

EDUCATION OTHERWISE

Happy Birthday Dear William

The Tempest

Macbeth

Twelfth Night

King Lear

Richard III

*Romeo &
Juliet*

As You Like It

*The Taming of
the Shrew*

Henry V

Julius Caesar



Coriolanus

*Titus
Andronicus*

Hamlet

Cymbeline

Othello

*Much Ado
About Nothing*

*Two Gentlemen
of Verona*

*The Merchant
of Venice*

23rd April

April '98

No 121

The Next Issue

The Editor of the Next Issue is:

Suzie Griffiths

Lilacs, 12 Love Lane, Rye TN31 7NE
01797 227164

Children's Pages Editor:

Ben Plommer

48 Jubilee Rd, Littlebourne, Canterbury,
Kent CT3 1TP

The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st May 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;

Wide Games and Games

Suzie Griffith, Lilacs, 12 Love Lane,
Rye, TN31 7NE 01797 227164
June '98, deadline, 1st May

Autonomous Education

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

Special Needs

October '98, deadline 1st September

Please share your experiences and expertise with other members and send your contributions as soon as possible to the relevant address.

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.

Copyright Any item published in this newsletter may be reprinted in other home education magazines in the UK or abroad or on the Internet. If you do not want your contribution reproduced without your consent, please state clearly that you wish to retain the copyright.

Editing the Newsletter

The Newsletter is edited by volunteers. If you would like to know more, please contact the Newsletter Coordinator. We currently need Editors from the **June '99** issue onwards.

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

EDITORIAL

With a week to go until the deadline for contributions I was starting to sweat. The EO tray was almost empty. I had visions of myself and Lily sitting side by side, two heads bent over the same desk, strains of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony in the background, writing the bulk of the newsletter together.

Suddenly an avalanche of mail arrived and we were typing, cutting and pasting like billy-oh. So huge apologies to those people whose contributions aren't in this issue; it wasn't that I didn't want them, I just ran out of space and they've been passed to the next editor.

Many thanks to Julie and Angie, who learned that I was short of contributions and sent in some wonderful pieces. Thanks to my daughter Lily (10) who typed away bravely to give me a rest. Most thanks of all to the real hero of the month, Neil Taylor, whose commitment to producing a valuable and articulate set of LEA Guidelines should earn him all our gratitude.

Having spoken to Sue I learned that my Month from Hell in February isn't unusual for newsletters editors (now she tells me about the jinx; lucky I'm not superstitious, she said, touching wood). In February what could go wrong did go wrong and on the face of it editing the newsletter was the last thing I needed. In fact it turned out to be a relief to sit down to it because it took my mind off Other Things. It was also an affirmation of the kindness of people; of their courage in the face of grot in its many forms, their support of each other, and their ability to struggle on to provide a good education

for their children.

Since this issue is dedicated to the LEA Guidelines it seems appropriate to mention that we had our inspection this week. We moved to Evesham on 1st December and having had an excellent advisor before were concerned that we might not be so lucky this time. I needn't have worried. Sheila was super and we thoroughly enjoyed talking to her. She was friendly, helpful and genuinely interested in Lily and her work and hobbies. Hearing some of the experiences other people have, I've stopped feeling so buffeted by life and once more feel very fortunate indeed.



Anne Milton
13 Masters Close, Evesham,
Worcs. WR11 6EL

◇-----◇

Contents

LEA Guidelines
EO Articles
Light Relief
Child Protection
Information Group
Book Reviews
Letters
EO Family Diaries

Co-ordinators' Corner
Contacts
Camps/Gatherings
EO Business
Regional Diary
Adverts

◇-----◇

Rationale for the LEA Guidelines

An explanation for members

The object of this document is to educate LEAs about their, (and our), legal duties and rights in relation to home educators.

The extent of our freedom to pursue this right as we see fit, free from intrusive and unwelcome monitoring, and repeated home visits, may come as a surprise to some, and is the reason why I believe it is time for a clear, balanced presentation of the law as it stands.

I would urge those of you who may be fearful that this plain assertion of our rights might induce a backlash of fresh legislation to remove these rights, to consider that if we don't exercise them anyway, we have already effectively legislated them away. A theoretical right, never exercised is not much use to anyone!

Since the home visit is probably the single greatest source of oppression and misery to home educating families, I have refrained in this version of the guidelines from describing desirable or acceptable procedures for a practice which the law does not require, unless either there is substantive cause for concern which can only be met in this way, or it is a parent's preference. This does not describe the overwhelming majority of home education situations.

There has been justifiable concern recently about a relatively new tendency of some LEAs to seek to mis-define home education, a legal right, as intrinsically deficient in child welfare terms, and therefore a reason to invoke their child welfare role under the Children Act 1989.

I don't wish to dignify this unworthy association in this document, which is not to say I don't think it isn't important to challenge any such attempt to criminalise home education, but I feel strongly that this needs a separate initiative. Since the government are currently inviting voluntary

organisations to have input into proposed changes to the Children Act, I feel EO should be availing itself of this opportunity to ensure new legislation does not make life any harder for us.

I consider a period of four weeks from the publication date of 1st April for this newsletter as a reasonable time in which to take criticisms and suggestions for alterations, before submission to EO council members for final approval, printing in bound A5 booklet form, and distribution in quantity to all LEAs in England and Wales, (a different version for Scotland), the DfEE, Ofsted, other HE orgs, and interested parties.

As this is a provisional draft, please do NOT send this document to your LEA in whole or in part, until there is a final version approved by EO council, and checked for accuracy by legal counsel's opinion.

Please let me have any comments or suggested alterations before the end of April, preferably in writing to, Neil Taylor, 31 Hepleswell, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes. MK8 8LU.
or email: neilsgt@nildram.co.uk

Alternatively, you may like to join the UK Home Education Support internet mailing list, and discuss these and other matters with online home educators. Membership of this free list is approx. 150. To subscribe to the UK HOME EDUCATION LISTSERV mailing list:
Send just this line:
SUBSCRIBE UK-HOME-ED followed by a space, then your real name, in the message area of an email to:
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.AOL.COM
Example:
SUBSCRIBE UK-HOME-ED Tony Blair

Don't forget to send copies of letters to the editor of the next newsletter.

Below is a tentative first draft of a covering letter to be sent out with the guideline booklets. Any comments or suggestions welcome.

Proposed text of covering letter to LEAs

The enclosed LEA Guidelines have been written by and on behalf of members of Education Otherwise Association Limited, the home education support charity.

They have been produced with the intention of assisting LEAs in their understanding of the law relating to home education (HE). The legal accuracy of this document has been checked by solicitors, and Counsel's opinion.

The printing and distribution have been partially assisted by a grant of £2,300 from The National Lottery and copies are being circulated to all LEA's. A copy of these guidelines has been lodged with the DfEE and Ofsted and also sent to other interested organisations.

It is hoped that by assisting LEA's in presenting an accurate picture of rights and duties under education law, we may all enjoy better relationships. Given that home education is unfamiliar territory to many officials, we hope to eliminate misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the law, and hope that a more consistent understanding of home education rights may be enjoyed throughout the country.

To this end, it is respectfully requested that all approaches, as well as correspondence and 'Notes for Guidance' produced by individual LEA's and sent to prospective or practicing home educators, should be amended where necessary to accurately reflect the law.

Please do not hesitate to contact EO for further literature.

Please distribute the copies of this booklet to relevant personnel concerned with home education.

Education Otherwise

education otherwise

Elective Home Education

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

INDEX

	Page
Education Law	1
Parental Responsibilities	2
Deregistration	3
LEA Duties	3-5
Diverse Approaches...	6
Irregular School Attendance	7
Special Educational Needs	8-9
Further Reading	10

Education is compulsory - school attendance is not

The freedom to educate children at home forms an intrinsic and essential element of educational provision in our society, a right which has been protected by a succession of Education Acts. **The law is clear that while education is compulsory, school attendance is not.**

Education Law

The fundamental piece of legislation regarding education in England and Wales is the **Education Act 1996** (previously 1944 Education Act).

The **only** relevant sections are: (emphasis added)

Parental Duties:

Section 7

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

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

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

LEA Duties:

The LEA's duties and powers in relation to home-educated children are contained in the Education Acts, 1944 to 1996. These are fully set out in Sections 437 to 443 of the 1996 Act and (except in relation to special educational needs) are limited to the provisions of those sections.

437. - (1) **If it appears** to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.

Parental Responsibilities

As parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are properly educated, it is their decision whether to use schools or provide education at home.

It is important to note that the duty to secure education is stated entirely in section 7 and nowhere else.

Provided the child is not a registered pupil at a school, the parent is bound by no other constraints. In particular, there is no obligation

- to seek permission to educate 'otherwise';
- to take the initiative in informing the LEA;
- to have premises equipped to any particular standard;
- to have any specific qualifications;
- to cover the same syllabus as any school;
- to adopt the National Curriculum;
- to make detailed plans in advance;
- to observe school hours, days or terms;
- to have a fixed timetable;
- to give formal lessons in a classroom;
- to reproduce school type peer group socialisation;
- to match school, age-specific standards.

De-registration

The grounds on which a pupil's name must be deleted from the admission register are listed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 9, 1995. Under regulation 9(1)(c), a 'school-age' pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register if:

he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.

If the parent writes to the proprietor explaining that the child is being educated at home, they are obliged to take the child's name off the register, and the duty to secure regular attendance thus comes to an end.

Since 1995 this has been an absolute legal requirement: no discretion is involved. (Under regulation 13(3) the proprietor of any school must also report the deletion of the pupil's name from the admission register to the LEA 'within ten school days'.) In this way the legal position of a parent embarking on home-based education is the same regardless of whether or not the child has been withdrawn from a school for this purpose. i.e., the LEA is entitled to make informal enquiries of the parent(s).

The only circumstances under which parents are under an obligation to inform the LEA of the intention to home educate a child concern pupils registered at a special school where parents must seek the consent of the LEA, and pupils with dual enrolment at a school and LEA-run referral unit or special school, where the consent of both proprietors is required.

LEA Duties

The wording of the Act gives the LEA duties and powers to act only if something comes to its attention which gives it reason to suppose a breach of a parent's section 7 duty. It gives it no power or duty to investigate any instances of home education which come to its attention, unaccompanied by any grounds for suspicion that an adequate education is not taking place.

However, case law (Phillips v Brown, Divisional Court [20 June 1980, unreported] Judicial review by Lord Justice Donaldson) has established that an LEA is entitled to make informal enquiries of parents. Donaldson said:

"Of course such a request is not the same as a notice under s 37 (1) of the Education Act 1944 (now s 437 (1) of the 1996 Education Act) and the parents will be under no duty to comply. However it would be sensible for them to do so. If parents give no information or adopt the course of merely stating that they are discharging their duty without giving any details of how they are doing so, the LEA will have to consider and decide whether it "appears" to it that the parents are in breach of s 36." (now s 7 of the '96 Education Act)

Provided an LEA's approach is reasonable, i.e. does not misrepresent a parent's rights by for example claiming duties not mandated by legislation, then the LEA is entitled to expect information beyond a mere assertion that a parent is fulfilling their section 7 duty by home educating.

The form in which this information is given is entirely within the discretion of the parents, the only requirement being that it would be a reasonable inference that adequate education is taking place. A parent may for example choose to present information in written form, describing their educational philosophy, practice, intentions, resources etc. in such a way as to present a picture of the parents' intentions, commitment and competence to fulfil their section 7 duty.

An LEA may prefer to make a home visit, and see the child, but it may not insist on this, and a parent is entitled to refuse such a suggestion.

Many parents are quite concerned not to have their child's privacy invaded out of respect for the child's autonomy, and any hint of testing or examination by strangers with a different agenda, can be experienced as undermining.

Where an LEA has been used to insisting on this kind of evidence, it should be aware that this exceeds its mandate under education legislation and would be considered to be an unreasonable approach, and of itself grounds for reasonably refusing to co-operate with an LEA's informal request for information.

In the case of *R v Surrey Quarter Sessions Appeals Committee, ex parte Tweedie* (1963), Lord Parker held that:

'.....an education authority should not, as a matter of policy, insist on inspection in the home as the only method of satisfying themselves that the children were receiving full time education.'

There is no legal requirement for the LEA to make continual enquiries. Once in receipt of a 'reasonable' account of the educational provision, their legal obligation is fulfilled and no further contact is necessary. However, some parents may appreciate continuous help, support and contact and under these circumstances further contact can be arranged. Some LEAs arrange 'drop-in' centres where families can maintain contact.

School Attendance Orders

Education Act 1996 s 437-443, (previously s 192-198 1993 Act)

This begins:

"If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent..."

The formal steps provided for in these sections should not be needed unless something has gone seriously wrong. Nevertheless they are summarised here for reference:

1. If the educational provision seems to be inadequate, the LEA must serve the parents with a notice giving them at least two weeks to satisfy them that they are educating properly.
2. If the parents fail to do this, the LEA then have to consider whether it is expedient for the child to go to school. If they think it is, they must serve a 'school attendance order'. But before doing so they must serve a notice stating which school they intend to name in the order, and giving the parents a chance to choose an alternative.
3. The LEA serve a school attendance order requiring the parents to register the child as a pupil at the school named in it.
4. The parents can ask the LEA to revoke the order because they are educating 'otherwise'.
5. The LEA can prosecute the parents for not complying with the order, but the action will fail if the parents can show the court that they are educating 'otherwise'.

The evidence a court requires to satisfy it that adequate education is taking place, is such as would convince 'a reasonable person', 'on the balance of probabilities'.

(Under section 447, whether they prosecute or not, the LEA must also consider applying for an education supervision order.)

Diverse approaches to home education

The principle of parental choice is paramount. Families are entitled to choose what they feel to be the most suitable educational approach. One system cannot be expected to cater for the needs and interests of all individuals, (many fail to thrive or reach their full potential whilst receiving formal instruction in a school environment). A variety of alternatives in education is therefore important and the law allows for this diversity.

A clearer interpretation of some terminology used in the 1944 Education Act (replaced by the 1996 Act), was gained in the case of Harrison & Harrison v Stephenson (appeal to Worcester Crown Court 1981). The term 'suitable education' was defined as one which enabled the children 'to achieve their full potential', and was such as 'to prepare the children for life in modern civilised society'. The term 'efficient' was defined as achieving 'that which it sets out to achieve'.

Clearly this definition covers a great variety of educational approaches.

There is no one 'correct' educational system. All children learn in different ways and at varying rates, and chronological age has little bearing on the process. It would be wholly inappropriate for example to seek to impose 'reading and numeracy age' scales on home educated children, not subject to the specific educational methods in state schools. Individual children come to literacy and numeracy over a huge age range, which has no subsequent bearing on their competence in these areas as adults. It is vital that parents and children choose a type of education which is right for them, and it is important that any LEA officers understand and are supportive of many differing approaches or "ways of educating" which are all feasible and legally valid.

Education Act 1996, Part V (incorporating Education Reform Act 1988)

This introduces the National Curriculum, stating in Ss 351 to 353 (replacing ss1 & 2) that it only applies to children who are registered pupils of maintained (i.e. State or State-supported) schools.

Home educators may choose whether to base their studies around these guidelines fully, partially, or not at all.

Irregular or Non-attendance at School

Education Act 1996 s 444, (previously s 199 of 1993 Act derived from s 39 1944 Act)

This deals with the non-attendance, or irregular attendance at school, of registered pupils. If poor/non attendance is due to severe school anxieties, usually the Educational Welfare department becomes involved and the family should be informed of all their duties, rights and available options including education at home.

Many LEAs, when confronted with the problems of School Phobia/Anxieties, School Refusal/Truancy, encourage families to contact Education Otherwise for help and advice. This provides a useful alternative course of action for officials, because if endeavours are made to pressure children with the above problems back into schools under duress, the whole family (as well as the child) suffers the ensuing stress and the truancy and nervous illnesses inevitably continue. Education at home may prevent further distress and the possibility of the child returning to school at a later date remains an option.

There may be families who would prefer a flexi-time schooling approach.

Under s444(3) of the 1996 Education Act

Any 'school age' child who goes to school at all must attend regularly, but absence 'with leave' does not count as irregular attendance. During such absences the child is officially at school, but is effectively being educated off site. (S)he is therefore covered for insurance and attracts full funding. Such arrangements are at the discretion of the school. (s 444 (9))

Home Educating Children with Special Educational Needs.

Children with special educational needs (SEN), a concept introduced by the 1981 Education Act, are defined in Section 312 (1) of the 1996 Education Act as having:

a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made.

A 'learning difficulty' is further defined in section 312 (2)

The right to home educate children with SEN is specifically upheld by Section 7 (b) of the 1996 Education Act.

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

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

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

No particular qualifications or special needs training are required by parents fulfilling their Section 7 duty by educating 'otherwise'.

Identification and assessment of children with SEN

Section 321 (3) (d) states that, in the area of SEN only, LEAs 'are responsible for' a child :

if he is in their area and.....
he is not a registered pupil at a school but is not under the age of two or over compulsory school age and has been brought to their attention as having (or probably having) special educational needs.

Under Section 321 (2) of the 1996 Education Act, LEAs have a duty to identify children for whom they are responsible if:

- a) he has special educational needs, and
- b) it is necessary for the authority to determine the special educational provision which any learning difficulty he may have calls for.

This makes it clear that LEAs would only need to identify children with SEN if they need to determine the provision they would be obliged to make if the parents had not made their own suitable arrangements. This would include children not registered at a school by virtue of their age (over 2 but under 5, or over 16), but not children being educated otherwise than at school, by elective home education.

Under section 323 an LEA also has a duty to assess the educational needs of SEN children, where the same circumstances, inappropriate to home-educated children, apply.

Further, Section 313 (2) of the 1996 Act gives LEAs a duty to have regard to the provision of the Code of Practice issued by the Secretary of State, giving 'practical guidance in respect of the discharge by local education authorities ... of their (SEN) functions'.

The Code of Practice states in Section 3:3:

An assessment ... should be undertaken only if the authority believe that they need or probably need to determine the child's special educational provision themselves by making a statement. But statutory assessment will not always lead to a statement.

Statements of SEN

As the Statementing procedure is designed to facilitate the LEA in deciding what educational provision it needs to make, it is unlikely to be appropriate to home-educating families who are making their own arrangements.

Section 324 (1) states that

If, in the light of an assessment under section 323 ... it is necessary for the local educational authority to determine the special educational provision which any learning difficulty ... calls for, the authority shall make and maintain a statement of his special educational needs.

This means that a child who is new to home education, may already have a statement of special educational needs in place.

Section 324 (5) states

- Where a local education authority maintain a statement under this section, then -
- a) unless the child's parent has made suitable arrangements, the authority -
 - i) shall arrange that the special educational provision specified in the statement is made for the child.

Suitable arrangements include fulfilling their Section 7 duty by home education. Therefore, if a parent notifies the authority that they are providing education 'otherwise', the LEA no longer have a duty to maintain a statement of special educational needs.

Where a statementing procedure is embarked upon, the LEA has a duty to honour the rights of parents detailed in Section 326 and Schedule 27 of the 1996 Education Act and to inform the parent of those rights. An LEA may also consider issuing a 'note in lieu of statement' as described in The Secretary of State's Code of Practice, where they perceive that it is not necessary for them to provide for the child's special educational needs themselves.

Further Reading

A detailed account of the law and home education further qualifying the points made throughout this document, can be found in 'Home Education and the Law' (1991) by Dr. David Deutsch & Kolya Wolf, which has been subject to careful checking by a solicitor and by Counsel's Opinion, to ensure that "all statements of law, regulations and proper legal and administrative practice that it contains are correct". (Preface to 2nd Edition).

Deutsch & Wolf observe that :

"It was never the intention of Parliament to compel all children to attend school. Nor was it ever the intention to specify, or to empower LEAs to specify, the form and content of every child's education. Parents who wish to provide a 'proper education' for their children otherwise than at school cannot legally be prevented from doing so....., and parents do not need to obtain permission or approval from anyone. (Pg.3)".....

"...There exist many contending educational philosophies, giving rise to many different styles of education which are reasonable even though they differ radically amongst themselves The issue is not whether the education is approved of or disapproved of by the LEA or by anyone else."

"Both among experts and among laymen there is no unanimous agreement as to what constitutes a proper education....."

Why We Need the LEA Guidelines.

This year when the 'Dreaded Letter' arrived from my LEA announcing their annual inspection was imminent, the usual reaction happened, my heart sank to my boots and depression set in. The whole family dreads the visit and the disruption and stress it causes.

I would like to say that I know my LEA is not the worst but every year they come along, try to test the children, complain about lack of curriculum plans, timetables and record keeping.

After looking at all the previous reports from the last 5 years, I decided I did not wish to be inspected at home and would like to present written evidence instead.

I phoned my contact at the LEA and asked for a copy of the law which required them to visit me at home. After a couple of weeks they replied stating that "it is for each LEA to determine how it will discharge its duty to ensure the education is suitable".

They also stated that they had consulted other LEAs in the area, which also used home visits to prove education was taking place. So as a result they would be re-arranging my appointment for an inspection and hoped that I would see the visit in the supportive way it was intended!

In case any of you were wondering if I have something to hide, the answer is no (although I do have trouble finding the carpet at times). Both of my children are doing very well, much more advanced in several subjects than their peers who attend school, probably because they are allowed to follow their own interests. Most of the time it is easy to incorporate maths and English into subjects that interest them. My 9 year old loves to do verbal and non-verbal reasoning (he will complete a whole book in a day, if I let him), he is on the 11-12 year old books and reads much better than a friends 14 year old daughter.

Unfortunately my LEA and many others all over the country are ignoring the law and trying to force Home Educating families to have home inspections, demand timetables etc. We have to provide suitable education for our children; it is not for the LEA or anyone else to tell us how to do it. It is also for individual families to decide how they discharge their duty under section 7, not the LEA. Its our choice, not theirs.

The LEA Guidelines will put an end to persecution of Home Educating families it clearly states our rights in a way that everyone can understand. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has worked so hard and for so long, particularly Neil & Joyce.

Angie Pullin, Sidcup, Kent.

0181 300 7236 e-mail: apullin@btinternet.com

Why these Guidelines make me very uneasy

If it is brought to the attention of LEAs that they have no legal right to visit home educators and that a significant number of families are intending to refuse inspections, they have, in my view, three options.

- to accept this interpretation of the law and visit only those families who welcome inspections
- to accept this interpretation of the law and make refusing visits a welfare issue, handing over responsibility for regular visits to *Social Workers*
- to challenge this interpretation of the law in the courts and if unsuccessful, move to change the law. It seems to me perfectly possible, that any new legislation will not only remove this right, but **other rights and freedoms** which we currently enjoy. In the current educational climate, LEAs will get what ever powers they say they need.

LEAs should not be making peoples lives miserable; we should stand firm against any instance of abuse of power.

But to send out such a radical re-interpretation of the status quo we need to be sure that parliament, the educational establishment, and the general public would support our right to educate our children as we see fit, with no supervision from 'professionals'. In my experience of 8 years of eeing, most people are astonished at the degree for freedom we already have.

No inspections ? No chance.

Sue Hutchin

Publications Secretary, Newsletter co-ordinator, Council Member
Oakwood, Sparrow Hatch Lane, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent TN26 3ED

WHY WE NO LONGER HOME EDUCATE

BY

ROBYN EVERIST

For 6 years, in the face of much opposition, I have steadfastly maintained my ideals regarding the benefits of home education. I have always been adverse to sending my son to school. In that time, we have been very busy exploring the world, and learning as we go. I have enjoyed the freedom and closeness which resulted from taking on the responsibility of seeing to Duncan's education myself, rather than handing him over to an institution.

Last Friday, Duncan announced that he wanted to go to school. What could I do? With redundancy staring me in the face, I swallowed back the tears, made a strong cup of tea, and settled down for a serious chat with my precious 6 year old, who wanted to go out into the wide world of institutionalised education - the one place where all school-phobic parents fear to tread.

I had to think carefully about asking him why he wanted to go, without making it seem like I strongly disapproved of his decision. Before I could get the question out, he landed one on me. Who's idea was it to home educate anyway? Well, of course it was mine. In that case, Mum, I want to go to school. Duncan went on to tell me that he had been bored at home for some time, but hadn't wanted to say anything because he thought I would be upset.

He also said he wanted to have the same gang of people to see every day, not a different group at each outing. He wanted to be more like other children, and have someone else to educate him, not his mum. As I dashed for the Kleenex, I wondered who had snatched away my darling and placed this assertive, confident little creature in his place, a boy who knows his own mind and was making a life choice.

Duncan had never been to a school before, nor anything even remotely like it. His father and I had spent the past 4 years or so gently dropping hints as to how bad school was, the lack of freedom, overcrowding, blah, blah, blah. So he had a pretty good idea of the down side of a school, and still wanted to go. My depression deepened.

For some time I had been raising a tricky issue with other home-educating parents - are we doing too much for our kids? Is it good for them, or us, to be around each other 48 hours a day, 14 days a week? No matter how close and comfortable the family ties, can they become too tight by over-exposure? Despite our best efforts to socialise our children, we still see a lot of them. Do we give them the chance to fully explore their world, and develop their own personalities under the close and constant scrutiny of the ever watchful home educating parent? And because we socialise so much with our children, as parents are we too anxious to have a child who pleases all, who minds their Ps and Qs, who doesn't put a foot wrong, in order to be socially acceptable? We all want to be proud of our children, and like to see them being nice people. But if the child was in a school yard, we wouldn't be around to gauge his potential for being a little monster. Is this constant close contact good for the kids?

I do agree with a lot of people when they state that a big reason to home educate is the tricky issue of - Why go to all the trouble of having a child, just to send it off to school for the best part of his life?

For our family, I feel I've found a solution. One of the hundreds of people with whom I'd aired my concerns suggested we take a look at the nearby Dharma School. The first thing which grabbed us was that it has a limit of 15 children in each of the two classes, plus two teachers for each class, and helpers. When we visited the school, such an air of peace and calm pervaded the place, that I knew it must have something more. I was right - it's a Buddhist school, where they have daily meditation and encourage the children to abide by five basic Buddhist principles. There is no overt religious indoctrination, and plenty of opportunity each day for one-to-one attention in the class room.

When Duncan spent his first day at school it was hard to get him home - he didn't want the day to end, and was up early and dressed the next day, ready to go with two hours to spare. He loves his school, and his teacher - he shared his chocolate muffin with her, so it must be serious. After the end of his first week, Duncan wanted to know when they were going to do some real school work, hard stuff like the writing and math we had done at home. It'll come, I'm sure, and if my suspicions are correct, he won't even know when he's doing it that it's the 'hard stuff'.

Many friends have kindly asked me - and how do *you* feel about his going to school? It's been nearly two weeks now, and I am slightly embarrassed to say, I haven't looked back. I received a commission for more writing the day he started school, so I have plenty of work to do. I've been to lunch and spent hours in the library on research. I'm resuming my life - ought I feel guilty? I'm enjoying my new-found freedom, which has come like a gift out of the blue, unasked for, unexpected and I realise now, very welcome.

If you had asked me two weeks ago, I would have said I anticipated Duncan would be educated at home until he arrived at an age to attend university. Now that he's just another school kid, I don't consider my efforts wasted or my principles now redundant. I am gratified home education has proved to be such a success - I have a son who is confident and self possessed enough to be able to decide his own course in life. As parents, we can ask for no more.

Do other EO parents suffer from complete exhaustion and Empty Fridge Syndrome?

I am finding that as the children get older (although they are still only 8, 5 and 2) I get more and more tired. Someone on the Internet spoke about the intensity of home-education. It is intense and it is relentless....but it is not advisable to mention this to non-EO parents unless you want a whole batch of 'I told you so's' descending. We are fortunate enough to have a job that we can share, so that we both get time with and away from the children equally - although I prefer the time with them, the time away maintains a bit of 'me'.

Also hard I find, is trying to be available to all three at different levels and at the same time! If I sit down with one, another wants a new video on, or a drink - and the baby gets herself into some sort of position she shouldn't be in, in a nanosecond!

My five year old daughter is always asked when we are out about what school she goes to blah, blah, blah. And when she answers that she doesn't go to school, that she is home-educated - (a perfectly acceptable and clear response I feel) - it is as if she suddenly becomes invisible as people turn to me for clarification. It seems that all most people can think of to ask a child is about school (the pre-adult equivalent of the weather I suppose.)

Also, most people think that it is quite OK to educate our son at home (he has Down's Syndrome and Leukaemia), but are very sceptical about it for our daughters!! Weird or what?

And the Empty Fridge Syndrome? Ah, yes. Somewhere in SINC it says that home-education doesn't have to be expensive. But the children have meals at odd times (we don't keep much routine here) and the rest of the day they graze!! Costs a fortune. But I would rather spend on food than on the latest trainers they would be bullied for if they weren't wearing. Wouldn't you?

Alison Peries, Colin, John, Elizabeth and Lucy Blain
69 Lundwood Grove
Owltorpe, Sheffield, S20 6SR

Thoughts on Our First Year of Home Educating

When we started home educating our two boys I can remember feeling inadequate, anxious and thoroughly daunted. Other Eoers said things like "You have to find what works for you" and "No two families do it the same way", but they all seemed so confident whereas I felt that I was probably lacking some essential ingredient. I finally decided to commit myself to just one year and then review the situation, on the basis that I probably couldn't do much irreparable harm in that time. So here we are one year on and, after a few blind alleys, some blazing rows and a lot of discussion; we seem to have found something that works. That sounds over-cautious, so I will risk nailing my colours to the mast: I am delighted, the boys are happy and I can't envisage them going back to school in the foreseeable future.

Something that helped me was talking to people about their schooldays and looking back over my own. It struck me that much of my childhood was wasted in a kind of saturation-bombing with knowledge. Some of it hit target, most of it stayed in my head at best until I had put the final full stop on an exam paper. The things that I retained were either particularly useful or particularly interesting, and they formed the basis for my working life. I guess that is the nature of school: out of all the knowledge, which is dispensed, most children will find widely different things, which are important for them. The beauty of home educating, however, is that I don't have to cover all eventualities. I can start from what interests the boys and see where it leads, and I can provide them with a variety of new experiences to open up other possibilities. The only things I consider essential are some steady work on literacy/numeracy because with those skills they are free to make choices in later life.

The boys are interested in all things dramatic and musical, so we go to a lot of plays, concerts, ballets, workshops and talks about how the plays, concerts & ballets were produced. They play instruments, go to drama club - anything which seems relevant and I think they might enjoy. We also go out a lot. I have become an avid collector of leaflets; I buy 'Kids Out', get on mailing lists, scan teletext and pick up information wherever I can. It is amazing how much there is to do and how much is either free or pretty cheap, especially with an EO card. I always ring places in advance and usually manage to get school party rates along with information packs, trails and sometimes even free guided tours.

All kinds of things have developed from the outings. To give you one of many possible examples: the boys went to a (free) lantern-slide workshop and Alex, my 9-year-old, was so fascinated that it seemed a good idea to follow it up quickly with a trip to the Museum of the Moving Image (cheap with EO card). This inspired him to produce his own cartoon at home on an old glass shelf, but he discovered that his torch alone wouldn't project it. After a bit of fiddling and looking at a book on light, he made a lens out of a prism and gave us all a film show. So much came from just two visits. An unexpected benefit has been the increase in their social confidence: they think nothing of grabbing the nearest useful looking adult and firing off questions and usually, people are extremely friendly and helpful.

Apart from all the outings, there are long walks with our dogs, I-Spy books and guides to bugs, beasts and birds. We keep a rucksack of Frisbees, bats, balls and assorted things which hurtle through the air, which is particularly handy on the inevitable days when I find murder tempting. I can rush the boys out of the house, turn them loose and ignore them totally for a couple of hours. Finding ways of making space for myself on days when I am short-tempered is, I've discovered, an essential skill. If it is raining and I'm desperate, I'm not above shoving a video in, handing them the biscuit tin and vanishing upstairs for an hour. (I hope I'm not the only EO parent who does this, otherwise I've just wrecked my credibility!) There are days, though, which go hopelessly wrong because the boys hate each other, I've got PMT, we're overdrawn and the rain is coming down in torrents. It passes thank God.

We seem to have fallen into a pattern of half-an-hour or so of 'formal' work on maths & English each morning, although this is not rigid, Monday is generally an 'at-home' day. I use this to start new maths projects off, to see what they are reading, talk about options for visits and to mess around vaguely educationally/artistically. For instance, last Monday I did a particularly thrilling rendition of "How Horatius Kept the Bridge" whilst the boys supplied suitable sound effects, we played Never Ending Stories, built K'nex models, discussed advertising, Iraq, the history of the car, the Beast of Bodmin, etc. They cooked tea, painted hoovered,

wrestled, phoned Granny, made passports for a mysterious game, composed dubious limericks, played the harp/piano/mouth organ/ drums, designed a railway, worked on their weekly newsletter, fought, giggled and never once said they were bored.

One thing I used to worry about was how they would have any kind of social life. My younger son, Ollie, (just coming up to 6) has never been to school so, unlike Alex, didn't have an established base of friends, but that doesn't appear to matter to him. He is very good at picking up other children and joining in their games. He has his drama group, goes to workshops and, possibly because he feels confident, seems to attract other children quite readily. The only time I ponder is around his birthday, because he doesn't really know enough other children to have a rip-roaring party. Having said all that, Alex has actually dropped out of touch with all but his closest friend from school. Instead he happily goes off to an archery club, belongs to a cricket team, spends Saturdays at the Guildhall Junior Music school, goes on occasional YOC trips and seems to have a far better and more relaxed time than he had at school. They enjoy seeing other EO children and it's interesting what they say after the organised trips. Only last week, after the Golden Hinde visit, Ollie said happily: "There were lots of other kids" and Alex added: "Yes, and they were nearly all OK, too." He seemed vaguely surprised, but then he has got quite a lot of experience of people not being OK.

I can still remember how cheated I felt when we packed Alex off to school. Just when he had become easy to take out, fascinating to talk to and great fun to be with, we had to hand him over to somebody else in a place where he didn't even want to be. I'm so glad now that we found out about home educating and decided to give it a try. The bad times are heavily outweighed by the interesting, companionable and easy days and, above all, it seems a real privilege to be able to watch our sons growing into themselves and feel we can help them a bit in that process.

Terri Dowty & Family, North London.

10 REASONS WHY I LOVED BEING TAUGHT AT HOME

By **Martha Cowell**, age 17 (Who passed all her GCSEs and has just quit college after a year to find something more fulfilling).

1. My sister's still my best friend cos of being taught at home - we still share a room even though I'm 17 and she's 14.
2. I got to look after birds in my shed, baby ones, ones with broken wings and ones that were generally dying a bit. (I also bred rats in there!)
3. I had no fashion sense which was ace. I didn't have to brush my hair that much either, and I wore duffle coats when it was cold and didn't care what people thought.
4. I didn't become a silly girl who goes to the toilet in a big group and giggles or cries 24 hours a day (they do exist).
5. I did ace stuff like pretend to be a Roman and make the parents be our slaves, and dress up as a Victorian boy on Victorian Day so I didn't have to wear a dress, and keep caterpillars, and not get up at 7 o'clock, write stories about foxes and learn chemistry with a home chemistry set - I made volcanoes.
6. I worked inside if it rained and went outside when it got sunny again.
7. I did loads and loads of drawing and painting and making stuff and nobody ever, ever told me that it was rubbish - and now I love to make stuff.
8. I refused to talk to the education officer unless I was stood on my head, and then I got to show off to him and read a book about a donkey sanctuary that was meant for grown up people.
9. I've got a really ace skull collection, and me and my friend (who's still my friend from EO) fixed a fox skeleton together, and it was really good and nobody thought we were weird.
10. The last very good reason is that I was happy, and it must have been good because I can't remember anything that wasn't.

BOOK REVIEWS

Marie's Voice In the EO newsletter of February '98 No.120 I read Michelle Daly's article: "Education - What's It All About Really?" I found it very moving and positive. I wrote to Michelle asking her about the book she had written and Michelle posted a copy of her book to me: *Marie's Voice*.

"Marie was a severely handicapped five year old when she first met Michelle Daly. Now some twenty years later through Michelle, we can read Marie's own story..."

I found the book compelling reading and could hardly put it down.

Although Marie has a handicap the struggle Michelle had with the "professionals" is one that many parents will identify with.

Marie's Voice isn't a book about home education as such but it certainly does encompass a lot of education at home. Michelle also discusses her decision to educate her own son and daughter at home.

Marie's Voice can be obtained from Michelle Daly, The Blue Cottage, Drumbane, Ballyhaunis, County Mayo, Ireland. EO members may buy it at the special price of £5 plus £1 postage and packing.

Stella Howden, 9 Orion Way, Grimsby. DN34 5TZ.

The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield. Transworld Publishers.

In this book you follow a man as he journeys around Peru searching for enlightenment. As he travels, he comes to find 9 insights, one at a time, drawn from an ancient Peruvian manuscript, each bringing a new understanding of life.

This book says that each and every one of us has an energy which gives us the power to change and that we can become enlightened beings by getting more and more of this energy by connecting ourselves with Earth.

Even though I didn't agree with some of it, it made me think about many things related to life. I recommend this book to those interested in the philosophy of life and in alternative views and values to the materialistic and competitive ones of modern day society.

Rachel Lopez (14), 14 Kingswood Court, West End Lane, London. NW6 4SU

Cambridge University Press publishes a wide range of quality textbooks and teacher support materials for all ages. These are national curriculum books and are ket stage specific - but don't let that put you off! We have recently purchased many of their books and recommend them. Even the science books are appropriate for home use (despite obviously being published for schools) when used in conjunction with books such as the Dorling Kindersley "How Science Works" range, which enable the substitution of lab based experiments.

Complete listings of educational titles by subject and level are available free of charge by telephoning the Cambridge University Press Bookshop on 01223 333333.

Books can be ordered on the same number using a credit card and are sent out first class the same day. If books are not what you expect they can be returned and reimbursement in our experience is prompt.

Julie Truepenny, Spalding, Lincs.

The Life and Loves of Zoe T Curley by Martin Waddell

This book is about a teenage girl who wants to be a writer. She keeps a diary and every day she writes about everything that happened that day.

Zoe and her family invent a planet called Zog and call each other different names.

Zoe's best friend is Melissa. They have a club where they make love lists and bury them.

There are some wonderful characters in this book and Martin Waddell writes very well. I think this is one of the best books I've ever read. My favourite character was Zoe. She was very dramatic and very, very funny.

There was nothing I didn't like about this book. It was very funny, sad and dramatic. I really enjoyed it and I think it will be enjoyed by all ages.

Lily Milton (10), 13 Masters Close, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 6EL

Human Anatomy Colouring Book by Margaret Matt & Joe Ziemann pub. Dover Publications.

For budding medics this is quite a detailed book, with technical text and diagrams to colour. It works through the body system by system starting with the skeleton and ending with the skin. It is quite detailed and more suited to teenagers than younger children.

This is an American book so you may need to watch for the spellings of some words. Dover, the publishers, provide quite a range of children's colouring books including Dinosaurs, Fun with Spelling, Favourite Roses and Life in Ancient Egypt. They are very cheap in the USA (under \$3) and I've just order the Egyptian one which will cost £2.70.

Anne Milton, 13 Masters Close, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 6EL

There is no such whetstone to sharpen a good wit and encourage learning, as is praise.

Roger Ascham, tutor to Princess Elizabeth, (1515-1568)

*This book review, written by Scott Shalkowski, appeared in the local newsletter in West Yorks and is reprinted with Scott's permission. Readers who don't already know Gatto may like a taster of his work. This book is available in the UK at a reduced rate for EO members of 5 inc. p&p, from Lighthouse Books, Field House, Thrandston, Diss, Norfolk. IP21 4BU
Tel/Fax 01379 783678 e-mail S.Guthrie@open.ac.uk*

DUMBBING US DOWN... THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

By John Taylor Gatto.

Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1992. Pp. xv, 104. USA ISBN: 0-86571-23 1-X (pb), 0-86571-230-1 (hb).

Most educators and politicians call for more hours/days/years in schools under the care of education professionals, Gatto argues that these institutions are detrimental to typical educational goals; he urges less schooling, not more. This book is a collection of addresses and essays in which Gatto presents some of his views not only on compulsory schooling, but also on social practice, including the sometimes inconvenient virtue of freedom.

Gatto claims that formal primary and secondary schooling was instituted not to impart knowledge of the masses who lacked access to private tutors, but as the means of controlling a populace by producing people whose behaviour can be reliably predicted and controlled. School is one of two major institutions that control children's lives; television is the other. Gatto has no time for those who think schools are important vehicles for socialisation. Where else in society are people compelled to sit for the best part of a day in a room with thirty people of the same age and social class? Whatever else school prepares children for, it is not anything like normal life, much less a fulfilling life.

Considering that when a child is motivated to learn to read, write and master essential mathematics only about one hundred hours is required for the task, what does school teach children all the rest of those hours? Gatto tells us in the first essay in this volume, 'The Seven Lesson School Teacher', given as an address when Gatto accepted the award as the New York State Teacher of the Year in 1991. The main lessons taught in school have little to do with reading and writing: confusion, class position, indifference, emotional dependency, intellectual dependency, provisional self-esteem, and one can't hide. Good for social control, perhaps, but not for living truly fulfilling human lives.

This is not a message one expects from someone who gave up a lucrative career to become a school teacher of twenty-six years. His over-riding message is that education is crucial to the full development of children into autonomous, responsible adults; compulsory formal education is not.

According to Gatto, the typical school is 'psychopathic' yielding a lower literacy rate than was present in the state of Massachusetts prior to compulsory schooling. Gatto notes with approval that children educated at home by their parents seem to be several years ahead of their formally educated peers in their ability to think. More money, better teacher training, and more hours in school will not rectify the deficiencies of modern schools; those strategies have been tried for the past thirty years and the results, according to the oft-quoted educational experts is that the problems have not been solved.

When a case like this is argued by one of the best from within the condemned institution, we should at least give the case a careful hearing. I recommend this book highly. It is very readable and thought provoking. Gatto's ideas cut across typical conservative/liberal ideological splits and should reward the reader with fresh insights into education and living in general.

LETTERS

Science is Fun!

After four years in EO it's time I made a contribution. I hope the following information may be of help.

Our daughter Stephanie, now 6, was really fascinated by the Hale-Bopp comet. It started an interest in the stars, and my wife bought several books on astronomy (Little Library, Kingfisher etc). This led naturally to science (My First Encyclopedia - Science, Kingfisher).

We felt that may have been as far as it went for a while, Steph is not Mensa material. However, in a local department store we came across a physics kit. I deliberated for an age over its usefulness, but eventually took the plunge; am I glad.

After three months she says, "Physics is Fun."

The kit isn't about dry memorising of facts and formulae, it's about first hand observation of basic principles of physical laws.

This sounds like an advert; it's not, it's just that I'm amazed at how much the kit facilitated the teaching of a subject I felt may have been beyond her grasp.

We just get the basic ideas from each experiment (250, using over 60 pieces of equipment which the average householder would have difficulty bringing together). We then relate the ideas to the world around us and write it down to aid retention.

I would recommend this kit (they also do one for chemistry). The address for reference on the box is:

John Adams Trading Co.Ltd., 32 Milton Park,
Milton, Abingdon, Oxford. OX14 4RE

We paid £30 at our local department store.

Wales Family, 3 Downie Road, Bilbrook, Wolverhampton.

Schools' TV

Dear EO - I wonder how many home-educators and their children are aware of the excellent 'schools programmes' shown on BBC2 and Channel 4 between January and April? They are listed in Radio Times with appropriate age guides.

Firstly as a reference to the last newsletter, there are a variety of language programmes - we've watched "La petite monde de Pierre", Channel 4, which was way ahead of our children but would be great fun for 9s plus who have a reasonable grasp of the language.

We particularly enjoy the science and maths programmes for 7-9s such as TVM (Channel 4) and Megamaths (BBC2) which are very stimulating for Kit (nearly 5) and reinforce what he is currently learning and also that maths is important, interesting and fun!

There are also excellent GCSE programmes.

Kirsten Freiesleben, Little Witheridge, West Worthington, Crediton, Devon EX17 4UA

We've found the written support material from Channel 4 to be excellent. They send details and timetables of programmes and booklets to extend what is in the programmes. For details write to Channel 4 Schools, PO Box 100, Warwick. CV43 6TZ - Ed.

Participation and Responsibility

While reflecting on how far "Education Otherwise" has developed over the past 20 years, I started to wonder just how it has achieved so much.

"Education Otherwise" is totally dependent on the commitment and participation of its members, which, as we all know, is voluntary. However, despite the fact that EO has done so much for us "home educators", perhaps its existence and its achievements are taken a little for granted. Do we really do as much as we could or do we rely on others to carry out EO's work as we are too busy?

Do we overlook the fact that we all "home educate" our children, run homes, perhaps hold down jobs and/or study - but somehow despite the "busyness" EO has achieved so much, to all our benefit. Where would we be without EO and all it has achieved?

Do we display EO posters/car stickers? Do we ask to display EO posters locally? Do we check that our local library and Citizens Advice Bureau have up to date information? Do we collect material that may be of interest to others and share it? Do we share experiences by contributing to the newsletter? Do we organise activities or suggest venues for activities? Do we do any of these things? EO is a *self-help* group and these are responsibilities of us all!

Perhaps we should take a step back and ask ourselves whether we do as much as we could and if not the position we would be in if others (who are probably just as busy) did not make the effort - would we have known about the legality of "home education"? Would we have attempted it without the support? Would we have had the back-up, if we should need it, with the LEA? Where would this have left our children, their education and our peace of mind?
Julie Truepenney, 182 Barrier Bank, Cowbit, Spalding, Lincs PE12 6AL

EO, Scotland and Schoolhouse Continued

In the December newsletter I wrote "The Case Against The Public Funding Application (Schoolhouse)". It seems that I have made a couple of errors and caused some offense. I am sorry that this happened as neither was my intention.

Most importantly I want it to be absolutely clear that there was no attack implied on the personal integrity of Alison Preuss and in fact what I was suggesting was that there is a conflict of interest in the holding of key roles in both organisations, for anyone. If one holds oneself out to represent an organisation in some context it would not be unreasonable for a third party (eg Scottish Office, media, enquirers) who was aware that that person also represented the other organisation to assume that the other organisation was being represented in that context also. While Schoolhouse and EO share some general aims it has become clear, and has been clearly stated, that Schoolhouse has a distinct agenda from EO. There is not, however, a conflict in being a member of both organisations from the organisations' point of view.

To set the record straight on the errors: Firstly, I mistakenly referred to Alison as the convenor of Schoolhouse; she is in fact secretary. Secondly, it seems the term and perhaps concept of per capita spending did not appear in the funding application as such. On this point, while technically in error, I assert that the essence of my view holds in terms of applying at all for a share of the education money not spent on home educated children. Basically I do not support an application for funding for a national resource centre. Schoolhouse is, of course, entitled to apply for funding but so long as I felt there was the possibility of that application being seen as being on behalf of all home educators (due to the possible conflict of interest situation) I also felt the need to state my objections and attempt to address the issues.

I hope that this completes and clarifies the matter from my angle although I'd be happy to hear about Schoolhouse's work in the future and I am hoping Alison and I will speak again soon so that we can foster harmony where both organisations' aims meet.

Ann Samuel Till, 49 Bellevue Road, Edinburgh. EH7 4DJ

Autonomous Education

I am interested in the practicalities of autonomous education and as the next newsletter will be focusing upon this, wondered whether potential contributors would like to share their experience of the following aspects: - satisfying the LEA that you are providing an efficient, full-time education etc, the LEA's reaction, if you have managed this over a long period - your or your child's view of its effectiveness, how it is managed - the practicalities, if applicable how the children then cope with formal courses leading to exams, the benefits and drawbacks.

Thanks, I'm sure it'll make interesting reading!!
Julie Truepenney, Spalding, Lincs.

Computer Programming

My 10 year old son has recently learned QuickBASIC - a dialect of the BASIC computer programming language through following "Programming in QuickBASIC" by N.Kantaris (Bernard Babini Books - 5.99 from W.H.Smith), and with help from my sister who used to be a systems analyst. He has now started learning VisualBASIC, but my sister thinks he may soon progress beyond her own out-of-date knowledge, and I know nothing about computer programming. Does anyone have any suggestions for resources, correspondence courses etc, which he could use to support his learning later on?

Incidentally, my son tells me that QBASIC (a cut down version of QuickBASIC, but which uses the same language) is included with MS DOS 5 and above.

Anita Bennett, 48 Jubilee Rd, Littlebourne, Canterbury, Kent. CT3 1TP

Attention Older EOers in Sussex!!

Kirsty, age 14, and I (her Mum) have been thinking about forming a club for EO's older age group. There seems to be plenty happening for those lucky under-12s, but the over-12s around here are getting lonely!!

A few thoughts occurred to us. We have plenty of space to accommodate a club here in our Eastbourne home. There is even a barn-like structure at the end of the garden for summer use. We think there must be a number of older EOers who might like to meet - perhaps fortnightly? - for skills-sharing, joint hobbies, visits, activities, etc. Parental skills-sharing could be a spin-off.

We are holding a meeting or brainstorming session on Saturday 25th April at 7.30 pm, when you will be able to sample some of Kirsty's home-made cake! If you want to come to the meeting, please phone for directions. Feel free to bring your parents...

We invite all EOers of age 12 and over who are interested in this idea to let us know on: 01323 725861. Kirsty and Cathy Harris

My name is Julie Buckingham and I have three children: Toby (8), Hannah (6) and Daniel (8 months). My children have been learning at home since November 1997. Things came to a head last year with the school they were attending but I have been thinking about teaching the kids at home for about 2 years.

Toby was having to turn into a tough guy in the playground just to protect himself. He was very unhappy in school but already I have noticed that he is much happier and more relaxed at home. He even said he feels as if he has been let out of prison.

Hannah was in a "special needs spelling group" in school. Her confidence was at rock bottom and she felt totally stupid and worthless about school. She is doing brilliantly at home and her confidence is soaring!!

However, we do struggle some days and I get very tired and frustrated. On the one hand, I want to teach them so many things (maybe I'm trying to prove myself to the Education Authorities) - even though Toby and Hannah say that I never make them do boring stuff like they had at school - and yet when I let them do their own thing, they are really happy. Do other mums struggle to find a good balance or am I the only one? Some days when we have been really busy visiting friends, we don't even do any "work" and usually I manage to not feel guilty!!!!!!

One good thing that we are now trying is to have 5 minutes at the end of the day with each child and I ask them what they enjoyed and if they were "naughty" I ask them how they could act differently next time - they also love having me all to themselves!! Yours sincerely, Julie Buckingham,

90 Orchard Crescent, Kettering, Northants. NN16 9PS

Dear EO Folks,

I will be editing the 123rd (August '98) EO Newsletter. This issue will be dedicated to 'Autonomous Home-Education'. If you have any experiences, thoughts, aspirations, etc. about home-educating the 'non-curriculum way' please write or type them and send them to me for inclusion.

By autonomous, I mean that your children's education/life is determined by themselves.

Do your children play with Lego, building space-ships and making magical islands? (Aren't they working out space travel, parallel worlds, construction, architecture, balance, symmetry.....?)

Do your children sit on top of the climbing-frame and watch the birds fly by **All** day, while having peanut butter sandwiches delivered to them? (Aren't they learning about solitude, peace, cloud shapes, the smallness of a bird, the largeness of the sky.....?)

Do your children read Tin-Tin books at 2 o'clock in the morning? (Aren't they learning about adventure, corruption, relationships, space exploration.....?)

Do your children sit on the sofa for hours and hours contemplating life? (Aren't they just sitting on the sofa contemplating life.....? 'Doing nothing' is sometimes more important than 'doing something'!!**??)

Do your children chat to you about..... slaughtering whales, danger, death, breathing in water, 'Jaws' the film, shark-infested-soup, the sea, waves, tides, the effect the moon has on us, the vastness of the universe, making a giant helter-skelter to go around the world and plunging into the ocean, propulsion, harnessing water power, jellyfish, putting seaweed on your compost, veg which is being eaten by snails, their shiny slime, eating snails and frogs, French people, garlic in bundles carried by Frenchmen on bicycles, stereotypes, boules, bowls, croquet, Alice in Wonderland, persecution of Alice, Children's rights.....

That's Education! That's what I mean by Autonomous Education.

Please write lots and lots!

Belinda Harris Reid, The Old House, Station Road, Buckfastleigh, Delicious Devon, TQ11 0BU - Tel: 01364 643343. e-mail bline@compuserve.com

QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE FEBRUARY 1998 NEWSLETTER

I would like to thank all those who have replied to the questionnaire that accompanied February's newsletter. I urge, please, those of you who have not already returned the questionnaire/and or written to me, to do so, since all replies, whatever information they contain, are contributing one of the most comprehensive studies of home education in the United Kingdom. I appreciate the time that families have taken/are taking to reply to the questionnaire. The study is due to end late in 1999 and summaries of the study's conclusions will appear in future newsletters.

Several members of E.O. have commented that they have not filled in the questionnaire because they did not know what information I wanted. How individuals interpret and answer the questions, is the information I am seeking, since it is those personal interpretations that will help to explain home education. I am keen to have replies from as varied a cross section of home educating families as possible, whether they are experienced home educators or not.

Time precluded an explanation of my study in last month newsletter. My research, based at Durham University, is concerned with home-based education, and seeks to investigate the education of those children whose contact with school is minimal, and of those who have no experience of school at all. My work seeks to extend on the studies of, Thomas (1998), Lowden (1993), Petrie, (1992), Webb (1988) and others, endeavouring to broaden the definition of home education to include those people who have not been the subject of previous home education research. I aim to refer to all who home educate for some or all of the time, whatever their reason for doing so, concentrating particularly on children aged up to eleven years. The study examines what is happening in home education, its place as an alternative to school, and the implications home education has for education generally, particularly as greater choice in education becomes accessible. It also refers to studies from overseas.

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

If you know of any home educating families who are not members of E.O. but who would be prepared to fill in the questionnaire or take part in this research, please let me know. Where requested, I will refund postage. If families who signal their wish not to participate further (by not including their address in the space provided on the questionnaire), would like their postage returned, I suggest they provide their address on a separate piece of paper. Their anonymity will be maintained. All information shared with me is treated with total confidentiality.

A copy of my questionnaire is available on the Education Otherwise web-site and by e-mail. Additionally, I am distributing an attitude questionnaire to some 8 - 10 year olds. If you have a child within this age range who is willing to assist, please tell me so on your home education questionnaire. A copy of this questionnaire is also available by e-mail.

Thank you

Paula Fielding-Bell at 1 Hill Top Cottages, Knott Hill Lane, Delph, Lancashire OL3 5RJ
Telephone: 01457 872 946 & E-mail address: p.j.rothermel@durham.ac.uk

EO Family Diary: The Fortune-Wood Family

February is normally my least favourite month of the year - Christmas is long gone and winter greyness seems to drag on for too long. This year however a week of spring weather in the middle of February, which opened up a whole tree of blossom at the front of our house, transformed my outlook on February and hopefully by the time you are reading this the spring will be truly underway.

What the tail end of winter has been good for in the Fortune-Wood household is some serious nesting activity. We're very fortunate in our house, in that vicarages tend to have space, but we've become more and more aware of how we can really radically think about space to get everyone in the family all that they want out of it.

Until recently Cottia has had the largest bedroom, but also had all the shared toys in there, and Rowan's room (a good medium size) also had things that everyone needed access to. So first of all we opened up the loft, cleaned it and sorted all the junk into neat boxes at one end, partitioned it off and were left with a space two thirds the length of the house with floor boards, windows and electric lights. We set about making this into a play room with alcoves for a home corner, construction toys, cars & trains and an old T.V and sofa (plus blankets to ward off the cold up there!) This got all of the shared activities into one shared space.

Then we tackled the upstairs. The upstairs landing was transformed into a library space and, knowing that I wanted to use the cupboard in the dining room for art materials instead of educational resources, we lugged all the boxes upstairs and sorted through them. We've been following an autonomous style of education with no ties to any curriculum or testing for quite a while now, but buried in some of the forgotten boxes were all the old text books. We never had that many, but it was interesting to note that even when we had radically changed styles (something which happened as a long process) we still hadn't quite had the courage to get rid of the materials that we had once thought essential. The curriculum mentality is not easily shaken off, but finally we had the confidence to dispense with the "just in case" resources and really trust ourselves and our children.

Next came the migrations. Cottia moved into Tamysn's little bedroom, Tamysn moved into our large bedroom and we (Mike, Seth and myself) moved into Cottia's even bigger bedroom and made it into a bedroom come

second family room. Downstairs we moved furniture around in the dining room to make room for a second table and filled the cupboard (rescued from a school that was going to throw it out) with paints, brushes, pastels, paper, glue, scissors, glitter and craft materials so that the children could have a permanent arts table.

So what's all that got to do with home education? The whole process has helped us all to do a lot of thinking about autonomy and community and how we can meet the needs for both within the given space. It took lots of creativity and discussion to think about spaces in new ways and to reach resolutions that everyone genuinely preferred without resorting to compromises. Along the way we changed and improved our theories about necessary room temperatures, privacy, sharing and much more. Making things like video machines, art materials, the non fiction books and construction toys much more easily accessible has also increased the creative output and discussion topics within the house. All that from a bit of decorating and room re-ordering!

The other positive spin off of the re-arrangement has been in the tidying up department. This is an area I have difficulty dealing rationally with. Over the years I've wasted massive amounts of emotional energy and countless hours of the children's time because of my own irrational ideas about tidiness and it never achieved anything but hurt feelings and mounting levels of irrationality in everyone else. Re-ordering the spaces in our home has meant that the play room is completely invisible to me and the children's rooms have become much more their private territory and all the hassle about tidying up has virtually disappeared.

This is a crucial educational step for us because we firmly believe that coercing children only damages their thinking processes and ability to remain rational and creative, so whatever coercion we can eliminate from their lives can only help them to be the wonderfully rational, creative people they really are.

Jan Fortune-Wood
St Barnabas Vicarage,
Overgreen Dr. Kingshurst,
Birmingham, B37 6EY.
0121 770 3972
Email: Jan.MikeFW@btinternet.com

EO Family Diary : The Bunn Family

This has been a difficult diary to write because so much has happened. A lot of it was good but some was so horrible that I didn't want to share it. However that would destroy the objectives of the diary so, where shall I start my latest tale of woe? Perhaps if I get the horrible stuff over first I won't feel too depressed by the end!

To begin with I got into an argument with some racists in a pub and was amazed when one of the locals came up and told me that I was the biggest bigot because I don't 'allow' my children to go to school. I didn't realise that some people could actually believe that I Home School because I don't want my girls 'mixing' with 'local' children. My real reasons fell on deaf ears, which I find very sad.

Meanwhile, Megan has stopped going to Brownies and won't give me a good enough reason. Her Brown Owl rang up and asked for her uniform without any concern for her well-being or reasons for leaving. And as if that wasn't enough none of the girls will play out if the other kids are around because of the verbal abuse they'd have to put up with.

Perhaps someone with a stronger personality could sit it out but I am ready to move on. I know, I know, I can't run away forever but I think I'd rather keep moving around until we find our square hole than suffer the looks, the gossip and the verbal abuse which are getting out of hand.

I did manage to stand up to that woman from the LEA, though.

She came spouting 'education speak', not explaining herself and treating me like a naughty child so I asked her to leave. On her way out she held back and whispered to Emily that she could always write to her with her problems! I have sent an official complaint and asked for someone different to visit. As yet I've heard nothing but if you're interested I'll keep you posted.

My main complaint against her is her narrow-mindedness. She has no interest in what we are doing or what we are trying to achieve. Her only mission is to make us conform to her way of thinking. I have a feeling that she will take it further and that we'll end up at a Children's Hearing (or whatever) but we'll face that when and if it happens.

Enough moaning! On the brighter side we've had some interesting and fun times. To start with we've been beach-combing after the storms and found some amazing pieces for our instrument which we will start putting together as soon as the weather (and our 'flu) improves.

We've started pottery lessons which are going really well. There's a good supply of clay at the beach for practising at home and Maggie teaches us on the wheel for 5 KOBs a week (KOBs being the currency of the LETS system). Jess has also made a good start at the local art class, her teacher says she shows promise.

The girls are working well with their own timetables and they are all busy writing 'novels'.

The newsletter died for a while but has been resurrected as an info. page on the computer (an old, temperamental Olivetti which we picked up for £60).

Friends gave us a book on historical sites in the area so we have been learning loads more about the various ruins and standing stones that we have visited.

Meri's word recognition is coming on really well. I have taken the advice of a retired teacher who believes that children shouldn't be taught to read until the age of 6 or 7. I found her reasoning to be fairly solid and supported by articles I found in the library.

We all read to Meri every day and sing the alphabet with her to support the flash cards and labels. She holds a pen properly (and has done for some time) and can write some letters. I've always encouraged the girls to sign birthday cards etc and her signature has progressed from a wavy line to MTOH1 (which I

think is pretty good for a 4 year old).

P.E. is a problem. The weather is so unpredictable that a bike ride can start in warm sunshine and end in hail!

Swimming would be nice but the nearest pool is 30 miles away and quite expensive.

Winter is a very lean time for our gardening business and so activities have to be very cheap or better still FREE.

We exercise along with a tape most mornings but we are still becoming fairly wide and unfit. Things will be better in the summer when we can cycle everywhere and go swimming in the sea.

Another reason for us getting wider is the experimenting we've been doing in the kitchen! Megan has shown herself to be a natural cook.

Well, that's all I can think of for this month. I will try to be more interesting and less of a moaner next time.

*Sharon Bunn, 16 Berryburn, Kames
by Tichnabruaich Argyll PA21 2BQ*

About EO Meetings

An incident at a local EO meeting has prompted me to write this letter to affirm what I believe is the foundation for a successful meeting and the spirit in which it should be held.

An Education Otherwise meeting should be a place of support, friendship and tolerance - a place where we can be assured of never having to defend or justify our style of education, our parenting skills or our very lifestyle. It should be a safe haven for our families to be who we are, with confidence and without fear of being judged and found wanting because there are issues on which we all cannot agree. After all, reason and compromise can smooth differences, or friendly differences of opinion can be reached if we value ourselves, our children and those we meet as individuals and in a spirit of friendship, support and tolerance.

Yours sincerely,
Wendy Plested, local co-ordinator for Oxford

CREATIVE PARENTING

Richard and I have been home-educating our daughter Emma, who is now 9, for the last year. We came to know about Education Otherwise from a very special person, Helena Eastwood, whose work we would highly recommend to anyone who has children. Our lives and the lives of our children have been changed as a result of being with Helena on her Creative Parenting courses. Helena has shown us how to give our children the freedom to direct their own lives through learning and play and how to provide ourselves with space, apart from them, in which to be ourselves and do what we need to do.

Some of Helena's aims are: -

- To maintain an open and trusting environment at home or school
- To encourage children to become more 'self directed'
- To make childcare easier and parenting less stressful

I recently attended one of Helena's workshops on 'learning of pre-reading and reading skills' and found it to be exactly what I needed at that time. Emma had become very unwilling to learn spelling and she hated writing in the way that I had learned and so of course was teaching her, but after Helena's inspired one-day workshop our learning together is streaking ahead.

Being with Helena is a uniquely rewarding experience, which we both feel privileged to have enjoyed and we wish many more parents to know about her activities. Helena has had many years' experience as a teacher in both mainstream and special education. Her own experience as a mother and foster parent has given her a deep understanding of children and their needs. We feel she has developed a special insight into the needs of children and how to address them.

Forthcoming activities include:

- April 3rd to 7th **Men's Creative Parenting** at the Earth Spirit Centre Glastonbury
- April 9th - 23rd **Creative Parenting** (inclusive of two day Creative Listening Workshops) at the Elmrise Chalet Park, on the coast near Carmarthen, Wales. Optional length of stay during this period.
- April 18th and 19th **Creative Listening weekend** workshop at the Elmrise Chalet. Friday evening introduction, and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 5pm. Accommodation and childminding available.
- May 29th to 31st **Adventure weekend** in the Forest of Dean Wilderness Centre in the Wye Valley Nr. Monmouth.

For further information Helena can be contacted at 19 St. Catherines, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 1BE or Tel. 0181 4290336

Child Protection Information Group (CPIG)
Report for Education Otherwise Council Meeting Feb 1998

We have been approached by several individuals and local groups about child protection issues during the last year. We are also often contacted by members who are themselves survivors of childhood abuse. The range of problems which come to our attention covers a wide spectrum.

We have dealt with one situation which involved consulting everyone on the council of Education Otherwise. Many council members found this difficult and demanding, but everyone behaved responsibly and with integrity. This made the work much easier for CPIG than has been the case with some previous problems.

We have continued to research these issues professionally, and discuss them with those responsible for them in other organisations in Britain, Canada and the USA, collecting examples of good practice. We hope soon to be able to present some suggestions for guidelines for various situations within EO, for discussion among the membership.

Many of the issues are complex, with no simple answer. For instance, one controversial question is whether we should accept single men within EO. The police have told us we are ridiculously naive to do so: this is a family organisation - what do men without children want with it? But most of our problems have been with men who have families and would not have been weeded out by such a restriction. And how would we feel at excluding our own adult home-educated off-spring? We would accept that they may have a genuine interest in home education, even if they do not (yet) have children themselves. We have known other single men where we felt that this was also the case.

And again, one LEA warned us usefully about one man's conviction; similarly, we warned the LEA in another area about another man. We are aware that we are, at least potentially, a target for the paedophile network, and must be vigilant. We were warned of suspicions of someone else (who was not an EO member) via a local authority; but there has since been publicity about him, claiming that he has been falsely accused because he blew the whistle on someone senior in the authority. There is concern among EOers that some LEAs see home education as synonymous with child abuse, sometimes through lack of experience with healthy home educators, and sometimes maliciously as a way of controlling home educators in their area; and sadly, on occasional, on the basis of their personal experience. We are as concerned as they are that home education should not be used as a screen for child-abusing parents; but equally that it should not be assumed that home-education is a suspicious activity.

Telephone support for child protection issues is becoming established as a valued resource within EO. Probably our single most useful service is for members who want to be able to explore whether an anxiety is well-founded without precipitating a crisis. As with Childline, people are more likely to approach us than social services because we have no statutory powers and they can remain in control of the situation if they wish.

Expenses have been minimal, mainly for telephone calls, and subsumed under our expenses in other roles. However, this may change if we have time to do more pro-active work in the future. Although our remit entails incurring expenses, we will check the current state of EO finances with the treasurer before proposing anything major.

Jude Ashley-Walker (IoW) 01983 531 680
Eleanor Stapleton (London - North) 0181 884 1368
Anne Wade (London - Middlesex) 0181 904 7155

CO-ORDINATORS' CORNER

Cheshire I have recently volunteered to be Acting Co-ordinator for Cheshire. My wife and I both fully support the concept of home education, and I hope that my former experience as a charity organiser, adult education tutor and social worker may be put to use.

Although my time is limited due to family and work commitments, I intend to make sure that home educating families get the information and support they require, have the chance to keep in touch with each other and are also treated as individuals with individual needs.

As Cheshire has not had a co-ordinator for some time I am organising an informal 'get together' in Chester for all those in the county who would like to meet other families and also take the chance to enjoy some of the pleasures of the city. The cost will be kept to a minimum and if anyone is interested, and has not heard from me already, please get in touch. Even if you aren't, get in touch anyway as I would be delighted to hear from you.

*Bernard Smith, 41 Cliveden Road, Chester, Cheshire. CH4 8DR
Tel: 01244 678482*

Cambridge

Thursday April 23rd: Meet at Bateman Street entrance to Botanic Gardens in Cambridge at 11 am. A member of staff of the gardens will give a short introductory talk then we will explore the gardens ourselves. Bring a picnic lunch. If you are late we will meet at the picnic area at 12.30. If you arrive at 11 am entry is free otherwise it is £1.50 per adult, £1 per child. I need to let them know how many of us there will be, so if you intend to come please let me know by Sunday 19th April. Come even if the weather is bad as there are some wonderful glass houses and a cafe.

Thursday May 21st: Meet in Abbey pool (off Newmarket Road in Cambridge) at 11.30 am. For those less energetic meet in the playground behind the pool (ask in pool for directions) with picnic lunch at 12.30 for games, chat and play. If the weather is bad there is an indoor picnic area and a soft play area.

Contact Penny Kouzarides on 01223 322703 for more information.

South West Wales

April 23rd: Woodland birds talk and walk, Swansea and Cwm Clydach all day.

May 6th: Star observatory tour, Swansea, am.

May 21st: Marine conservation activities, Swansea, am.

Details from Sue Hagerty, 01269 861902

EO in Kent - A Personal View

We are Amanda and Cameron MacKenzie. We have been Kent Co-ordinators for a year now, and felt we wanted to write about how EO has developed in Kent and what it has done for us. Our children are now 13½ years and 9 years old and have never been to school.

We first read about EO in The Independent in 1990, we joined and went along to our first meeting at Lullingstone Villa. For the first time we met people who felt like us about school, education and life. It was such a relief, as we had become more and more isolated after our daughter had passed school entry age. Some of the people we met that day have remained good friends.

In those days outings and meetings were organised by the Cook family and Pam Stevenson. Sue and Keith Burchett later became co-ordinators and with Joy Lyon started regular meetings in Maidstone, outings, and the now legendary Kent Camp. Over the next few years we happily attended anything Sue organised, often driving all over Kent to visit castles and museums, taking part in coastal walks and numerous craft activities. Sue with others set up a creative writing group which met for several years at the Friends Meeting House in Maidstone, helping children overcome the great bugbear of 'writing'.

When Sue and Keith 'retired' from EO I was personally worried how we would go on. But my anxieties were unwarranted as many families showed their strengths and took over various activities continuing to organise pottery sessions, writers' group and drama workshops.

Membership in Kent seems to have increased dramatically recently, whether this is a greater public awareness or a reflection on schools in Kent I am not certain. This growth has seen a diversification and development of new interests for members. Four regular meetings now take place, each with their own identity, some regulars attend all, others travel only to local meetings or to activities that meet their needs. Anyone interested in home education is welcome. The groups meet in:

Canterbury Riverside Youth Centre	contact Anita 01227 722 140
Bekesbourne Village Hall	Hannah 0130 389 2417
Dartford Hubert Hse Community Centre	Angie 0181 300 7236
Barming (nrMaidstone) Sports Pavilion	Jean 01622 820206

As a group we belong to:

Royal Opera House Schools Matinee Performances: we have been to see the Royal Opera and Ballet Companies in Swan Lake, Tosca, La Boheme, Giselle, The Merry Widow for £6 each.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's Schools Mailing List: for performances and workshops at The Barbican and on tour in Kent.

We have attended regular workshops at The Globe Theatre and enjoyed free visits to English Heritage. We are at present applying for schools membership of The National Trust. We regularly visit galleries and museums in London, also farms, nature reserves, even a nuclear power station.

At Canterbury we have regular canoeing and swimming sessions. The writers' group is still going strong at Barming and games with Andy at Dartford are a joy to watch.

Cameron and I became Co-ordinators a year ago. We have spoken to and met so many people since then. It is a real pleasure to

tell people - yes, it is legal, no you don't have to follow the national curriculum, come along to a meeting - and hear the relief in their voices when they realise they are not alone. We especially admire those who have home education thrust upon them by a sudden crisis, and who take on in a short period what we have spent years adapting to. The workload has increased so much in Kent that we are taking a second Co-ordinator to help relieve us, Angie Pullen 0181 300 7236 is taking over North and West Kent.

Our main problem in Kent is that we spent so much time EOing we have little time left for home education. Sometimes we have to make a real effort to stay at home and do something (especially if the inspector is due).

Our children are growing up with so many good friends and are now organising their own activities (latest plan, to make their own video version of *Bugsy Malone*). We, too, have made many good friends through EO. Thank you to everyone who has given us encouragement, love and support over the years but especially to Cath Cooper, Sue and Keith, Joy, Sue T., Liz and the Bedis, who have been there on the bad days as well as the good, it would not be so much fun without you all.

Amanda MacKenzie

For details of the Kent Activity List send sae to:

16 Brambletree Cottages, Borstal, Rochester, Kent.ME1 3TN

DATABASE SECRETARY

Please note that the database has now been handed over by Barbara Edwards to Janet Wilkinson whose address and phone number are on the back cover. We would all like to thank Barbara for her work as Database Secretary.

GRANTS FOR LOCAL GROUPS

At the meeting in Oldham I agreed to co-ordinate applications for funds from bodies such as the Regional Arts Boards or Grant Making Trusts. So would any local group thinking of making such application please contact me.

I have obtained some information from the Arts Council and though we have missed out on this round of Arts 4 Everyone grants there will probably be more in the future. I contacted Southern Arts, one of the 10 regional boards, and it looks as though it would be possible to obtain a grant supporting education in any art form. The jargon for the funds you would be seeking is to "enable arts practice among young people".

Some of the funding requires reciprocal fund raising on our side, but it seems that our side of the costs can be in the form of voluntary help with perhaps only 5% in cash provided by EO. What is needed is a well thought out plan of what you want to spend the money on. If you have a plan contact me and I will help direct you to find funding.

The Directory of Grant making Trusts can be looked at in the Library. It would be possible to apply to funds for all sorts of educational ideas. Many of the trusts only give money to other charities, which is where co-ordination though me would be important.

Priscilla Park Weir (Treasurer)

CONTACTS

Dear EO - We have now withdrawn our son from school after he developed school phobia on transition to senior school. We have gone against medical "expert" opinion which advised us to get him back to school by almost any means.

Has anyone in a similar situation been treated more sympathetically, or is this the normal medical response to a very disturbing problem?

Please write and let us know.
Mrs Elaine Massey
"Tyddyn Drain Isaf"
Mount Road, Llanfairfechan,
Conwy LL33 0HD
Tel. 01248 680663

Roman Catholic family would like to hear from like-minded people who educate their children at home. Contact Neil & Karen McKay, 'Kingcraig' 22 Milton Road East, Joppa, Edinburgh. EH15 2NJ
Tel. 0131 669 1434

We have decided to educate our son, who is nearly 5 years old, at home. We would like to meet other families in our area (Cornwall) for social occasions (weekly, monthly, etc.) particularly if they have children around the same age. Non smokers, please.
K.Roberts, Court Cottage,
St Kew Highway, Bodmin,
Cornwall. PL30 3DP

I would like to start a local group in the London Borough of Bexley, either Sidcup or Bexleyheath area. It would be nice for local families to meet for fun, games, socialisation and support, whatever people want. There is a huge amount of home educating families locally and within easy travelling distance, Orpington, Bromley and Greenwich. If interested please contact:

Angie on 0181 300 7236
e-mail: apullin@btinternet.com

Hi - I would like to get in touch with homeschoolers in and around London that homeschool without a curriculum. My daughter is 3 years old, so if your family has a younger member as well, that would be good although all ages are welcome. We are living in Sweden, but travelling to London frequently. Yours,
Urban and Channah

e-mail: >urban.larsson@nack.mail.telia.com<
or phone Angie on 0181 300 7236
who will pass your details on to me

We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart.

Sir Walter Scott, novelist, 1771-1832.

We'd love to meet EO members with a child/children under 7 perhaps once a fortnight in Exeter, especially mid-week as transport is limited.

*Kirsten Freiesleben
Little Witheridge, West
Worlington, Crediton, Devon
EX17 4UA*

Choice

An EO newsletter for in and around London. With news of up to 20 regular meetings and other events. Send large stamped sae to "Choice" 69 Ripley Road, Belvedere, Kent DA17 5AH.

<http://www.choice.memail.com>
choice.ao@mcmail.com

Would anybody know of a similar group to EO in Spain. I'm trying to get some contacts out there. I would also like to get in touch with anyone who has lived there to give me some background info.

Also, who can provide me with information on syllabus etc for 'O' levels.

*Jasmine Jones, 8 Whiston House,
Goldsmiths Row, Hackney, London
E2 8SJ*

*The aim of education is the knowledge
not of facts but of values.*

*William Ralph Inge (1860-1954)
Writer, Dean of St.Paul's*

*A teacher affects eternity; he can never
tell where his influence stops.*

*Henry Brooks Adams (1838-1918)
American Man of Letters*

Houseswaps for EO Members

I am thinking of setting up a houseswap register for members of EO. My family and I have had some excellent experience with this scheme and visited places we would not have thought of visiting.

The houseswap register we used was organised by a national charity which also raised funds by charging a small fee (15) for as many houseswaps as you wanted. I had at least three swaps a year, a substantial saving on what it would have cost going through the usual channels. I was thinking of charging the same fee and all profits going to EO.

The register is run on mutual respect and honesty, you exchange references i.e. a letter from a friend or neighbour to confirm where you live and what a wonderful family you are!

The register contains names, addresses, phone numbers, children's ages, a short description of accommodation and sites to visit. When you receive the register and like the look of a particular swap then it is up to you to arrange it.

If you are interested in joining or just want further information please ring or write to me, I'll be very happy to hear from you.

*Barbara Thring, 15 Hazeldon Road, Crofton Park, London SE4 2DD
Tel. 0181 694 0769*

EO NATIONAL GATHERING 25th - 29th JUNE

The summer gathering and MEETING will be at
Headcorn in Kent.

marquees & tents, bonfire, cafe, cheap food, beautiful
field, african drumming, jewellery making, canoeing,
firestaffing, didgeridoo playing, volley ball, drop hike,
african dance, creative crafts.... and it's really cheap!

for full info and booking form, send an SAE to

*Sue Hutchin, Oakwood, Sparrow Hatch Lane, Bethersden, Ashford,
Kent TN26 3ED 01233 820008*

OR email: sue@oak-wood.demon.co.uk

CONTACTS

I'm an EO member with 6 children aged between 15 and 2. I'm interested to hear from parents who live in the Cotswolds, New Forest and Dorset. I have a son aged 15 who's interested in cars, a 13 year old daughter who likes the usual teenage stuff, a 10 year old boy who has a hearing and speech problem but likes football and Man Utd, a 9 year old boy who's special needs, a 5 year old girl and a 2 year old girl. They would like to hear of children of either sex of the same age in the areas above.

*Susan Charles, 4 Berwyn Close,
Hill Street, Cefn Mawr,
Wrexham, Clwyd. LL14 3BQ*

Hi - I'm Karen. I'm 10 years old. I first started EO in October last year. I love being taught at home. I think it's great! I like to do reading, writing, art & I also love animals. I have a dog, a cat, a budgie and two guinea pigs. I even have some wildlife that comes into our garden like foxes, deer, hedgehogs, two barbery doves and lots more. I often take my dog for a walk in the park that is about 5 doors away from our house. It is so beautiful in the park.

I would be thrilled if I could meet some other people from age 9-13. Please let me know if you would like to be my penpal (or friend to meet). I'd like to hear from anyone soon.
*Karen O'Connell, 327 Dagenham
Park Drive, Harold Hill,
Romford, Essex. RM3 9ED
Phone: 01708 701463*

The EO Seaside Camp 1998

There's going to be an EO Weekend Camp on May 15th to 17th at Monkton Wyld Farm, Charmouth, Dorset. This is a beautiful site just three miles from a lovely beach at a quiet and secluded spot amongst 200 acres, with playground, free hot showers, toilets and launderette. ½ mile from A35 and 3 miles from mainline train station.

Events planned include beach games with a Bar-B-Q and get together with local EO members at Monkton Wylde Court. 13 per family. For information and booking form please send a stamped sae to: Andy Blewett, 69 Ripley Road, Belvedere, Kent.DA17 5AH
Phone:0181-306-0168 aannd@mcmail.com

Gwersyll Dewi Sant

Pembrokeshire Summer EO Camp
Wed 17th to Wed 24th June 1998

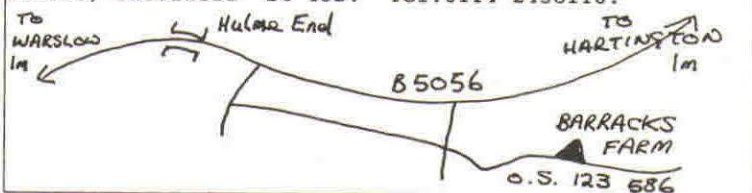
In the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, close to St.David's, West Wales, Campsite with showers and shop, some caravans available. 200 metres to beach. Dramatic coastal scenery, surfing, boat trips, RSPB reserves, leisure park. Beach party on Saturday 20th.

For details send sae (with 80p in loose stamps for admin) to:
Yvette Hartley, 17 Maes Ingli, Newport, Pembrokeshire. SA42 OTE
Telephone: 01239 820968

PEAK CAMP 98

To avoid clashes with other EO events, this year's Peak Camp will be from Friday, July 3rd, to Saturday, July 10th. As usual, the venue is Barracks Farm, Beresford Dale, near Hartington. The site caters for tents and touring vans, and has showers and wash-up facilities (hot water is 20p). There is a small shop on-site.

For more details contact Gary Podmore, 105 Lloyd Street, Sheffield S4 8JD. Tel:0114 2438116.



Open Council Meeting and Annual General Meeting

held at

The Chapel, George Street, Oldham

Saturday 7 February 1998

Although the venue was a bit hard to spot, some 30 people eventually succeeded in finding it. Most of the day was taken up by an **open council meeting**. This was interrupted briefly at 2:30 p.m. for a formal **AGM** at which the annual accounts were accepted and council members elected.

The purpose of the **council meeting** was to make plans, resolve problems and carry out routine housekeeping. It was a hardworking and well-disciplined meeting, but one day was not enough to fit in all the business, and various discussions had to be curtailed or held over.

The AGM included three **special resolutions** which had already been carried once but needed to be considered again for technical reasons (December newsletter, page 39). Two of them were not at all contentious; the effect of the other was to remove all references to proxy voting from our articles of association. Written statements from two members were read and the issue was discussed. The resolutions were all carried: it was held that informal postal voting would be a more effective and democratic way of eliciting the opinion of the whole membership, and a working group was asked to bring a proposal for this to the next meeting.

Job changes

This year **Gwen Baldock**, **Barbara Edwards**, **Maxine Griffith** and **Pien Maltz** retired from the council, and **Christine Adey**, **Gary Podmore** and **Janet Wilkinson** were elected as new members. The full updated list is on the inside back cover of the newsletter.

Following **Pien's** resignation, **Eleanor Stapleton** agreed to take over as **Chair**. **Pien** had undertaken to write a report of the last meeting, including an account of how she was misquoted in the press last year. She sent her apologies for not having done so: her mother in Holland had been ill and had died, and she had again had to spend a lot of time abroad.

Anne Wade resigned as **Vice Chair** (but remained on the council), and **Rob Wade** resigned as **Meetings Secretary** (not a council post). These posts have not been filled: we need people who have attended enough meetings to understand the way things work, and who could undertake to attend reliably once appointed.

Barbara Edwards resigned as **Database Secretary** and **Janet Wilkinson** (London - Middlesex) replaced her. **Mark Wilkinson** would complement Janet's rôle by investigating ways in which the database might be improved and developed. A working party was set up to consider what we want from the database, and to look at ways of breaking the job down further.

Some time ago the **steering group** had been abolished, but it had since become increasingly clear that a formal mechanism was needed for taking urgent decisions between meetings. Such decisions would be reported back to the following meeting for ratification. The meeting now decided to reconstitute the group. It would consist of the **Chair** (**Eleanor Stapleton**), the **Treasurer** (**Priscilla Park-Weir**) and the **General Secretary** (**Lucy Charlton**) with **Isobel Bogucki** and **Anne Wade** as backups.

We continued to apply our policy of developing small networks of people, with a coordinator, to take care of each area of our work. Several people had taken on responsibility for different areas of **special educational needs**, and we ratified **Lesley Belgium** (Bristol) as acting **SEN coordinator**.

Isobel Bogucki reported on current vacancies for **local coordinators**, and five new coordinators were ratified.

Publications

Jill Fisher pointed out that decisions would have to be taken about the next edition of the **contact list**. How much information would there be room for? Did we want to include skills, interests, or email addresses? Should there be a section of general information? How would all these elements be presented? Should we keep to the present A5 format, or would there be advantages in switching to A4, with or without columns? If we kept to A5, would it have to be perfect bound like *SINC*, or would it be better to split it into two stapled volumes? All these possibilities were raised, but none was rejected at this stage. (If you have contact list **amendments**, please send them to Janet Wilkinson, not to Jill, so that the database can be updated.)

Discussion of the **newsletter** included the inclusion of various regular features, problems with

the regional diary, and the recent tendency for family pets to advertise for penfriends in the children's pages. (This meant that the person soliciting letters was effectively anonymous. It was important that all contributions should be accompanied by names so that the sender could be identified.) A suggestion was made that the frequency of the newsletter might be increased to once a month. This would lessen the maximum delay to which announcements were subjected, but it would also have major implications for the cost of postage and the work involved.

We had secured a grant of £2,300 from the national lottery towards the cost of producing a publication for LEAs (the LEA "guidelines"). The draft document had been through a number of revisions and transformations, and there had been a continuing debate over its nature, purpose and content. Because of an ambiguity in the interpretation of the law, the question of legal advice had been raised. Neil Taylor was coordinating the project and had sent a report to the meeting. The proposed text of the document appears elsewhere in this issue.

Ann Samuel Till agreed to check out the current legal situation for Scottish home educators, with a view to writing the last in our series of information leaflets.

We discussed payment for work on EO publications. Payment has occasionally been made in an emergency, to get essential work done, but this should not be treated as a precedent. The meeting felt strongly, yet again, that to pay for particular tasks would detract from the ethos of EO. The success of the organisation depends on the enormous amount of regular unpaid work done by numerous people in many capacities.

Other matters

A working party was set up to research the relationship between the accounts of local EO groups and EO Association, and the possibility of local EO groups using EO's charity status to get funding from local charities.

Janet Wilkinson was working on a solution to the ongoing problem of subscription payments by banker's order and would discuss it with the database working party.

We continued to have good coverage in the national media. Please remember to send copies of local press articles to **Beverley Young** (Lancs). Let her know too if you could be part of a network of regional publicity contacts by getting to know the EOers in your area who are willing to be interviewed.

Gwen Baldock had proposed a scheme for publicising EO by posting small cards in public libraries. Valerie Gommon undertook to find a volunteer to help put it into practice.

Malcolm Muckle reported on his plans to organise a national home education conference next year. He had a provisional date, venue and speakers, but the issue of funding and the question of its status with respect to EO Association both needed clarifying.

Forthcoming meetings

The next meeting will take place at a camp in Kent, which Sue Hutchin is organising for the last weekend in June. (See elsewhere in this issue.) This worked well a couple of years ago, and the whole event was very popular. Featherstone Castle in Northumberland has been booked for September 3-10, with a meeting on Saturday 5. Various suggestions have been made for meetings in 1999, but as yet there are no firm plans.

It is impossible to meet everyone's needs in each gathering, but over the years we have established some idea of our basic requirements. It is difficult to find venues which satisfy these, and the meeting is always grateful for new ideas from members. The ideal venue is cheap, has good access from public transport, has a variety of bed-options and therefore prices (camping, space for camper vans, sleeping on the floor, large and small bedrooms), has space for communal and individual cooking, several rooms for meetings and children's activities, with a big one for dancing, and has interesting and safe grounds.

Does such a place exist? Let us know.

Anne Wade

Outgoing Vice Chair

19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middx HA0 2LY

If you would like a copy of the full minutes, please send an addressed return label and stamp (or an A5 SAE), plus a further first class stamp in payment for photocopying, to Rob Wade at the above address.

REGIONAL DIARY

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

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

BATH

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

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

BERKSHIRE

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

Fridays - Indoor and outdoor activities at Woodford Park, Woodley, Reading, 1pm - 4pm, £3 per family.

Table tennis, kite flying, model boats

Stonehenge free visit, 11th May 11am

Legoland £12/£6.20, 8th June 11am
Contact: Pat Connor 01734 662123
2, Whitegates Lane, Reading
RG6 1ED

Pre-School Group also on Fridays

Contact: Paula Rice 0118 973 5219

BRISTOL

Alternate Mondays - Ice skating

Alternate Tuesdays - Swimming at Bishopsworth Pool, 1.30 - 2.30

Fridays, Totterdown YMCA, 10.45 - 2.00, term time only.

Contact: Kathy Nott 0117 966 8265

BUCKS (SOUTH)

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

Contact: Trish 01494 783 398

CAMBRIDGE

Contact: Penny Kouzarides 01223 322703

CLEVELAND & DURHAM

Last Wednesday of the month

Contact: Pauline 01642 55 628

CORNWALL

Contact: Anna Wheeler 01209 890378

DERBYSHIRE

Wednesdays - 11am-3pm.

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

Contact: Trevor Denyer 01629 56609

DEVON

Contact: Sammy & Nick Vidal-Hall
01548 830716

DORSET (BOURNEMOUTH)

Weekly meetings and visits.

Contact: Sue North 01202 525011

30 Oswald Rd,
Moordown, Bournemouth,
Send SAE for details

ESSEX

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

Contact: Sandie Coffee 01268 73325
17 south View Rd, Rettendon,
Chelmsford CM3 8DX

FIFE

Outings & get togethers

Contact: Karen Spy 01337 830976

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

Second Wednesday of each month

at Yvonne Rowse's house, near Kidderminster.

Last Wednesday of each month

Jane Charles and Chris Harper's house near Malvern.

Contact: Yvonne Rowse 01209 400750

ISLE OF WIGHT

2nd Saturday of the month
gathering/workshop
Fortnightly Friday Club at Newport
Youth Club 10am - 1pm
Contact: Rachel 01983 872997
Jude 01983 53160
Alison 01983 563862

KENT

Regular meetings & activities:

Canterbury -
Contact: Anita 01227 722140

Bishopsbourne -
Contact: Hannah 01303 892417

Barming -
Contact: Jean 01622 820206

Dartford -
Contact: Angie 0181 3007238
Events list available.
Contact: Send sae to Amanda Mackenzie
16, Brambletree Cott, Borstal
Rochester, ME1 3TN,

KENT CAMP '98 MAY 28th-JUNE 2nd
Pennys Field, Headcorn.
Workshops & activities include,
drama, craft etc. Any offers or
suggestions welcome.
Contact: Liz, 01304 367625
Amanda 01634 402154

LEICESTERSHIRE

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

LONDON

CHOICE- newsletter covering events
in London area
Contact: Andy Blewett 0181 306 0168
email anwett@vosnet.co.uk
69 Ripley Rd, Belvedere, Kent.

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

Contact: Angie 0181 300 7236
Andy 0181 306 9999

Tuesdays - 11am Chissold Park
playground.

Contact: Charlotte 0171 254 0419

Wednesdays - Honor Oak adventure
playground.

Contact: Keith Hertog 0181 776 859

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

MANCHESTER

Bi-weekly at Peel Moat Sports
Centre, Stockport. Sports, games, soft
play, gym (over 16's). £1.10 per child.
Monthly Art Classes at Stockport Art
Gallery and meeting at Friends
Meeting House for older children.
Contact: Gil Wilson 0161 442 8723

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events. £1
plus four large saes.
Contact: Ali Willer 28 Cozens-Hardy Rd
Sprowston, Norwich. NR7 8QF

OXFORD

Fortnightly meetings - St Margaret's
Institute, Polstead Rd, 11am - 3pm.
Philosophy for over 9's & French.
Contact: Wendy Plested 01865 514973

SUFFOLK

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

SURREY - GUILDFORD

Fridays - Ice skating at the Spectrum
1.30-2.30, £2.25 (+50p for group
lesson).

Fortnightly meetings around
Guildford.

Contact: Penny Meader, 11 Thompsons
Close, Pirbright, Woking
GU24 0JG. (sae please)

SUSSEX

There is something happening nearly
every day,

Contact: Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178
Anne Rix 01435 862794

Tuesday Club at Lindfield

Contact: Liz Evans 01444 414058

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

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

TAYSIDE

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

WALES

Mondays - Newport area, meetings &
outings

Contact: Anne Pope 01239 710905

Monthly meetings in Llanelli/
Swansea area.

Contact: Sue Haggerty 01269 861902

Weekly meetings in NE Wales /
Borders area.

Contact: Genny Bove 01978 757489
49 Westminster Rd, Moss
Valley, Wrexham LL11 6DH
£2 for a year's listing

WEST MIDLANDS

• Birmingham

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

Contact: Rod Drury 01384 233497

Dee westbury 01527 452329

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

Contact: Rod Drury 01384 233497

• Dudley - Wolverhampton

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

Contact: Rod Drury 01384 233497

• Walsall

Second Thursday of each month
1.30 - 3.30.

Contact: Penny Clarke 01922 745465

YORKSHIRE, NORTH & EAST

Younger Age Group 29th April, 27th
May at Meraylah's house. Music,
drama, playing in the woods - bring
wellies. Other events via telephone
tree.

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

YORKSHIRE - WEST

Outings & activities.

Contact: Diane 01484 846946

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

Contact: Trish 01274 788938

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

Contact: Katherine 01422 844459

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

Contact: Diane 01484 846946

Clare 0113 2690061

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

Contact: Judith 0113 2265515

Clare 0113 2690061

Tuesdays - 10.30 term time -
swimming at Shipley.

Contact: Julia 01274 487182

TO PLACE AN ADVERT

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

Adverts should be limited to 50 words and sent (with any donation) to the editor of the next issue.

Advertisers who wish to discuss larger ads should contact the newsletter co-ordinator.

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

WISE OWL EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

PO Box 334 Abingdon OX14 2YB
Telephone 01235 - 529808
email wiseowls@aol.com

The only UK children's shareware library, established 1991. Specialising in educational programs and games (DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95) for all PCs (XTs to Pentiums). 800 titles for 2-16+ years. 3½" & 5¼" media. Free newsletter & advice.

Latest Titles: ■ Science Fair £6 ■ LOGO for Win 95 £3 ■
■ Educational Clip Art (200+ BMPs) £3 ■ Chemlab £3 ■
■ 10 Kid's Logic Games £6 ■ The Great War £3 ■
■ Maths Basics £6 ■ 8 Spell Games £6 ■ Tetris Pack £3 ■
■ More (13) Paper Doll Sets £3 ■ Primary Learning £9 ■

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


NEWSLETTER FOR JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WHO HOME EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN

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

Louise English
41 Queens Road
Horley
Surrey RH6 7AH

Duxford

Historic Aircraft and Wartime Exhibits



- Pre-booked school party rate
- Sixth form conferences
- Talks and 'hands-on' activities on Flight and the two World Wars
- Special educational events (costumed characters, Second World War Days etc)

For a free 'Teachers Pack' on our educational services contact:
The Education Office, Duxford Airfield, Duxford,
Cambridge CB2 4QR. Tel: 01223 835000.

Taking Children Seriously

TCS represents a profound criticism of prevailing theories of education and parenting, and provides a positive alternative. TCS is about how to bring up children in such a way that their learning is motivated entirely by their own interests, and not by externally imposed incentives or penalties. Taking Children Seriously, the journal, is essential reading for anyone interested in improving their relationships with their children, and for anyone concerned about their children's education.

To subscribe, send a cheque (payable to TCS) for £8 for 4 issues or £15 for 8 issues to TCS, 46 Latimer Grange, Latimer Road, Oxford OX3 7PH. Tel. 01865 761817

The Non-Stop Reader

can teach children to read within weeks and they love every minute.

Detailed instructions for parents

Rich and varied text

Wonderful illustrations

Systematically graded throughout

Scientifically up to date

Enquiries to:

Non-Stop Books

26 Lathbury Road Oxford OX2 7AU

Tel (01865) 554953 Fax (01865) 553443

e-mail 100532.1550@compuserve.com

For Sale

Children's table

Metal frame, formica top.
55 x 110 cms, height 55cms
Plus four chairs. Good
condition. £35.

French Muzzy

BBC video and tape course
introduction to French for
children. £25 (cost £100)

Rosemary Newton

6 Yeatmans Close, Shaftsbury,
Dorset Phone 01747 853593

For Sale

Reference books. Reading books.
Cambridge maths, Modules 5, 6 and
7. DK CDs £10 each. 10 out of 10
educational software for PC £1
each, all subjects. 11+ English
and Maths test 9-10 years and
10-11. Plus official National
test papers 1997 key stage 2, age
10-11 in science. Also other
resources for primary education.
Phone Karen or David on
01204 573136

**The Directory of Teaching From
Business** is a free catalogue
listing over 300 businesses that
have materials free or for sale,
that are created for or suitable
for educational purposes at all
levels. Simply send £1 for post
and packing to: Education
Distribution Service, Education
House, Drywall Estate, Castle
Road, Sittingbourne, Kent
ME10 3RL Tel 01795 427614
Fax 01795 474871

Independent Hostel

1½ miles from the sea in West
Wales on a small community
working towards practical
sustainability. Simple accom-
modation, alternative energy etc.
Central to the community are:
home education, celebration,
connection with spirit, working
co-operatively.
Cost £4 per adult, £2 per child
For further information phone
Julian or Emma Orbach on
01239 820164

Exchange Visit

I am a 16 year old French girl.
I would like to hear from a
British girl of the same age who
is interested in exchanging
visits this summer. I do not
mind which part of the UK I
visit and I live just north of
Rouen.
I was educated at home until a
year ago and I am now in school
(so visits have to fit in with
school holidays in July, August).
I am interested in horse-riding.
*Adeline Truchon, 13 bis impasse
Loissuau, 76130, Mont-St-Aignan,
FRANCE.*
Tel: 02 35 98 49 91

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

ADVERTS

Allan Austin B.Ed
is
RETURN VISIT THEATRE

One-man theatre bringing history to life for you and your children. Specialising in the Elizabethans & Victorians "Why can't history always be like that?" EO parent, Suffolk group: 27.2.98

For further details phone/fax Allan on Ipswich 01473 830811

Leaves of Life

Vegetarian Wholefood Cookery and Health Seminar. Recipes demonstrated. Samples served. Health lecture. 6th April, 4th May, 1st June, 2nd June. The Advent Centre, 37 Brendon Street, London. Nearest tube Edgware Road. Registration 6.45pm. £2.00 members, £3.50 non-members, £1.00 OAPs and unwaged. Children under 12 free. Membership £4.70 per annum inc.p&p (optional) For more information or to pre-register call 0181-800-1850 or 0958-495-029

Rainbow Circle
Family Fun Camp
May22nd - 31st 1998

A chance for parents to play and to share fun and laughter with our children.

There will be face-painting, crafts, drama, music, games, picnics and much more, ending every evening with hot chocolate and stories in the Big Lodge.

£60 per adult inc. one child
£10 per additional child

For more details contact:
Janette Tel:01565-653743
Sarah Tel:01970-617570

CAMPSCENE DIRECTORY 98

The only complete listings & info on all UK alternative/holistic camps this summer. Over 100 camps to chose from, most welcome children/offer concessions.

For your **FREE** copy, please send SAE to:

Chrissie, Cirenor, Wells-in-the-Field, Whitchurch, Hants, RG28 7NG

**The Natural Nurturing National
Open Day**

3rd May, Ryton Gardens, Coventry

The Natural Nurturing Network brings together parents interested in; breast-feeding, co-sleeping, baby wearing and nurturing children's sense of self worth.

There is a regular newsletter, gatherings and summercamps.

If you are interested, come to the open day and meet NNN members. Discussions, entertainments, playground, animals etc.

For information, send a SAE to;
The Natural Nurturing Network,
PO Box 48, Matlock, Derbyshire
DE4 3ZR

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

Chair: Eleanor Stapleton

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

Vice Chair: vacant

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

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

Publicity Group:

Anita Jamal: 01904 645659

Beverley Young: 01772 492245

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

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

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

Special Needs: Lesley Belgium

52 Camberley Rd, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 1SZ
Tel: 0117 930624

Research Secretary:

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

Database Secretary: Janet Wilkinson
58 Brindley Close, Wembley, London HA0 1BS
Tel 0181 998 3252

*(subscription renewals, address changes,
membership cards etc)*

School Phobia: Catherine McKillop
Tel: 01631 565551

GCSE Contact: Wendy Plested
Tel 01865 514973

College Contact: Valerie Gommon
Tel 01908 511247

Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator:

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

Membership Secretaries Coordinator:

Pam Bellinger: The Inn, Chapel Rd, Great
Worth, Banbury, OX17 2DT Tel 01295 710976

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

*(Parents of mine)
Fax 0116 2592200*

Stationery: Pam Bellinger

The Inn, Chapel Rd, Great Worth, Banbury
OX17 2DT

*EO stationery, re-use labels (£2.50 per 100)
leaflets, posters, membership forms, car
stickers and are available from; (Donations
towards postage & printing welcomed)*

Publications: Chris Harper

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

Council Members

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

Christine Adey (Dorset)

Andy Archer (Leics)

Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight)

Pam Bellinger (Oxon)

Isobel Bogucki (Sussex West)

Lucy Charlton (Leics)

Jill Fisher (Leics)

Val Gommon (Bucks)

Sue Hutchin (Kent)

Priscilla Park-Wier (Surrey)

Gary Podmore (Yorks)

Eleanor Stapleton (London-North)

Anne Wade (London Middx)

Bruce Wallace (Highlands)

Janet Wilkinson (Middex)

Beverley Young (Lancs)

*THURS -
01904 421982
Queen Baldock*

education otherwise

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

Our principal aims are to:

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

For further information send an A5 s.a.e. to:
P.O. BOX 7420
LONDON N9 9SG

HELPLINE 0891 518303
(calls charged at 50p per minute at all times. Recorded message,
average call length; 1- 2 minutes)

<http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/e_o/>
<e_o@netlink.co.uk>

