are at school, so it's not crowded. Our local home education group is really exciting because there are lots of things to do and plenty of people to make friends with. I like it when it's really hot and we play with water pistols. We can organise our own games. The adults join in, but they don't tell us what to do. One day, one of my friend's dad brought lots of outdoor games for us to play.

I feel really sorry for children who have to go to school, because they are always told what to do. They are bossed around by adults, and don't play any really exciting games. There are lots of bullies in school. I think schools are mean to children and shouldn't be allowed.

Tamsyn Fortune-Wood (aged 9), St. Barnabas Vicarage, Overgreen Drive, Kingshurst, Birmingham. B37 6EY. Tel: 0121 770 3972.

Peer Pressure

I think that peer pressure is totally stupid, more than stupid, really stupid, but in school and out, for 90%, it's life. I like fashion and try to look acceptable but I will wear my own kind of clothes to look fashionable. I hate people who wear brand names of everything. Usually these things look crap anyway, and cost the earth, PAH. Its fads that really get up my nose. Everybody doing the same thing, even, when before they

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hated the thing. My last fad was the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, since then I've seen sense. I know people who wear this, watch that, simply because the 'leader' does, Rarghhh! I was forced to have a miserable time at school because I didn't go along with peer pressure. I had a mind of my own. Now I've taken the ultimate step to kill peer pressure and left school. I hear now my place has been filled with hatred. It reminds me of a film where everyone was a zombie and there was one person who was different so the zombies tried to change him, calling 'join us, we are your friends' which was a lie and when that failed they tried to eat him. Very similar I think!!! I was once the ideal person I wanted to be during any break from school and then when I went back to school and the when kids (zombies) saw this they tried to get me back by peer pressure (insults) that failed so they tried to eat me (hatred). Like the film too, I escaped to home. I kind of feel sorry for those too scared of what might happen if they turned their backs to peer pressure but that is their problem. Peer pressure has nothing to do with me now, Ha, Ha, Ha. Scott MacDowall, Rochester, Kent. ME1 2LA.

Dear E.O.

The last time I visited the Natural History Museum and signed the E.O. entry book, I discovered that about ten E.O. families had already signed in that day. I would have loved to have said 'Hello' to them had I been able to identify them whilst walking round. If the cost of making metal badges to wear is too much, how about sheets of 'peel off, stick on' stickers, which we could buy - possibly when renewing our subscriptions and receiving our membership cards. May I suggest using the E.O. logo of the children breaking out of the triangle for the badge. This would be easily recognisable to all those who are members, whilst those who are not will probably be intrigued to know what it means.

Penny Meader, 11 Thompsons Close, Pirbright, Woking, Surrey. GU24 OJG.

SPANISH NEWSLETTER -

Crecer Sin Escuela, Apdo 45, 03580 L'Alfas Del Pi, Alicante, Spain
Editors are the family of Isabel, Bippan and Lomi Norberg.

In the last newsletter, I announced that we are members of the above home education organisation and that I will hold a copy of their newsletter on behalf of EO. I did not expect the rush of interested families that have contacted me asking to see it. Please be patient, a copy is on its way to those who have requested it. Subscription is 2,000 pesetas. I expect that the Norbergs, who edit the newsletter, are able to accept a sterling cheque. Perhaps they will let us know when they read this. Normally, they ask for a postal order, your name and address, and the names and dates of birth of your children. The newsletter is published quarterly.

I have contact with several families who are, or are interested in, living in Spain. If you would like to make contact with each other please let me know. Similarly, if you know of a family home educating in Spain please let me know their details or/and give them details of the Spanish newsletter.

P. Fielding-Bell

e-mail: p.j.rothermel@durham.ac.uk

tel: 01457 872946

Oaklands Educational Resource Centre

Update: Oaklands is a wonderful home, we have loved living here, but as an Educational Resource Centre it needs more people to join in! There are a few families using the centre regularly, and the Oaklands Wednesdays have been fun, friendly and spontaneous, even intimate and very small. But more people, more often would transform the centre and make the very high cost of living here worthwhile. At present we have a 'vicious circle' of few people therefore little income, which does not even cover basic expenses, therefore no money for providing exciting resources, and workshops, therefore less appealing and attractive to people, therefore few people etc. I have thought about some of the difficulties and hope these thoughts will help the various people in the country who are hoping to set up a similar project, and who have enquired about Oaklands. There are numerous home-educators in North & East Yorks, yet so few use the centre. Possible problems are:-

- (1) Location/Transport! No car, long bus/train journey, too expensive to travel, too far away etc. Not enough local home-educators.
- (2) Cost! Unable to afford to travel and/or pay to support basic expenses.
- (3) Resources! Not enough exciting resources to attract people, not enough money to buy them.
- (4) Activities! Perhaps people prefer to have activities pre-arranged, organised for them, rather than the co-operative co-creating vision I have.
- (5) No need! Perhaps home-educators are so independent and resourceful already that there is simply no need for such a centre.
- (6) Others! You know why you don't use Oaklands, please let me know, so I can try to find a solution.

Possible Solutions:-

- (1) Location/Transport! Ring people near you, encourage them to come, car share, share cost of petrol. New idea - "Weekend sleepovers" for far away people. Advertise E.O. locally and recruit new home-educators! Move to this area-create a 'home education' neighbourhood.
 - (2) Cost! We need people, physical help, resources, just as much as money. Lets negotiate.
 - (3) Resources! Really there is loads of stuff here (books galore, science equip, Montessori materials etc) already and most of it is seldom used. Applying for grants would supplement it.
 - (4) Activities! My personal vision is still of people coming together to share skills and ideas, spontaneously co-creating activities on the day, but if people prefer a more structured and organised approach - ok! Do it! I haven't the time or energy, but I'd be happy if others want to do it.
 - (5) No need for Centre? O.K. But I am still committed to finding and demonstrating a suitable alternative education system which falls somewhere between school and home-education, and I believe resource centres are an option. I also accept that with the small numbers of home-educators around, maybe it is 5 years too early for a successful resource centre here! So for now I will try to recruit a larger local population of home-educators! Experiment with different ways of doing it!
- For my own long term future, unfortunately I have now been forced to leave Oaklands, due to unforeseen circumstances. I am now going to be living part-time in Derbyshire near a new 'Home-Education Community', which I hope to join in the very near future.

I will still be living near York part-time so that I can still keep my University job. All mail and telephone calls will be re-directed to me.

I do hope that my experience at Oaklands does not put anyone off, from starting an Educational Resource Centre, I really feel this area would benefit from a committed effort from everyone to build an active E.O. group and centre.

E.O. DIARY No. 3 THE BUNN FAMILY

The peak camp wasn't what I was expecting, but it was worth the journey as we met some really nice people. Ironically it rained all week, while back home in the wettest part of Scotland, they were enjoying the driest June since the '40's.

The visit from the L.E.A. didn't go as planned. As soon as she turned up English became my second language, (total tripe, being my first). The girls came over well though, spouting information without prompting. Once again I failed to put my point across and listened in obedient silence as she told me what to do and how to do it.

I was still angry with myself, when I received a note from Emily's maths tutor telling me what to do, including the sort of time I should be sending Emily to bed. The Last Straw? Too right! We've decided to try it alone, lots of people at the Peak Camp were managing GCSE maths on their own, some without any qualifications themselves.

Now that I've calmed down, though I'm feeling guilty, I know that I am capable of getting her through an exam, but with three other children I couldn't spend the time to give her an all round understanding of maths, like her tutor. Being the only home-educator for miles, I have no-one to discuss these sort of problems with. I think confidence plays a large part in successful home-educating and mine is at an all time low at the moment. The girls are great, they seem to have picked on my mood and are working really hard on their projects - asking me lots of questions, and wanting to watch documentaries with me. Aren't kids brilliant.

Sharon Bunn and Family.

Suffolk Regional News

Our Wetherden group has been awarded an Arts Council Lottery Fund grant to run for 9 months, from September 1997. It enables us to run professional workshops regularly, covering a wide range of arts and creative programmes, and keep the charge at £2 per family. We do want to see as many E.Oers as possible at these events, all are very welcome. Certain workshops will be limited because of space restrictions, so please check if you aren't a regular member, and want to come. Sept 19th-Circus Skills with Bazza Bizarre (no restrictions on this one) Oct 10th-Sculpture with Beatrice Hoffman (priority to regulars here, sorry, but worth checking). Oct 31st- to be decided. Further info from Sarah Guthrie, Tel: 01379 783 678.

NEW CO-ORDINATOR

Hi, I'm Julie Truepenney and I've just taken on the role of acting E.O. co-ordinator for Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire.

Russ and I have two children, Billy (11 3/4) and Sam (9). We started 'home educating' Billy and Sam 17 months ago and feel that it was one of the best decisions that we have ever made. I feel that the main benefit of belonging to E.O. is the friendship, support and empowerment which can be generated from contact with other's in similar circumstances to our own. I have recently heard of several families whose children have started school purely due to feelings of isolation and the need to socialise more, which I feel is a shame and should be un-necessary, especially within a network such as E.O.

I'm pleased to hear that the Cambridgeshire members have started to organise 'get togethers' (please consider advertising all meetings in the newsletter to ensure that all interested parties are aware), but at present there are no organised 'get togethers' in the Lincolnshire area. Therefore I have contacted 15 Lincs. families on the contact list regarding developing this area, but so far have only had replies from 6 of these families (perhaps some have moved or their circumstances have changed or just bad timing!), although new members have also expressed an interest, so this article is aimed at those Lincolnshire members that I was unable to contact, new members and those from surrounding areas who may be interested.

Despite the fact that Lincs. members span a vast area, I feel that the benefits of E.O. membership could be greatly enhanced by developing a local E.O. network, as many other areas have successfully done. This would mean that our home educated youngsters can mix with each other where they do not feel the odd one out, and do not constantly have to explain why they do not go to school, and also that we are more easily able to support each other.

To achieve this we could start up a regular informal get togethers. Due to the vast area that we span, it would be impossible to find a meeting place that was good for us all, but looking at the map, Lincoln appears to be the most central place, so if any of you could suggest a suitable place to meet in Lincoln, that would be great. Alternatively (or additionally) we could meet up at each others homes, strictly on a 'take us as you find us' basis. By rotating homes we could hopefully encompass all areas. Once we had all been introduced, we could also start up regular children's get togethers and eventually, sleepovers. Each child could bring some refreshments to share amongst the group and bring equipment/games/music tapes/C.D's as they wish. Obviously there must be groundrules which would have to be agreed prior to this.

We could also arrange to meet up for picnics, walks, outings, swimming, perhaps arrange group ice skating lessons etc, the potential is enormous. It has also been suggested that we compile a more detailed list of local interested members with details of hobbies, interests etc, which could then be circulated.

I am willing to hold an events diary as from now, whereby local members can ring me with information about events, get togethers, days out that they have arranged and also details of any public events/amenities which may be of interest to the group, and also to find out what other members have arranged. If interested in sharing transport, details of participants can be noted, so that joint transport arrangements can be made between interested parties. If I have enough notice, basic details will be advertised in the newsletters regional diary.

Please contact me with your thoughts about the above, including any additional ideas and most importantly details of possible meeting places and/or volunteers to host the get togethers, also ideas/sites and possibly firm dates and times for days out.

Unfortunately the get together that I arranged for Wednesday 13th August did not go

ahead, five families expressed an interest but were unable to make it, so better luck next time! In addition to the above, if any of you need a chat or a supportive ear, please do not hesitate to contact me, looking forward to hearing from you all.
Julie Truepenney, 182 Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 6AL.
Tel: 01406 380045.

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL NEWSLETTERS

WYNOT Home Education

by CLARE MURTON

West Yorkshire's News Of Their Home Education is the long title of our new local magazine for EO members. The first edition came out in May and I've just finished editing the latest one. We planned it to alternate with the national newsletter.

The first one was well received and article contributions for the second were plentiful. I'm naively hoping that contributors and editors for future issues will be as readily forthcoming.

The magazine is 6 A4 sides with colour. It gives up to date information on all local meetings and outings and concessions. The other things that have been included so far are book reviews, French, Maths and History facts, poems, quotes, a quiz with a prize provided by a local bookseller, articles expressing personal views on Home Education, recipes and lots more.

I'm hoping that we will have much more practical stuff as time goes by, so that the magazines will be a useful resource for ideas and information, about things to do in a Home Educating day. I also hope that for each outing we arrange, one of the young people will write up a report so that those who couldn't go can benefit from what was learned.

We decided that if anything seemed worth sending to the National Newsletter we would ask the author permission to send it on, so there may be more from West Yorks. in the future.

If anyone would like a copy, please send 30p + 20p postage to:
C. Murton, 27, Sandhill Crescent, LEEDS, LS17 8DY.

All you other Newsletters around the country. If you would send a similar article to me, I will liaise with each editor, so to have a regular spotlight, on newsletters around the country.
Rod Drury, 5, Haig Road, DUDLEY. West Midlands. DY2. 7QP. Tel:01384-233497.

CO-ORDINATORS' CORNER



I took on co-ordinating because E.O. has given us great support and I wanted to put something back into the organisation. I enjoy meeting and chatting to people, so being phoned up - either for initial information or to discuss resources or imminent evaluation visits - is a pleasure not a hardship.

There have been less than 20 first time contacts in the last two years. I keep a small note book near the phone and that's been invaluable for follow up calls. Phone calls have happened when we're in the middle of a book, meal, bed time routine, and I have never had a caller object to being asked to phone back in half an hour or such like. I do like problem solving, so have to be self controlled in that I give support and information, but don't take over. One interesting contact number I came across was the Scottish Child Law Centre 0141 3339305. This, I gather, is a free advisory service on any child and law related subject.

What they don't know they will find out are keen to know the outcome of situations.

As someone who has never had their children in school, I definitely have days when I wonder if I'm just being crazy and actually there's no problem with school education. Being a co-ordinator is a brilliant antidote for this, the heart tearing accounts of parents trying to get their children treated as individuals, not deviants, are enough to settle me back in the conviction that for the moment, our children are better off at home even with the deficiencies of their education guide, i.e. me!

[It takes the major commitment of a whole day's tiring travel, and usually a recovery day, to have a big get together, as folk are quite spread out in this area. We have used museum workshops, usually free, as a reason for gathering, leaving loads of time before or after to chat and play. I used to feel I'd failed if I couldn't arrange a trip to suit

every one, but soon realised it was silly to take responsibility for something outside my control. What I do feel I've achieved is the introduction of various Home Educators to one another, so that they can act as a network of support and friendship. I personally find too many get together leave us too tired to do what I really believe in, which is HOME educate. I'm yet to find a workshop which was so good our children couldn't have been educated with out it. Rather like T.V. some good parts, but definitely not essential.

I would like to hand the co-ordinating on to anyone interested, and to offer to do it again in a few years. Anyone game?

Come on all you Co-ordinators, send in your own "Co-ordinators' Corner". Not only can this spread ideas around, but will also be an interesting read in seeing what different Co-ordinators are up to, what they are up against, tips and ideas they may have, plus also give you a chance to direct your views and valuable work in your own regular column.

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.

Co-ordinators Update

The new acting Co-ordinator for Lothian/Borders is Ann Till, Tel: 0131 556 6277.

Co-ordinators who are looking for a replacement are:-

Margaret Gilbert	- London SW.
Karen Spy	- Fife
Claire Young	- Strathclyde
Anne Mills	- N. Yorks.??

Most areas mentioned in the last newsletter are still seeking a co-ordinator. If you feel you can help please contact: Isobel Bogucki, Tel: 01403 261178

Attention all Cambridgeshire E.Oers!!!

In the absence of a Cambs Co-ordinator, I am a temporary contact person. New members details are sent to me. Well there are dozens of you out there, you're joining E.O. at the rate of knots and I think you should all meet up. Could the person whom I contacted about this, please get in touch with me? Or is there anyone else in Cambridge who would like to organise a local group? Phone Sarah Guthrie, 01379 783 678.

CONTACTS

I am seeking playmates with a home education background (South/Central London) for Joe 2 3/4yrs and Lucy 13 months. Access to garden space would also be appreciated as we currently live in a tower block.

Linda Wintle, 43 Tilehurst Point, South Thamesmead, London. SE2 9UH.
Tel: 0181 311 8864.

Child friendly beautiful old vicarage in 11 acres, 3 miles from the sea at Lyme Regis. Can accommodate up to 40, including some camping. Two large group rooms, vegetarian food and some arts and crafts facilities. Contact: Habiba, Pete or Suma at Monkton Wyld Court. Tel: 01297 560342 or Fax: 01297 560395.

Pen-Friend wanted, interested in Star Trek, Dr. Who, and politics, especially Liberal Democrats. I am 14yrs and am just starting GCSE's at home. Write to: Andrew Nisbet, 3 Ridgeway Avenue, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset. BS23 1YH. Tel: 01934 415879.

Calling all recent members in Scotland who did not receive, with their new membership pack, a fact sheet of places where E.O. membership card can be used for possible concessions. If you would like a copy please send a stamped addressed envelope as I now have a new supply.
Una MacGregor, 5 Knocknagael, Essich Road, Inverness. IV1 2AJ.

I am just writing to say how much I have enjoyed this years E.O. Newsletters. In particular the reading and science topics. At last something for everyone, with reference to education. The 20yrs of E.O. was an

especially good read and made me feel very happy, at points sad, but above all optimistic for the future. I am looking forward to the Feb issue: Learning a foreign language, as we are at present learning French and Portuguese, (slowly). We are vegans with 2 boys aged 2 and 7 and a girl 9, If there is anyone living or travelling (or thinking about it) in Southern Europe, (inc. S. of France) who would like to get in touch, please write to: Micki, c/o 56 St Margarets Road, Old Fletton, Peterborough, Cambs. PE2 9EA.

Mums and Nannies of E.O. children anywhere in the country and abroad who'd like contact and support with other home-educated children's families. Please send a self addressed envelope and a 2nd class stamp for the pen-pal list. Write to: Theresa Mercer, 23 Northgreen, Bullbrook, Bracknell, Berkshire. RG12 2NY. Tel: 01344 485256.

LATEST VERSION OF THE LEA GUIDELINES is now ready. Co-ordinators and experienced members who would like a copy, send an A5, SAE to:
31 Hepleswell, 2 Mile Ash, Milton Keynes, MK8 8LU

West Midlands H.F.E.L.M. is the colour 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 W. Midlands. There's news every month from the local E.O. Co-ordinator, news of the local meetings, trip's, gatherings and

CONTACTS

events. Children's pages, jokes and jests, penfriends, rhyme and (no) reason the wall, crosswords, wordsearches, puzzles, interesting articles, things in the pipeline, ideas, notices, swap shop, controversial cartoons, information of allsorts and now digital: photographs, in colour! If you live in the W.Midlands or neighbouring counties and you would like a complimentary copy, send us an A5 s.a.e. envelope to the address below. If you wish to subscribe it cost's 25p a copy. Including postage it's £1.35p for 3 months, £2.70p for 6 months or £5.40 for 12 months. Please make payments payable to H.E.L.M., and send it to: Rod Drury, 5 Haig Rd, Dudley, W.Midlands. DY2 7QP or Tel: 01384 233497.

We are Tom, Catherine and Benedict (4 months) and we are intending to home educate, pre-school and at school age. We have not seen many contacts listed for the North Wales area and would be interested in hearing from anyone who lives or holidays here. Also any information from anyone on starting out in home-education (any books to recommend, learning materials, facilities etc (would be useful. We feel a little isolated, having had a home birth, and opting out of vaccinations - are we a lone voice in the wilderness as far as N. Wales is concerned. Contact:

Tom Pritchard & Catherine Crossley,
4 Norman Court, Beach Rd, Rhosneigr,
Anglesey.

Hi, my name is Michelle, and I am looking for a girl/boy penfriend aged about 10 or 11 yrs. I love art and french, but I hate maths. I like going swimming also. Contact: Michelle Harrison, 34 Grayshott Close, Bromsgrove, Worcs. B61 8PT.

Roman Catholic Family would like to hear from like minded people who educate their children at home.

Contact: Neil & Karen McKay,
'Kingcraig' 22 Milton Rd East, Joppa,
Edinburgh. EH15 2NJ.
Tel: 031 669 1434.

Teach Your Own by John Holt.
Hooray!! This inspirational book is back in print. Written by the founding father of the home-education movement in the States, great for building confidence and trust in the natural learning processes of young ones.

Available for £5.50 inc. p&p from:
Chris Harper, EO Publications,
Badgers Holt, Birchwood, Storridge,
Malvern, Worcs. WR13 5HA

Are there any home-educating families in the Rhayader/Llandrindod Wells/Builth Wells/Llanidloes or Newtown areas of Mid-Wales, whom we could visit or meet up with, for my son Oliver age 12 to have children of a similar age to socialise with on a Tuesday? We have no transport, but can bus on a Tuesday to the above areas, or be visited on a Tuesday at our home. Contact, Claire Milton-Reynolds The Manse, Bridge St, Rhayader, Powys, Mid-Wales
Tel: 01597 810684.

EDUCATING ARCHIE goes stateside!

BY STEVE 1997

FOR KID'S USE

MRS G and ARCHIE are on their way to the 1997 EDUCATION CONFERENCE in BOSTON - home of homeschoolers - U.S. of A!

WELCOME ABOARD

AND WE'RE FLYING AT AN ALTITUDE OF... EDUCATION OTHERWISE? WHO THE HECK PUT THIS STICKER ON THE WINDSCREEN?

GEE - THAT'S TOO BAD JIM - BUT HEY LET ME WRITE THE TEL. NO. DOWN BEFORE YOU FEEL IT OFF. WILL YA?

BEST ARCHIE OF NOW! (SEE PGS)

HOME SCHOOLERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

YES! HOW TRUE!

NOW-NOW IS THE TIME TO

CLAP CLAP CLAP

TO GET A CREAM CHEESE BAGEL WITH PICKLE ON THE SIDE + A MILK SHAKE - COME ON MUM!

THE FEARLESS DUD GO OUT ONTO THE STREETS OF AMERICA

HEY LADY - HOW COME THE KID AIN'T IN SCHOOL?

SING MAP of Boston

DON'T WALK

oops! NO WALKING! BETTER TAKE A CAB....

cute accent

MY DEAR MAN - do the letters EO mean nothing to you?? The year 1944?

I ♥ GWS

good point. I suppose I AM seen as something of a crank, an eccentric on the fringe

SNAX TO GO Pie n cream

John Taylor GATEAU

YOU SOME KINDA NUT, LADY?

yet Surchy WAS IT VOLTAIRE? who said what is madness when those who...

HAVE A NICE DAY!

BATH

Hedgehogs meet every Tuesday and Friday for a wide variety of outings and events. For more information contact, Jo Ball & Andy Hannen, 25 Larkhall Place, BA1 6SF. or Tel: Ros on 01125 832118.

BERKSHIRE

Wednesdays: Ice skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell. 1pm - 4pm. Lesson 1.30 - 2pm. Cost including skate hire and lesson is £1.50. The rink is reached from the M4 and A329M.
Fridays: Indoor activities at Woodford Park, Woodley, Reading. 1.30 - 4pm. Table tennis, badminton etc. The park is on the east side of Reading just off the A4 and near the A329M and M4. Details of other activities/meetings contact, Pat Connor, 2 Whitegates Lane, Reading. RG6 1ED. or phone: 01734 662123.

BRISTOL

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

CLEVELAND/DURHAM

Last Wednesday of the month.
Contact: Pauline, 01642 55 628.

CORNWALL

Contact: Anna Wheeler, Tel: 01209 890378.

COVENTRY**(City Farm-New Venue)**

In September we started a meeting in Coventry at the City Farm, Clarence St, off King William St, Coventry. (A-Z Pg 116 4C). This is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, between 10.30-3.30pm. The City Farm has the

feeling of being in a real farm yard, with chickens roaming around and other animals with their young. There is plenty to see and do here, and all parts can be easily reached by the disabled and pushchairs. Drinks provided all day and to cover costs it is £1 per family and 50p per child. For more details. Contact: Sue Cardus, 01203 543801.

DORSET (Bournemouth)

We now have a new name:- "The South East Dorset Home Education Group" Our children are aged between 11 mths and 15 yrs, and we now meet weekly to share ideas, give support and participate in interesting activities.
Special Events for Oct/Nov
Oct 9th - Computer afternoon, bring along any unwanted books, discs, or other resources to sell
Oct 23rd - Doughcraft/Painting.
Oct 31st - Halloween.
Nov 13th - "Fun with Maths"
Come and meet us. We're a friendly bunch. Send an SAE for current list of activities to: Sue North, "Quince Cottage" 30 Oswald Road, Moordown, Bournemouth. BH9 2TQ. or Tel: 01202 525011.

ESSEX

Essex Epicycle gives details of all events. Cost £2.50 for 4 issues
Contact: Sandie Cottee, 17 South View Rd, Rettendon, Chelmsford. CM3 8DX
Tel: 01268 73325

GUILDFORD

Guildford Get-together Group meets fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons for walks and educational outings. Also Ice Skating at the Spectrum, every Friday afternoon. Please send an SAE for further details. Penny Meader, 11 Thompsons Close, Pirbright, Woking, Surrey. GU24 0JG.

HEREFORDSHIRE & WORCESTER

There are regular meetings now every month at two venues. The second Wednesday of each month at Yvonne Rowse's house, near Kidderminster. The last Wednesday of each month at Jane Charles' and Chris Harper's house, near Malvern. Both houses are a little off the beaten track, but if you can get to the local stations we will pick you up. Call Yvonne Rowse for details. Tel: 01299 400750.

ISLE of Wight

Gatherings: the second Saturday in the month.

Oct 11th at Jude Ashley-Walkers
11am-4pm (making masks workshop)
Friday Club - Every fortnight at Newport Youth Club, 10am - 1pm
Oct. 3rd Exploring Charts.
Oct. 17th Co-operative Games.
Oct. 31st Costume making.
Contact numbers for more details
Rachel 872997. Jude 531680. or
Alison 563862.

KENT

Events list available, send SAE to, Jean Searle, Barn Hill Oast, Barn Hill, Hunton. ME15 0QT.
Fortnightly meetings in Canterbury. Table Tennis etc, plus outdoor activities. Contact: Anita Bennett. Tel: 01227 722140.

LEICESTERSHIRE

We'll be meeting up several times a month for swimming, skating (ice & roller) cycling at Rutland Water, doing science experiments and various craft activities. Barn Dancing, speaking French and going to the Robin Hood Pageant and having lots of fun. More details in local newsletter - LEO -send £2 for a years subscription.

Liz Stevens, 96 Ivanhoe Street, Leicester. LE3 9GW. or Tel: Lucy or Keith. 0116 259 2118.

LONDON (S/E and Kent area)

Fridays - meetings at various venues in S/E London, North Kent area. Contact: Mary or Andy 0181 306 0168. or, Bev 0181 855 3245.

Choice - newsletter covering events in the London area. Contact: - Andy Blewett, 69 Ripley Rd, Belvedere Kent. DA17 5AH. or Tel: 0181 3060168. e-mail anwett@vosnet.co.uk

MANCHESTER

Monthly meetings at Excel Sports Centre, Bolton. Sports and Games. Contact: Karen Moore, 24 Darley Ave, Farnworth, Bolton. BL4 7RU. For more details send a SAE (please) Tel: 01204 573136.

NORFOLK

There are at present three things a month happening in the region for home educators organised formally by E.O., some social, some educational. NEON (Norfolk Education Otherwise Newsletter) contains details of all local events. It can be obtained by sending £1, and four stamped, self addressed envelopes to: Ali Willer, 28 Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF. or Tel: 01603 401020.

SUFFOLK

Meetings every 3 weeks with grant-aided professional workshops. Contact: Sarah Guthrie, for details, Tel: 01379 783678.

SUSSEX - EAST

Contact: Anne Rix for details
Tel: 01435 862794.

SUSSEX - WEST

There is something happening nearly every day, for local newsletter.
Contact: Isobel Bogucki.
Tel: 01403 261178.

TAYSIDE

Lots of different activities each month.
Contact: Catriona Morrison.
Tel: 01382 864930.

WALES

Monthly meetings in Llanelli/Swansea area. Contact: Sue Haggerty.
Tel: 01269 861902.
Weekly meetings in N/E Wales/Borders area. Contact: Genny Bove.
49 Westminster Rd, Moss Valley,
Wrexham. LL11 6DH.
Tel: 01978 757489.

WALSALL ARBORETUM (New Venue)

The Mess/School Room, Walsall Arboretum, Walsall, (A-Z Pg 34 1A), on the 2nd Thursday of each month, between 10.30 - 3.30pm. This is a wonderful mature park of around 80 acres, with lakes, walks, a large new (un-vandalised) playground, tennis courts, bowling green, and much more. There will be tea, coffee and squash provided all day, but do bring a packed lunch. Cost per family is £1 and 50p per child. The Mess/School Room is situated at the far side of the lake, next to the old greenhouse. Contact: Joy Beasley on 01922 863115 or Penny Carke on 01922 745465.

WEST DORSET/EAST DEVON SOUTH SOMERSET

We have meetings at least every fortnight, on various days, covering the area between, Abbotsbury and Lyme

Regis. All are welcome. For details of current activities, send an SAE to Bridget & Habiba, Monkton Wyld Court, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset. DT6 6DQ. or Tel: 01297 561070, or 01305 871561.

WEST

LONDON/MIDDLESEX

Every Tuesday at 12 noon. Various activities around West London. For details send SAE to: Janet Wilkinson, 58 Brindley Close, Wembley, HA0 1BS or Tel: 0181 998 3252. please note new address and phone number.
Also: New Resource Library, call Janet for details on, 0181 998 3252.

WEST MIDLANDS

(Birmingham Central Library)
The last Wednesday of every month, 10.30 - 12.30pm. The meeting is held in the "Centre for the Child" meeting rooms. Three multimedia computers are booked for our use only. There are many places of interest to visit, such as the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, the International Convention Centre, Museum of Science and Industry and Gas St Basin with restored canals - all of these are free of charge. Contact: Jackie Harley, and she'll look out for you arriving.
Tel: 0121 243 8242

BIRMINGHAM (St. Pauls Meeting)

Usually the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month between 10.30am - 3.30pm. St. Paul's Venture, Malvern St, Clifton Rd, off Moseley Rd, Moseley, Birmingham (A-Z Pg 90 2B). It is a few minutes outside the city centre and well served by public transport. There is a grassed play area, urban farm, football pitch and lots of space to run around as well and other activities.

(continued overleaf)

REGIONAL DIARY

All the tea, coffee and squash is provided, the cost is £1 per family and 50p per child. There are about 20 adults and 40 home-educated children, everyone is friendly and if you are coming for the first time, give Paula Turner a call and she will greet you on arrival. Tel: 0121 603 8673.

WOLVERHAMPTON - DUDLEY

Cotwall End Nature Centre, Catholic Lane, Sedgley, Dudley, W. Midlands. (A-Z Pg 41 5H). We will be holding regular meetings/trips here every 3rd Friday of the month between 10.30am and 3.30pm. The centre is in a lovely setting in a tree lined valley, bordering open countryside. It is on a 20 acre site, with numerous animals, walks, play areas, plus lots of wildlife and much more. We have use of a nice heated Craft Centre, and as usual all the tea, coffee and squash you can drink. With so much to see and explore, your children may not stay inside for very long. To cover costs, it is, £1 per family and 50p per child. Contact: Rod Drury, Tel: 01384 233497.

YORKSHIRE WEST

Bradford: On the third Friday of each month, we meet at the Community Arts Centre, Chapel Street, Bradford. This is a gathering for adults and children and there is usually at least one workshop. Contact: Trish. 01274 788938.

Hebden Bridge: First and third Wed, of every month, from 10.30am - 1pm. At: The Ground Floor Centre, Hebden Bridge, (next to the P.O.). A meeting place for activities and support. Other weeks, random activities arranged locally. For more details contact: Katherine. 01422 844459.

Huddersfield: Last Thursday of every month, from 11 a.m. til 1:30 p.m. At: The Civic Centre, Huddersfield (close to bus station). We organise activities

and trips, chat, share ideas, make friends and welcome and support new members. If crowded we may move on to Greenhead Park in good weather. Contact: Diane 01484 846946 or Clare 0113 2690061.

Leeds: Second Friday of every month, from 11 a.m. til 4 p.m. At: Moortown Baptist Church, King Lane, Leeds 17. A meeting place for activities, workshops, support and friendships. £2 per family initially, though we hope fund raising will soon cover this. Contact: Judith 0113 2265515 or Clare 0113 2690061.

Shipley: Swimming every Tuesday morning from 10.30 during term time. Contact: Julia 01274 487182.

YORKSHIRE (North & East)

Under 7's meet regularly. Contact:

Meraylah Allwood. 01904 448643.

Friday Oct 10th Knaresborough Swimming Pool and playground.

Wednesday Oct 29th Final Farewell day, please come to give your support, and to say goodbye. Anne Mills, 'Oaklands' 01405 720894.

Wednesday Nov 5th

"Fireworks/Bonfire Party" venue to be arranged. Contact: Meraylah, 01904 448643 or Alison 01405 769902
Friday Nov 14th Leeds Art Gallery at 11am. Contact Meraylah 01904 448643 or Alison 01405 769902.

Wednesday Nov 26th "Art" day. Contact Meraylah 01904 448643 or Alison 01405 769902.

Friday Dec 12th Christmas Party, to be arranged. Contact Meraylah 01904 448643 or Alison 01405 769902.

All other Wednesdays to be arranged. Contact Meraylah 01904 448643 or Alison 01405 769902.

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Tel 01483 832 250, e-mail 100412.2712@compuserve.com,
12 Oxford Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3RP

WANTED EO FAMILY DESPERATELY need three bedroomed accommodation in Cornwall/Penzance/St. Ives area. Long let preferably, anything considered. Ms B Meekings. 27Ancona Rd, London SE18 1AF

FOR SALE - RAYBURN SUPREME cooker, good condition only £350. Cabin Bed, reasonable condition (space rocket design) £40. Anne Mills 01405 720894. Calls will be redirected if I have moved.

SMALL SCHOOL opening in east London next September for 5 - 11 years. The school will be run on Human Scale/Green principles, using the Steiner curriculum within a flexible and co-operative framework. Terry or Ian Dowty 0181 558 8849

COMMUNITY NETWORK - Many people are interested in the idea of joining or setting up a community. Anne Mills will put you in touch with each other and exchange information about books and resources. To join the list and get involved, send £2 (for costs) and your name and address to; Anne Mills, Oaklands, High St, Airmyn, Nr Goole, East YorksDN14 8LF

SMALL HOLDING IN RURAL AREA sought by home educating family, minimum of 1-5 acres and preferably in the West Country. Our options are council house exchange, rent or buy a mobile home on land with planning permission. Any advice, information or details of available housing associations/properties welcomed. Mr W T Blake. 3 Yare Ave, Witham, Essex CM8 1TR

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, 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. Please telephone the Newsletter Co-ordinator to discuss larger ads.

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Catherine McKillop: Scotland
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College Contact:

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leaflets, posters, membership forms, car
stickers and are available from;
Pam Bellinger: The Inn, Chapel Rd, Great
Worth, Banbury OX17 2DT
(Donations towards postage & printing welcomed)

Publications: Chris Harper,

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

Council Members

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

Andy Archer (Leics)
Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight)
Gwen Baldock (Yorks -North)
Pam Bellinger (Oxon)
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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.

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