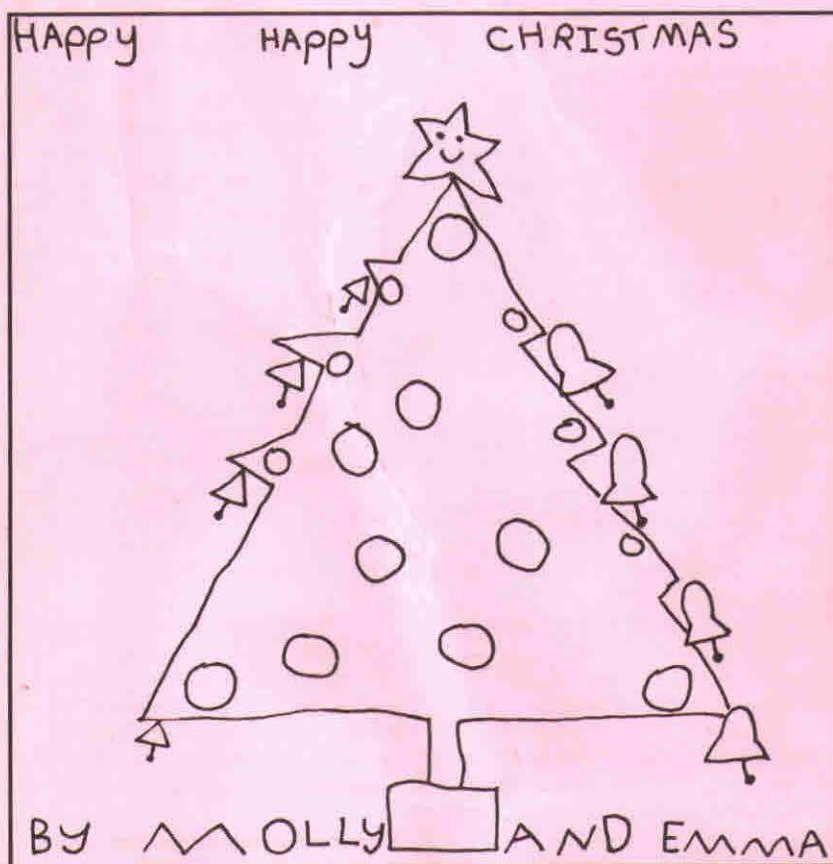


EDUCATION OTHERWISE



December '97

No 119

The Next Issue

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The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st January 1998

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

There will be special sections on the following subjects

Learning a Foreign Language
February '98 issue. Deadline Jan '98

The Performing Arts
April '98 issue. Deadline March '98

Wide Games and Games
June '98 issue. Deadline May '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
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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.

HELLO AND WELCOME to the December edition of the E.O. newsletter. I am editing this in response to the plea in the August edition that there would be no December edition without a volunteer... so, despite my father's advice to never volunteer, here I am.

As usual, a bit about our family, we are three Whitehalls: Simon, Emma (7) and Molly (4) and one Willer (me): Ali. We live in Norfolk and love it. (Where else could you live within thirty minutes of every conceivable natural feature except mountains?) There are quite a lot of home educating families, with a hard core of regulars. We average around three events a month, some formally educational, some just for fun. I edit (a very grandiose term and far too posh but I can't think of another one) the local newsletter and book some of the events. This year we've had a Japanese day, studied Roman artifacts, visited historical places, identified mushrooms, picnicked all over the place and generally had a very good time.

I suppose this issue has a very East Anglian feel about it, no apologies as most of us have never written to the newsletter before and so I rustled up some contributions and Sarah Guthrie (many thanks) has been very supportive and offered articles and help from Suffolk. While I'm thanking, thanks also to Steve Williams for typing in my desperate moment when the computer's hard drive apparently disappeared (aaarrgghh).

I'm afraid some contributions didn't make it into this issue, mainly because I got them well past the deadline (three weeks!!!) and I have passed these onto Sue. I also thought (well Sarah Guthrie did really) that some Christmassy bits and pieces would be seasonal although

you may have to keep some of them until next year now, thanks again to those late arrivals! We have worked this as a family, me typing, Simon doing paste up and illustrations and Emma and Molly doing writing and drawings. I hope you all have a happy Christmas and New Year and enjoy reading the magazine.

Ali Willer, 28, Cozens- Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich (01603) 401020

Please note that all the 'Christmas ideas' are photocopied from:

- The Children's Year* by Stephanie Cooper et al (pub. Hawthorne Press)
- All Year Round* by Ann Druitt et al (published by Hawthorne Press)
- Child Education* (published by Scholastic Magazines)
- or *Something Special* by Lyn Gray (published by Belair)

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Book Reviews

We all know that there are many approaches to home based education, which we become increasingly confident about as we progress down the EO path, but *Teaching Your Child at Home Full-Time: some ideas and resources* by Pip Grocock, is a brilliant starting point. It looks at many ideas, including how to tackle a range of subjects, and lists possible resources and also looks at record keeping and ways of presenting work to the LEA for maximum effect. When we were new to home education and feeling vulnerable, we used this publication extensively to help us plan, organise, and present our work. However, whilst we followed the recommendations regarding record keeping (which really covered every angle and would have been wonderful 'evidence' if it was ever needed), our inspector thought it very impressive but commented that it was far more detailed than schools would have to produce and that this much detail was not necessary. Despite this, because of our records, we felt very prepared for our first inspection and if we ever had a less enlightened inspector then we would probably recommence this way of record keeping. We would thoroughly recommend this publication to those new to EO or those who do not have such understanding inspectors and who wish to look at ways of presenting work to maximum effect. We feel that it is very fairly priced at £3.50.

Other publications by Pip Grocock are:

Making the Most of Education in the Home: Rogerian Applications (£7), which looks at why this approach is effective and how it can be applied to home education.

Bullying: Teaching Your Child to Cope - a learning pack (£13.95), which is a useful package of handouts and worksheets which older children may be able to work through alone.

People Skills for the Parent - a learning pack (£12).

Helping Your Child Overcome Worry and Anxiety (£3.50) which aims to provide you with skills to help your child cope and recover.

These publications, amongst others, are available from:-
Centre for Children's Counselling and Educational Support,
Centre House, 14, Basil Avenue,
Armthorpe, Doncaster, DN3 2AT
(Check prices as those quoted are last years).

Julie & Russ Truepenny, 182, Barrier Bank, Cowpit, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 6AL

Cavaliers & Roundheads.

An excellent introduction to the English Civil War for younger children is the book **Cavaliers and Roundheads** by Bob Moulder. The book contains a good explanatory, yet easy to read, text and excellent coloured drawings of the events, which include stand-up scenes that the student can put together themselves. The text covers all the basic reasons for and the execution of the civil war, so would also be useful for older students starting out on this period. Sadly there does not seem to be a series of these books, which is a shame as they would help to bring historical events to life for the younger student.

Mike Allen

Cavaliers and Roundheads by Bob Moulder, available through
Tarquin Publications, Stradbroke, Diss, Norfolk, IP21 5JP

The Dark is Rising Sequence.

The Dark is Rising is a wonderfully magical sequence of books by Susan Cooper that deal with the life long struggle for power over the world between Light and Dark. Here is a review of them.

Over Sea, Under Stone.

In this book, Simon, Jane, and Barnabas Drew, with help from their mysterious great uncle Merriman search for the first of the Great-Things-Of-Power, also known as the Grail. But when Bernie gets caught by the Dark via the evil Mr. Hastings, and when Mr. Hastings almost gets the Grail, things don't seem so easy!

The Dark is Rising.

On his eleventh birthday, Will Stanton comes into his power as the last of the Old Ones (servants of the Light). Will also hunts - with help from his Old One family - for the Six Signs (the second of the Great-Things-Of-Power), and with them attempts the 'feat' of driving back the Dark.

Greenwitch.

In this book Will Stanton and the Drews meet and join forces to recover the Grail that has been stolen by the Dark. They use the spells of Mana, Reck and Lir to summon from the depths the Greenwitch, who is reluctant to let them have its 'Secret' (the document that completes the first Thing-Of-Power).

The Grey King.

In this book, the last of the Old Ones, namely Will Stanton, is sent to Wales to recover from a serious illness. There he meets Bran (pronounced Braaaan) and seeks the golden harp (the third of the Great-Things-Of-Power) made for the Light long, long ago to rouse the Sleepers when their land needs them.

Silver On The Tree.

This is my favourite book. In it, Will and Bran go into the Lost Land to try and persuade the King to give them the sword Eirias. Then the whole of the Light gathers to try and stop the Dark's final and most important rising.

If you would like to know more, then GO AND READ THEM! I am 9, and I recommend these books to ages 7-12, and my parents like them too. **Richard Lupton.**
.....

Richard and his family live in Hawaii. As they have kindly sent us articles from so far away (remember Sara Rae's contribution to a 'Typical EO Family?') I'm sure no-one will mind me printing Richard's younger brother's request for a pen-pal, here:

Hi, my name is **Oliver Lupton**. My interests are: **riding my bike, reading, playing on the computer, going to the beach & playing the cello.** I would like a penpal aged 6,7 or 8. I live in Hawaii. My address is: **P.O.Box 7135, Kamuela, HI 96743, USA.**
.....

Home educating my six year old son Duncan has given me heaps of time (not) to read lots of books on child development. One I have just finished reading is called *Your Child's Drawings: Their Hidden Meaning*. I found this to be a very interesting book and well worth the read. It gives detailed explanations about how to easily discover what is really going on inside the complex mind of your child. The 'tests' are easy to set up, non-invasive, and effective in giving you an indication that all is well (or not) with your child. The book is aimed at parents with children between the ages of six and twelve. It is easy to read and despite a few sweeping statements I found it was generally helpful and provided some light-weight counselling techniques if it turns out your child is not as happy as you had thought. I wouldn't like to see people taking some of the statements made in this book to heart - you could really start to get depressed yourself. But do read it and use it as a general indication of how your child is going, not a cut-and-dried interpretation of your offspring's state of mental health.

Another brilliant book I found to be useful was *Unicorns Are Real*. It is all about how the brain works differently for different people, and why some children learn well by seeing things, others by hearing things, and yet others by experiencing. It is also useful for information about what ages you could reasonably expect a child to be able to achieve certain mental and physical tasks, and why some children will take longer or be faster than others to pick up various concepts. There are chapters on left and right brained children, but don't get too hooked up on this concept. The book explains how the brain acts as an integrated circuit - sections of it do not go off on their own to achieve something, learning is very much a whole body experience. It's a useful book to help learning facilitators (i.e. home educating parents) to have some idea of how their children are likely to learn and what activities and skill developments will help the children most. I would highly recommend it for it's original ideas and easy to read information.

A small and useful book has been *Teaching Left-Handed Children*. At only 48 pages it taught me a lot about how to understand the difficulties my son might face being left-handed in a right-handed world.

A recent release is *Tales From Ovid*. These are slightly re-worked versions of the more interesting bits from the Metamorphoses. It is written in a sort of verse style, but is very easy to read out loud as stories for the young and not so young. Some parts need selective editing if you don't want to gross-out your child, some of it's a bit raunchy - for example Jove and his lascivious behaviour. Overall a thoroughly good story book, giving details of the ancient gods and goddesses, and their personalities, having great relevance for understanding what motivates people today. The last few pages contain a concise glossary of ancient names and places, which helps to put some of the more obscure characters into perspective.

The last on my must read list is a brochure on a speed reading course. Maybe it should have been the first.

Your Child's Drawings: Their Hidden Meaning. David Lewis and James Greene
Hutchinson & Co (Publishers) Ltd 1983 200 pages.
ISBN 0 09 151331 6 Paperback.

Unicorns Are Real. Barbara Meister Vitals.
Jalmar Press (Publishers). 1985. 104 pages.
ISBN 0 91 519035 4 Paperback.

Teaching Left-Handed Children. Margaret M Clark ISBN 0 340 181990
Hodder & Stoughton (Publishers) 1974. 48 pages Paperback.

Tales From Ovid. Ted Hughes.
Faber & Faber Ltd (Publishers). 1997. 264 pages.
ISBN 0 571 19103 7 Paperback

Robyn Everist, 197 Surrenden Road, Brighton, Sussex. BN1 6NN

Lord of the Flies.

I had been reading to my children (aged 9, 7 & 7) vaguely on the theme of pirates and desert islands when I hit on the idea of reading *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. It was one of the first 'adult' books I had read and I had a vague memory of the storyline. It follows the trials of a group of boys involved in a plane crash on an island, from their initial attempts at co-operation and survival through to the eventual collapse of their 'society'. I just wanted to recommend it to everyone really, for adults who maybe read it a long time ago or for children of any age. I got so much enjoyment from it and understood so much more of it. The language is quite complex and the vocabulary somewhat obscure in places, but I got really involved both in the characters and deeper things he tries to show about society and so called 'civilisation'. The children got very involved with the storyline. I mainly read it to them as a straight story, though we talked a lot about the fear that the boys had and how it affected their behaviour (it worried me a little that my eldest identified with Jack and not Ralph, though he always has had 'hunter' tendencies!).

Children like to read favourite books over and over and it seems that adults read a book once and think they have read it - it showed me that you can get a lot from a good book when you come back to it again.

Martine Archer, 3 Brookfield, Humpsthwaite, Harrogate, HG3 2EF

STEVE: A Story of Home Education. by Elizabeth James.

This is a personal, and beautifully readable, account of a family who took on education at home for the sake of their gifted son 'Steve' who was not only bullied at school, a problem so many Education Otherwise families can identify with, but whose unique learning style coupled with his giftedness could not be catered for leaving him uninspired and unchallenged.

As GCSE co-ordinator for Education Otherwise I found that this book answers many of the questions confused parents with children ready to embark on GCSE's, outside of the school system, constantly ask. The family in question take us through their endeavours to find courses, exams boards and means of taking GCSE's best suited to 'Steve's' needs and, in doing so, give valuable information to all families who anticipate being in a similar situation. I would recommend this book as not only an inspirational story of home education and valuing the children we are given with their individual needs both personally and educationally, but as a guide for those who anticipate their own children needing options on taking GCSE's out of school.

Copies of this book can be ordered from: **Able Publishing, 13, Station Road, Knebworth, Herts, SG3 6AP. Tel: 01458 814316 Fax: 815232**

Payment of £4.95 plus £1 extra first book, £1.50 for two, to be sent with order.

Wendy Pleded, Oxford.

Matthew Fox, though not writing specifically about education, sees a need for a radical revision of the education system. His writing has influenced my everyday perspective on home-education so I mention it here for those who may be interested. His most recent book is **Natural Grace**, written jointly with Rupert Sheldrake, a biologist. It has a chapter on education (though it does not mention home-education), **Natural Grace** was reviewed by *The Times* - "... the book fizzes with ideas." Matthew Fox is an American Dominican priest but he has fallen foul of the establishment because of his unorthodox and radical ideas. His first book was called **Original Blessing** - as opposed to original sin, an idea which, I think, still permeates our society whether we consider ourselves Christian or not. Attempts have been made on his life, so strong is the feeling against him in some quarters. Rupert Sheldrake is an English biologist who has tried to overcome the great rift between detached scientific study and the reactions of the scientist as a human being. He writes "The first thing we did in the Biochemistry Department was to kill the organisms we were studying and then grind them up to extract the DNA, the enzymes and so on."(p.7). Then, after reading an essay by Goethe, the German botanist and poet, he began to see that it was possible to have "a holistic science that integrated direct experience and understanding. It didn't involve breaking everything down into pieces and denying the evidence of one's senses". The book is subtitled 'Dialogues on science and spirituality'. Both writers manifest a broad and tolerant spirituality throughout the book; Matthew Fox has a high regard for many native religions, Rupert Sheldrake for Sufism. Fox, generally, has little time for the

institutions of our society in their present form, including the education system. His view is that since the Enlightenment western civilisation has over-emphasised the rational, the factual and scientific detachment. These are the concerns of our left brain; we have consequently neglected our right brain, which deals with, among other things, creativity and mysticism. He talks about our need for refreshment through creativity and play without always having a goal in mind. We need to be in touch with the mysticism of the universe, which includes our own capacity for awe and wonder. The reason why he sees a need for a radical revision of our education system is to re-balance its long-term emphasis on left brain activity. I find Matthew Fox a good antidote to that anxious what-have-they-done-today mentality.

In **Natural Grace** some of Fox's common themes are present; his ecological concerns and our need to be aware of our place in the universe. Also, our need to welcome the dark (silence, emptiness), both the physical darkness of the vast universe and the darkness within ourselves (in other writing he addresses the need for us all to acknowledge the wounded child in each of us as expanded by Alice Miller). Rupert Sheldrake points out that 99% of the matter in the universe is 'dark matter' - "The cosmos seems to be grounded in dark matter, but no-one knows what this substance is."(p.119). Education is not only doing and achieving it is about living and becoming more ourselves as human beings, what Fox and Sheldrake perhaps do is to help me place some of my priorities in home-education within a wider perspective which includes our place as human beings within an immense cosmos.

Pauline Mackay, Braevalle, Bower, By Wick, Caithness, KW1 4TP

Alice Miller - Extraordinaire!

Pictures of a Childhood - 1986 - Publisher - New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Prisoners of Childhood - 1987 * - reissued in paperback as **The Drama of Being a Child: The Search for the True Self** - 1985 *

For Your Own Good: Hidden cruelty in child-rearing, and the roots of violence - 1987 *

Thou Shalt not be Aware: Society's betrayal of the child - 1987 *

The Untouched Key: Tracing childhood trauma in creativity and destructiveness - 1990 *

Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries - 1990 *

Breaking Down The Wall Of Silence : to Join the Waiting Child - 1991 *

* - All published by Virago

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

One of the main reasons we control our children (sometimes in the name of love) is because of the powerlessness we encountered when we were small and vulnerable children ourselves (many adults dismiss this theory, but just think about it...). The events which we think of as emotionally painful experiences were perhaps the ones that were not so bad. It is the times when we were humiliated, punished, beaten etc. that our minds have chosen to block-out - these are the ones we need to try and remember and acknowledge. Only when we have realised and addressed these feelings can we ever hope to heal and then give our children the respect and love

that they deserve.

Alice Miller lives in Switzerland, where for more than twenty years she taught and practised psychoanalysis. Now, she radically questions the validity of psychoanalytic theories and psychiatric methods and in 1988 resigned from the International Psychoanalytical Association. Alice Miller has achieved world wide recognition for her work on the causes and effects of child abuse, on violence towards children and its cost to society. Her books have been translated into fourteen languages.

"Probably the majority of us belong to the category of 'decent people who were once beaten, since such treatment of children was a matter of course in past generations. be that as it may, to some degree we can all be numbered among the survivors of "poisonous pedagogy." Yet it would be just as false to deduce from this fact of survival that our upbringing caused us no harm as it would be to maintain that a limited nuclear war would be harmless because a part of humanity would still be alive when it was over. Quite apart from the culpably frivolous attitude toward the victims this view betrays, it also fails to take account the question of what aftereffects the survivors of a nuclear conflict would have to face.

The situation is analogous to "poisonous pedagogy" for even if we, as survivors of severe childhood humiliations we all too readily make light of, don't kill ourselves or others, are not drug addicts or criminals, and are fortunate enough not to pass on the absurdities of our own childhood to our children so that they become psychotic, we still function as dangerous carriers of infections. We will continue to infect the next generation with the virus of "poisonous pedagogy" as long as we claim that this kind of upbringing is harmless. It is here that we

experience the harmful aftereffects of our survival, because we can protect ourselves from a poison only if it is clearly labelled as such, not if it is mixed, as it were, with ice cream, advertised as being "For Your Own Good." Our children will find themselves helpless when confronted with such labelling. When people who have been beaten or spanked as children attempt to play down the consequences by setting themselves up as examples, even claiming it was good for them, they are inevitably contributing to the continuation of cruelty in the world by this refusal to take their childhood tragedies seriously." - Alice Miller

In 'For Your Own Good', Alice Miller challenges the way in which we rationalise punishment and coercion as being for the child's 'own good'. I would advise *everyone* to read this book. We were all children ourselves once, so Alice Miller's very impassioned writings are important, necessary, and essential for us *all* to read.

Alice Miller's theories are something I hold dear to my heart. I believe that it is up to parents depending on how we treat our children, either to turn them into unhappy, unfulfilled, frustrated, angry young men and women or to allow them to grow into feeling and hence responsible human

beings. Society as a whole must start to change it's attitudes towards parenting, for this is the only thing that will bring change in the children we create. Only when we make this decision to move towards a more child-centred world (or even a world where children are given an equal voice) will we start to realise the joy and privilege of having children, and hopefully be rewarded with our young people being compassionate, loving, and *most* important of all happy adults.

Please read Alice Miller, she's a genius!!

Poisonous Pedagogy - when parents are horrible to children

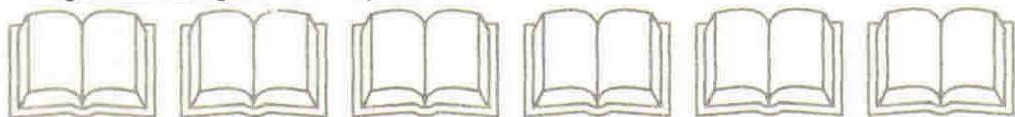
Poisonous Gogy-Gogy - when children are horrible to children

Poisonous Pedy-Pedy - when adults are horrible to adults

Poisonous Gogy-Pedy - when children are horrible to adults

by Gus Harris Reid

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MERRY CHRISTMAS !

and a Happy New Year
to everyone who has contributed to this year's
Special Section and to everyone who plans to
contribute next year, we couldn't do it without
you! Don't forget the next subject is
learning a foreign language,
send in your entry today.

Mike Allen



These are some books I have read and enjoyed:

WHALESONG by Robert Siegel

It was wonderful and it seemed to carry me away into the animal world. It was like swimming on silver flippers. It was a really wonderful book. It was all about a whale's journey.

THE WITCHES by Roald Dahl

It was very adventurous. You never knew what was going to happen when you turned the page. It was nearly always something really exciting, like something changing into something else. It was really wonderful.

CHEMICAL CHAOS by Nick Arnold



Chemical Chaos is really chaotic. It's got lots of really interesting things in it like this example:

NAME OF CHEMICAL - IRON

Where found? Much of the Earth is iron.

You find it in rocks and in the soil.

Crucial characteristics? You can use iron to make railings.

It's also found in the chemical that gives blood its tasteful red colour.

COOTS IN THE NORTH by Arthur Ransome

This book is quite interesting for me because it has Norwich, Mousehold Heath, Hickling, Ranworth Broad And Wroxham in it, which are all places where I have been and I live in Norwich. It is lots of little bits of books by Arthur Ransome.

STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD published by Wayland

This is a lovely series of books called things like "Tales from the African Plains" They are exciting to read. For example a bird carries away a woman's baby because she breaks the bird's eggs. The baby goes back to its nest in the banana tree and afterwards it comes back, but the woman has to promise she will never break the bird's eggs again.

From Emma Whitehall (age 7)

**STRENGTHS OF THEIR OWN - Home schoolers across America:
Academic achievement, Family Characteristics and Longitudinal
Traits (1997) Brian D. Ray, PhD NHERI**

A recent study of home educated students that examines the academic achievement, social activities, basic demographics of families, relationships between student achievement and selected student / family variables describing and exploring longitudinal changes among home educated students and their families. Data were collected on 1,657 families and their 5,402 children in the U.S.A.

Results: Families were much larger than U.S. average. 95% of family income was earned by fathers; 34% of them were professionals, 11% small business owners. 88% mothers were homemakers/educators, only 16% working outside the home. 90% were Christians. The parents had higher than average educational attainment; 45% of fathers and 42% of mothers had a bachelors degree or higher. The families' median annual income of \$43,000 was a little lower than the median for all married-couple families in the U.S. \$546 was spent per child per year on home education by the parents.

Mothers did 88% of the teaching, fathers 10%. The majority of children were not being taught by professionally trained or government certified teachers. On average they were taught at home for 5 years since age 5 and their parents planned to home educate them through secondary school years. 71% of parents hand picked curriculum materials rather than purchasing complete programmes. 47% were involved in group sports.

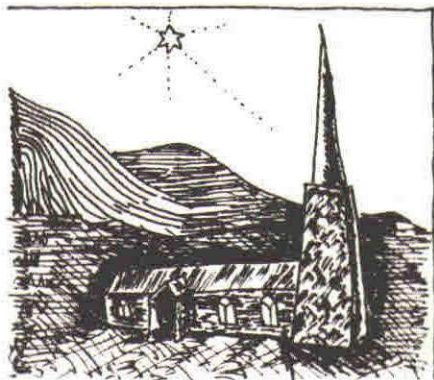
Students scored on average at high

percentiles on standardised academic achievement test: (a) total reading 87th, (b) total language 80th, (c) total math 82nd, (d) total listening 85th, (e) science 84th, (f) social studies 85th or (g) study skills 81st. The national average is the 50th percentile.

There was no significant relationship between achievement and (a) whether the father or mother was a certified teacher (b) family income, (c) money spent on education, (d) legal status of the family, (e) time spent in formal instruction, or (f) age formal instruction began. This and other studies indicate that very few background variables (e.g. socio-economic status of parents, regulation by the state) explain the academic achievement of the home educated.

Available from NHERI, PO Box 13939, Salem, or 97309. Cost \$19.95 plus \$2 shipping (cheques payable to NHERI).

From Paula Fellding-Bell
P.Bell@btinternet.com



GWS 20th Year Conference in Boston, August 1997

It's not just EO that celebrates 20 years this year: Growing Without Schooling, founded by John Holt, is also 20 years old. They marked it by holding a big conference in the home state of Holt Associates and they invited me to come and say something about the British home education scene. Obviously important for EO to be at this conference, yet how to fund it? Thanks to the guidance and suggestions of various EO dignitaries, I found a sponsor (nothing to do with EO), and off I went, in something of a state of shock at the speed with which all this had happened.

Arriving at Logan airport in Boston, jet-lagged and excited, I straight away met a woman who, in the course of conversation said how much she wanted to teach her grandson at home. I gave her info about GWS as I got on the bus to the conference hotel. (I don't hang about). Later that evening, pinching myself to stay awake, I met Kyoko - known to all EO by now I'm sure (and if not see elsewhere in this newsletter) as the indefatigable power behind Otherwise Japan. She had brought her 11 year-old son Usuke with her: a home-educated Japanese boy! There followed three days of intensive and stimulating times.

Pat and Day Farenga and their Holt Associates team had worked for at least a year to make sure this conference ran smoothly: it was well organised. Over 700 people attended from all over America. The majority were those interested in John Holt's approach to learning. About a third were new to, or beginning, home education. We all crowded in to the keynote speeches: kicking off with Micki and David Colfax. These 'veterans' talked inspiringly, naturally and engagingly of their experience of home learning: play as real work. And they should know. They built a house in the Californian mountains while home educating their four sons, now grown up and pursuing careers of their own (it's all in their book: *Hard Times in Paradise*). Micki spoke of the need to foster the children's spirit to work for change and the need to do *real* work - not just as a collection of experiences, but as a means of engaging with the world. There's no space here to do justice to her speech, but this and other talks were all recorded on tape (see footnote). I was impressed to be sitting among this huge crowd of people listening to such confident speakers - they're more up front in America! They're more radical! They have the determination and confidence to speak up loudly for what they believe is right. However, I could also see, from talking to a wide range of families over the three days, that there was a very real worry that as the home education movement expands there, it will attract increasing government attention. Already some states have re-evaluated their hitherto liberal approach to home educators, considering whether to bring them more into line with state requirements. It's seen as the thin end of the wedge.

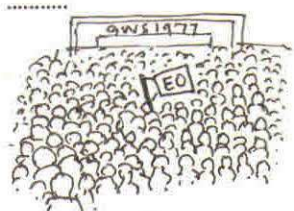
Back to the conference: there I was with my humble (but worthy!) EO publications, looking around this very professional vendor's hall. I know that some felt that having a sales hall implied that you had to buy stuff in order to home educate, perhaps exploiting parental anxieties, especially over reading schemes and the like. My EO stall had only curiosity value for the American punters who, understandably, were keen to network and exchange ideas about the U.S. Time and again people asked me whether there was any

GWS 20th Year Conference in Boston, August 1997 (cont.)

home education in Britain and were pleased to hear the extent to which it had grown.

I met John Gatto: a white haired bubbly wizard, looking as though he'd been reborn from a life as a Wild West medicine man, or preacher - the kind you'd see holding forth from a soapbox amidst the crowds. This man has the power of rhetoric and then some; he gave two talks over the weekend. In 'The Guerrilla Curriculum' he spoke fluently and rivetingly about how he went about liberating his pupils from the restrictions of their school curriculum. Then on the final day he gave his audience a powerful hour or so of talking about the 'dumbing down' of intellect and human spirit- the intriguingly titled "Bianca, you animal, shut up!" It started like this:

I want to congratulate all of you and the Holt people for 20 years of the most exciting populist revolution the world has ever seen - I think the Holt people are a blessing and you as well...I came with a whole lot of notes and a prepared talk; but sometimes when you meet people you get a sense of how honest they can be and I said 'I've got to be more honest'



And the International Panel? In the event this consisted of Kyoko and myself addressing a room of some 30 or 40 people on the Saturday evening. I was relieved not to be speaking to 700 via a microphone, but disappointed the discussion was not better organised. We ended up being squeezed in between two other sessions and running out of time. It would have been interesting to have had a wide ranging discussion (with time for more questions) - the way forward for home education, parallels between Britain and the U.S.A., ways we could support each other. I did talk about the long history of alternative education in our country, of the current situation in Britain, the political climate, the evolution of EO. I said I thought our attitude to children had become shockingly negative and showed as just one telling example a headline from *The Independent* (no less): "How to avoid killing the children these holidays", which had screamed at me from a bookstall as I left London. In the same paper was a piece about a father's 'nightmare', which turned out to be his impatience and boredom while his young child stumbled and struggled to read aloud to him. (Children are welcome and liked in America which comes as a surprise and pleasure. Mothers can breastfeed without being abused, high chairs are automatically placed at a table, little ones are spoken to, catered for, everyone is relaxed and casual even in quite posh restaurants. You realise what we have to do without) I should have liked to talk about specific EO case studies, our progress in getting things changed, our eccentric but successful way of managing to keep such an idiosyncratic organisation afloat for 20 years. It's so different from the American model which comes over as streamlined and professional. Yet there is a certain something about EO...when I look back....(that's enough sentimentalising) Seriously, I do think that we are more relaxed here about using the system, staying open to different solutions. We don't see it as a disaster if children dip in and out of school (do we?) maybe we are not radical enough though.

Despite constraints on time Kyoko got a chance to explain something of the struggle to legalise home education in Japan and in doing so discovered that there was a woman in the room who spoke fluent Japanese. I'll never forget the look on Kyoko's face as she heard her own language - disbelief, relief, joy... Then two British women made themselves known suddenly. Two sisters from London who have recently taken their children out of school despite big family pressures, they stood up and told their story to the world with great gusto. (They have since disappeared however. Where are you both I wonder? Was it a bagel-induced mirage?) (See Archie.....) We all retired to the bar where the international evening continued in Japanese, American and British.

Apart from the keynote speeches, there were workshop choices, discussions and panels. On the Saturday, there were something like 18 workshops throughout the day. How to do maths, writing, learning history, using the media, beginning home education. I could have heard Nancy Plent (she been running the Jersey Unschoolers Network for 20 years) show how homeschooling has changed society. I could have explored learning alternatives, living and learning as a family, science options for the teenager, special education. I chose to go to the workshop by Aaron Farbel about the roots of GWS: what Holt learned from Illych and how he was influenced by Illych's radical politics. Illych was the one who led Holt into social philosophy at a time when Holt was struggling with the notion of the reform of school. Illych knew, even back in the early 70s, that the idea of schools no longer made sense. Well, it's good to be reminded of this, good to hear it being stated loud and clear, even as I struggled to keep my eyelids open in the warmth of the Boston afternoon. 'The Guerrilla Curriculum' followed. With slides and overhead projections, Gatto described the way he'd inspired his students "how to do things and learn stuff in a radically practical way", to liberate their imagination, to allow them to see that all things are possible. On the Sunday, there were another 10 choices including technology, reading, college admissions, working with 'mentors' (the idea of finding a trusted adult to share educational relationships).

While all the conferencing was going on, the children too had all kinds of activities, trips and workshops laid on. I felt quite jealous - I should have liked to 'meet Louisa Alcott' or enjoy storytelling, but I did manage to see a bit of 'how to manage a horse if you are a Boston park ranger' (very, very useful for me actually), the highlight of which was incidentally falling into conversation with a wonderful home educating family from Virginia, but that too is another story. The conference ended with a veterans' panel - a chance to put questions to those who had home educated. ("Don't put off that travelling with your children - DO IT NOW" was one piece of advice I recall, another was the wish that the parent had made even more time to be with her children). Then the very last - Pat Farenga's tribute to John Holt's life, beliefs and work. Illustrated with slides and tapes of John's voice, it was a moving occasion and brought the audience to its feet in emotion at the conclusion. John's voice talking about young children.... how lovely and spirited they are, what treasures....reminded me of his deep wisdom and respect for childhood, regardless of 'subjects', 'learning' or anything else we might worry about. I felt grateful to him, to GWS and to the energy of this independent-minded, direct, 'tell it how it is' American home education movement. I came away with the

belief that it is time we too brought these radical ideas into the public arena.

Dumbing us Down, John Gatto, available from Lighthouse Books, £5.95 inc p&p
Field House, Thrandeston, Diss, Norfolk IP21 4BU

The Exhausted School, John Gatto et al (soon available here, contact Sarah)
(or order now via GWS)

Hard Times In Paradise, Micki and David Colfax (ditto)

The Art of Education, (ditto)

Deschooling Society, Ivan Illych - see your local library

Pack of conference tapes available through Holt/GWS 2269 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge MA 02140

Sarah Guthrie,
Field House,
Thrandeston,
Diss, Norfolk

WHOSE EDUCATION?

Monday night: tidied the house in preparation for the next day's mess. Sat down and made notes from a GCSE book on the Tudor period extending my understanding of it on a local and global scale.

Hang on. Who am I educating?

Tuesday morning - discuss the Tudor period over breakfast with Josh (7) and Jordan (5).

Wednesday - walking through the City, Josh notices a pub named "The Woolpack Inn". We discuss the rise of sheep farming and the Flemish weavers who came to Norwich to teach the locals how to make cloth from the wool. And it all slides into place. Connections are made. For them it is not just a subject in a book; it is a shared family knowledge and has a relevance to the world in which they live.

In contrast when I was at school once we 'did' the Tudors, well...that was it...it never reared its ugly head again, nor was it put in context with anything out in the real world. Home education, for me, is less about sitting the children down and teaching them, than about my understanding how the information is relevant to our experience of the world, my ability to impart the information in a confident manner. It's about re-educating myself primarily.

'Course I would love to say that I study every night!

What else have I learnt? How to use the library! How to make use of that time in the car when you have a captive audience! How to relax when you feel you haven't achieved anything for ages! How to forget the washing up and be Long John Silver attacking the stockade on Treasure Island! And most of all, how to be proud of my children, rather than of their power to perform or produce.

Sharon, Josh, Jordan and Alison Head,
Hapton, Norfolk

A CONTRADICTION POSITION?

When I went to see my daughter's head teacher to inform him that she would be leaving school to be home educated, he told me he would have liked to have done the same with his own children, something I have heard repeated many times. Why do so many school teachers home educate, or profess to believe in it? How does educational and learning theory support such a belief?

This is a difficult question to answer as most educational research is aimed at making school based education more effective. It may be that home educating school teachers who lean towards the social-constructivist model of learning (which emphasises the importance of the social context in which learning takes place and the learner's interaction with others), recognise that a very rich educational environment may be realised outside of school.

Perhaps the National Curriculum, which is intended to ensure a broad education, is too constricting for the classroom to provide the social context and opportunities in which learning may thrive.

Maybe it is, as John Holt says, that school is a place where children learn to be stupid and home educating teachers know this. The implication that these teachers are uncaring souls, willing to condemn everyone else's beloved children to a daily routine of fear and boredom whilst saving their own, is not my intent. In my experience school teachers generally do their best to make school based education enjoyable and effective, it is not an easy job. I can also understand why some parents are relieved when they have deposited their children inside the classroom for the day.

I don't see my position as a home educating teacher as contradictory. When I am teaching in a school I do my best in accordance with my training, the resources available, the National Curriculum, the school ethos and the pupils to provide a rich educational and social experience. When I am home educating, it is a lot easier, a natural process. My daughters' education arises out of just living, the National Curriculum has no significance to us as a family.

School can be fun, I'd give up tomorrow if it couldn't, and it is what a lot of children want, but for some, it can be a negative time. A child's experience of school depends on many factors, not least their relationship with the teachers. Although the system sometimes makes what I perceive as unreasonable demands upon myself and the children I hope to encourage the same independence and love of knowledge at school as at home. My saddest moments in school are when children are clearly upset about being there and the option of home education is not even considered possible.

Simon Whitehall, 28 Cozens Hardy Rd, Sprowston, Norwich.

Kyoko Aizawa continues to work for the right to educate children at home in Japan. She wrote the following for the current issue of GWS and asks us to reprint it here:

This March, the Ministry of Health and Welfare here was trying to change the welfare law. The aim of this amendment was to put children who do not go to school, including 'school refusers' into the juvenile reformatory. We don't have any alternatives to schooling in Japan but, as you may know, there are so many problems in the schools here: bullying, physical and verbal punishment by the teachers, high pressure etc. If a child wants to quit school he or she doesn't have any other way but to be a school refusers. Because of the high pressure that society places on them, they often commit suicide, use violence against their parents, or sleep during the daytime and only get up at night.

We took an action to oppose the recent amendment with support from abroad. We made a demand with more than 300 names (including lawyers, educators and parents) And took it to the legislature. I was then invited by the Committee of Health and Welfare in the House of Representatives and was asked my opinion regarding this amendment as a representative of Otherwise Japan. I explained that we need the right to an alternative way of education as soon as possible, especially home based educators. There are about 180,000 children here of elementary and junior high school age, who do not go to school. As I am an advocate of home education, I talked about home education in the US and England. We had translated a booklet called *School is not Compulsory* from the British home schooling group Education Otherwise and I took some of these books with me when I spoke to the committee. The members were surprised to hear about the idea of home education abroad.

The members ended up adopting an incidental resolution to the bill saying that children can't be sent to the reformatory just because they are not going to school. I think we won! But the idea of home education is still in an early stage in Japan. It is very difficult for us because access to higher education and jobs all depend on early schooling. On June 19 the Japan Federation of Bar Associations presented a report on the implementation in Japan of the convention on the rights of the child and the section on 'Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities. Education and Educational System in Japan' they wrote: "1. Places of education should not be limited to schools, but alternative forms of education such as home-based education should be approved; 2. children who choose home-based education should be approved as having completed compulsory education, thus entitling them to receive education at high schools." They had asked my opinion regarding this report and had accepted my advice.



E.O. WEB-SITE

Hello,
Having re-read the "Happy Birthday" issue of the newsletter and enjoyed it as much, if not more, than the first time, I thought it would be nice to make it available on the E.O. web-site, hence giving emphasis to the fact that E.O. has been around for a while!

The E.O. web-site (that I look after), in internet jargon, is at
<http://www.education-otherwise.org>

In making the articles, comments, reviews, interviews etc. available on the internet, the names of contributors and any children mentioned would be changed, and any personal telephone numbers or addresses would be dropped - unless express permission to reproduce them was given. Specific mention of LEAs would be retained.

The 'contacts' and 'regional diary' would be replaced with a message to the effect that information is available on emailing E.O. or contacting a local coordinator.

As an example, Sandy Cottee's attribution at the end of the 'Coordinator's Corner' on page 36, would appear simply as 'S.C.' (dropping the full name, address and 'phone details) and Marc and Emma's names would be 'M' and 'E'.

++ If you are happy to see your writing available on the internet please let me know.

++ If you are **not** happy with your writing appearing at all, please let me know.

++ If you are happy with the writing appearing, but not with your initials, please let me know how you would like the attribution to appear (Choose any pseudonym or alias you like within reason!...)

++ Conversely, if you would prefer your correct name to appear, that's fine but again, please let me know.

++ A message left on my answer phone 0181 341 0621 is fine, or write.

I look forward to hearing from you one way or the other.

Malcolm Muckle
10 Warner Road
London N8 7HD



CONTACTS

NEW CONTACT LIST AVAILABLE

There is an updated version of the Contact List available now to all EO members. If you would like a copy please send an A5 or larger s.a.e. with 38p postage to: **Jill Fisher, 92, Howard Road, Leicester LE2 1XH**

Please note that the Contact List can only be sent to fully paid up members of EO and that your membership status will be checked before posting.

The next version of the Contact List will be sent free of charge to all members when it is published, hopefully next summer. I would very much appreciate any comments about format and content of the list as soon as possible to the above address.

PETERBOROUGH: I'm seeking pen friends, my name is Rachael Carter and I am married with two sons aged 8 and 5 who I teach at home. I'm housebound with "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome". I'd like some contact to swap suggestions and ideas, plus a bit of friendship.

**Rachael Carter
10 Turpins Ride
Stilton, Peterborough
Cams PE7 3RE**

ISLES OF SCILLY: We're Abby and Tasha. We live on a small island in the Scillies, off Cornwall. We have always been home educated. Our main interests are our farm, gardening, island life, cooking and needlework. Tasha is more into drawing and painting, Abby (16) is learning to play the fiddle, spinning and rowing.

As there are no other children of our age on the island we would love some pen friends with similar interests.

Please write to: **Abby or Tasha Morton
Little Arthur Farm
St. Martin's
Isles of Scilly
Cornwall**

FROME: I have recently moved to Frome with my almost 3 year old daughter Florrie. I want to make contact with any other local parents who intend to home educate, or who are already home educating, with children of 'pre-school' age. I would like Florrie to be part of a home educating community as from now. Please contact:

**Hestia May
Flat 3 North End House
Bridge Street
Frome BA11 1BB
Tel: (01373) 471488**

KENT: We are an EO family wishing to meet other EO families in the West Kent/East Sussex area. We opted out of mainstream schooling last April and are enjoying our current education. It would be nice to share experiences, visits, get-togethers, etc. Our family consists of myself, my husband Tim and our son Harvey who is 11 years.

**Pat Winter
22 Thorpe Avenue
Tonbridge**

CONTACTS

WANTED ADVICE ON ABROAD Two issues I'd really like to find out about:

Firstly I'm intending to take my unvaccinated 20 month old son to Bali and would love to hear from anyone who has travelled abroad with a baby / toddler and not used immunisations or anti-malarial drugs.

Secondly, I've always had this vague idea of moving somewhere where the climate was more conducive to being outdoors all year round, possibly in a rural community of similar families. I'm thinking of a Mediterranean country or perhaps much farther afield. Sadly I'm somewhat hampered by having no second language, no profession or obvious source of income, no savings (yet) and no idea about the legal obligations of issues like immunisation and education in countries outside Britain. As I also know nothing about emigration laws, buying property abroad etc. all in all it doesn't look like I'm ever going to realise my dream!

I need a few leads on where to look for information. If any families have lived, or are living abroad ANYWHERE, or have done any research, please drop me a line and tell me about your experiences.

Tracy Kercher
9 Rosie Place
Edinburgh EH7 5SF

EDINBURGH

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

Contact: **Neil and Karen McKay**
'Kingcraig'
22 Milton Road East, Joppa
Edinburgh EH15 2NJ
Telephone 0131 669 1434

WEST MIDLANDS H.E.L.M. is the colour newsletter for EO members and other home educators in the West Midlands. It is published monthly and gives all the local up-to-date news on the home education scene in the West Midlands. There's news every month from the local EO co-ordinator, details of local meetings, trips, gatherings and events. Children's pages, jokes and jests, penfriends, rhyme and (no) reason, the wall, crosswords, word searches, puzzles, articles, things in the pipeline, ideas, swop shop and now digital photographs in colour!

If you live in the West Midlands or neighbouring counties and would like a complimentary copy send an A5 s.a.e. to the address below. To subscribe send 25p a copy or £1.35 for 3 months, £2.70 for 6 months, £5.40 for 12 months including postage. Please make payments payable to H.E.L.M. and send to:

Rod Drury
5, Haig Road
Dudley
West Midlands DY2 7QP



Normal For Norfolk?

"I've aimed them for Yarmouth" The words, spoken softly in a gentle local accent came intermingled with the rich aromas that are an unmistakable sign that someone had been busy in the kitchen, and it would not be long now before we could all sample the fare!

"You've taken into account the wind direction?" came the reply. "Cos I have.... they'll be just right".....

And so they were! And so was everything else that evening! Bright voices in the next room announced that the "little ones" had started swapping all the stories and vital bits of news that had occurred since their last rendezvous "ages ago" (last week) and through it all Toby refused to move even so much as an eyelid, he was ensconced in "his" armchair for the night and nothing, not even the prospect of an abundance of mesmerized mice could persuade him to venture outside on a night like this!

Woosh..... woosh .. and we were off..... a mini explosion overhead and a cascade of multi-coloured lights was confirmation that the aim for Yarmouth had been spot on -delivering the spectacle just where it was wanted!

Volcanoes, Roman candles, whirling dervishes, things to be stuck in the earth, ones to be stood on a firm surface, cascade ignition (you know where a row of three or four is set up, one is lit and sets the next one off.....and so on..... not quite by the "rule book" but the results were appreciated!) we tried them all!

An interlude for "sparklers" amid squeals of delight especially from the youngest members present led on to a magnificent

bonfire.....no, I'll rephrase that.....after the sparkler interlude the bonfire was lit and the FOOD arrived! Broad spectrum eaters could indulge in lamb stew, whilst those of a more herbivorous inclination had a potato/cheese bake to keep them warm. Those who couldn't decide had both! Cider, wine, beer and other suitably fortified beverages were imbibed mainly by the older ones in the gathering.

"I've put 'Maggie Thatcher' on top of the fire"..... and indeed a splendid figure clad mainly in blue was burning away merrily atop what had by now become a large 'torch' shooting skywards. Mind you, from the grin on its face it did not seem much to worry about the roasting it was getting and reminded me of ...well....almost anyone really!

More importantly, at the bottom of the bonfire one could see a number of aluminium foil wrapped items nestling in the red hot embers.....FOOD for later! Even Toby had had second thoughts about the evening's goings on and thought it might just be worthwhile poking his head outside now all that noise had stopped!

Thank you Sue and Mike for standing us such a enjoyable 'Bonfire Night' it really was a night to remember!

The only ones who appeared to have 'missed out' on the proceedings are the residents of Yarmouth who didn't get to see the spectacle 'aimed' at them! However like all good E O ers those of you there will have done your own thing in your own way, and like us, being residents of Norfolk it will almost certainly have been dun diff'rent.

Steve Williams Crostwick Norwich

LETTERS

Dear EO

Two of my three home educated children have just chosen to go back to school after 18 months at home. In one breath I am pleased that they chose it for themselves and seem to be enjoying it very much. In another I am relieved because I think we had too much of each other's company recently (having moved house and left behind a lot of good friends and needing to fall back on our own resources for quiet a while). In a third I feel I'm gutted and as if I have let them down - that they don't need what I am offering. Finally I can't bear the "standing outside school to pick them up" process. Because the other parents could never understand that I don't really believe it is the best place for them I can't talk to them. So much of their talk is about school and agendas that I want no part of. I don't like our lives being run by school timetables and I feel the other two children at home can't enjoy themselves because we feel guilty if we do good things without them.

I guess it has just been a bad wrench to see them leave us every day and I am trying to support them in their choice while inside feeling very strange about it. I just wanted to write about this experience and hope to hear from others who have shared it. I continue to consider myself a home educating parent and will do so even if all my children end up in school. The whole process has changed so much the way I look at life and has made me learn a lot about learning and growing when I thought I had finished with that when my own formal education ended.

Martine Archer
3 Brookfield
Hampsthwaite
Harrogate

Dear EO,

Thanks to your help, we can manage to keep Otherwise Japan going. We have been able to translate "School is not Compulsory", complete with Archie cartoons! And I was told that one professor of education in a famous university is using this book as a text book. And another professor called me to say that he will use it next year to teach education law in Hokkaido University (a national university). So thank you all for your help and support in our work to get the right to home education in Japan.

Kyoko Aizawa
Otherwise Japan



'Zimsterne'

(Traditionally only star shapes are used for this biscuit.)

You will need:

- 3 stiffly beaten egg whites
- 300g icing sugar
- 1 level tbsp spoon cinnamon
- 1 level tbsp lemon juice
- 350g ground almonds

Mix egg whites and icing sugar. Put aside about five tablespoons of this mixture for the icing. Mix in all remaining ingredients and knead lightly into a dough. Roll out on a sugared board to about 6mm thickness and cut out stars. Place on a greased baking sheet and paint with left-over icing mixture. Leave to dry overnight. Bake in a preheated hot oven for 3 - 5 mins.

LETTERS

Dear EO

Although I have always been home educated I have only recently read one of the EO magazines. Mum having recently rejoined EO I was interested to hear how other families viewed their education and to read of their experiences, particularly as I have never met anyone of my own age who is educated at home.

I am now 16 years old and have never been at school, so have quite a long experience of education otherwise. I believe that home education is, for a start, much healthier because, being at home, you are well away from school-attending children who seem to continually have colds, 'flu and any other illness going.

I live on a farm where we grow much of our own food and produce our own milk, eggs, meat and vegetables. Part of our education involves learning to produce all this food. My brothers and sisters each have our own garden patch where we learn to plant, weed and look after our own flowers and vegetables. On the farm we have each had our own animals to look after - each year we would progress to looking after a more demanding animal. For instance, at 5 or 6 we would look after the donkey, at 8 or 9 the chickens, at 11 the young goats or pigs and by the age of 15 or 16 we move onto looking after the milking cows.

We have our 'schoolroom' in one of the farm buildings. It is nice to have your own school on the farm where you are always only a few minutes away from the animals and the garden. Academic work begins at age 5 with a couple of hours a day simple Maths and English. Around 8

we start a bit of History, Science

and Geography and we work through standard English and Maths books. At 14 we study for IGCSEs. I began by studying seven subjects, but I later decided I couldn't cope with them all together so I continued with Maths, Biology and Physics and last May sat my exams. I took these on the main island of St. Mary's (we live on the small island of St. Martin's) so I had to travel by boat each day before sitting the exams. I was really pleased to get my results - three Cs. I, along with my sister who is 15, am now working on History, English, Accounting and French. My elder brother has already taken his seven IGCSEs and is now studying for A-level Accounting and History.

My first three exam results gave me inspiration to get on with my other subjects and I now feel much more confident about them.

My only regret is that more children are not educated at home. In Scilly for instance, there are not other home educating families. I hope in the near future this will change.

**Abby Morton
Little Arthur Farm
St. Martin's
Isles of Scilly,
Cornwall**



LETTERS

Dear EO,

My family have belonged to EO for 3 years now and I have two overriding impressions of EO families. The first is the breadth of opinions held about educating children. I am therefore disturbed by the negative attitude demonstrated in Sarah Lawrence's article "Beware the Curriculum Mentality". By all means extol the virtues of an educational approach, but don't attempt to undermine people's confidence in their own judgment in how to bring up children.

May I take the opportunity in redressing the balance. Collecting work is an educational process in itself. It can produce a body of work similar to a book - surely a laudable achievement especially if produced in partnership with the child? Keeping a diary is also a healthy hobby. If it outlines activities which the parents feel are worthwhile then what is the problem? Of course the child will be aware of their parents' prejudices about what is "good" and "bad" but surely that will happen regardless.

Looking at a child's progress is also acceptable. A piece of sewing is good or bad. You praise the effort but you explore and discuss alternative methods/strategies so the next attempt is more satisfying. Neither you or the child should expect their first efforts to be as good as later efforts. There is a skill to be developed. I think criticism is much misunderstood and is taken as a monster destroying self-confidence. It can do that, but it doesn't have to. My wife trained as a ballet dancer. She was good at it and wanted to be better. The harsh criticism in the dance studio was something she wanted. And now she can accept criticism in all areas of her life. She is

self-confident, but realistically aware of her weaknesses and enjoys finding them and dealing with them.

Perhaps I am lucky as my child is self-confident and keen to explore her weaknesses. Or perhaps it has been our approach. We show her that we lack skills and knowledge and that we are happy to improve these. We talk to her about her skills in a loving manner but not shirking from problem areas. In this way her education is a road and she sees that her knowledge is growing and she is becoming more skilled in increasingly more areas of life. She has an overview of what is happening to her and she can be proud of her achievements.

I am sure many families will profoundly disagree with me. But I am also sure that the majority of children, at school or not, will grow up to be worthwhile human beings. Some will thrive at school while others thrive from "unschooling". In the end parents must follow their own instincts and judgment and hope that they can be proud of their offspring. As a group we must at least respect our differing opinions and attempt to be positive in our pronouncements.

To get back to my first paragraph, my second overriding image of EO families is of their strength of character and this makes me certain that we will all continue to do what we personally feel is good for our children. And a good thing too.

Nick Gilbert
102 Brockley Grove
London

E.O. FAMILY DIARY: THE BUNN FAMILY

The male bias in such a magazine can also introduce some interesting 'gender roles' debates. The girls have an understanding of inequality and a determination to change things which makes me very proud. I have a great

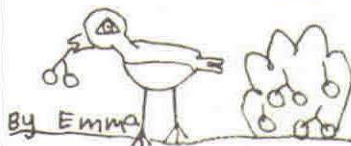
deal of respect for my daughters that I don't think would have been as deep if they had learnt their opinions at school, rather than forming them for themselves. Does anyone know what I mean? I see how difficult I find it to talk with my Mum on equal terms, there's none of that with my girls, we discuss everything. One of my favourite times is the ten minutes to an hour we spend all crowded into my bed on a morning, chatting. I feel that even if they don't 'achieve' academically, this time we've spent in each other's faces all day every day (almost) will have been worth it if only because we have reached such an early understanding of each other....sorry, getting carried away!!

Anyway, we've had a glorious Indian Summer which we spent outside exploring new tracks and frying on the beach. We've followed life-cycles and learnt about evolution through the pond that we built, learnt to swim in the sea (especially Meg who has thrown away floats for good), experimented with soil in the garden, kept records of birds that come to the table that Jess and Meg made and I've finally managed to lose some weight, thanks to all the walking we've been doing. Jess finished her solar system project and was awarded a £5 book token because it was so good. In the meantime Meri has done so much art that I've repapered the walls in the hall with it. I made her some flash cards of words that she uses a lot like our names, her toys and some of her favourite foods - I've also labelled a lot of things such as the cooker and fridge. We made some bark rubbings the other week while out on a fungi hunt and used the leaves, feathers, nuts etc. that we collected to try out some simple math.

While on a visit to England to see my Mum the car broke down and we ended up staying with friends in Carlisle (about 200 miles from our destination). The castle, cathedral etc. were worth a visit, if a bit expensive, but our favourite was the 'touchy, feely' exhibition at Tullie House. There was a musical instrument made of branches and tubular steel and three interactive sculptures. One was a heart (complete with heartbeat), another a uterus with fallopian tubes and uterine sounds and the third was a chrysalis. They were meant to be climbed on and in, but the staff were a bit stiff, so we thought we'd try and make one ourselves.

Things aren't always rosy though, especially now that we have no independent means of transport and the bad weather is on its way. We've had quite a few days when no-one knows what to do and we end up getting on each other's nerves, but even with all the doubts, worries, feelings of guilt, we still think we are doing the right thing.

Little Robin Redbreast



E.O. FAMILY DIARY: THE FORTUNE-WOOD FAMILY

the doors (even in the rain) and it's a time when I can generally go too.

We're still constantly short of time despite trying to rationalise things a bit. Rowan is busy investigating every aspect of Mongol culture and has a scheme to make his own video movie (with a friend's equipment); Tamsyn is researching the properties of essential oils; Cottia has a lot of story tapes to listen to and Seth is launching a major project on colour and the properties of squares with the aid of as many opal fruits as he can get his hands on.

Of course there are also hundreds of films we all want to watch, places we want to visit, meals we want to cook and eat, books we want to read.... Somewhere along the line something else will have to give - I suppose it will just have to be the tidying up again! I can't imagine how people make the time to go to school!

E.O. FAMILY DIARY: THE BUNN FAMILY

Before I start I would like to apologise to Ali for this piece being so late and also to say a huge thanks to those who rang or wrote to me offering support after my pathetic diary in the last newsletter. I don't mind sharing all our ups and downs if I'm going to get such brilliant feedback.

At the moment we are still trying to find a method that suits all of us. Of course this leads to enormous guilt trips about 'wasting time', 'not doing enough written work' etc. but I'm trying to relax and allow the girls to find their own way. I want them to have a safe, competition and bully-free environment in which to develop their own abilities, confidence etc., while learning from everything around them. The more information and support I get, the easier it is for me to free myself from the "Curriculum Mentality" (S. Lawrence EO Newsletter October '97) and allow them to grow instead of being forced to learn.

I introduce new things into the house - magazines, books, newspapers, T.V. programmes, ideas etc. - and sit back to watch their reaction. E.g. - we subscribe to *Focus* magazine which is a very male orientated science magazine that has some fascinating articles and some fairly ridiculous ones. Ern devours it from cover to cover, Jess flicks through reading the bits that catch her eye and Meg reads the picture captions, only reading whole articles if they are really weird or gory (she's had a strange fixation for gore since her accident). Instead of turning it into a lesson I wait until everyone has read it and then someone will inevitably ask "did you read about such and such", which will set off a discussion with some rereading and/or explaining why it hadn't interested them in the first place. It can be quite amazing, like living in a philosophy lesson!

The male bias in such a magazine can also introduce some interesting 'gender roles' debates. The girls have an understanding of inequality and a determination to change things which makes me very proud. I have a great

E.O. FAMILY DIARY: THE FORTUNE-WOOD FAMILY

Writing this diary has made me very aware that by the time people read it the events are well over. This one will come out in December but refers to September and October. The further we get into home education and the more it affects the whole of our lifestyle, the more I need regular and more immediate contact with other families. So, although I really look forward to the magazine, e-mail lists like UK Home Ed and local meetings (there are now six a month plus weekly swimming in the West Midlands) have become increasingly more important in our network of support.

However with so much to choose from we found that family life was becoming somewhat frenetic. In addition to all the meetings, which the children really enjoy, we had taken on an increasing itinerary of activities - pottery, art classes, dance, circus skills, drama, recorder, violin... They were all things the children wanted to do, but all together we were suffering from major overload (not to mention financial strain!)

So before signing up for all the classes this autumn we sat down as a family to think of ways of meeting our needs for contact and creative activities without spending the whole of our lives running around in the car or going bankrupt. We decided to prioritise one of the regular home educator's meetings because it's reasonably close and a venue that we all feel comfortable in and another because it can be combined with visits to town to buy essentials like coffee and changing our library tapes! Then we decided that there are another two meetings we all particularly enjoy and which we will go to fairly regularly, one that we will go to in good weather and one to which we will probably be very occasional visitors. We fit in swimming when we can.

On the activities front Tamsyn decided that she had learnt enough of the recorder to continue by herself and Cottia decided she would much rather learn from Tamsyn. Rowan and Tamsyn both agreed that art and pottery classes were getting a bit repetitive and they could continue their interest by themselves. So we decided to spend Saturdays doing art activities together at home in a more relaxed and informal way and had great fun buying pastels, charcoal, inks and clay to work together.

Buying our own materials was much cheaper than the classes. We have also had much more fun working together and Seth has enjoyed being included instead of spending every Saturday morning waiting for the others. So far we've made clay shapes for mobiles and fridge magnets, beautiful paper, started making notebooks from leather off cuts and are making dream catchers as Christmas presents. This week we plan to look at some Georgia O'Keefe pictures and let them inspire our own drawings.

We have kept some outside activities but now the children are only out two evenings a week: once when the older three go to drama classes and the other time when the older three go to circus skills with Rowan's half hour violin lesson tagged on the end. At the moment drama evening is rather boring for Seth as he just goes and waits because I'm working at that time. We need to think that one through a bit more. However he loves the circus skills class because he likes the sweet counter at the Art centre and the park just outside

EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS : SUMMERHILL SCHOOL

As many of you are aware, Summerhill school in Leiston, Suffolk has been criticised by Ofsted when they visited the school this autumn. Several letters appeared in response and this is just one, from the Guardian. It has been suggested that if you would like to make a protest you might write to your local M.P. and send a copy to David Blunkett. In addition if you write to EO council suggesting it, they can debate the issue and take a formal position (supporting?) the school.

For those who do not know, Ena Neill, widow of A.S. Neill died on October 26th this year.

Summerhill: an inspector calls

As a parent with three children at Summerhill, I would like to describe what the school has had to put up with at the hand of official inspectors (A lesson lost in the wood, October 28). Over the last seven years, there has been one Ofsted inspection every year and another by social services — that's an inspection of some kind every six months, every year. Children aged from six to 16 have been subjected to this regime. During all this time, parents have been consulted only once and that was at our insistence.

More often than not, Ofsted inspectors have not heard of Summerhill, nor do they know the principles of education are on which it was founded. They have usually come from traditional education backgrounds and social contexts.

The last inspection reflected the deteriorating relations with the DFEE. The inspectors obviously had an agenda. One grilled my eight-year-old daughter and another child for nearly an hour, countered all comments by the class teacher, and were confrontational and aggressive. Parents were not given the chance to present their views.

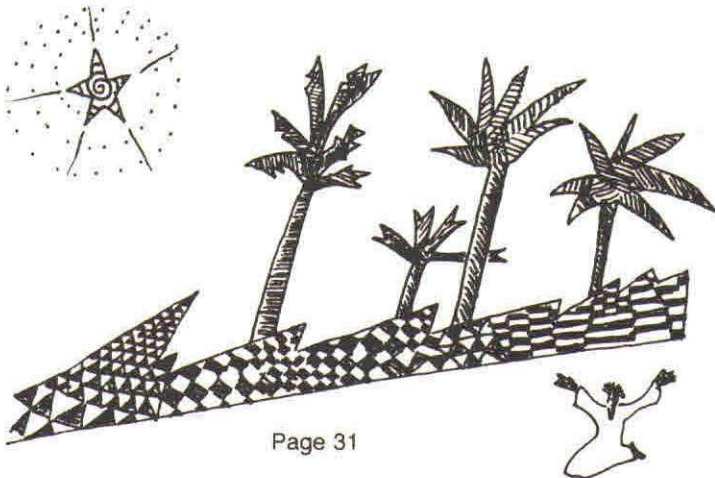
Summerhill has tried to meet the demands of the inspections, but every time something is achieved the goalposts are moved. It has now reached the stage where to compromise any further would mean a complete erosion of the basic school philosophy. This would not remain the school that we chose to send our children to.

These constant inspections convey a clear message to us parents, that the education system/model we and our children have chosen, is not good enough. This shows lack of respect for our integrity and judgment and basically tells us that the only choice in education is the choice endorsed by the Government, despite us also paying for our children's education. This is not democracy.

If Summerhill goes, then the other alternative forms of education — for instance, the Home Schooling Movement and the Steiner schools — must follow. This would mean an end to diversity in the education system, as we know it.

S M Clutterbuck.

Lampards Farm,
Framlingham,
Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 9SB.



CO-ORDINATOR'S CORNER

When I first saw in the newsletter that a co-ordinator was needed for Norfolk, I thought "That sounds interesting, but I expect they want experienced people" and turned the page.

You know how it is though, when you get an idea in your head and it niggles away and you can't quite get rid of it. So, I decided to find out exactly what was involved and made a few 'phone calls. To be honest, it had also occurred to me that this might be a good way for me and my then 6 year old daughter to meet some other home educators; up to then I'd tried everything I could think of without much success.

That was two years ago.

Since then we haven't just met other home educators, we've made a lot of good friends which has been a very happy and fulfilling experience for both of us. As for the co-ordinating, I've had long cheerful chats with people who are so excited with the idea of home ed that they hardly know what to rush off and do first. I've had equally long reassuring talks with people who are terrified but determined and for whom it is all they have left to offer an unhappy child, but don't think they are 'qualified' enough to do it. I've calmed down angry people who telephone with pen in hand expecting me to tell them what they should be teaching and when.

I've taken calls in bed, whilst washing up, with a paint brush in my hand and have become adept at slamming in a (hopefully) blank video and hitting the record button in two second flat. I've hung up feeling angry (not necessarily with the caller), frustrated, uplifted and on one occasion - when a woman, in tears, told me that if only she'd known it was legal two years ago, maybe her 14 year old wouldn't have run away twice and attempted suicide - extremely sad, but always glad I was there to listen.

So what's it all about then? What's my philosophy with regard to my child's education I hear you ask, having had all this experience?

Well...a friend of mine who over the past few months has got to know most of my friends both individually and in groups knew nothing about home education having brought up two teenagers through the school system in the 'normal' way. He is fascinated by the whole concept and asks endless questions, trying to get to the bottom of why we all do it and getting different answers every time (frequently from me!)

However, driving home from a birthday party recently, through dark country lanes, having sung songs around a campfire, made a den with the children, talked, eaten cake, talked some more and generally had a good time, he said, after a thoughtful silence "This home education lark, it's more than just lessons isn't it?"

I couldn't have put it better myself!

Sue McMahon, Co-ordinator, Norfolk E.O.

EDUCATING ARCHIE ~ at Christmas BY SEG

our friends are getting ready to entertain a little gathering of local EOers...

MRS G IS REDUCED TO TAKING A CHAINSAW TO OPEN A CARTON OF JUICE



isn't she silly, readers? NEVER try this yourself, especially if you are a CHILD or an ADULT, even if a qualified tree surgeon (which I doubt).

While Archie is absorbed in trying out his ELECTRONICS set, an early Christmas present from his Auntie Arcana



The Best of Archie-20 years of ARCHIE, £3 inc p&p ("Bargain of the year!" - T Blair) from SEG Field House Mellis Road Thrandeston Diss Norfolk IP21 4BU

The Case Against The Public Funding Application (Schoolhouse)

In the August newsletter we were introduced to Schoolhouse Home Education Association by Alison Preuss. At the Milton Keynes meeting we were updated by letter from Alison on their activities: "a dedicated Scottish rapid response unit." Here I heard of their application for public funding and questioned it. I also asked where E O in general stood on applying for per capita public funding- the impression I was left with was that it had been explored in the past and we are not using our energy on this at this time.

Schoolhouse's application was rejected by the Scottish Office in October on the matter of principle that "free state education is available for all", a disappointment for Schoolhouse no doubt but hardly surprising. It seems that the application was made on the basis that as home educated children, our children do not benefit from public money spent on school education and their notional share as a per capita was pursued. In addition, it seems Schoolhouse was set up as a specifically Scottish Association because technically the Scottish Office could not consider funding for something not wholly Scottish (i.e. that part of E O in Scotland would not do) (A thought on this: would E O have quietly stood by had a "separate" English organisation claimed per capita funding on behalf of English home educators?)

My recently formed views on this funding application follow, and I would invite home educators (Scots or otherwise) to comment to this newsletter, at meetings, or to me personally if they wish.

Firstly, the concept of per capita funding is based not on reality but on a statistic. Children at school do not benefit equally from a per capita amount. Indeed if for example you slice off the "buildings" component, if it could be identified, it would reduce the whole significantly.

Secondly, even if a "real" per capita amount could be identified attributed and "found" I assert that it would only be right to attach it per capita to the children and the homes in which they are educated, not to a "national resource centre" with computers, books and an outreach worker (Schoolhouse's proposals). For most people one of the important aspects of home education is their personal responsibility for the process. To use "missed-out-on-money" for central resources and "expert" help and support seems an ambiguity at the very least. A national resource centre by its very nature would be of little use to home educators-particularly the less well off-except for those living nearby.

I am not against money for home education as such. Money for a local venture or a resources centre would be a quite different matter. It is someone claiming the national education funding per capita aspect on home educator's behalfs to which I object and I want to make it clear that Schoolhouse does not represent me nor I suspect many other Scottish home educators.

I am concerned that as an E O member I have felt the need to state all this. It seems that fudgey boundaries make it look like Schoolhouse 1) represents home education in Scotland and 2) is endorsed by E O. (One newspaper erroneously said they were an offshoot of E O). My understanding at Milton Keynes was not that we (E O) endorsed Schoolhouse but

recognised them as the stated separate organisation they claimed to be, doing their own thing, not in competition or as an offshoot. Can this be possible? When their leaflet states aims overlapping with E O but also some varied from ours and is sent out with E O information by Alison Preuss as the E O postal enquiry secretary for Scotland (who claims as a Schoolhouse convenor to be in touch with 200 families). Am I the only person who sees a problem with this, or am I the only one who has been in the position to see it?

I have spoken with Alison twice recently and intend to contact her again before this is published. This is not a personal issue. I have no problem with Schoolhouse existing as a **clearly stated*** separate organisation.

On a positive note, since it seems unlikely that any government at the moment would easily give us direct funding for home education, energy would best be spent improving L E A relationships, obtaining support, access to resources, and goodwill, as well as mutually developed L E A guidelines (underway in E O I understand). That way we would go some way to getting our share of the education cake. This is how I understand E O is operating at the moment and I am happy to be a member working for that.

P.S. For clarity, I see getting a bit of the education funding cake as a separate financial issue altogether, to support low income families choosing to home educate.

Ann Samuel Till
Acting coordinator for Lothian & Borders
49 Bellevue Road
Edinburgh EH7 4DJ
0131 556 6271

*so as to be obvious to LEAs, government and new enquirers.

A straw star

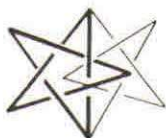
This requires some patience and skill.

Materials:

Thirty straws of the same length, ironed flat and cut to a point (the best length to start with is 10 cm, 4")

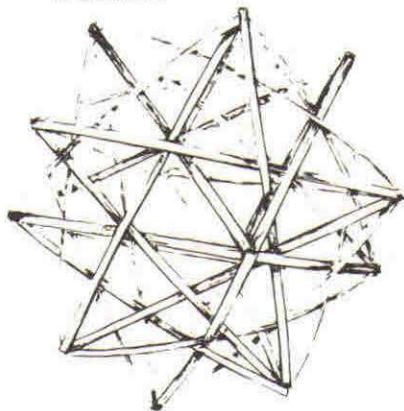
Adhesive

Stick a star together out of five straws. Take care to weave each straw over and under as in the drawing. Stick the straws together lightly at the points.



Build a second star on to one of the straws of the first star on the same principle. One point of the second star will now project into the middle of the first star.

Go on building star by star until all thirty straws have been used, seeing that at every point five stars meet and thus six five-pointed stars are interlocked.





Wrapping Paper

When designing wrapping paper, the children need to be reminded of the properties and suitability of the papers used. Offer a selection for them to test for folding and creasing. Brown wrapping paper is an obvious choice but tissue, greaseproof and cartridge papers are also suitable. Below are some different techniques the children can use to decorate their paper.



■ **String pull prints** make a lively pattern. Use strings or wools of various thicknesses. Mix strong paint in several colours and pour into shallow containers. Soak the strings in the colours. As the strings are removed from the containers remove excess paint with fingers. Take a piece of paper and fold it in half. Open it up and arrange the strings in patterns on one side, leaving the ends protruding. Refold the paper and apply pressure with your hand. Taking hold of the ends of the strings, pull them out slowly.

■ **Marbling** is effective on brown paper which also provides a good surface for printing.

■ **Christmas shapes.** Ask the children to cut out card templates for objects which they associate with Christmas. Encourage them to produce several shapes each. Draw around the templates on bright paper and cut them out. Arrange the shapes on a large sheet of paper of a contrasting

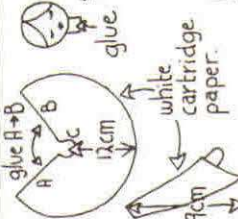
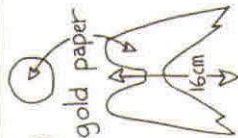
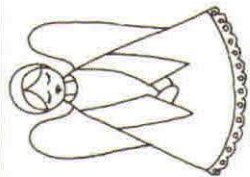
colour in a random or formal pattern. Best results are achieved if the designs are simple and bold.

Alternatively, arrange the cut-outs on bright paper and stencil around them using a stiff brush. (Show the children how to avoid overloading the brush with paint.)

■ **Festive ferns.** Fix ferns and leaves on to a large sheet of paper using Blu-Tack and spray over them with paint. Use several colours to produce a richer result. For a more festive effect use gold or silver spray paint.

■ **Crumple pattern.** Take a piece of tissue paper and crumple it to make a pad for printing. Press the pad into thick paint, taking care not to overload it. Apply it lightly by gently pressing onto background paper covering the whole paper, reloading as necessary. Gold or silver paint on a bright background can be very effective.

Glue A → B. Glue sleeves in place. Stick the gold halo behind the head and glue the head to the body placing the tab inside at C. Stick on the wings. stick hands together.



Co-ordinators Update

The Following Co-ordinators are standing down and seeking replacements:-

Paula Turner	West Midlands,	Thomas Harpur	Pembrokeshire
Alison Cox	Warwickshire	Jo Jenkins	London North, North West & Enfield

Chris and Jean Smith are now covering North Somerset only.

Diane Gould's phone number is 01495 350809. Her new address is in the latest contact list.

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

Merayah Allwood	Yorkshire North (Ann Mills is still covering Yorkshire East = Humberside)
Sue Cardus	Warwickshire
Jill & Peter Fisher	Leicester City
Genny Bove	North Wales
Angela Smith	Northumberland

Karen Spy is welcomed back as co-ordinator for Fife!

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

Areas Seeking a Co-ordinator

Bristol; Cambridgeshire; Cheshire; Hertfordshire; Isle of Man; London Enfield, North & North West; London South West, Nottinghamshire; Warwickshire; West Midlands and Wiltshire in England.
Argyle & Bute and Grampian in Scotland.
Cardiganshire; Glamorganshire; Pembrokeshire in Wales.

N.B. I still have some 4th edition SINC's for co-ordinators who have not yet requested them. I will send them on receipt of a 55p SAE.

Please contact me if you are interested in finding out more about the role of co-ordinator, or if I have failed to do anything that I said I would, for example, sending you the guidelines!

Isobel Bogucki (Co-ordinators Secretary)

Newsletter Update

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to edit the newsletter; there are now editors through to 1999!

For all of you who have joined EO relatively recently, I am including a list of past newsletter themes:

Feb '96: Craft	Feb '97: Special Needs
Apr '96: Social Isolation	Apr '97: Reading
Jun '96: GCSE's	Jun '97: Science
Aug '96: Special Needs	Aug '97: EO Families
Oct '96: Computers	Oct '97: Special Needs
Dec '96: After EO	Dec '97: Book Reviews

Some have been more successful than others but I hope they have been of interest to you. More articles are always wanted, particularly for the next two issues. Next year's themes are have now been worked out.

February - Learning a Foreign Language
April - The Performing Arts
June - Wide Games & Games
August - Autonomous Education
October - A More Structured Approach
December - Special Needs

Home education and "school leaving dates" in England and Wales

Until the end of August this year, you only needed to know about "school leaving dates" if you had been a registered pupil at a school at some time after reaching the age of fifteen. Otherwise, if you were home educated, your parent's duty to secure education came to an end on your sixteenth birthday.

On 1 September 1997 all that changed. Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 came into force. With respect to the end of compulsory education *there is no longer any distinction between school pupils and home educated children*. There is now a single "school leaving date" in each year, and this has been fixed as *the last Friday in June*. Compulsory education ends on this date even if you are educated at home.

- **If you were 16 before the beginning of September** you are no longer subject to compulsory education, and none of this applies to you.
- **If you were 16 on or after 1 September 1997**, you will continue to be subject to compulsory education until 26 June 1998.
- **If you are going to be 16 before the beginning of the 1998 autumn term**, you will be subject to compulsory education until 26 June 1998.
- **If your 16th birthday falls within the school year 1998-1999**, you will be subject to compulsory education until 25 June 1999. (A "school year" begins at the start of the autumn term. Presumably this relates to the authority in whose area you live, even if you aren't at school.)

The start of compulsory education in England and Wales

Compulsory education begins on a child's fifth birthday (1996 Act, s 8(2)), but if this falls during a school term and it is "not practicable" for the child to be admitted to school immediately, it can be delayed until the beginning of the following term (s 433(5)). This is the law as it stands at present.

However, when s 52 of the Education Act 1997 comes into force the existing law will be amended. Fixed dates will be set for the start of compulsory education, and if the child's birthday does not actually fall on one of them, the *next following* date will apply. Nevertheless, the qualification about reaching the age of five during the course of a term will still have effect.

So far I am unclear about the intention behind this amendment, but it would seem to make most sense if there were *two* fixed dates in each year (i.e. fewer than one per term). I would be interested to hear from anyone who knows the background to this prospective change.

Rob Wade
London - Middx

ONE-DAY GATHERING AT OLDHAM

Saturday 7 February 1998

The venue for this gathering is the chapel next to Spindles shopping centre, George Street, Oldham (nearest rail station: Oldham Mumps). We expect to hold an **open Council meeting** starting at 10:00 a.m., with a break for lunch followed by the formal **AGM** (see below). The Council meeting will be resumed after the AGM and will probably finish at about 5:00 p.m. **All EO members are welcome to attend both meetings.** In particular, this is an opportunity for local members to meet some of the people currently active at national level, and vice versa.

If you have an item for the agenda, please let **Rob Wade** know as soon as possible (see below). **If you will need overnight accommodation or if you can offer accommodation locally,** please contact **Paula Fielding-Bell** as soon as possible, either by phoning her on **01457 872946** or by writing to her with a stamped addressed envelope at:

1 Hill Top Cottage, Knot Hill Lane, Delph, SADDLEWORTH, Lancs. OL3 5RJ

The Annual General Meeting

of

Education Otherwise Association Ltd

will be held at

The Chapel, George Street, Oldham, Greater Manchester

on

Saturday 7 February 1998, at 2.30 p.m.

The business of the AGM is to consider the accounts, to receive reports from officers, to elect members to the Council of Management, and to appoint auditors.

The number of Council members is set at between 14 and 19. As at November 1997 there are 17 members in post (see inside back cover). Seven of these were either re-elected or newly elected at the last AGM. Of the remaining ten, six must retire at the forthcoming AGM but may seek re-election. The Council may recommend other candidates for election. Registered members (i.e. guarantors) of EO may also propose candidates. In this case, written notice from the proposer and signed consent from the candidate (who must also be a registered member) must both reach the **general secretary** no earlier than **January 9** and no later than **February 2**. In the event of a vote at the AGM, registered members personally present are entitled to take part provided they have paid their subscription.

If you wish to become a registered member (guarantor) of EO, please write to the **general secretary** as soon as possible, enclosing an SAE or return address label with stamp.

The general secretary is **Lucy Charlton** (see inside back cover).

Special business

At the EGM held in September 1996, special resolutions were carried as follows:

1. to remove from EO's memorandum of association an irrelevant object clause relating to recreational facilities;
2. to remove from EO's articles of association all references to proxy voting;
3. to add a clause to EO's articles of association relating to bank accounts.

Owing to a technicality, these resolutions will need to be considered again. It is hoped that the meeting will feel able to ratify the original decision. However, if you would like more information, please contact me, or refer to the August 1996 newsletter, page 42.

Rob Wade, Meetings secretary 19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middx, HA0 2LY; 0181-904 7155

REGIONAL DIARY

All regular meetings listed below will now automatically be included in every issue. Please notify the newsletter Co-ordinator of any changes/errors and the Editor of special events.

BATH: Please note Ros Foreman's telephone number as below, not as previously stated. Hedgehogs meet every Tuesday and Friday for a variety of outings and events. Contact Jo Ball & Andy Hannen, 25 Larkhall Place, BA1 6SF or Ros 01225 471253

BERKSHIRE:

Wednesdays: ice skating at John Nike Leisure Centre Bracknell 1 pm - 4 pm. Lesson 1.30 - 2 pm. Cost including skate hire and lesson £1.50. The rink is easily reached from the M 4 & A 329 M. Fridays: table tennis, badminton etc. Woodford Park, Woodley, Reading from 1.30 - 4 pm. The park is on the east side of Reading off the A 4 near the A329M. Details of other activities/meetings from Pat Connor, 2 Whitegates Lane, Reading RG6 1ED Tel (0118) 9662123.

BRISTOL: Alt. Mondays - ice skating. Alt. Tuesdays - swimming Bishopsworth Pool, 1.30 - 2.30 Fridays Totterdown YMCA 10.45-2.00 term time only. Contact Kathy Nott 0117 9668265

CLEVELAND AND DURHAM:

Last Wednesday monthly
Contact Pauline 01642 55628

CORNWALL: Contact Anna 01209 890378

DERBYSHIRE: We meet every Wednesday. It is hoped that events will be social and supportive as well as providing opportunities for activities. All events from 11am - 3pm unless stated otherwise. Bring food to share. There may be a small charge for some events. Events are arranged on the following

framework: 1st Wed. swimming at Watermeadows, Mansfield; 2nd Wed. at Atlow near Ashbourne; 3rd Wed. in Matlock area; 4th Wed in Long Eaton area. For further details or full events list contact Trevor Denyer (01629) 56609

DORSET (Bournemouth area): The S.E. Dorset Home Education group meets weekly to participate in interesting activities and enjoy outings together.

December:

4th - Make a Christmas puppet
11th - Design & make Christmas cards, table and room decorations
17th - Christmas party - food and fun for everyone!

Jan 7th - pantomime trip
Send s.a.e. for list of activities to Sue North, "Quince Cottage", 30, Oswald St., Moordown, Bournemouth BH9 2TQ
Tel (01202 525011).

ESSEX: Essex Epicycle gives details of all events £2.50 for four issues. Contact Sandie Cottee 01268 73325 17, South View Road, Rettendon, Chelmsford CM3 8DX.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER:

Regular monthly meetings at two venues. Second Wed at Yvonne Rowse's nr Kidderminster, last Wed at Jane & Chris Harper's nr Malvern. Call 01299 400750 for details / lifts.

KENT/S.E. LONDON:

Mondays - meeting in a hall in Dartford, North Kent. Ring Andy 01813060168
Wednesdays - Honor Oak adventure playground ring Keith Hertog for details 0181 776 8597

REGIONAL DIARY

Thursdays - weekly meeting in Lochabar Hall, Manor Lane terrace, Lewisham, after in local park. Ring Clare 0181 333 9455
Fridays - meeting alt. weeks at Dumps adventure playground and Veneer Road, Sydenham. Ring Keith as before

LEICESTERSHIRE: Monthly meetings at friends Meeting House, Leicester, plus meetings in homes, visits, newsletter etc.
Contact Lucy Charlton 0116 2592118

LONDON: "CHOICE" an E.O. newsletter for in and around London is available by sending A5 s.a.e to "CHOICE" 69 Ripley Road, Belvedere, Kent DA17 5AH.
choice.eo@mcmail.com
<http://www.choice.mcmail.com>

NORTH LONDON: Tuesday mornings 11 am Chissold Park for playground, cafe, general socialising, or nearby home if wet. Phone Charlotte on (0171) 254 0419 if interested.

NEWPORT (Pembs) area:
Monday meetings in Newport (Pembs) area. Also outings. Contact Anne Pope Telephone (01239) 710905.

NORFOLK:
Christmas party on December 18th 10.45 at Frettenham Village Hall, bring food to share. For details of events please send four largish S.A.E.s and £1.00 to Ali Willer, 28 Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF. This will give you one years supply of N.E.O.N. Norfolk EO Newsletter.

OXFORD: There are fortnightly meetings at St. Margaret's Institute, Polstead Road, Oxford from 11 am -

3pm. During the meetings there are philosophy classes for the over 9s and French classes for beginners and older learners. Meeting dates include Dec 10th 1.30 Maths games
Dec 17th 10.10 Pitts River Museum 'Egypt Trail' with slides 50p per child. For more information contact Wendy Plested 01865 514973

SUFFOLK: Ring Sarah Guthrie for further information or before driving down in case of changes.
Dec 19th Christmas party and Wetherden players production of Cinderella, all welcome
December 14th, children's cinema at Thrandeston "Scrooge" Alastair Sim version, 50p admission
Wetherden meetings resume January 16th with African drumming (to be confirmed).

SURREY - GUILDFORD: Fridays 1.30 - 2.30 ice skating at the Spectrum. Fortnightly meetings around Guildford. Contact Penny Meader, 11, Thompsons Close, Pirbright, Woking GU24 0JG. (S.A.E. please)

SUSSEX - EAST: Contact Anne 01435 862794

SUSSEX - WEST: Something happening almost daily for local newsletter. Contact Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178

TAYSIDE: lots of different activities monthly.
Contact Catriona Morrison 01382 261178

WALES: Monthly meetings in Llanelli/Swansea area. Contact Sue Haggerty 01269 861902

Weekly meetings N.E. Wales / Borders area. Contact Genny Bove 01978 757 489, 49 Westminster Road, Moss Valley, Wrexham LL11 6DH

REGIONAL DIARY

WEST MIDLANDS: please ring before attending any of these events as they could change or more be added.

Last Wednesday monthly 10.30 - 12.30 at **Birmingham Central Library**, "Centre for the Child meeting rooms". Contact Jackie Harley 0121 243 8242.

1st & 3rd Monday monthly **St. Paul's Venture, Malvern St., Clifton Road, off Mosely Rd., Birmingham.** Contact Paula on 0121 603 8673.

Coventry City farm off King William St, Coventry. 2nd Tuesday monthly 10.30 - 3.30. £1.00 per family 50p per child. Contact Sue on 01203 543801.

Dudley - Cotwell End nature Centre, Catholic Lane, Sedgley (A-Z p 41; 5H). 3rd Fridays. £1.00 per family, 50p per child. Contact Rod on 01384 233497.

Walsall Arboretum 2nd Thursday monthly. £1.00 per family 50p per child. Call Penny on 01922 745465.

YORKSHIRE - NORTH & EAST:

First Tuesday monthly at Anita Jamal's. Contact Anita 01904 645659

Younger age group contact Meraylah Allwood 01904 720894

Wednesdays 11.00 - 4.00, Oaklands Resource Centre nr Goole £2 - £5 Bring lunch to share. Friday outings. Contact Anne Mills 01405 720894

YORKSHIRE - WEST:

Third Friday monthly at Community Arts Centre, Chapel St, Bradford. Contact Trish 01274 788938.

First & third Wednesdays 10.30 - 1.00 Ground Floor Centre, Hebden Bridge.

Contact Katherine 01422 844459. Last Thursday monthly 11.00 - 1.30 Civic Centre, Huddersfield Contact Diane 01484 846946 or Clare 0113 2690061

Second Friday monthly 1.00 - 4.00 Moortown Baptist Church, King lane, Leeds. £2.00 per family. Contact Judith 0113 2265515

Christine's Christmas biscuits

Without these traditional Swiss Christmas Biscuits our Christmas wouldn't be the same. They are usually made during Advent and keep very well in a tin. The whole family joins in the baking and we have, over many years, acquired a variety of different biscuit cutters: stars, hearts, moons, animals, etc. which we use for these biscuits alone. Our three favourite recipes are:

'Brunslì'

You will need:

250g white sugar
250g grated or ground almonds
1 pinch cinnamon
2 rounded tbsps plain white flour
2 - 3 stiffly beaten egg whites
100g melted cooking chocolate (plain), or
40g cocoa powder

Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the egg whites and melted chocolate (if you are using it). Make a firm paste and roll out on a sugared board to about 6mm thickness — cut out shapes with the biscuit cutters and arrange them, not too close together, on a greased baking sheet. Leave to dry for a few hours or overnight. Bake in a preheated moderate oven for about 10 mins.

THE OTHERWISE CLUB PRESENTS

A compilation of selections and quotes to help the home educator.

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

**'SERVICES AND PRODUCTS ADVERTISED ON THESE PAGES HAVE
NOT BEEN ENDORSED BY EDUCATION OTHERWISE'**

ADVERTISEMENTS

RESOURCE LIST (approx 8 pages) relating to special needs available by sending £1.50 (stamps or p.o.) to Teresa Fagin, 25, Chelwood Drive, Bradford BD15 7YD.

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WANTED HOUSE TO RENT OR SHARE

We are E.O. members currently living in Australia and moving back to Britain in April '98. We have two children, Rebecca 7 and Gareth 5, both almost entirely home educated. We are interested to hear of any house (3 bedrooms) to rent (or larger to share or part own - via some kind of cooperative ownership scheme) in a rural or semi rural environment. Please email us on terry@melpc.org.au or fax Melbourne 9350 7407 or write to Terry & Jessica Harrison, 18 Clarke St. N Coburg, Vic 3058, Australia.

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

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Cheques/PO payable to 'Edge of Time Ltd', send to Edwina, BCM Edge, London WC1N 3XX. Outside UK: £1 extra.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

List of books of interest to Christian home educators available by sending A5 s.a.e, plus 2 first class stamps to:

Mrs Tracey van den Broek

'Hananeel'
Otterhill Farm
Rowtown
Addlestone
Surrey KT15 1HD

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Valerie Gommon, Tel 01908 511247

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

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EO stationery, re-use labels (£2.50 per 100) 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)

Isobel Bogucki (Sussex West)

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education otherwise

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

Our principal aims are to:

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

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